

ETHICS AND APPRECIATING DIVERSE CULTURES: A CASE STUDY APPROACH

Ethical Questions – Moral Decision Making

According to Rushworth Kidder (*Moral Courage*, Harper-Collins, 2005), people make ethical decisions based on the following considerations:

- Truth vs. Loyalty
- Individual vs. Community
- Short term vs. Long term
- Justice vs. mercy

To resolve ethical decisions, Kidder recommends these key approaches:

- End based: greatest good for greatest number
- Rule based: according to rules
- Golden rule: how would you want to be treated?

Examples of ethical questions/appreciating diverse cultures, across the curriculum

When it comes to responsibility in the arts, who should decide what's appropriate?

Should students be penalized for checking their email in class? Should professors be responsible for making lectures and classes interesting enough to hold students' attention? Do students have a responsibility to pay attention?

Should government be responsible for deciding what kinds of food you can eat?

Is volunteering a civic responsibility? Should government be involved with public service?

Have you ever mislead a survey taker with inaccurate information? How and why?

By discipline

Accounting, Law, Nursing: Codes of ethics

Agriculture: What responsibility does a farmer have to consider the environment in his work?

Agriculture/Nutrition:

What responsibility does a farmer have to choose between higher yields versus the health of the consumers by using growth hormones, fertilizers, pesticides, that are known to cause health problems?

Automotive: Should the government be allowed to track mileage and locations traveled by inserting a high-tech device in cars? Should "gas-guzzler" cars be outlawed?

Biology: Should government be responsible for deciding what kinds of food you can eat?

Consider the debate about using embryonic stem cells versus adult stem cells in research.

Discuss the use of lab animals versus cell cultures.

Concern over dissections in various courses.

Use of invertebrate animals versus vertebrate animals in lab: why is there a difference in the way they are handled in terms of ending their lives?

Biology/Pre-Med/Microbiology:

Should the government/medical community play a better job in reevaluating the vaccine schedule (in regards to the autism epidemic) rather than just accept the historic way it has always been done?

The role of the government when it comes to controlling an epidemic (what measures are taken to prevent exposure – how far do we go?)

Business: Is it fair to make people who faithfully paid their mortgages bail out those who didn't?

English, Speech: The question of plagiarism

Fine Arts: When it comes to responsibility in the arts, who should decide what's appropriate?

Foreign Languages: What obligation do we have to learn other languages? What obligation do immigrants have to learn English?

History/Political Science: Should government be involved in public service?

Math/Government: How far should government go to justify statistics that appear to support political actions?

Nutrition: Discussions about vegan diets (no animal products whatsoever, including honey, etc) vs. various types of vegetarianism (some eat no animal flesh but consume milk and/or eggs) vs. omnivore diets. What is the role of the government and food safety (laws, food recalls, proper food labeling, etc.)

Psychology: Are people naturally selfish?

Sociology: Who should have access to personal genetic information, and how will it be used?

Technology: People are putting GPS systems in their pets to keep track of them. Should this be allowed in children?

Wind energy: Is information and disclosure about performance of various "natural sources of energy" required?

Appreciating Diverse Cultures

Is it fair to make people who faithfully paid their mortgages bail out those who didn't?

Shouldn't everyone be allowed to access anyone's personal legal history, whether or not it's criminal?

Where does personal responsibility end and business responsibility begin when it comes to the cost of helping the environment?