

Ethical Reasoning: Defining, Teaching, Assessing

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Parts adapted from Hawk &
Fulcher (2016) AALHE webinar:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-J5Uvrp_dk0

Purpose

To expose Japanese colleagues to a strategy for improving ethical reasoning skills.

We note, this topic is controversial.

We hope that it inspires thoughtful questions and conversation.

Also, we are VERY interested in our Japanese colleagues' models for philosophical education.

Overview

Ethics Education in the U.S.

Guiding Questions

Student Learning Outcomes of focus

Assessment Plan and Instruments

Teaching Strategies

Q & A

Ethics education in the U.S.

Often avoided

When taught:

- Very basic
- Low level
- i.e., don't cheat on exams

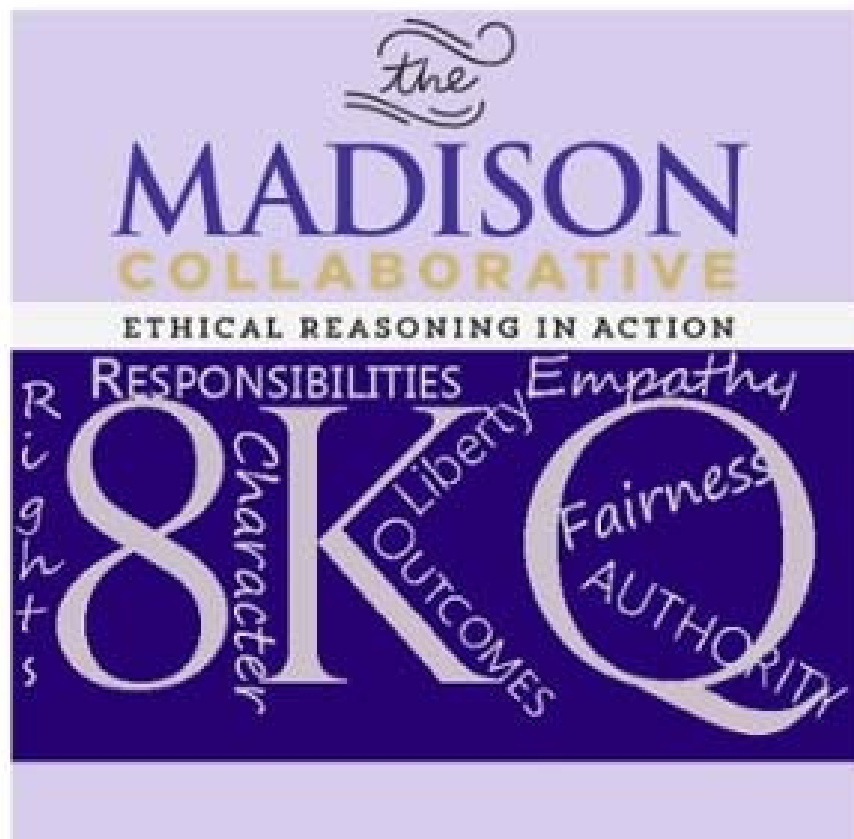
Rarely teach how to act when facing complicated philosophical and ethical situations.

Question


We're here to improve students' ethical reasoning in the context of James Madison University's framing of ethical reasoning.

That brings to mind the question:

When a student demonstrates good ethical reasoning skills, what does that look like?



Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)

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- SLO 1 Memorization
 - SLO 2 Identification Simple
 - SLO 3 Identification Complex
 - SLO 4 Application Generic
 - SLO 5 Application Personal
 - SLO 6 Importance
 - SLO 7 Confidence
-

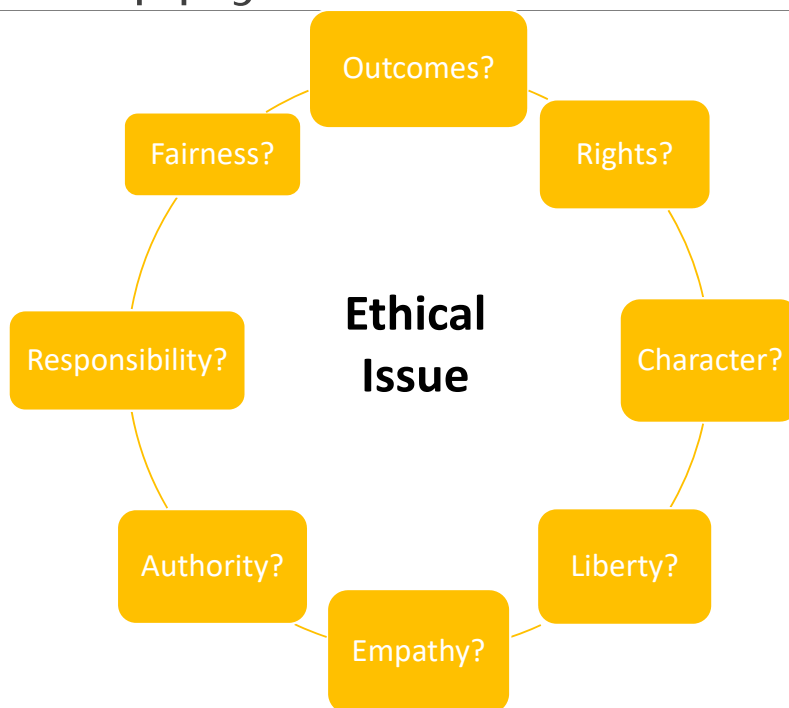
SLO 4 & 5

To (an⁴/their own⁵) ethical situation or dilemma, students will evaluate courses of action by applying (weighing and, if necessary, balancing) the considerations raised by the 8KQ.

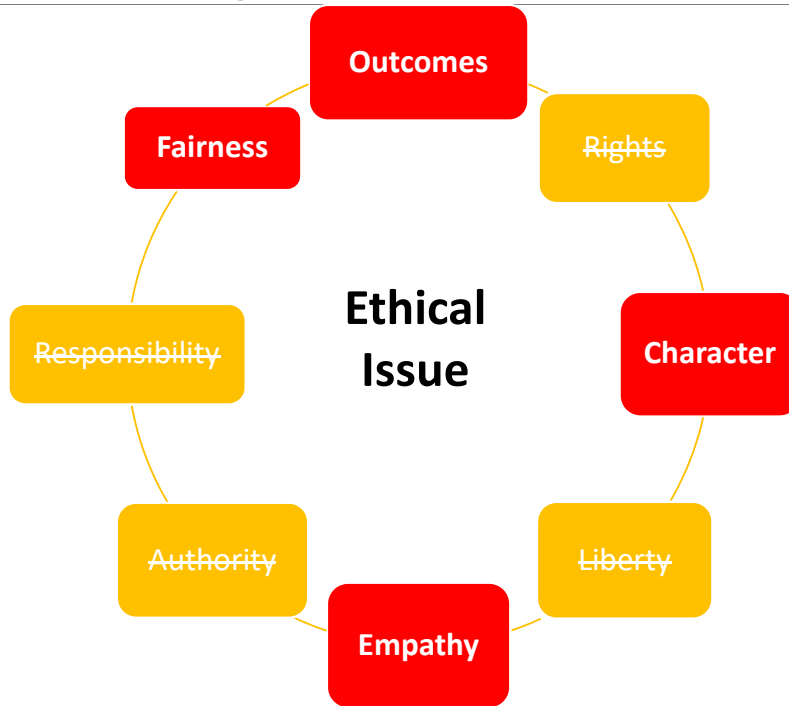
The Eight Key Questions (8KQ)



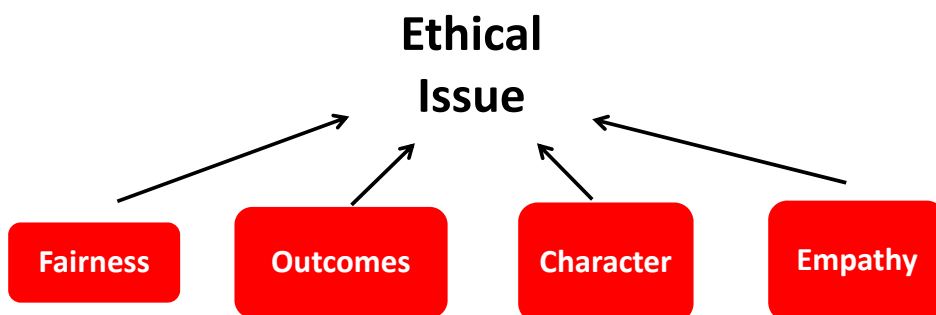
Which Apply?



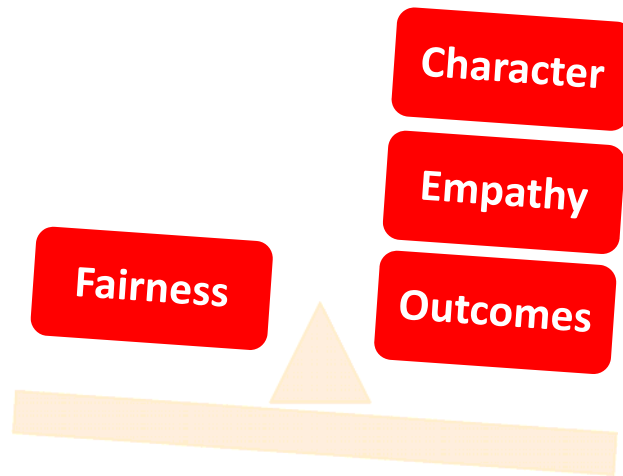
Which Apply?



Conduct Analyses



Weigh and Decide



James Madison University's Ethical Reasoning Rubric

Insufficient 0	Marginal 1	Good 2	Excellent 3	Extraordinary 4	Score
A. Ethical Situation: Identifying ethical issue in its context					
B. Key Question Reference: Mentioning the 8 KQs or equivalent terms					
C. Key Question Applicability: Describing which of the 8 KQs are applicable or not applicable to the situation and why					
D. Ethical Reasoning: Analyzing individual KQs					
E. Ethical Reasoning: Weighing the relevant factors and deciding					

University Assessment Plan

	SLO 1: Memorization	SLOs 2 & 3: Identification (Simple & Complex)	SLO 4: Application Generic	SLO 5: Application Personal	SLOs 6 & 7: Attitudinal	Data Collection:

Student Learning Interventions

SLO 1	Memorization
SLO 2	Identification Simple
SLO 3	Identification Complex
SLO 4	Application Generic
SLO 5	Application Personal
SLO 6	Importance
SLO 7	Confidence

An Example: Teaching Fairness

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKhAd0Tyny0>

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JMU's Orientation



Hurricane Sharon

[Watch the Hurricane Sharon video](#)

Involves 4300+ incoming first-year students led by
150+ volunteer faculty and staff facilitators



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Ethical Reasoning Results:

Where do we want to be?
Where did we start?
Where are we now?

James Madison University's Ethical Reasoning Rubric

Insufficient 0	Marginal 1	Good 2	Excellent 3	Extraordinary 4	Score
A. Ethical Situation: Identifying ethical issue in its context					
No explicit reference to decision options AND/OR the context regarding decision(s).	Implicit reference to decision options AND/OR the context regarding decision(s).	Explicit but unorganized reference to decision option(s) and context.	Explicit and organized reference to decision option(s) and context.	Meets criteria for <i>Excellent</i> AND... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context treated with nuance Builds tension with organization and word choice. 	
B. Key Question Applicability: Describing which of the 8 KQs are applicable or not applicable to the situation and why					
References to one key question.	Vague references to key questions OR only two key questions referenced.	References four key questions.	References six key questions.	References all eight key questions.	
C. Ethical Reasoning: Analyzing individual KQs					
No rationale provided for the applicability or inapplicability of any KQs to the ethical situation.	Provides a rationale for the applicability or inapplicability of two key questions to the ethical situation.	Provides a rationale for the applicability or inapplicability of three or more key questions to the ethical situation.	Provides a rationale for the applicability or inapplicability of six key questions to the ethical situation.	For all eight questions provides a rationale for its applicability or inapplicability to the ethical situation.	
SPECIAL NOTE: If author identifies fewer than the criteria "D" and "E" can be scored no higher than (1) "Marginal"*					
D. Ethical Reasoning: Weighing the relevant factors and deciding					
No attempt to analyze any of the referenced key questions.	Analysis attempted using two or more key questions. Typically incorrect ascription of the key questions to the ethical situation. Account is unclear, disorganized, or inaccurate.	Analysis attempted using three or more key questions. Basically accurate ascription of the key questions to the ethical situation. Account is unclear or disorganized.	Analysis attempted using three or more key questions. Accurate ascription of the key questions to the ethical situation. Account is clear and organized.	Meets criteria for <i>Excellent</i> AND... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nuanced treatment of key questions, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> elucidates subtle distinctions uses analogies or metaphors considers different issues within same key question. 	
SPECIAL NOTE: If Criterion "D" is scored a 0 or 1 then Criterion "E" can be scored no higher than (1) "Marginal"*					
E. Ethical Reasoning: Weighing the relevant factors and deciding					
No judgment is presented OR judgment presented with no rationale.	Uses products of the analysis and provides some weighing to make a decision. Account is unclear, disorganized, or inaccurate.	Conveys weighing approach using analysis products. Provides an intelligible basis for judgment.	Meets criteria for <i>Good</i> AND.... Logically terminates in decision that will be reached.	Meets criteria for <i>Excellent</i> AND... Products of analysis weighed to make judgment compelling.	

Baseline, 2013

Target, 2020

Where we are now, 2016

Further Thoughts

We are pioneers here. Some strategies are going to work. Some aren't.

What works, what doesn't? – We must figure this out.

We need you - this team - to help blaze the trail.

Summary

Q & A

Resources

Ethical Reasoning at JMU:

<https://www.jmu.edu/mc/>

Assessment at JMU:

<https://www.jmu.edu/assessment/>

Assessment and Learning Improvement at JMU:

<https://www.jmu.edu/assessment/Visitor/Student-Learning.shtml>

Smith, K. L., Fulcher, K. H., & Sanchez, E. H. (2015, September). Ethical reasoning in action: Validity evidence for the Ethical Reasoning Identification Test (ERIT). *Journal of Business Ethics*. Advanced online publication. doi: 10.1007/s10551-015-2841-8.