Victorian Curriculum F-10: Ethical Capability

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| **Unit title:****Investigating why ethical principles may differ between people and groups** | **Term /date:** | **Duration:** (number of sessions / hours / weeks)**2 sessions: 2x 50 minutes****Sessions may be taught individually, sequentially or non-sequentially.**  |

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| **Big ideas:** (What is the main theme/s? What do you want the students to specifically cover? What misconceptions do you want to challenge?) | **Essential questions:** (What will inspire /extend / support inquiry / challenge thinking?) |
| When considering what to do, sometimes people and groups use different ethical principles to each other to guide their actions, even when it is the same action. There are a range of reasons why this might be so. Sometimes people share the same desired outcome but use different ethical principles to guide them, in reaching that outcome.Extension:Sometimes people sharing the same guiding ethical principles select different actions | Why do people sometimes use different ethical principles to guide their actions? Can these reasons explain the following, or are there other factors involved:Why does this sometimes occur even when everybody wants the same outcome?Why people might take the same action but base the action on different principles?Why people might use the same guiding ethical principles but select different actions? |

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| **Learning – This sample program targets content description VCECU015 at Levels 7 and 8. This is located on a developmental continuum, as shown below.** |
| **Ethical Capability strand and levels**  | **Dimension / Content descriptions** | **Achievement standards** |
| Understanding concepts (5 and 6) | Discuss how ethical principles can be used as the basis for action, considering the influence of cultural norms, religion, world views and philosophical thought on these principles  | Identify the basis of a range of ethical principles |
| Understanding concepts (7 and 8) | **Target content description:** Investigate why ethical principles may differ between people and groups, considering the influence of cultural norms, world views and philosophical thought. | **Analyse the differences in principles between people and groups.** |
| Understanding concepts (9 and 10) | Explore a range of ethical problems and examine the extent to which different positions are related to commonly held ethical concepts and principles, considering the influence of cultural norms, religion, world views and philosophical thought. | Analyse commonality and differences between different positions. |

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| **Assessment Evidence / Activities**  |
| **Pre-assessment:** | **Ongoing formative assessment/s:** | **Summative assessment/s:** |
| **Responses in lesson’s ‘Introduction’ phase:**Assumed prior learning is drawn on to help develop the reasons why ethical principles may differ between people and groups. The introductory activity can be used to confirm that students are able to identify an ethical principle and explain how they can be used to guide action.  | **Teacher observation during Shared and Independent Learning phases.** | **Of students’ work completed in the Independent phase:****Levels 5-6 achievement:**The student can identify reasons that may lead to the choice of particular ethical principles**Levels 7-8 achievement:**The student can analyse the differences in principles between people and groups in an example by explaining the ethical principles involved and why there are differences, supported by evidence. **Levels 9-10 achievement:** The student can explain why ethical principles may be shared by an individual and group but lead to different actions; or why the action may be the same but informed by different principles |

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| **Learning Sequence Overview** |
| **Session** | **Major focus / intention** |
| 12 | Examples are used to develop a list of reasons for why ethical principles may differ between individuals and groups.In small groups, students analyse an example and the list of reasons is refinedStudents reflect on whether it is common to have differences in principles between individuals and groups and what kind of situations might lead to similarities and differences. Students independently apply their learning to an example given by the teacher or researched themselves. |

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| **Resources** |
| **For use in the session:**Prior to the session, the teacher will research specific examples where differences between ethical principles guiding individuals and groups towards a particular desired outcome might be involved. This could involve the same desired outcome or different desired outcomes in response to an ethical issue. Look for sources where some evidence of reasons for choosing particular actions are given or can be reasonably inferred. Examples should be found providing opportunities for the Levels 9-10 achievement above. Researching one or more of these areas may lead to specific examples that can be used in class:* *Cases involving rules*:for example wanting to wear something different to what the rules allow, for example the hijab as a ballerina or school uniform issues
* *Whistle-blower cases*: for example an individual against discrimination by a wider group (who felt they were doing the right thing but the individual disagrees)
* *Choices against majority views*: for example during war; choosing to be vegetarian; or refusing to buy a particular product against the views of a wider social group
* *Equality debates*: for example, on marriage.
* *Medical debates*: for example, on vaccination or euthanasia.

**Student Reflection Tool** – to use in Independent Phase as hard or electronic copy. **Further background resources:**On Sartre’s moral dilemma of the pupil who must decide whether to go to war or look after his mother:[**https://philosophynow.org/issues/15/A\_students\_guide\_to\_Jean-Paul\_Sartres\_Existentialism\_and\_Humanism**](https://philosophynow.org/issues/15/A_students_guide_to_Jean-Paul_Sartres_Existentialism_and_Humanism)<https://www.google.com.au/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=wearing%20hijab%20in%20australia>VCAA<http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/ethical-capability/introduction/scope-and-sequence> |

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| **Reflections** |
| **Date** | **Comments** | **Teacher** |
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| **‘Differences in ethical principles between people and groups’(Session One and Two – Know, Understand, Apply) 2x 50 minutes** |
| **Learning intention**  | **For students:** *“We will be learning about why ethical principles governing action may differ between people and groups.”* |
| **Focus/ Inquiry question(s)** | * Why might individuals and groups differ in the ethical principles that guide their actions?
* Why does this sometimes occur even when everybody desires the same outcome?

Extension: Why people might use the same guiding ethical principles but select different actions?  |
| **Teaching Points** | Sometimes, actions of people in response to an ethical issue may be guided by differing principles. People may want the same outcome, or resolution, of an ethical issue or different outcomes.Different ethical principles may be guiding different people who share the same desired outcome or different desired outcomes. These different principles could guide them to the same action or different actions. Reasons for differences in principles may include:1. a genuine moral dilemma not showing an obvious way forward
2. different context or experience base to draw on leading to different understanding of what the consequences of particular actions might be
3. different interests, responsibilities or goals or different levels of power and influence
4. different cultural, religious or philosophical backgrounds that have informed ethical principles and that were typically drawn on to make decisions in the past
5. different understanding of what certain ethical principles mean or which are important, or of how to interpret certain laws or rights
6. different knowledge of the range of ethical principles available to help guide action
7. different ways of making decisions, for example, the importance of feelings, conscience and reasoning

**An illustrative example*** The philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre wrote a lecture entitled ‘Existentialism is Humanism’ and later a book based on this lecture ‘Existentialism and Humanism’. In the lecture he tells the story of a pupil of his who faced the dilemma of whether to look after his sick mother or fight for France. See resources section below for link to the lecture and a discussion of it. For the purposes of these sessions it is not necessary to teach students about existentialism and the concepts that Sartre enunciated. The example of the pupil is used to highlight merely that often there are several choices when faced with a decision and that different influences can be involved.
* This example provides the opportunity to draw out some of the reasons outlined above. Sartre makes claims about what might help or not help, for example Christian doctrines. Note that Sartre is not disagreeing with the doctrines themselves but merely their usefulness in trying to illuminate a way out of this practical dilemma. For example, the doctrine of being charitable, while commendable, is difficult to apply to find a way out of the dilemma as it could result in either looking after the sick mother or fighting for France and so we are back where we started. In discussion with students they should of course be free to agree or disagree with Sartre’s point of view.
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| **Success criteria (for students)** | * I can explain a range of reasons for possible differences in ethical principles between individuals and groups
* I can explain why people might differ in their ethical principles and yet undertake the same action
* I can explain why people might share ethical principles and undertake different actions
* I can use examples to support my explanations
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|  | **Activities** (considering different levels) | **Resources** (considering different levels) |
| **Assumed Prior Learning** | **From Ethical Capability:*** Discuss how ethical principles can be used as the basis for action, considering the influence of cultural norms, religion, world views and philosophical thought on these principles (VCECU010)
* Discuss the role of context and experience in ethical decision-making and actions (VCECD018)
* Discuss the role and significance of conscience and reasoning in ethical decision-making (VCECD013)
 | VCAA<http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/ethical-capability/introduction/rationale-and-aims> |
| **Introduction****SESSION 1**  | Lead class discussion:Do you know of a time when someone had difficulty choosing between helping a particular group and family responsibilities? For example volunteering somewhere, which then takes them away from doing chores at home?Allow students to have a brief discussion with a partner about any examples. What decision was made? Why? What were the ethical principles involved? Ask for any examples to be offered to the rest of the class.  |  |
| **Explicit teaching phase** **SESSION 1** | Lead class discussion:Tell the story from Sartre of the pupil who had to decide whether to look after his sick mother, or go to fight for France. Develop a list of reasons why ethical principles between individuals and groups may differ. Use questions to draw out a range of reasons. For example:1. Why is this a moral dilemma? Why is it hard to decide what to do?
2. Which ethical principle/s might the pupil consider in trying to decide what to do?
3. Imagine different pupils in the same situation. Which ethical principle/s might they use to guide them if they had:
* a Christian background?
* a particular cultural background (for example that emphasises community over the individual)?
* had been recently learning about weighing harms against benefits to make a decision when faced with an ethical issue?
1. Are these principles similar or different?
2. Why?
3. Are there cases where different pupils might decide the same thing - to stay at home or fight for France, but for different reasons? What are these reasons? Could the guiding principles differ too?
4. (extension) There may be cases where different pupils might decide differently (one to stay at home, the other to fight) but be guided in their decision by the same ethical principle. How is this possible?

Lead class discussion to note the following:Ethical issues do not always involve dilemmas. People working towards a clear shared outcome may use similar or different ethical principles to guide them. Students could be given a scenario showing a clear or shared outcome (such as equality for LGBTI people) between an individual and a group but different actions towards this outcome, for example:*An individual and a group may share the same desired outcome of equality for LGBTI people. The individual decides to support the LGBTI movement by attending a peaceful protest march because they identify with LGBTI. On the other hand, the company where the individual works supports the LGBTI movement by appointing appropriately qualified staff in Human Resources to provide advice to the company on LGBTI issues.* Students could discuss whether the ethical principles guiding the individual towards this shared desired outcome are the same or different.Sometimes there are opposing views on what outcomes there should be. People on either side may be guided by the same ethical principles or different ones in advocating for various actions or decisions. | Discussion of this dilemma can be found at <https://philosophynow.org/issues/15/A_students_guide_to_Jean-Paul_Sartres_Existentialism_and_Humanism> |
| **Shared practice phase** **SESSION 1** | The class now has a list of reasons on why ethical principles may differ between individuals and groups. Activity:1. Divide students into small groups and assign roles to members including a note taker to record ideas on the ***Student Reflection Tool***
2. Handout either one example for the whole class or several different examples across groups.
3. Small groups consider the following questions:
4. What is the issue/ problem/dilemma?
5. Who are the individuals and group involved?
6. What outcome/s did they want to achieve?
7. What were the actions undertaken by each?
8. What were the ethical principles that may have guided each of them?
9. Which of the reasons for differing principles that you know of are most relevant to this example?
10. What is your evidence to support your thinking?
11. Are there any other reasons that you have discovered?
 | Examples researched by the teacher prior to the lesson, for example:* *Cases involving rules*:for example wanting to wear something different to what the rules allow, for example the hijab as a ballerina or school uniform issues
* *Whistle-blower cases*: for example an individual against discrimination by a wider group (who felt they were doing the right thing but the individual disagrees)
* *Choices against majority views*: for example during war; choosing to be vegetarian; or refusing to buy a particular product against the views of a wider social group
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* *Medical debates*: for example, on vaccination or euthanasia.

 ***Student Reflection Tool*** |
| **Reflection/ evaluation** **SESSION 1** | Groups report back and with the class: Review the list of reasons and discuss whether there are any other factors that could be added. Refine the list to remove anything that may be duplicating other reasons on the list and to combine together similar reasons. Ask students for further examples where ethical principles may differ between people.Reflect on whether it is common to find differences in ethical principles between people and groups. What kind of situations might lead to differences?If extension activities have been undertaken, reflect on why ethical principles might be shared by different people but lead to the same action.  |  |
| **Independent practice phase** **SESSION 2** | Independently, students analyse another example. This is provided by the teacher or researched by the student. They can begin by answering the same questions used in the shared group phase.These answers are then developed into an extended response, using the T.E.E.L. paragraph structure. T= topic sentence, E = evidence, E= explanation, L= link to the relevant question/ topic.If undertaking research, advise students to find examples with some evidence of people holding different ethical principles and reasons for this. They can be extended to submit a further example exploring people that hold similar principles, but leading to different actions.Students may finish their example/s for homework, and then submit for summative assessment. |   |
| **Assessment and Feedback** | Students self-assess using Success CriteriaTeacher provides feedback during class discussion (Session 1) and to individuals on their written work (Session 2) |  |