

DEVELOPING STUDENTS' ETHICAL THINKING AND REASONING SKILLS

by:
Vanessa V. Nava

Learners can be engaged by challenging topics with social relevance that address a real-world context for learning classroom content. Even the most effective teacher may be hesitant to bring potentially controversial topics into the classroom, fearing that a discussion will lead to a battle of ideas or be overtaken by a few aggressive voices. Furthermore, many socially provoking issues elicit debate and, as Zeidler and Sadler (2008) state, "seem to contain implicit and explicit ethical aspects and necessitate some level of moral justification". Teachers who show an interest in developing strong logical reasoning skills in their classrooms constantly teach us that it is difficult to help learners justify their viewpoints on socially complicated issues. Many socially significant issues are not only controversial but also necessitate moral and ethical judgment. Furthermore, ethics as a discipline is full of obscure terms and its own jargon, which can be intimidating for teachers who have little experience in ethics. This confluence of factors frequently creates a barrier for teachers seeking to give real-world context in the school setting.

Ethics is taught not only in ethics courses but in any class where ethics may possibly be adhered to. Sometimes, there is a threat that what learners learn will be inert – that they may not see how to practice it outside of the one ethics class. Learners must know how to apply ethical standards while also being inoculated against unethical burdens by being surrounded by ethical problems in a wide range of domains.

Ethical reasoning is the process of thinking about what is right and wrong. Reasoning mechanisms can be learned, and schools are ideal places to do so because they provide the necessary guidance and practice to establish such skills. While parents and

religious institutions may impart ethics, they do not always teach ethical reasoning. When ethical problems are associated with the content of a specialized area, academic programs are the logical learning area to learn the conceptual model of reasoning. No matter how competent a person is in their profession, if that knowledge is not supported by ethical reasoning, long-term career accomplishment is likely to be compromised.

When discussing ethical concerns, one must consider factors such as all aspects leading to unfavorable results or that a decision may be between two "wrongs." While a choice about a complex ethical dilemma can be seen as right or wrong by groups or individuals responsible for the decision, ethics leads to making decisions that affect others. An answer that pleases one group may contradict the core beliefs of another group or individual; this conflict is at the center of ethical argumentation. Ethics necessitates the careful consideration of opposing viewpoints and, to that end, requires a strategic, rational method for determining the best approach in the presence of competing options. In short, ethics is concerned with assisting students in developing critical thinking skills while contemplating how we should unite together as a community.

Methods for Bringing Ethics to the Classroom

Be Guided with Case Studies

Case studies provide ethical circumstances and challenges that incorporate students' real-world ethics. As a result, students can examine their ethical judgment and its implications for stakeholders. Most importantly, the subsequent ethical discourse allows students to observe the actions and decisions they would make in similar situations.

Invite Competent Guest Speakers

Guest speakers provide students with the opportunity to hear directly from people who make ethical decisions on a daily basis. Speakers can discuss ethical challenges they

have confronted, decisions they have constructed, and the overall effect on involved people. This method exposes students to real-world ethical quandaries that they are likely to face in their own future careers.

Conduct Learning Simulation

Simulations allow students to test their ethical decision-making processes while developing adjustments and improvements along the way. This is completed by creating a safe environment in which they can implement ethical skills and make decisions without fear of repercussions in the real world. Moreover, simulations enable students to gain self-awareness of their current skill proficiencies, which is required for successful skill improvement and the development of an ethical decision-making process.

Practice Integration

Experience and practice help to develop ethical decision-making abilities. This is why ethics should not be dealt with in a single class, but rather throughout the entire curriculum. Students have multiple opportunities to meet in ethical conversations and develop their own ethical decision-making process as a result of the assimilation across various fields of study.

Prioritize Self-assessment and Reflection

Self-awareness and a clear knowledge of the current skill competencies are required for valuable personal and professional growth. Self-assessments not only enable learners to reflect on personal and professional skills but also learn to take responsibility for their advancement and plan for the future.

References:

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1013926.pdf>

<https://www.ideaedu.org/idea-notes-on-learning/developing-ethical-reasoning-and-or-ethical-decision-making/>

depedbataan.com
The Official Website of DepED Division of Bataan