Embedding career education in the Victorian Curriculum F–10

Ethical Capability, Levels 9 and 10

An existing learning activity linked to a particular learning area or capability in the Victorian Curriculum F–10 can be easily adapted to incorporate career education, enriching students’ career-related learning and skill development.

1. Identify an existing learning activity

**Curriculum area and levels:** Ethical Capability, Levels 9 and 10

**Relevant content description:** Investigate how different factors involved in ethical decision-making can be managed by people and groups ([VCECD023](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCECD023))

**Existing activity:** Analysis of an ethical decision in a real-life or fictional scenario, identifying the influence of internal and external factors.

**Summary of adaptation, change, addition:** Using the employee/employer relationship to explore how social context influences ethical decision-making.

2. Adapt the learning activity to include a career education focus

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| Existing learning activity | Adaptations, changes or extensions that can be made |
| Teacher makes distinction between the internal influences (feelings, reasoning, values, etc.) and the external influences (social context, environment factors, etc.) on a person’s decision-making. | Existing activity runs unchanged. |
| In small groups and with teacher assistance, students choose an example of a real or fictional character who had to make an ethical decision that involved tension between internal and external factors. For example, students could examine a recent real-life example of heroism in the face of danger and what makes something heroic. Alternatively, they could discuss a historical example of somebody struggling with conscience and social context when making an ethical decision, such as the pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s involvement in a plot to assassinate Hitler.  In their groups, students brainstorm how internal and external factors affect their chosen example. | To extend the discussion and apply the understanding of the distinction between internal and external influences, students look for examples of ethical decision-making that highlight the tension between internal and external factors within a work environment, with emphasis on the employee/employer distinction. Examples could include:   * A casual worker making a complaint against their manager, who is the one who determines the weekly work roster. * An employee or contractor who waits to complete a work task until workplace safety concerns are addressed, even if this puts strain on deadlines. * Someone takes on temporary work that does not align with their dreams and goals because they need to support their family. * A university student forgoes shifts at work to finish an assignment, although this lowers her income. |
| Students conduct further research into the case to explore the internal and external influences on the ethical decision-making in their chosen scenario.  Students then write a paragraph detailing the scenario, the decision, the outcome, and the internal and external factors that influenced the decision-making.  In another paragraph, students imagine how the decision might have changed if the internal and/or external factors had been different. For example, students might imagine if Bonhoeffer was more concerned with the purity of his conscience than of responding to the societal injustices that he had witnessed. | As in the existing activity, students conduct further research to gather an informed and detailed understanding of scenario.  Students focus their writing on reimagining the workplace scenarios if there were different internal and/or external factors. For example, students could imagine how the decision-making of the casual worker might be affected if they relied on their income to care for a family member.  Alternatively, students could consider how the decision-making might be influenced if external factors such as worker unions are included in the scenario.  As an extension, they could include how they would respond in the same scenario. |

Considerations when adapting the learning activity

* Students may assist in constructing hypothetical workplace examples if they have relevant work experiences relating to the distinction between employee and employer.
* This activity can be taught alongside other learning areas. For example, in union with Levels 9 and 10 Health and Physical Education, students could examine AFL player Nicky Winmar’s famous stand against racial abuse from the crowd in 1993.
* Teachers can prompt students’ knowledge of unions for the adapted activity, as explored in the Economics and Business curriculum.

Additional resources to help when adapting the learning activity

* For examples about problems at work, visit Youth Central, [Problems at work](https://www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au/jobs-and-careers/your-rights-at-work/problems-at-work)
* Dr Petra Brown discusses Dietrich Bonhoeffer on ABC Radio National’s [*The Philosopher’s Zone*](https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/philosopherszone/the-bonhoeffer-moment/11792864),   
  15 December 2019.

Benefits for students

Know yourself – self-development:

* By examining challenging ethical scenarios within a workplace context, students identify the range of factors that might affect their own decision-making in the future, thus building self-awareness.
* Students understand that internal principles do not always align with external context.

Know your world – career exploration:

* The distinction between internal and external factors in ethical decision-making can help students to explore the different reasons people pursue different career opportunities.
* Imagining broad examples that explore the employee/employer distinction can help students to gain insight into experiences of work. This is further improved if specific workplace contexts are used, especially if Ethical Capability is taught alongside other learning areas.

Manage your future – be proactive:

* Gaining a greater awareness of internal and external influences can help students develop a more nuanced approach to making informed decisions.