

Student X

October 10, 2011

EDUC 302

Heinz Revisited Case Study

Over the Fence: For Second Grade Students

One afternoon, at recess, Jay was playing with his ball by himself on the edge of the playground. Jay did not have very many friends, and he was often bullied by Mark, the school bully who was twice Jay's size. Today, Mark was feeling especially mean and decided he was going to pick on Jay yet again. So, Mark walked up to Jay, snatched his ball away from him, and threw the ball over the playground fence! To make matters worse, the ball rolled into the street as a car was passing by, and the car ran over the ball and popped it. Jay was devastated, while Mark ran off laughing before the teacher could see him. One of the more popular students in the class, Chris, watched the entire episode from the other side of the playground, but could not reach Jay in time to help him. Chris was infuriated. Jay had done nothing wrong to Mark and did not deserve to have his ball ruined! Since the teacher had already ignored the bullying behavior many times, Chris decided to take matters into his own hands. Mark needed to be taught a lesson. After recess, Chris snuck into the storage room where everyone kept their toys for recess. He found Mark's basketball and stole it from Mark's cubby. When they were leaving school that day, Chris stopped Jay before he got into his mom's car and gave him Mark's basketball. Was Chris right to steal Mark's basketball and give it to Jay to replace the ball Mark ruined? Why or why not?

Level I: Pre-Conventional Morality

Stage 1: Obedience and Punishment Orientation

Response: “Chris was wrong to steal Mark’s ball and give it to Jay, because stealing is wrong.

The teacher could catch you stealing and send you to the principal’s office.”

Justification: This is an appropriate response for a student in Stage 1, because the badness of Chris’s action is based on the possible consequences it could produce. The student understands that stealing is bad, but only in an external sense. They do not understand their role as a member of society yet. The student knows the teacher has rules against stealing, which should always be obeyed without question. The negative consequence for stealing is getting sent to the principal’s office, something the student wants to avoid at all costs.

Stage 2: Individualism and Exchange

Response: “Chris thought he was right to steal Mark’s ball, because Mark ruined Jay’s ball by throwing it over the fence. Chris would also think it was right to steal Mark’s ball, because Mark kept being mean to Jay. Chris should make sure the teacher does not see him take Mark’s ball. However, Mark would not think Chris’s action was right, because Mark’s ball is his property.”

Justification: In Stage 2, the student recognizes that different people involved in the situation might see the situation differently. The answer to the rightness or wrongness of the action depends on the individual’s perspective. The student is still in the Pre-Conventional Level, because they only view the scenario from an individual perspective, not from the perspective of society as a whole. Additionally, the student sees that punishment from the teacher is a possible consequence of Chris’s action, so they want Chris to avoid the risk of punishment.

Level II: Conventional Morality

Stage 3: Good Interpersonal Relationships

Response: “Chris was right to steal Mark’s ball, because Chris was trying to help Jay. He knew Jay was upset about Mark ruining his ball and being mean to him, so he wanted to make him feel better. Chris had good motives, because he wanted to be nice to Jay to help cheer Jay up. Mark deserved to have his ball taken from him, because he brought it upon himself by throwing Jay’s ball over the fence.”

Justification: A student in Stage 3 begins to be concerned with people other than themselves. They could think Chris’s action was good, because he was helping Jay out. The student recognizes that Chris had good intentions by trying to remedy the situation and teaching Mark a lesson. The student also sees that Mark’s intentions were bad. The rightness of Chris’ action is based on a personal relationship between Chris and Jay that includes feelings and emotions like empathy and care.

Stage 4: Maintaining the Social Order

Response: “Chris was trying to do the right thing, but he was not actually right. Even if Chris is stealing the ball to help Jay, other people in the class might think stealing is okay. Then the whole classroom could start stealing! People might think it is okay to steal someone’s ball every day. People could also start stealing other things in the classroom too!”

Justification: The Stage 4 student understands that moral rules are held by all of society, not just personally or within their family group. They see the need for rules to be in place and to be upheld. The only way the classroom and school can function effectively is if everyone adheres to the rules put in place by authority figures. The student thinks that Chris should not have taken the ball from Mark, because it could disrupt the social order for the rest of the class. If there was not a rule against stealing, people could steal whenever they wanted to, and the classroom would be an unsafe place.

