

MODULE

3

Ethics in Leadership

"Ethics is knowing the difference between what you have the right to do and what is right to do."
- Potter Stewart

Introduction

Ethics put simply, are the standards of what is right or wrong. An individual's ethics play a large role in the decisions they make as a leader and how they solve problems because ethics determine the individual's priorities and thinking. In this module, we will be exploring different types of reasoning and leadership styles, and helping students grasp a better understanding of their strengths and weaknesses as a leader.

Student Objectives

1. Students will be able to understand a basic definition of ethics.
2. Students will be able to understand how ethics play a role in problem-solving and their leadership style.
3. Students will be able to identify ethical issues in the IMSA community and beyond.

Agenda

1. Bonding
2. Cannibalism Discussion
3. Intro to Ethics
4. Inline Ethics (IMSA Ethics)
5. Professional Ethical Dilemmas

Purpose & Place in Curriculum

2022-23 LEAD Mission: To inspire students to pursue activism through leadership, and enhance leadership skills through a variety of modules.

Place in Curriculum: Ethics & Problem Solving serves as a baseline module previewing the different ethical dilemmas leaders often face during leadership. By opening up discussion about ethics and their proximity to leadership, students will gain an understanding of how their - and others' - ethics affect their worldly perspective and thus their actions.

Value to Students: Understand ethics and how crucial it is for problem-solving and decision-

making as future leaders.

Upcoming Module: Leadership Skills for Life I

Facilitation Notes

- You may spend more or less time on certain activities than called for. You may also do one or both of the activities, it is all up to the facilitator's discretion.
- Try to make this module engaging! It was a fan favorite last year.
- Make sure to incorporate as many ties to IMSA & LEAD as possible. The entire curriculum should feel cohesive and flow together.

Facilitator Guide

Suggested Outline (New/Unsure Facilitators, follow this!)

- Bonding - 5 min
- Cannibalism Discussion - 10 min
- Intro to Ethics - 10 min
- Inline Ethics (IMSA Ethics) - 20 min
- Professional Ethical Dilemmas - 15 min

Cannibalism Discussion (10 min)

Purpose: Understand the importance of discussion through discussing a very controversial issue.

Materials: [Story](#) (Give the option to read before class for more depth); Video: [The case of Dudley and Stephen](#)

Directions:

1. Before going into the discussion question, tell students that the goal is to be as respectful as possible to everyone discussing the issue.
2. For those that didn't read the story, read this [summary](#) or give a brief overview during the first few minutes of class. You can also watch the video with the class instead of explaining the case.

Discussion:

1. Suppose you find yourself in a situation in which killing an innocent person is the only way to prevent many innocent people from dying. What do you think is the right thing to do? Do you think Dudley did the right thing?
2. If the crewmembers had drawn lots as Dudley originally proposed, (keeping in mind Brooks still did not consent) would the situation where three crew members eat the other become more or less ethical?
3. The end verdict of the case given by the court was the death sentence to be passed on Dudley and Stephens. Given the fact that they would be killed either way, does your stance on their actions change? (Ask people why they think the way they think about the situation)

Intro to Ethics: Discussion (10 min)

Purpose: Students will understand the basics of ethics and the variety of ways ethics can be

interpreted. Students will also understand what ethics should not be tied to if they choose to define ethics themselves.

Materials: [Slideshow](#) to aid facilitators if necessary

Facilitator Notes: Try to ask certain questions and write the students' answers on the whiteboard to make a list, refer back to the list when discussing what ethics are.

Make the discussion dynamic! Hold it in small groups or make a small skit between facilitators acting out what ethics are/are not!

Information:

What is not Ethics?

- Ask your students what they think ethics is.
- Some common responses:
 - "Ethics has to do with what my feelings tell me is right or wrong."
 - "Ethics has to do with my religious beliefs."
 - "Being ethical is doing what the law requires."
 - "Ethics consists of the standards of behavior our society accepts."
- Explain that ethics is not tied to one's feelings
 - "A person following his or her feelings may recoil from doing what is right. In fact, feelings frequently deviate from what is ethical." (<https://www.scu.edu/ethics/ethics-resources/ethical-decision-making/what-is-ethics/>)
- Explain that ethics is not tied to religion
 - "Most religions, of course, advocate high ethical standards. Yet if ethics were confined to religion, then ethics would apply only to religious people. But ethics applies as much to the behavior of the atheist as to that of the devout religious person. Religion can set high ethical standards and can provide intense motivations for ethical behavior. Ethics, however, cannot be confined to religion nor is it the same as religion." (<https://www.scu.edu/ethics/ethics-resources/ethical-decision-making/what-is-ethics/>)
- Explain that the law is not always ethical
 - ex.) pre-Civil War slavery laws and the old apartheid laws of present-day South Africa (<https://www.scu.edu/ethics/ethics-resources/ethical-decision-making/what-is-ethics/>)
- Explain that "what society does" is not always ethical
 - An entire society can become ethically corrupt. Nazi Germany is a good example of a morally corrupt society. (<https://www.scu.edu/ethics/ethics-resources/ethical-decision-making/what-is-ethics/>)

Then, What are Ethics?

- Ethics is two things according to the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics from Santa Clara University
 1. "First, ethics refers to well-founded standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans ought to do, usually in terms of rights, obligations, benefits to society, fairness, or specific virtues."
 2. "Secondly, ethics refers to the study and development of one's ethical standards."
- Emphasize that everyone, even researchers and professionals, view/explain/define ethics differently
 - The aim of ethics has been viewed in different ways: according to some, it is the discernment of right from wrong actions; to others, ethics separates that which is morally good from what is morally bad; alternatively, ethics purports to devise the principles by means of which conducting a life worth to be lived. ([Ethics: the Search of the Life Worth Living \(thoughtco.com\)](https://www.thoughtco.com/ethics-the-search-of-the-life-worth-living/))

Discussion (Optional):

1. What is the role of ethics in our society?
2. Why do you think the definition of "ethics" is different for everyone?

3. How do ethics tie into leadership?
 - a. Can you give an example of an ethical leader?

[Intro to Ethics: IMSA Ethics Inline \(20 min\)](#)



Purpose: Students will see and understand ethical dilemmas that may occur at IMSA.

Materials: IMSA Students

Directions:

1. Ask students each question (below) **and ask them to stand at either side of the room for each possible answer. Once they are all decided, discuss their choices.**
2. After the questions are asked and discussed, explain to students their moral philosophy choices.

Questions:

1. Suppose your friend is really struggling with CSI, however; you are passing with flying colors. They call you one night, their voice thick with sleep deprivation, asking for your HTML code for the homework due tomorrow morning. You want to help them pass, however, the academic dishonesty rule haunts you. You can either help them by letting them “borrow your code” or you can decline their plea for help. What do you choose: 1) help out a friend and reap the consequences or 2) potentially damage your friendship?
2. You (a vegan) are walking into Lexington and see a massive line. However, you also see your friends near the front of the line, as well as the fact that the last tray of vegan pasta is awaiting you and it won’t last the whole line. You can either 1) get a serving of the vegan pasta by cutting the (long) line, or 2) you can wait in line acknowledging the fact that you won’t get to the pasta and might not have many other options. Do you cut the line?
3. Lexington - You haven’t eaten, it’s 7:10 pm and dinner is about to close. The main door is already closed but there are still students inside eating. Do you 1) ask students to open the side door and get some food, or 2) decide not to eat Lexington that night.
4. You finally found a club that you feel really passionate about. Unfortunately, it’s really popular and board positions are limited. However, you do know some upperclassmen who are already on board. Would you 1) try your best on a level playing field with the other applicants and respect the fairness, or 2) would you try to appeal to those you know on board to have a better chance at getting on board? (Because nepotism is large at IMSA).

5. The wifi in your room has limited bandwidth and your roommate is having trouble finishing up their last homework assignment of the year due to connectivity issues. You, on the other hand, are finally about to get out of bronze on Valorant and you'll be the same rank as all of your friends. However, winning the game comes at the price of your roommate not getting their assignment in and not having a chance to bump up to an A in the class. Do you 1) finish the game and rank up, or 2) do you leave the game and let your roommate use the wifi for their academics?

6. You're running short on cash and you find a wallet on the ground. Do you 1) pick the wallet off the ground and report it to the authorities, or 2) keep it for yourself?

7. You and your best friend have known each other for most of your lives. They are the president of their own business and you find out that they've committed some sort of fraud. Do you 1) turn a blind eye because they are your best friend, or 2) report them to their superiors or proper authority?

8. You're the Lunar director for this year's show and you have a theme in mind that you really really want to use. You also know for sure that a majority of the IMSA community wants this theme. Let's call this theme A. However, the other members of the board as well as your supervisor want to use theme B. The decision ultimately rests in your hands. 1) Do you use theme A, justifying it by saying that the majority of the community wants it or 2) do you hold a vote with the board (which will end in using theme B)?

Idea: Pose an ethics question regarding leadership and have students answer with different ethical justifications (also with terminology if the facilitator goes into categorical/consequential)

Explanation (facilitator discretion; skim or be thorough depending on time)

1. Those who said the right thing to do depended on the consequences of the action use consequentialist moral reasoning. For example in the academic honesty problem, this would be the reasoning of, "better that they will pass even if I fail". This is consequentialist moral reasoning, which is locating morality in the consequences of an act.

2. In some cases, you may not have been so sure about consequentialist reasoning. You might have hesitated to cut the line or help a friend. This is categorical moral reasoning as each of you were considering the intrinsic quality of the act itself - regardless of the consequences. Thus, categorical moral reasoning locates morality in certain duties and rights.

Professional Ethical Dilemmas (15 min)

Purpose: Have students create their own ideas to incite them to think deeper about the ethical dilemmas the class comes up with.

Materials: White board, Expo markers, small groups

Directions:

Each table will be given the task of coming up with an ethically complicated scenario that ideally has a focus on people in power/leaders. Each table will get a section on the board to write a short exposition of their ethically complicated scenario. After, they can write short bullets below about the main decisions people can take in their scenario. Leave about 1-2 minutes at the end to allow the class to sit and read each other's work. If time allows, students can explain their bullet points if they so choose.

