Embedding career education in the Victorian Curriculum F–10

Ethical Capability, Levels 5 and 6

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 5 and 6

**Relevant content description:** Explore the significance of ‘means versus ends’ by considering two ways to act when presented with a problem: one that privileges means and one ends ([VCECD012](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCECD012))

**Existing activity:** Analysing the position 'the end justifies the means' and the tension between means and ends in different contexts.

**Summary of adaptation, change, addition:** Exploring the tension between ‘means and ends’ in workplace settings.

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 poses the question on the board, ‘Does the end justify the means?’  Before delving further, teacher ensures class consensus through discussion and definition of the meaning of ‘means’, ‘ends’ and ‘justify’. Once unpacked, teacher again poses the question, ‘Does the end justify the means?’ The class then explores what this could mean. | Discussion on means versus ends runs unaltered. |
| Teacher asks, ‘Is it ever okay to lie?’ and explores student responses through class discussion. | Class discussion runs unaltered. |
| Teacher tells the following story:  ‘A little girl who comes from a poor house has a very sick mother. Her mother cannot afford any medicine to recover. The little girl, who loves her mother very much, devises a plan to steal medicine from the pharmacy without getting caught. Sure enough, the girl manages to steal the medicine without getting caught and takes it home to her mother. When she gets home, her mother asks her how she got the medicine. The girl lies, stating she asked the pharmacist who, out of the kindness of their own heart, gave the girl the medicine. The mother takes the medicine and gets better.’  Teacher asks, ‘Does the end justify the means? Is it okay that the girl stole the medicine from the pharmacist as she knew she would not get caught and her mother’s health would improve? Why/Why not?’ | Students explore a range of ‘means versus ends’ examples that can be encountered in different workplaces. Teacher introduces a range of jobs and encourage students to think about ‘how’ and ‘why’ people in those roles do things that may seem bad to others. Relevant jobs include medical researcher, a coach or a professional athlete, police officer. Students can be introduced to situations where they have to consider the ends versus means regarding a task that person does.  Some examples include, but are not limited to:   * the experimentation on animals for a range of pharmaceutical products * the selection and rigorous training processes of sports stars * removing homeless people from an area during an event.   In each example, teacher asks, ‘What is the outcome a person in that job is after? In terms of ends justifying means, is that person’s goal worth how they do it? And is there another way to achieve the outcome?’ |
| Students are asked to reflect on whether framing ethical scenarios around ‘means versus ends’ is helpful. | Students are asked to reflect on how framing ethical scenarios around ‘means versus ends’ is helpful, if at all, when exploring ethical scenarios from a range of learning area and career-related contexts. |
|  | Students reflect on how being able to identify ethical dilemmas might help them in their life later, with particular reference to their working life. They could be asked to provide additional examples of ethical dilemmas they think might arise. For example, working-life ethical dilemmas may include an employer choosing between purchasing extra Occupational Health and Safety equipment or retaining staff members; or people facing a decision on whether to move away from home to find work that could financially support their family. |

Considerations when adapting the learning activity

* Teachers can use age-appropriate scenarios to bridge the gap between relevant and more abstract career-related examples while developing students’ capacity to reason using the ‘means versus ends’ framework. For example, cheating on a test, lying to a teacher, or solving friendship issues can be relevant when exploring these issues and can easily be linked to a learning area or career setting.
* The discussion of work-related ethical dilemmas could give rise to some sensitive issues being disclosed, or could trigger students with difficult family situations, so teacher should consider the experiences of their students and plan the discussion accordingly. The activity can be modified to better reflect student experiences or sensitivities.
* Teachers could follow-up the existing activity with a discussion around why stealing is illegal, and how the Australian government subsidises expensive medicine.

Benefits for students

Know yourself – self-development:

* Students develop their flexibility and adaptability when needing to change their thinking when confronted with new information or looking at a scenario from a different point of view.

Know your world – career exploration:

* Students can name the skill of considering ‘means versus ends’ and examine how this framework can be related to a range of different careers.
* As they consider how ‘means versus ends’ relates to a range of workplaces, students understand more about the world of work.

Manage your future – be proactive:

* Students analyse information by considering things within the ‘means versus ends’ context. This contributes to the development of their capacity to think critically and creatively, which can benefit them when considering career pathways later in life.