Teachable Moments

Ethics and Reflection in Service-Learning
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by Teddi Fishman and Lorilei Swanson
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Introduction

Ethical misbehavior on the part of business, entertainment, and political leaders is, unfortunately, nothing new. In the past decade, many of our cultural institutions have been rocked by scandals: government at all levels, corporate executives, sports heroes; not even our educational and religious leaders have remained untouched. What has changed, however, is our recognition that these breaches of integrity can have serious, long-lasting implications that go far beyond the people directly involved. With every scandal, it becomes clearer that integrity matters to us all.

As the recent banking scandals and subsequent damage to global economic stability have shown, ethics and integrity are far from inconsequential or esoteric concerns. In the aftermath of the financial meltdown, as we witness widespread unemployment, social instability, and an unprecedented widening of the gap between the very rich and the very poor, it becomes increasingly evident that in order to maintain secure, sustainable societies, more attention must be paid to the development of character and the value of integrity.

It is also clear that habits of integrity and character develop long before adulthood. For this reason, it is essential that students learn lessons about values, moral reasoning, and ethical decision making before they grow up and assume leadership positions. Helping young people develop the ability to make sound ethical decisions and instilling in them the courage and resilience necessary to make difficult choices is a challenge so great that it requires a sustained, collaborative effort that involves families, schools, and communities. Traditionally, schools have devoted little time to ethics education, but as the complexity and consequences of ethical questions have become greater, so does the challenge to educators to do more to prepare young people for the decisions they will face. To meet that challenge, educators need a new set of skills and practices they can utilize to teach the fundamentals of ethical decision making and reflection.
Personal Decisions

It is not unusual for students to be confronted with tough personal ethical decisions nearly every day. In the classroom, cheating on tests and copying research directly from the Internet is widespread. Personal issues involving bullying, gangs, drugs, and alcohol can present challenges that can potentially affect the rest of their lives. Because these challenges have become pervasive in our schools and communities, we must take collective responsibility for providing students with the tools they need to make good decisions even under stressful circumstances. What follows is a framework and tools for making those decisions.

Decisions in a Democracy

On a more global level, students also need to begin developing the capacity to address the societal challenges they will face as adults, such as the need for educational reform, healthcare access, combating violence and racism, protecting the environment, and other perennial issues such as poverty, homelessness, and hunger. It is important to recognize the connections between the development of problem-solving skills as students and the ability to solve larger problems in a democracy. Learning about ethical decision making gives students a
tool to understand and evaluate the policies and practices on the local, state, national, or global level. This ability is central to becoming fully engaged citizens in a democracy as they become the decisionmakers of the future.

This guidebook will provide you with tools to integrate ethical decision making with service-learning throughout the reflective process. Service-learning, with its capacity to expose students to real-life challenges and experiences, provides the perfect context for fostering a student’s growth in developing those habits of character and integrity.

The suggestions contained herein have been gathered and assembled from lessons learned over years of teaching, learning, testing, discussing, and reformulating them. Many of the ideas contained herein were originally created and presented by the organizers, participants, and facilitators of the National Dropout Prevention Center’s summer service-learning institutes, Rutland Institute for Ethics programs, members of the Pearce Center for Communication research teams, and participants in the Ethics Across the Curriculum program (EAC) at Clemson University. We thank them and the EAC community for providing the insights upon which this volume is based.

We would also like to thank our family and friends, who have supported the development of this volume and also our personal development. Thinking about Cassidy, Daniel, and Elliot, for instance, helped us envision the complexity of the world that the young people of today will face in just a few short years. Without all of these people and their efforts, this project would not have been possible.

Teddi Fishman
Lorilei Swanson
Many teachers have already discovered the tremendous power of service-learning as a method for enhancing and reinforcing academic goals and objectives. Because service-learning combines *learning* and *doing*, it can provide an ideal setting for students to begin learning to identify and assess complex ethical questions. When the activities are supervised and chosen for their appropriateness, service-learning can also serve as a safe setting for students to practice critical-thinking and decision-making skills and to see the effects of their decisions and actions, and, thinking more globally, the ethical consequences of society’s decisions and actions.

**What Is Service-Learning?**

The central tenet of service-learning is that it utilizes service activities to *fulfill, enhance, and complement* learning objectives. In simple terms, it is *learning through doing* where the “doing” is service. Service-learning takes students out of the classroom and into the “real world” to meet people who may differ in terms of age, ability, income, religion, race, and ethnicity, and to help them address their needs. In quality service-learning experiences, students connect with and learn from others who have different perspectives or life experiences, thereby learning about others and about themselves. Service-learning activities challenge students to learn more about problems in their communities. The issues vary widely, and may include environmental, socioeconomic, education and literacy issues, as well as many others. Regardless of the issues being addressed, they encourage students to look beyond their immediate circumstances and explore “big picture” issues such as war, pollution, climate change, waste, hyperconsumerism, privilege, poverty, and ethical breaches on a person-to-person level, and then think about how the small-scale issues they see contribute to societal and global problems. Ideally, service-learning experiences include
both a “problem” component and a “solution” step that allows students to experience what it is like to truly make a difference.

This is, of course, a tall order. When students become truly engaged, they are likely to encounter situations where they feel uncomfortable or unfamiliar with what is going on around them. They may observe events that they interpret as unfair or unjust. They may sense that something is wrong in a situation and may not know how to respond to the situation. They may encounter decisions that are difficult and not know how to address them. Therein lie the teachable moments.

It is no secret among educators that teachers face enormous pressures and tough choices in the classroom. Increasingly, teaching is focused less on student development and more on showing evidence of learning by means of standardized tests. In order to meet institutional goals, teachers must construct lessons that not only convey the material but also improve test scores. Knowing that they must defend their choices, it can be challenging to fit service-learning into the curriculum, and even more so, to capitalize on teachable moments when they occur. In this environment, it may seem that the most expedient thing for teachers to do is to skip over these moments, but at what cost? If one goal of service-learning is to promote deep learning and understanding, these moments are not only an essential component of the activity but also a way to meet learning goals. We hope that the overarching goals of education—the cultivation of higher-order thinking skills and the ability to make good and defensible decisions—will tip the scales in favor of allotting time for teachable moments.
As part of his social studies curriculum, Emilio has been serving at a senior citizen’s day-care center as part of a semester-long service project. He has spent two hours a week there each week, interviewing seniors and recording their oral histories. During his final week, he notices that some of his participants are missing. When he inquires, he learns that the program that provided free transportation to the center has been discontinued because of budget cuts. At first, he is concerned because he needs to complete his interviews, and he wonders if there are other support mechanisms that his participants might use to get back to the center to talk to him. After thinking about it for while, however, he begins to wonder if, without free transportation, the seniors are still able to do things like shop for food and get to the doctor. He knows, from his interviews with them, that many have no family in the area who can provide transportation for them. He mentions his concerns to his project supervisor who advises him that he needs to focus on the remaining participants, finish recording their histories, and complete his assignment. Emilio asks if he can call on the missing seniors at their homes, but his supervisor says “no.” Emilio feels troubled by this situation, and seeks your advice. What would you advise Emilio to do?
Focus on Teachable Moments

Emilio’s questions reveal that he is grappling with significant and troubling systemic issues. Seeking answers to them will certainly lead to greater understanding not only of his participants but also the world in which they (and all of us) live. Emilio needs support from his project supervisor, his peers, or his community partners, but he also needs a set of tools to use when he encounters ethical dilemmas. Additionally, he needs guidance on how best to reflect on uncomfortable and unfamiliar events as they unfold in his service-learning experience. The right combination of ethical tools, reflection activities, and teacher support are critical to enhancing the development of Emilio’s moral reasoning skills.

Often ethical dilemmas require making tough choices between two or more actions that each have something right about them. Sometimes every possible choice risks causing some harm. In the above scenario, Emilio might risk delaying the completion of his project if he goes against the advice of his supervisor. Not doing so, however, also carries risk.

In order to address these questions, we propose that teachers take advantage of teachable moments by teaching students about ethics in a way they can understand, using the ethical toolbox developed by the Rutland Institute for Ethics and guided reflection activities to practice ethical decision making before they encounter ethical quandaries in their service-learning projects. After practicing with the tools, students can feel confident that they are making good decisions and choosing the best course of action.
What is Ethics?

Before tackling difficult ethical questions, it is important to understand what “ethics” is and how it differs from other, similar things that may also factor into decision making.

✦ **Ethics is about identifying right actions and about establishing and maintaining a “good” life.** These two goals are related in that you need the first in order to accomplish the second. Put another way, by choosing right actions, it is possible to create the kind of environment in which people and societies can flourish.

✦ **A situation has an ethical dimension when action within it would have a significant impact on the well-being of human beings and sentient creatures.** A situation has an ethical dimension to it when an action an individual takes is likely to have a significant impact on humans, animals, or even the environment.

✦ **Ethics is normative rather than descriptive.** Deciding what is ethical is a matter of what should be done rather than what is done. While it is true, for example, that people lie, it is also true that with rare exceptions, they should not. Ethics is about normative claims as opposed to descriptive claims. Normative statements make a claim about how the world should be as opposed to descriptive statements that make a claim about how the world is.

✦ **Ethics is not equal to the law.** Although there are points of overlap, ethics is not the same as the law. Just because something is illegal doesn’t mean it is ethical. The converse is true as well in that some legal things might be unethical. For example, harboring runaway slaves was illegal in the 19th century, and breaking a promise in the 21st century is legal.

✦ **Ethics is obedience to the unenforceable.** Ethics requires people to commit to ideals that are often unenforceable, meaning there are no rules or laws forbidding unethical behavior. For example, there are some things that most people would take pains not to do, like disappointing a child, even though there are no laws forbidding this behavior.
Ethical decisions should have systematic justification. Ethical decision making requires not only that one forms an opinion, but also that the opinion is supported by sound reasons. When, after considering the dilemma from multiple perspectives, one arrives at a decision, it is possible to feel confident that it is the correct one.

Ethical Absolutism and Ethical Relativism

There are two extreme positions to avoid when considering ethical matters. The first is ethical absolutism, which says that for each ethical question, there is only one right answer. On the other extreme is ethical relativism which says that whatever someone believes is right is, in fact, right for that person. The two are quite different, in that absolutism fails to take circumstances into account whereas with relativism, circumstances determine everything. Interestingly, however, the problems presented by absolutism and relativism are very much the same: Absolutists can’t use good judgment about ethical dilemmas because the decision has already been made. Relativists can’t make good ethical decisions because there is no right answer—only what each person believes. Both of these positions preclude making informed decisions and should be avoided.

Spotlight: Absolutism and Relativism

Sam is working late when a frantic young man runs into the classroom, looks around desperately, and says, “Help! I have to hide! He’s trying to kill me!” and then opens the closet door, steps inside, and closes it behind him. Seconds later, a man with a bat comes through the door, and says, “Did a guy just come in here? He needs to be taught a lesson.”
If someone is committed to absolutism and believes that people should never lie, it follows that he or she would have to tell the man with the bat the truth about the other man hiding in the closet. Most people would agree, however, that in this situation, telling the truth would not be the right thing to do.

A similar problem occurs with relativism. If someone believes in ethical relativism—that right and wrong are determined by what individuals believe—he or she cannot discriminate between the very different perspectives of the man in the closet and the man with the bat because each of them sincerely believes his perspective on the matter is the correct one. This, too, is a position few people are eager to accept. Neither position allows for good decision making. This is why both absolutism and relativism should be avoided.

**Religion and Ethics**

For many people, religion has a very special relationship to ethics, particularly when it comes to clarifying and developing values. Relying on religion in ethical discussions can be problematic, however, because appealing to religious authority is a form of absolutism and tends to put an end to dialogue, particularly if the parties to the discussion have different beliefs. An argument based on a particular faith will not be effective with a person who does not share those beliefs. Even people with the same religious beliefs may disagree about interpretation of divine law.

**Ethics and Science**

Ethics might seem very different than science, but they actually have much in common. Both, for example, are engaged in a search for truth. Scientists conduct experiments to find scientific truths, and when we engage in ethical discourse, we are looking for ethical truths. In both cases, there must be an assumption that answers can be found
and that our efforts can bring us closer to finding them. Also in both cases, there is an acknowledgment that our current beliefs might be wrong and that, if we encounter better information, we should be prepared to reexamine our assumptions and revise the opinions we now hold. As we learn more, we may arrive at “better,” more reliable truths, but the important thing is to learn as much as we can and make the best possible decisions with the available information. Our confidence increases with the degree to which various kinds of evidence lead to the same conclusion. By examining questions, both scientific and ethical, through systematic investigations, we can be as sure as possible that we are doing the very best that we can at that given moment.
The Ethical Toolbox

In the same way that a mechanic needs more than just a wrench to solve all mechanical problems, there is also no single approach that works for all ethical problems. For this reason, the “ethical toolbox” (developed by the Rutland Institute for Ethics at Clemson University and presented as part of its Ethics Across the Curriculum Programs) includes three different ways of looking at ethical problems. The three tools in the ethical toolbox are utilitarianism, the rights-based approach, and virtue ethics.

Utilitarianism/Consequences Tool

“The Greatest Good for the Greatest Number”

The first tool in the ethical toolbox is utilitarianism, which focuses on the consequences or outcomes of an action. Using this tool, choices are made with the goal of achieving the greatest good for the greatest number of people without causing harm. Acts are seen as right when they yield happiness, and wrong when they result in unhappiness. When using this tool, students choose the action that will maximize the happiness of all involved. To determine which action is best, students should take the following steps:

✦ Identify the foreseeable consequences of the possible courses of action.
✦ Evaluate these consequences in terms of overall happiness, i.e., how much happiness will be gained and at what cost?
✦ Choose the action that will result in the greatest amount of overall happiness.
Sometimes there are other things to consider besides simply what will bring about the greatest good for the greatest number, especially when one considers the rights of the people involved. It would not be acceptable, for instance, simply to take a bus from the tour company and give it to the senior center. That example brings up two important questions to consider: Can some acts be wrong even though their consequences are very good, and can some acts be right even though their consequences are very bad? The answer to both questions is yes, so it becomes clear that utilitarianism alone cannot answer all ethical questions. Fortunately, there are additional tools.

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**Spotlight: Utilitarianism/Consequences**

Emilio learns that if he can persuade a local tour company to donate their old buses to the senior center, he can secure transportation for everyone who needs a ride. This is a challenging task, but the best choice for ensuring that all of the seniors’ needs are met. The donation would also mean a sizeable tax credit for the tour company. Having determined that this solution is the one that brings about the greatest good for the greatest number of people, Emilio devotes all of his time to getting the donation.
The Rights-Based/Respectful Treatment Tool

“Do Unto Others As You Would Have Others Do Unto You”

The second tool in the ethical toolbox, the rights-based approach, focuses on the fact that all people deserve respectful treatment and that in order to make a decision, it is important to consider the rights and duties owed to others. Its central premise is that all people deserve respectful treatment, and an action is only right if its policy can be used with everyone regardless of who they are. This idea is very similar to the Golden Rule: “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.”

Like all tools, however, it has weaknesses. Because it doesn’t consider consequences, this tool can lead to outcomes that are not desirable, especially when applied in rigid, inflexible ways.

Spotlight: Rights-Based/Respectful Treatment

*Imagining himself in the position of the seniors who are now without transportation, Emilio realizes that he would want someone to stand up for him and to make sure he was able to get the things he needed. Emilio feels a duty to try to restore transportation services to them. Emilio might discuss the problem with the center director and with a community leader, bringing their attention to the fact that the seniors have a right to the same transportation resources that other citizens in the community enjoy.*
Virtue Ethics/Aspiration Tool

“Strive to Become a Person of Admirable Character”

The utilitarian and rights-based approaches both focus on a set of rules, but the third ethical tool relies more on a general goal of aspiration. This tool focuses not only on the decision, but also on the decisionmaker as he or she strives to become a person of admirable character. For this tool, choices are made that move the decisionmaker toward becoming the person he or she wants to be. This tool is less about “thou-shalts” and “thou-shalt-nots” and more about doing what is admirable.

Spotlight: Virtue Ethics/Aspiration

Emilio considers how people he admires—Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King Jr.—stood up for the rights of people in need, and thinks about how they might respond in this exact situation. Since each of these leaders spent a great deal of time talking about taking care of people without the means to take care of themselves, Emilio would select an action that honored this philosophy, and pursue a course of action modeled on their success such as talking with community leaders or bringing the situation to the attention of local media.

One weakness of this tool is that it does not include a simple formula for answering ethical questions. There are, however, still useful prompts that can be used in order to find the best choice using the virtue ethics tool:
What would a person of admirable character do?
If someone I admire was watching me, what would he or she want to see me do?
What am I making of myself? What will I become, if I do this act?
What would someone I admire do in the same situation?
If this were included in the story of my life, how would I want it to end?

Convergence Begets Confidence

So how do students know which approach to use and when to apply it to ethical dilemmas? The Rutland Institute for Ethics recommends that teachers and students apply all three of the tools when considering an ethical dilemma. When a solution meets all three criteria—it brings about good consequences, respects rights, and helps the decision-maker become a better person—the convergence indicates that the decision is a good one.
Theoretical Checks and Balances

Convergence begets confidence*

Consequentialist  Respect for Persons  Aspirational Ethics

Decision/moral judgment

Consequences
Respect for persons—deserved treatment
What one aspires to be

The toolbox approach is the key element in a four-step approach to ethical decision making.

* Randy Barnett coined the phrase

The ethics toolbox works best when used as part of a reflective pedagogy that takes a systematic approach to decision making. The Rutland Institute IAJD model provides a four-step process for identifying and examining problems, then identifying solutions and taking action.

Step 1: IDENTIFY

In order to address an ethical issue, the first step is to identify the problem and the people with a stake in the outcome. Helpful questions in this step include:

- What are the issues at stake?
- What are the significant factors in those issues?
- What contributes to the problem?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- What is at stake for each stakeholder?
- What are the options for action in response to the situation, problem, or ethical dilemma?

Step 2: ANALYZE

The second step is to compare and analyze the various options using the three analytical tools to examine the question or issue from multiple perspectives. Each of the tools provides a different perspective.

Utilitarianism/Consequences Tool

- What are the foreseeable and likely consequences for each option?
- What are the likely consequences to the various stakeholders?
- What option generates the greatest good for the greatest number?
Rights-Based/Respectful Treatment Tool
✦ Which option is most just?
✦ What are the intentions behind each option?
✦ Would you be willing to receive the treatment outlined in each option if the tables were turned?
✦ Does the preferred option demonstrate respectful treatment to all involved?

Virtue Ethics/Aspiration Tool
✦ Do the options demonstrate integrity and good character?
✦ Would you be comfortable following through with each option if your plans were published in the school newsletter?
✦ Do the options contribute to who you want to become personally and professionally?
✦ Which option would a person you admire most be likely to select?
✦ What option brings you closer to becoming the person you wish to be?

Step 3: JUSTIFY

The third step ensures that the question has been thoroughly considered by requiring not only that a choice be identified, but that it can be explained and justified. Questions to consider during this third step include:

✦ What are the benefits of the preferred choice?
✦ What are the risks and costs?
✦ What happens if we don’t make this choice or take this action?
✦ Are there any unidentified alternatives?
Doing the right thing requires not only action, but that you can explain or justify your action. The tools (consequences, respect for persons, and aspiration) should be used here, as well as in the analysis step, to justify the preferred choice.

**Step 4: DECIDE**

This is the action step and often the hardest one. When making ethical choices, choosing is not enough—following through is also a necessary step. Questions to ask at this phase include:

- **What is the best way to implement the choice?**
- **How can I maximize the good and minimize the harm?**
- **How can I make this decision “count”?**

Taking ethical action requires courage and commitment and may be the most difficult challenge in using the IAJD Model.

**Ethical Decision Making as a Process**

Ethical decision making is a skill that must be learned and practiced. While the student’s age and stage of moral development must be taken into account when choosing an appropriate activity, the more opportunities teachers and students have to think reflectively about ethical dilemmas and to choose the best course of action in any given situation, the better they become. It is, however, a difficult skill to teach because with a genuine moral dilemma, there are no easy answers. Learning to use the toolbox and IAJD model can help students be more confident that their decision is the correct one.
Spotlight: Real Dilemmas

Fatima is a high school student who wants to be a teacher. She volunteers at a local middle school where she helps out in a resource classroom in which students get special help with reading. She notices that some of the children seem quite bright but are unable to concentrate on their lessons. One morning when she comes in early, she overhears the children talking about lunch, which is several hours away. She hears one of them ask another child if she has any candy or chips. He says that he can’t wait for lunch because there was no food in his house last night, and they only had Kool Aid for dinner and breakfast.

Fatima calls the resource teacher out in the hall to share what she has heard. The resource teacher says that it’s a frequent occurrence that is even worse on Mondays when the kids haven’t eaten all weekend. She shows Fatima her “stash” of snacks and tells her she can bring them in as a “treat” whenever she thinks that the children are hungry. Fatima brings in the snacks and watches as the children devour them. She admires her teacher for feeding the children in her class without making them embarrassed about their situation, but she is still troubled that they are not getting enough to eat. She considers calling social services, but instead calls you to ask what you think she should do.
Reflection

Reflection is a means by which experiences are translated into understanding, and therefore an essential element of service-learning. Especially because teachers do not have control over all of the circumstances and outcomes of service-learning, reflection can be used to “tease” the lesson out of the experience, even when the experience itself was less than satisfactory. The ethical toolbox and IAJD model work together as part of a reflective framework.

Reflection as a Process

In order to get the most out of both the reflection activities and the service-learning itself, reflection should be included throughout the duration of the service-learning unit—before, during, and after the service-learning experience. Ideally, all participants including students, teachers, and participants should participate. Teachers can employ reflection activities to assess what students understand (or misunderstand) about the issue or problem before beginning the project. They can check expectations and preconceptions. They can measure progress. They can help assess the extent to which the desired learning outcomes are being achieved. Finally, they can serve as indicators of the effects of the project, both to the participants and to the students.

Reflection as Problem Solving

Reflection can also serve an additional purpose: Often students are placed in service settings where they encounter people and environments that are very different from what they typically encounter in their own experiences. Structured reflection can help students process the difficult and challenging feelings they may have when placed in the unfamiliar social context associated with complex service experiences. Used this way, reflection activities allow students to explore, clarify, and develop their values as they progress through the service-learning

**Spotlight: Reflection**

*When Fatima approaches you to ask if she should report the situation with the hungry children in her class to social services, you ask her to consider what might happen if she does, and to write down the possible positive and negative consequences. When she does, she realizes that although the children might qualify for social services, they might also be taken from their parents and end up in even worse circumstances than they are in now. You ask her to identify as many alternatives as possible, and she is able to list several.*

**Reflective Prompts: What, Why, Now What, So What?**

The goal of the reflective process is to encourage and enable students to think in a targeted, critical way about the issues they encounter during their service experience. These things can often be identified by asking these questions:

- **What?** The “what” can include questions like “what is the problem?” “what are your goals?” “what is the best solution?” “what bothered you?” “what went wrong?” and “what courses of action are available to move forward?” These questions can be used before, during, or after a service-learning activity and encourage students to think critically about the project in specific terms.
Why? The next step in the reflective process challenges students to try to understand the reasons for the issues that they identified using the “what” prompt. Why are there people who need to be given food? Why didn’t the members of the group cooperate? Why wasn’t the project as successful as they hoped? Why do projects like this one in the first place? This prompt can also be used before, during, or after the service-learning activity and encourages students to look beyond the immediate circumstance and begin to consider causes and systemic issues.

Now What? The third question is usually useful any time after students have had their initial service-learning experience. This question provides an opportunity for the student to assess what has happened and to use their new knowledge in order to plan what to do next. In addition to its reflective value, it also encourages students to see the experience as a first step rather than an isolated experience.

So What? This question can be used before, during, or after the activities and is often useful as a “before and after” gauge of the students’ engagement and learning. The “so what” prompt asks students to consider the societal implications of the issue or project they are addressing and to see the “big picture” view of why it is important.

It is important to remember that reflection should be incorporated before, during, and after the service-learning activity in order to maximize both engagement and understanding. Ideally, understanding and appreciation of both the problem and their potential to help bring about a solution should increase as they participate and reflect.

The guidelines for reflective practice mesh perfectly with the IAJD Model and provide a supportive linkage for the service-learning practitioner, knowledgeable about reflection, who wants to embed it into an ethical framework.
Application

It is now time to practice using the IAJD Model and the tools in the ethical toolbox with reflective practice. In the following pages, we will present an ethical scenario involving a service-learning project for high school students. Seeing how the model works with students will give you a better understanding of how to use the model and toolbox with your own students.

Students in a high school sociology class held focus groups and conducted surveys with staff and clients at local nonprofit organizations to find out how poverty and hunger impact people in their community. They discovered that after-school programs and supervised community recreation centers offering free or affordable child care is an important issue for poor families. Students then interviewed members of the town council to find out what they were doing to address the issue of poverty and hunger in the community. They discovered that the town council actively opposed the pursuit of affordable after-school programs in the community.

IDENTIFY

Identify the stakeholders in the ethical scenario described above.

✦ Service-learning students
✦ Sociology teacher
✦ Families with low socioeconomic status
✦ Town council members
✦ High school
Identify the issues in the ethical scenario described above.

- The safety and well-being of low socioeconomic status families in the community are at stake.
- The reputations of the students, teacher, and school are at stake.
- The reputations of the members of the town council are at stake.

Identify all possible options to the ethical scenario outlined above.

- **Option 1:** Research the benefits and feasibility of an after-school community program and make a presentation to the members of the town council.
- **Option 2:** Write letters to the editor and create a campaign to expose the actions of the town council to the community at large.

**ANALYZE**

Using the IAJD Model, we will analyze all possible options using each of the tools in the ethical toolbox.

After identifying the possible options, the service-learning project leader instructs the students to examine the possible options in terms of the consequences tool, by identifying all foreseeable consequences.

**Ethical Tool One: Utilitarianism/Consequences**

- **Consequences for Option 1:** Students will gain expertise in research and presentation skills. They will also gain experience advocating for a community issue and have an opportunity to persuade the town council members to change their opinion. The town council
members will gain useful information about their community and after-school problems to help them make an informed decision.

✦ **Consequences for Option 2:** Students will gain experience advocating for a community action. The community will learn about an important community issue and how their town council has dealt with it. The town council members are likely to be displeased with the students who exposed these details to the community without having a chance to prepare for a public response.

**Note:** When identifying consequences, remember to look at the bigger picture and think beyond what will happen to stakeholders involved in the current situation.

*For example:* The town council may take a stronger stance against after-school community centers in response to the negative publicity and place even more barriers against the development of such centers in the future. Conversely, the town council members may decide to act favorably on the after-school community center after learning more about the issue.

Using the utilitarian tool, determine which option generates the greatest good for the greatest number?

✦ The students decide that Option 1 provides the greatest benefit to the community.

The students selected the best option using the consequences tool and next must consider all possible options in terms of the respectful treatment tool.
Ethical Tool Two: Rights-Based/Respectful Treatment

- **Respectful Treatment for Option 1**: The town council members will be treated respectfully when the students present their research on the issue in a private setting. The town council may in turn respond with respectful behavior toward the students and low-income members of the community.

- **Respectful Treatment for Option 2**: The town council members may receive a negative response from community members after the issue is publicized. It may be disrespectful to accuse the town council of wrongdoing without giving them a chance to reflect upon their decision after learning more about the issue.

Using the rights-based tool, which option demonstrates respectful treatment for all involved?

The students decide that Option 1 is the option that best meets the requirements for respectful treatment.

The students analyzed each option in the ethical dilemma in terms of the consequences tool and the respectful treatment tool. Now they must analyze the options in terms of the ethics of the aspiration tool.

Ethical Tool Three: Virtue Ethics/Aspiration

- **Virtuous Behavior for Option 1**: The students believe that they can advocate for after-school community centers with compassion and integrity by presenting their research to the town council. They believe it will be more virtuous to give the town council members an opportunity to make the right choice after learning more about the benefits of after-school community centers.
Virtuous Behavior for Option 2: The students believe that they will not be acting with virtue or integrity if they attack the town council’s decision in the paper without giving them an opportunity to become more informed about the benefits of after-school community centers.

Using the virtue ethics tool, which option promotes good character and helps the students practice social action with integrity?

The students select Option 1 as the best way to practice social action with integrity.

JUSTIFY

Now that the students have analyzed the ethical dilemma in terms of all three tools in the ethical toolbox, they are ready to decide which option can be justified using all three tools in the ethical toolbox.

The students select Option 1 as the best possible option because it meets the requirements using all three ethical tools in the toolbox. This action promotes the greatest good for the greatest number of people, treats the town council with respect, and demonstrates virtue and integrity.

A sound decision can be systematically justified using the three tools in the ethical toolbox.
DECIDE

After justifying the ethical action using the ethical toolbox, the students are ready to take ethical action.

The students decide to do more research and put together a presentation for the town council members. They will make arrangements to be on the agenda at the next town council meeting to present their findings and ask the town council members to reconsider their opinion on after-school community centers.
Your Turn

Now that you have read this example of students using the ethical toolbox, it is time for you to try the model on your own. We have provided you with one ethical scenario with three various outcomes. Select a possible outcome that most closely fits the developmental stage of the students you typically work with and answer the questions under the IAJD Model worksheet. This process will take you step-by-step through the ethical decision-making process and will give you a sense of how you might use the toolbox and the model with your students.

Ethical Dilemma

You have been asked to come up with a service-learning project to meet science curriculum standards on the impact of land-use on watersheds. You and the students have decided to take weekly water samples from a local river, analyze the samples using a microscope, and graph the results. Students discover evidence of sediment from nearby logging and construction as well as pesticides from a new subdivision and golf course. This pollution is a result of the recent growth of the town and has provided jobs and boosted the economy significantly. The students want to protect their river, but they don’t want people to lose jobs or income for their small businesses.

Step-by-Step IAJD Model

IDENTIFY

♦ Who are the stakeholders?
♦ What is at stake for each stakeholder?
♦ What are the possible options that your students might take in response to this ethical dilemma? While completing this section, think about the developmental stage of the students you typically work with and how they might respond.
Option 1: ____________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

Option 2: ____________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

Option 3: ____________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

**ANALYZE**

✦ Analyze the options in terms of the utilitarian/consequence tool.

Option 1: ____________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

Option 2: ____________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

Option 3: ____________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

Select the best option in terms of the utilitarian/consequence tool. Option ______

✦ Analyze the options in terms of the rights-based/respectful treatment tool.

Option 1: ____________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

Option 2: ____________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

Option 3: ____________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
Select the best option in terms of the rights-based/respectful treatment tool.  
Option ______

* Analyze the options in terms of the virtue ethics/aspiration tool.

Option 1: __________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

Option 2: __________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

Option 3: __________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

Select the best option in terms of the virtue ethics/aspiration tool.  
Option ______

JUSTIFY
What option is systematically justified by meeting the criteria for all three tools in the ethical toolbox?
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
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Linking Learning With Life
DECIDE

After using the tools in the ethical toolbox and the IAJD Model, what action might your students take to address the ethical dilemma described above?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
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________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Conclusion

The benefits of service-learning can be seen but often hard to measure in the same ways as other types of learning. So too for ethics and character education, which are often recognized as both vital and extremely difficult to measure. How, then, is it possible to assess the success of the toolbox and IAJD approaches? One way to gauge success is by comparing students’ ability to identify and address ethical issues before and after using them. Can they explain and apply the three tools? Can they identify a range of solutions to a problem? Can they avoid slipping into absolutist and relativist positions? If they do these things better after engaging in the project and reflecting upon it, then you have evidence of success.

Another measure of success in teaching ethics and reflection is in terms of students’ understanding of the relationship between what they have seen and done and the larger issues to which their activity is connected. If, by participating in a canned food drive, the students understand more about the issue of hunger, you have evidence of success. If they start to talk about why, in a country where there is so much waste, there are still people without food, you can feel confident that the service-learning project has made a difference. And while it is true that often the development of ethical decision-making skills is a slow process that takes years—perhaps even a lifetime—to perfect, it is also true that planting a “seed” of ethics and reflection is a necessary first step. By taking that step, you—and your students—have already made a difference.
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The National Dropout Prevention Center, in collaboration with faculty from the Eugene T. Moore School of Education, the Rutland Center (now Institute) for Ethics, and the Pearce Center for Professional Communication sponsored five summer institutes at Clemson University to advance the pedagogy of service-learning, ethics, and reflection among K-12 educators and teacher educators.

During the Institutes, SCISE participants learned about and practiced ethical decision making, critical analysis, and reflective writing. They also discussed methods of integrating ethics into class discussions via “teachable moments” that occur in the context of service-learning. The goal of this monograph is to share the knowledge generated during the SCISE Institutes and to provide a professional development guidebook for teachers who wish to enrich their students’ service-learning experiences using ethics and reflection.
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The Co-Sponsors

The National Dropout Prevention Center/Network’s (NDPC/N) mission is to increase high school graduation rates through research and evidence-based solutions. The NDPC/N hosts national conferences and institutes focusing on the effective strategies of dropout prevention including service-learning. The Center also publishes the Linking Learning With Life series of service-learning guidebooks.

The Robert J. Rutland Institute for Ethics (RIE) works to promote principled behavior and ethical decision making at Clemson University and throughout the surrounding community. Rutland Fellows teach a variety of courses and programs to students, teachers, business leaders and other professionals. The Rutland Institute also is the current institutional home of the International Center for Academic Integrity. For more information, visit www.clemson.edu/Ethics

The International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI) assists Colleges, Universities, and K-12 schools throughout the U.S. and abroad in their efforts to promote and uphold the values that are fundamental to academic success: honesty, respect, responsibility, trust, and integrity. The Center provides assessment and consultation services and facilitates collaborative exchanges between and among representatives from its member institutions and affiliates. For more information, please see www.AcademicIntegrity.org