



Ethics Education in the Health Professions: Designing for Learning that Lasts

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Learning Objectives:

Describe four filters for teaching for enduring understanding

Explain the connection between knowing and doing

Compare learning strategies in the online and in-person environments

Consider the different ethics competencies required of the individual health professional and those for interprofessional collaboration

Four Filters for Selected Understanding¹

- Content that is essential
- Content that is at the heart of the discipline
- Content that is difficult to unpack
- Content that encourages engagement

Levels of Understanding, Application and Critical Self-Reflection

- ▶ Knowing or understanding includes levels such as:
 - ▶ Superficial understanding based on knowledge directly from sources of information
 - ▶ More profound understanding based on comprehensive and coherent knowledge structure
 - ▶ Understanding indicated by ability to transfer knowledge to novel tasks²
- ▶ Understanding content lays the foundation for application (doing)
- ▶ Aim should be not only that learners understand content and apply to new situations but to be actively reflective
- ▶ Critical self-reflection brings together knowing and doing which is particularly important in the health sciences

Example: SOTL Questions regarding Ethics Education in the Health Sciences³

What impact do SP interactions have on student learning regarding resolving ethical problems?

Is there a relationship between critical thinking and the ability to resolve ethical problems?

Is there a relationship between levels of moral development and the ability to resolve ethical problems in SP interactions?

Does reflection about interactions with SPs have an effect on ethical decision-making?

Do interactions with SPs have an effect on self-efficacy in dealing with actual ethical issues?

Do interactions with SPs have an effect on the quality of writing assignments such as exams?

- ▶ The "Five- Minute" Writing Assignment:^{4,5}
 - ▶ Provide brief case study related to essential content
 - ▶ Ask students to identify an issue, values at stake, missing information, etc.
 - ▶ Provide a satisfactory reply and ask students to reflect on their reply
 - ▶ Outcomes - provides a built-in opportunity to critically reflect on their insights; comparison of their reply to others; reveals blind spots; reinforces the practice of self-evaluation; teacher gets to know the learners, how they think

Designing Learning Experiences in Ethics - Sample Strategies

Designing Learning Experiences in Ethics

- Sample Strategies

- ▶ The Difficulty Paper:⁶
 - ▶ Work through personal difficulty within case study
 - ▶ Share response with others in small groups (online/face2face)
 - ▶ Prioritize the difficulties and propose resolutions for those that lend themselves to that or next steps within the time allotted
 - ▶ Outcomes - recognize individual approach to difficulties; appreciate that difficulties differ; make resolution public and collaborative; learn to live with incomplete resolution

Designing Learning Experiences in Ethics - Sample Strategies

Literature and Poetry:

Use of unfamiliar genres creates tension

What is the poem or short story saying to you?

Does this have anything to do with ethics? Why?

Outcomes - opens up opportunities to discuss emotions; allows richer and more complex insights from different perspectives; muddies the water

Designing Learning Experiences in Ethics

- Sample Strategies

▶ Ethics Simulations:

- ▶ A simulation is a teaching technique that "integrates immersive, experiential learning with planned and facilitated debriefing." ⁷
- ▶ Outcomes - enhances learners' engagement with the material; provides multiple opportunities for assessment; improves abilities to transfer knowledge, skills, and attitudes to clinical environment; should also account for the learner's emotional and psychological needs sometimes part of a pre-simulation briefing
- ▶ Cautionary Note: Requires skillful planning, coordination, and implementation of curriculum, pedagogy and technology.

Example: Debriefing Questions for Ethics Simulations⁸

- ▶ What was the primary ethical issue you encountered?
- ▶ Why did you choose to resolve the ethical issue the way you did?
- ▶ If you were actually involved in the case, what would you do next?
- ▶ The part that still confuses me is . . .
- ▶ What emotions were evoked in this simulation, if any?

Online and In-Person Teaching and Learning: Advantages and Challenges



Online Ethics Education (asynchronous) - Advantages⁹

When text-based, less ephemeral than in-person class sessions/experiences; when recorded online even more so

Extended opportunities for specific focus, thoughtful reflection and critical review

Structures equal opportunities for learners to make contributions

Promotes higher levels of critical thinking and reflection

Online Ethics Education - Challenges⁹

Assignments and course materials should align with course objectives; less flexibility regarding changes during the course

More time needs to be spent creating clear expectations should including rubrics, exemplars, audio/video explanations

Timely, individualized and group feedback from instructor is critical; pace is more demanding

Lacks non-verbal cues of learners that help instructors gauge misunderstanding



Individual versus Interprofessional Ethics Education

The Limits of Focus on the Individual Level of Ethics Education

- ▶ Individual competence, expertise, and attitudes are an appropriate starting place
- ▶ Necessary but not sufficient
- ▶ Propose viewing ethical competence from an interprofessional collaborative perspective

Individual Attributes for Interprofessional Collaboration¹⁰

Self-Awareness - the ability to reflect on personal knowledge, skills and abilities.

Competence - Being secure or confident in your abilities in your own discipline

Trust - originates from self-knowledge and competence; a prerequisite to teamwork.

Flexibility - the ability to maintain an open attitude, accommodate different personal values, and be receptive to the ideas of others.

Acceptance - accept differences among members of the healthcare team and the interprofessional environment.

Team Skills for Interprofessional Collaboration

Mutual Respect - the IPEC Core Competencies refer to mutual respect as a requirement for working collaboratively; there must be a status-equal basis¹¹

Shared Planning and Decision-Making - reasoning from alternative approaches or angles should be part of the culture

Distinguish Between Interdependence and Sharing Information

Interprofessional Ethics Education

What do health professions students believe are the most effective ways to learn about interprofessional collaboration in ethics?

1. Social and educational opportunities.
2. Authentic, immersive methods of teaching such as interprofessional clinical rounds, simulations and service learning.
3. Opportunities to practice.

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