

But My Textbook Said This Would Work Teaching Notes

What Are the Relevant Facts?

1. Alice's company is emphasizing hiring and promoting minorities. Several discrimination suits have been brought against the bank in recent years.
2. Alice trains tellers. Bank teller is an entry-level position, and most promotions come from within.
3. Belinda is a black trainee whose training performance, after three days, is very poor. She threatens to file a formal complaint unless Alice passes her.

What Are the Ethical Issues?

1. How can Alice ensure that all her teller-trainees are adequately trained without "picking on" any person?

Who Are the Primary Stakeholders?

- Alice
- Belinda
- Bank employees (including other trainees, tellers, managers, etc.)
- Bank customers
- The community

What Are the Possible Alternatives?

1. Alice could simply tell Belinda that her training performance is poor and if she can't learn the job, she fails.
2. Alice could ignore Belinda's errors and simply pass her with no further ado.
3. Alice could offer to spend a little extra time with Belinda in the hope that her training performance improves satisfactorily.

What Are the Ethics of the Alternatives?

- Ask questions from a "utilitarian" perspective. For example:
 1. Which alternative would provide the greatest good for the greatest number?
 2. How would costs/benefits be assessed? For example, what is the cost of refusing to

evaluate Belinda differently? What is the cost (and the benefit) of hiring a minority? (Is an unqualified minority better than no minorities at all?) What is the cost of being honest with Belinda--telling her she simply isn't doing well?

- Ask questions from a "rights" perspective. For example:
 1. What rights does each stakeholder have? Does Belinda deserve special consideration/treatment merely because she's a minority? Does the bank (and its customers) have the right to expect a certain level of performance?
- Ask questions from a "justice" perspective. For example:
 1. Which alternative might distribute benefits and burdens most fairly? Who will benefit most (and be most burdened) by each of the alternatives? Is there a moral reason for treating Belinda differently from other trainees?

What Are the Practical Constraints?

1. Alice should be aware of possible legal constraints. Is she really treating someone differently because of race, or is she just applying accepted principles of training? (In addition, this situation poses a related problem. Since the bank has already been sued several times, it may be motivated to avoid any potential complaints of racism.) Likewise, how will the other trainees feel if Belinda gets any kind of special treatment?
2. Alice is responsible for training tellers. If she passes an unqualified trainee, it could have a "ripple" effect, because of the emphasis on promotion from within.

What Actions Should Be Taken?

1. What should Alice do? Why?
2. Which of the three ethical theories helped you the most in choosing an alternative?