



# Ethical Judgment

## Activity Booklet 2

*Nurturing Character in the Middle School Classroom*

Sensitivity	Judgment
Motivation	Action



by

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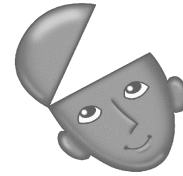
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# Ethical Judgment

## ACTIVITY BOOKLET 2



### *Contents*

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Page Number</i>
Organization of Booklet	4
Ethical Judgment Overview	6
EJ-1: Understanding Ethical Problems	13
EJ-2: Using Codes and Identifying Judgment Criteria	28
EJ-3: Developing General Reasoning Skills	38
EJ-4: Developing Ethical Reasoning Skills	55
EJ-5: Reflecting on the Process And Outcome	69
EJ-6: Planning to Implement Decisions	77
EJ-7: Developing Optimism	88
Ethical Judgment Appendix	100
Includes Links of Judgment skills to Graduation Standards and Search Assets, Lesson Planning Worksheets, Special Activities and Resources for Ethical Judgment	



# Organization of Ethical Judgment Booklet

## Overview Pages

Ethical Action skills and subskills

### Skill Sections (7 skill sections in all--the "*meat*" of the booklet)

Skill Overview (see sample page below)

Subskills (see samples pages on p. 3)

Activities

Assessment hints

Climate suggestions

### Appendix

Guide for Lesson Planning

'Linking to the Community' Worksheet

Rubric Examples

Special Activities

Resources

Linking EA Skills to Graduation Standards

Linking EA Skills to Search Institute Assets

References

## Skill Overview Page

### Skill Title

Minnesota Comprehensive  
Goals for Skill

WHAT the skill is

WHY the skill  
is important

SUBSKILLS list

### Developing Perseverance Ethical Action 6

*This skill addresses the Minnesota Comprehensive Goals:  
Productive Group Participant, Self-directed Learner, Responsible Citizen*

#### WHAT

Perseverance enables individuals to complete actions that are important to them and others. Without it, many ethical actions would fail at the sight of the first obstacle or difficulty.

#### WHY

Perseverance is important for the completion of an ethical action. Children can be successfully instructed to 'talk to themselves' about not doing something, and instructed on how to distract themselves from unwanted behavior. A form of self-talk to complete a task can be a useful technique to help one find the ego strength to complete an ethical action—at any age.

#### HELP STUDENTS FIRST LEARN

Planning skills, particularly strategic thinking and goal setting skills (EJ6)

#### SUBSKILLS OVERVIEW

Self-control  
Delayed gratification  
Impulse Control  
Overcoming obstacles and discouragement  
Pushing oneself

EA-6 Developing Perseverance: Overview

Skill Name: Subskill Name  
Side Header



# Subskill Activities Page

**Subskill NAME**

**Expert Example**

**Subskill Activities  
by Level of Expertise**  
(4 levels total,  
usually spans 2-4 pages  
per subskill)

## Subskill 3: PUSHING ONESELF



*Christopher Reeves* (who played Superman in the movies) had a ski accident that left him a quadriplegic. He could have given up in life and stayed home quietly. But he became a spokesman for those with spinal injuries, traveling to speak about the importance of research in spinal injuries.

### Ideas for Developing Skills

**Level 1: Immersion in Examples and Opportunities**  
*Attend to the big picture, Learn to recognize basic patterns*

**Study self-efficacy.** Discuss how, for a particular field, small successes give a person confidence to keep trying and try harder things. Find examples in literature, television and movies, or in a particular subject area. ★

**Level 2: Attention to Facts and Skills**  
*Focus on detail and prototypical examples, Build knowledge*

**Self-talk.** Find examples of and discuss how to 'cheerlead' for yourself in different situations. What behaviors help you do your best and reach excellence? ★  
(1) Students discuss self-talk and behaviors that help one persevere. (2) Students interview older students or adults about general behaviors. (3) Students interview adults in roles they admire or strive for in a particular field.

**Level 3: Practice Procedures**  
*Set goals, Plan steps of problem solving, Practice skills*

**Examples of pushing oneself in helping others.** Students interview elders about their personal experiences of (1) how they persevered in trying to help others; (2) how they persevered in working towards a goal that helped humanity.

**Level 4: Integrate Knowledge and Procedures**  
*Execute Plans, Solve Problems*

**Self-help.** Have students practice ways to coach oneself to reach excellence in skills like these for a particular subject area: Persistence in mental and physical learning tasks without

### Assessment Hints

**Pushing Oneself**  
Use multiple-choice, true-false, short answer, or essay tests to assess student's knowledge of strategies to push oneself.

Have students write reports, based on observations or interviews, of what they learned about pushing oneself.

EA-6 Developing Perseverance: Pushing Oneself

**Skill Name:**  
**Subskill Name**  
Side Header

**Hints for  
Assessment**

## Create a Climate to Develop Perseverance

Regularly discuss the importance of finishing a task, as a group or individual.

Regularly point out what would happen if people did not persevere until a job was done (e.g., the highway, a bridge, your house, your car) and how it would affect people around them.

Discuss the importance of persevering in meeting your responsibilities to others.

Sample Student Self Monitoring Developing Perseverance	
<input type="radio"/>	<b>Self-control</b>
	I wait to reward myself until I've finished my work.
	I don't wait until the last minute to do my work.
	I lose control when I am angry. (NOT)
<input type="radio"/>	I control my feelings of anger.
	I resist my impulses to disobey rules.

### What you need to know for success in school

1. That attitudes affect behavior
2. That what you believe/think about affects your behavior
3. That you have some control over your attitudes
4. That learning anything requires commitment (decision to put your energies into a task)

EA-6 Developing Perseverance: Climate

## Skill Climate Page

**Suggestions for  
Creating a Climate  
to Develop Skill**

**Sample Self-Monitoring  
Questions for Student**

**Selections to Post in the Classroom  
for Developing Skill**



# Ethical Processes & Skills

## with Ethical Judgment Subskills

### Activity Booklet 1: ETHICAL SENSITIVITY

ES-1 Reading and Expressing Emotion

ES-2 Caring by Connecting to Others

ES-3 Working with Group and Individual Differences

ES-4 Taking the Perspectives of Others

ES-5 Controlling Social Bias

ES-6 Generating Optional Actions

ES-7 Identifying the Consequences of Actions and Options



### Activity Booklet 3: ETHICAL MOTIVATION

EM-1 Respecting Others

EM-2 Developing Conscience

EM-3 Acting Responsibly

EM-4 Helping Others

EM-5 Making Peace and Cooperating

EM-6 Valuing Social Structures

EM-7 Developing Ethical Identity And Integrity



### Activity Booklet 4: ETHICAL ACTION

EA-1 Communicating Well

EA-2 Resolving Conflicts and Problems

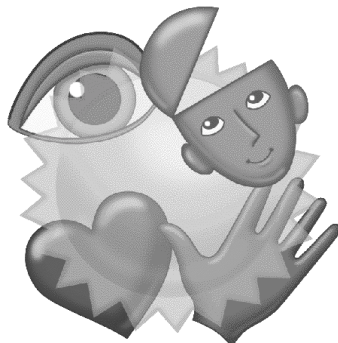
EA-3 Identifying Needs and Acting Assertively

EA-4 Taking Initiative as a Leader

EA-5 Developing Courage

EA-6 Developing Perseverance

EA-7 Working Hard



### Activity Booklet 2: ETHICAL JUDGMENT

#### EJ-1 Understanding Ethical Problems

Gathering information

Categorizing problem types

Analyzing ethical problems



#### EJ-2 Using Codes and Identifying Judgment Criteria

Characterizing codes

Discerning code application

Judging code validity

#### EJ-3 Developing General Reasoning Skills

Reasoning objectively

Using sound reasoning

Avoiding reasoning pitfalls

#### EJ-4 Developing Ethical Reasoning Skills

Judging perspectives

Reasoning about standards and ideals

Reasoning about outcomes

#### EJ-5 Reflecting on the Process And Outcome

Monitoring one's reasoning

Reasoning about means and ends

#### EJ-6 Planning to Implement Decisions

Thinking strategically

Implementing successfully

Determining resource use

#### EJ-7 Developing Optimism

Applying positive thinking skills

Modifying affect in thinking

Explaining causes

# Ethical Judgment

Ethical judgment involves reasoning about the possible actions in the situation and judging which action is most ethical. This component is influenced by Ethical Sensitivity, Motivation, and Character.

## Outline of Skills

### EJ-1: UNDERSTANDING ETHICAL PROBLEMS

To fully understand a problem, regardless of the subject area or domain, a person must accurately define the problem and understand its structure. In defining the problem, the problem solver determines what information is critical and what is unimportant in deriving a solution. To understand a problem's structure, the problem solver organizes critical information to generate options and strategies. All this is done in the context of knowing why s/he is creating a solution in the first place.

### EJ-2: USING CODES AND IDENTIFYING JUDGMENT CRITERIA

Codes are what we know and use to act respectfully and responsibly in different domains or contexts. The different sources of codes include explicit and implicit rules and laws and ethical standards, which may vary from one context to the next. Contexts may be more local, such as school, family, and work, or broader, such as national and international.

### EJ-3: DEVELOPING GENERAL REASONING SKILLS

Reasoning is a type of thinking in which a person draws a conclusion that is based on a particular set of information (Overton, 1990). In order to be a reasonable conclusion, it cannot be any random conclusion. Instead, the conclusion must be consistent with the information at hand. If it isn't consistent and coherent, the reasoning is flawed. Flawed reasoning is the source of many prejudices and harmful actions.

### EJ-4: DEVELOPING ETHICAL REASONING SKILLS

Students make judgments and decisions every day about how to get along with others. Students use ethical reasoning to make each and every one of these decisions. In using ethical reasoning, they think about how his/her decision may affect others or self, what codes/rules/laws s/he should be following, or what is the most fair/just/kind/dutiful decision.

### EJ-5: REFLECTING ON THE PROCESS AND OUTCOME

An important metacognitive skill, reflection consists of examining one's thinking processes and outcomes. For students to consistently make good, ethical decisions, they must reflect on (1) their *judgment process* and (2) their *resulting decision*.

### EJ-6: PLANNING TO IMPLEMENT DECISIONS

Planning is the crucial step between making a judgment and implementing it. In planning to carry out an ethical decision, the student needs to think about what actions are required, possible obstacles, alternative actions, and resources that may be needed.

### EJ-7: DEVELOPING OPTIMISM

Optimism is the sense of having a positive outlook. This positive outlook pervades an entire belief structure: having positive attributions toward others, having hope for a satisfying future, finding the benefit in most experiences, having positive perseverance under adverse conditions. At advanced levels optimism can be a motivating force for others.



# Ethical Judgment

## WHAT

Ethical judgment is reasoning about the possible actions in the situation and judging which action is most ethical. A person making an ethical judgment uses reason to decide what the best solution or decision is to a problem. S/he contemplates such questions as “What is the best action to take?” and “Why is this particular action the best to take in this situation?”

## WHY

Ethical judgment is a critical piece in the decision-making process. To make a good, sound decision or effectively solve a problem, a person must have some basic cognitive skills that enable them to thoroughly and systematically complete the decision making process. These basic cognitive skills include understanding what the ethical problem is, knowing what codes can be applied to the situation, using reasoning to determine what the best decision is, reflecting on the situation to make sure that the best decision has been made, and planning how to implement the decision.

## ROLE OF TEACHER/ADULT

To help students develop ethical judgment skills, adults can explain the reasons behind their ethical decisions. They can also explain to students what the ethical problem is, reflect aloud on their decision, and explain their plans as to how the decision should be implemented. Adults can provide opportunities for students to make their own decisions and afterwards discuss the decision and how it was made.

## HELP STUDENTS FIRST LEARN



1. To have concern and care for others
  - Use activities in caring by connecting to others (ES-2).
2. To control prejudice
  - Use activities for controlling social bias (ES-5).
3. To think of multiple options and interpretations in a situation
  - Identify as many alternatives as possible through a type of “personal brainstorming”
  - Use creative thinking to generate original and unusual options
  - Don’t evaluate at the beginning (think of choices and write them down without worrying about what is wrong with them)
  - Modify “flawed” alternatives to create “new” options
  - Avoid dichotomies (there are often more than 2 options to every given dilemma; view “either-or” situations through a broader lens)
4. To predict and understand the possible consequences in a situation
  - Use activities for identifying the consequences of actions and options (ES-7).





## TACKLING EXCUSES AND HANGUPS

*Sometimes students will resist learning or taking action, giving excuses like the following. We offer suggestions about how to counteract these attitudes.*

**'Why should I bother about them?'** (sense of superiority)

Discuss this as a general human bias that one must consciously control.

**'Yup, I was right about those homeless people. They're just lazy.'**

Discuss the human tendency to look only for confirming evidence of personal bias. Work on perspective-taking.

**'I couldn't help it. I was so mad.'**

Discuss or demonstrate the benefits of giving emotions a "cooling down period" and being objective.

**'It's not my problem.'**

Discuss human relatedness (ES-3) and ethical responsibility (EM-4).

**'That looks/tastes/smells weird!'**

Work on reducing fear of the unknown and the different. Discuss the realistic risks and benefits of learning about something new.

**'It's just a TV show, I know it's not real.'**

Discuss the harm of desensitization to violence and objectification of people.

**'The consequences are too far in the future to concern me.'** (This is especially pertinent to young people's attitudes toward drugs, alcohol.) Bring in guest speakers who had these thoughts/attitudes and then experienced the "far off" consequences. Encourage students to discuss issues with the speaker.

**'The possible consequences will never happen to me.'** (e.g., getting pregnant, being arrested for vandalism, other crimes) Bring in guest speakers who had these thoughts/attitudes and then experienced the "unrealistic" consequences. Encourage students to discuss issues with the speaker.

**'The possible consequences will never happen to him/her/them.'**

Bring in guest speakers who had these thoughts/attitudes and then witnessed the "improbable" consequences occurring to another (e.g., killing a friend or stranger by driving drunk). Encourage students to discuss issues with the speaker and ask many questions.

**'I have no choice - my friends are making me do this.'**

Have students practice assertiveness skills (from an EA-3, Subskill 2 activity): (1) Describe the situation that is upsetting, without blaming or getting emotional. (2) Tell other person your feelings. (3) Tell other person what you want him/her to change. (4) Tell other person how the change would make you feel.

**'It's not my fault - person X is who you should blame!'**

Counter with techniques to foster feelings of responsibility/accountability for one's own actions: (1) Discipline with immediate consequences and a given reason, (2) Help parents with discipline plans that include giving reasons to student when disciplined, (3) Discuss related dilemmas with slight variations.

**'I can't change this situation so I won't try.'**

Counter with inspirational examples of how others make a difference (e.g., Rosa Parks, or a local community member who has made a difference). Discuss how student is more similar than different from this person. Emphasize how the student can make a difference.



## TACKLING EXCUSES AND HANGUPS (continued)

**'This situation is none of my concern.'** (e.g., witnessing a fight or a crime)

Counter with citizenship activities, discussing the importance of concern for others in the community and outside of the community. Discuss the purpose of citizenship and its related responsibilities. Study exemplars of good citizenship.

**'There's no time to think of other alternatives!'**

Discuss (1) human tendencies to lose control (and do harm) when emotions are high, and (2) the importance of carefully and systematically thinking through a dilemma or problem and decision so others and self will not be harmed in the immediate or distant future.

**'Why should their well-being be my concern?'** (lack of positive regard for life)

Encourage a more positive regard for life and discuss in class people who have a healthy regard for life.

**'It's not my responsibility to save the world!'** (not seeing the value of human existence)

Counter with a discussion of the interconnectedness of us all and our ethical obligations to others.

**'Why should I help them?... nobody's ever done anything for me!'** (pessimistic attitude

resulting from negative life experience) Discuss the importance of optimism, and of overcoming obstacles.

**'It's their own fault that they're in this mess... not mine.'** (lack of empathic understand-

ing of others) Foster a discussion of those who are empathic and how to help another in distress.

**'I've got other things planned... I don't have time to help!'** (having immediate needs that

are in opposition to caring for others) Discuss the importance of weighing others needs against our own, developing courtesy, meeting obligations and showing generosity.

**'Being a citizen of the U.S.A. means freedom to do what I want.'**

Counter with examination and discussion of various forms of citizenship. Discuss the purpose of citizenship and its related responsibilities.

**'This is stuff that adults do.'**

Discuss examples of the positive and meaningful impact of young people on the world (e.g., dot-com companies, altruistic group leadership, etc.).

**'This is the stuff that people in x-group do.'**

Give counter examples to sex-typing, group-typing.

**'Other people will take care of it.'**

Discuss this as a general human bias.

**'I don't want to look like a fool in front of my classmates.'**

Discuss counterexamples of young people being assertive, taking action for others and standing out.

**'I'm afraid that my classmates might get back at me.'** (This may come up especially if the

peers are involved in unethical or illegal activities) Discuss choices of peers, role models and the consequences.

**'I don't like people in that group.'**

Discuss the changing nature of group membership and feeling 'outside.'

**'I can't do it.'**

Discuss this as an obstacle to overcome.



# Ethical Judgment

## How Ethical Judgment Skills Fit with Virtues

VIRTUE SUBSKILL	EJ-1	EJ-2	EJ-3	EJ-4	EJ-5	EJ-6	EJ-7
Altruism		*		*	*		
Citizenship	*	*		*	*	*	
Civility		*		*	*		
Commitment		*		*	*	*	*
Compassion	*	*		*	*	*	
Cooperation				*	*	*	
Courage							
Courtesy		*		*	*		
Duty		*		*	*	*	
Faith		*		*	*		*
Fairness	*	*		*	*	*	
Forgiveness		*			*		
Friendship		*		*			
Forbearance		*		*	*		*
Foresight		*	*	*		*	
Generosity		*		*	*		
Graciousness		*					*
Hard work			*	*		*	
Helpfulness		*		*	*		
Honor		*		*	*	*	
Honesty		*		*	*	*	
Hopefulness							*
Includes others		*		*	*	*	
Justice	*	*		*	*	*	
Kindness		*		*	*		
Lawfulness	*	*		*	*	*	
Loyalty		*		*	*	*	
Obedience		*		*	*		
Obligation	*	*		*	*	*	
Patience			*				*
Patriotism		*		*	*	*	
Persistence			*				
Politeness		*					
Respect		*		*	*	*	*
Reverence		*		*	*	*	*
Personal Responsibility	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Social Responsibility	*	*		*	*	*	
Self-control							*
Self-sacrifice				*	*		
Tolerance		*		*	*		*
Trustworthiness							*
Unselfishness		*		*	*	*	



## Selections to Post in the Classroom for Ethical Judgment

### DECISION-MAKING

- Decisions should be judged on the basis of the processes used in making them (Wheeler & Janis, 1980).
- Sound decisions are those that are made with full consideration of all relevant aspects of the problem (Wheeler & Janis, 1980).
- The pattern of effective decision making occurs only when decision-makers believe:
  1. the risks are serious
  2. they can find a solution
  3. there is enough time to make a good decision

### TIPS FOR DECISION-MAKING

(applied to the decision-making model from the Minnesota Graduation Standards Areas of Learning)

#### **Identify problem and decision to be made**

- Identify the core issues from an impartial perspective
- Identify one's personal goals and the goals and interests of others
- Raise multiple perspectives of the dilemma

#### **Identify criteria**

- Consider all consequences (both positive and negative) of all alternatives, especially how alternative may affect others (including individuals in both the in- and out-group)

#### **Evaluating options**

- Ask *WHY* and *HOW* about each alternative
- Compare alternatives by keeping track of them on a "personal balance sheet" that lists the alternatives along with pros/cons/social considerations/impact to others/feasibility/etc.

#### **Making a decision**

- Be deliberate and systematic in reasoning
- Distinguish good and poor arguments/reasoning
- Set aside time for contemplation

At any point in the decision-making process, ***ask other people for input and advice***



# Understanding Ethical Problems

(Analyze the Situation)

*This skill addresses the Minnesota Comprehensive Goal of of Purposeful Thinker, Responsible Citizen, Self-directed Learner.*

## Ethical Judgment 1

### WHAT

To fully understand a problem, regardless of the subject area, a person must correctly define the problem and understand its structure. In defining the problem, the problem solver determines what information is important and what is irrelevant. To understand a problem's structure, the problem solver organizes the important information to generate options and strategies.

### WHY

Understanding problems is one of the first steps of any problem-solving and decision-making process (Bransford & Stein, 1984; Marzano, 1988; Minnesota Graduation Standards Areas of Learning, 1999). The ability to understand a problem is important because it

- determines the types of solutions considered and determined (Sternberg, 1981)
- is necessary for effective decision-making (Wheeler & Janis, 1980)
- facilitates a student's generalization to new problems with different content (Ellis & Siegler, 1994).

Unfortunately, understanding ethical problems is one of the steps in problem-solving and decision-making that students tend to ignore (Bransford, Sherwood, Rieser, & Vye, 1986); therefore, it needs to be emphasized.

### HELP STUDENTS FIRST LEARN



To take the perspectives of others (see ES-4 for assessment ideas).



## SUBSKILLS OVERVIEW

### Subskill 1: Gathering information

- Judging the credibility of sources
- Distinguishing fact from opinion
- Getting enough of the *right* information

### Subskill 2: Categorizing problem types

- Dilemmas (one value against another)
- Ethical failure (lack of ethical sensitivity, judgment, motivation, implementation)
- Outward form vs. fundamental value (the same fundamental value expressed in different ways vs. clash of fundamentally different values)

### Subskill 3: Analyzing ethical problems

- Who, what, where, when, how, why

*Note: Developmental differences exist in determining “what” the problem is. Identifying the main idea or conflict in the problem is dependent upon students’ abstract thinking and students’ past experiences. As students develop more complex cognitive skills and as students acquire more diverse, positive experiences, their definition of what the problem is will be more elaborate and their understanding of the problem will be deeper.*

## Subskill 1: GATHERING INFORMATION

**Geraldo Rivera** is known for his excellent investigative journalism skills (he won an award in 1973 for his exposé of a state home for the mentally retarded) and for his acute understanding of legal and social issues that he discusses on his legal-oriented news show. As an investigative journalist and legal analyst, Geraldo has become an expert in judging the credibility of sources and getting enough of the *right* information.

Creative and Expert  
Implementer  
Real-life Example

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 1: Immersion in Examples and Opportunities

*Attend to the big picture, Learn to recognize basic patterns*

**Thinking about social problems.** Discuss with students the importance of gathering information about the problem/issue in order to understand what the problem is. Present a problem to the class (e.g., homelessness, animal rights, etc.) and brainstorm (1) what additional information they would want to gather about the problem, and (2) where one could get that information (e.g., newspapers, internet, homeless shelters).

**Thinking about a problem in the community.** Use a problem that exists in your own community (e.g., vandalism, social isolation among the elderly). Briefly present the problem to students (or have them identify and present the problem). Have them (1) discuss what additional information they would like to gather about this problem in order to better understand it and (2) brainstorm where they might be able to obtain the information.




#### Level 2: Attention to Facts and Skills

*Focus on detail and prototypical examples, Build knowledge*

**Distinguish facts from feelings/opinions.** Present students with a lengthy description of a dilemma and have them list the facts of the situation and the feelings and opinions of people involved in the dilemma. You may also use periodicals, stories, novels, television, film.

**Newspaper fact or opinion?** Have students bring in newspaper articles that interest them (you might specify which sections of the paper from which to draw and allow them to bring more than one). Discuss the viewpoints presented: which are facts (e.g., one car hit another car) and which are opinions (let's raise taxes to pay for new school buildings). On what are the opinions based (e.g., good reasoning, emotion, self-interest, civic mindedness)?

Starred  activities within each subskill go together!



## Subskill 1: GATHERING INFORMATION

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 2 (continued)


**Credibility of sources.** Using one of the larger problems from the Level 1 activity (e.g., homelessness, animal rights). Present example information from the various sources that students identified (e.g., newspapers, internet). Discuss the credibility of the sources. Which sources are appropriate for what kind of information? Would some sources be more likely to have information that is based more on their opinions rather than on the facts of the problem?

**Determining the credibility of information in ads.** Discuss with students how information presented in media ads may be skewed or biased in order to better sell their product. For example, over-the-counter drug ads don't always list side effects, or may diminish side effects. Have students find ads in magazines, newspapers, and television that could be biased. Have students present them to the class, explaining how they could be biased or skewing information.

**Hearing from an expert in gathering information.** Bring in a journalist to discuss the importance of "getting their facts straight," possibly using examples of when they didn't and what happened. Have the journalist discuss how s/he determines credibility of a source and distinguishes fact from opinion.



**Gathering information for a community problem/class project.** Have students gather information from multiple sources as part of a class project (e.g., using the community problem from the starred Level 1 activity as a class project). Discuss with students the following aspects of information gathering: "Where can they get information about the problem/issue/topic?" "Do they need to know any special procedures/processes to get the information?" "Who can help them obtain more information or give advice about where and how to get it (e.g., local person familiar with the community problem, a librarian)?"

Starred  activities  
within each subskill  
go together!





# Subskill 1: GATHERING INFORMATION

## Ideas for Developing Skills

### Level 3: Practice Procedures

*Set goals, Plan steps of problem solving, Practice skills*

**Judging the credibility of media sources.** Have students look critically at media sources. Discuss the following questions with them: “What does the media source want you to think?” “What does the source assume you like and what your goals are?” “How does the source entice you?” “How credible is the source?” “How real is the issue/problem/situation/topic depicted in the media source?” Other discussions you may want to have with this activity:

- Identify areas where the media pressures students (look at television, magazines, billboards, music videos and songs, movies, video games, etc.)
- Define media pressure (look at the subtle messages that media say about who you should be, how you should look, how you should act, what is beautiful, what is success, what you should focus your life on, what you should do with your time, what you should think of your peers, what you should think of adults, etc.)
- Discuss typical portrayals that media present and why they might have so much power

**Practicing journalism skills.** Discuss with the students two important skills that journalists must have: (1) determining that the source of information is credible, and (2) distinguishing facts from opinion. Present a controversial news event to the class and practice the skills. **Assess** by having students write a report on a news event to practice these skills on their own. They could either all report on the same event or each choose their own.

**Evaluating information sources on a social problem.** Have students select a difficult social problem that interests them. Have them gather information on it and report on their sources. They should have answers to questions regarding the credibility of the source and the certainty of that credibility.

**Evaluating gathered information for a community problem/class project.** Have students gather information about the community problem or class project. Have them organize the information and discuss how they determine whether they have enough information. Once **all** the information is gathered, have students determine whether they gathered any conflicting information, and have them evaluate which sources may be more credible than others.



Starred ★ activities  
within each subskill  
go together!



## Subskill 1: GATHERING INFORMATION

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 4: Integrate Knowledge and Procedures

*Execute plans, Solve problems*



**Articulating the gathered information for a community problem/class project.** Once students have gathered information about the community problem or class project and evaluated it, have them write a detailed description of the problem (and/or present it to the class) using the information from sources they determined most credible. Have them present their ideas to a local community person or group.

#### Assessment Hints

##### Gathering Information

Use multiple-choice, true-false, short answer, or essay tests to assess student's knowledge of gathering information skills (e.g., assessing the credibility of sources, distinguishing fact from opinion, and getting enough and the right information).

Use news clips or written scenarios and have students distinguish the facts from opinions, evaluate the credibility of the source, and assess whether there has been enough information gathered.

Use a dilemma (written or video clip) and have students distinguish the facts from opinions.

Starred ★ activities  
within each subskill  
go together!



## Subskill 2: CATEGORIZING PROBLEM TYPE

*Creative and Expert  
Implementer  
Real-life Example*

As former Secretary of State, **Madeleine Albright** was an expert in categorizing problems. Ms. Albright had to excel in this skill in order to understand problems in other areas of the world, particularly in Kosovo and the Middle East.

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 1: Immersion in Examples and Opportunities

*Attend to the big picture, Learn to recognize basic patterns*

**Identifying ethical and non-ethical problems.** Present a set of problems to students (e.g., what to wear, what to do when you're mad at a friend; when you are finished with your fast food, leaving the paper bag and garbage on a park seat, etc.) Discuss with students the distinction between ethical (how to get along with others) and non-ethical problems. Have students think about examples of each and discuss them. Present a range of ethical problems, from the simple to the more complex, emphasizing the importance of being able to understand the ethical problem before making a judgment or decision. For example, consider what are ethical problems for a toddler or a first grade student? What are ethical problems for middle school students? For high school and college students? For parents? For teachers? For presidents?

**Assess:** Give students multiple dilemmas, both ethical and non-ethical. Ask the students to identify which dilemmas are ethical and which are non-ethical.

#### Level 2: Attention to Facts and Skills

*Focus on detail and prototypical examples, Build knowledge*

**Clashing Values.** Discuss what should be done in the following dilemmas (or others you see your students struggle with) and what values are clashing. You may use one of the formats in the Ethical Dilemma Discussion method in the appendix. (1) You promised to babysit/mow a lawn on Saturday (and you need the money) but your friend has invited you to the lake for the day (and you are dying to go). (2) You saw one of your neighbors take another neighbor's bicycle. Without a bicycle the neighbor can't get to work, except to take a 2-hour bus ride each way, but the neighbor has other responsibilities scheduled for those two hours. (3) Use a real-life classroom-based conflict, if appropriate. (4) Use a values conflict from a newspaper story or literature.

Starred ★ activities  
within each subskill  
go together!



## Subskill 2: CATEGORIZING PROBLEM TYPE

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 2 (continued)

**Ethical failure.** Identify or have students identify instances of ethical failure. Analyze, using the ethical process model, what might have gone wrong.

- *Lack of ethical sensitivity:* lack of awareness of (1) how our actions affect other people, (2) multiple lines of action, (3) consequences of possible actions; poor empathy and role-taking skills  
Example: a student makes fun of another student's new hairstyle
- *Lack of ethical judgment:* simplistic ways of justifying choices of ethical action  
Example: Mark justifies stealing Joe's jacket because Joe stole his watch
- *Lack of ethical motivation:* prioritizing non-ethical values over ethical values  
Example: Sheila, not wanting to be labeled as a "rat," does not tell school officials that her peer was the one who called in the bomb threat that morning
- *Lack of ethical action:* lack of implementation skills (e.g., communication, conflict resolution, assertiveness skills) and easy discouragement to follow through on the action  
Example: Todd witnessed another student cheat on a test but did not feel assertive enough to confront the student or the teacher

**Same values shown differently.** Discuss with students how many people have the same values but show them differently. For example, the value of showing respect when meeting someone can vary from culture to culture. In some cultures you shake hands and look people in the eye; another culture you hug and kiss; in others you bow. The fundamental value is showing respect to a newly introduced person, but the outward form, or behavior, varies. Many times these different behaviors can lead to problems and conflicts if the people are not aware that they are expressing the same value, just in different forms. Find examples of misunderstandings in your community that are based on different forms of expressing a value.

#### Level 3: Practice Procedures

*Set goals, Plan steps of problem solving, Practice skills*

#### **Interviewing elders about different types of ethical problems.**

Review the different ways that ethical problems can be categorized (Level 2 activities of clashing values, failure of ethical processes, expressing different forms of the same value). Have students think of questions they could ask an elder (family or community member) about each of these categories. Students then interview the elder and report back to class.

Starred ★ activities within each subskill go together!



## Subskill 2: CATEGORIZING PROBLEM TYPE

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 3 (continued)

**Categorizing ethical problems in media stories.** Review the different ways that ethical problems can be categorized (Level 2 activities of clashing values, failure of ethical processes, expressing different forms of the same value). Have students find an example of one (or each) of these in the media and present it to the class.

**What's an ethical decision?** (1) Help students distinguish between problems that can be solved with few consequences to people and other life forms and problems that affect people and other life forms directly or indirectly. **Assess** with a set of problems that they must categorize as ethical issues or not. (2) Help students distinguish between ethical issues (those that bear on the welfare of people) and non-ethical or neutral issues (those that don't). Have student groups examine a periodical and make a list of each kind of choice/issue reflected in the periodical. Discuss findings with whole class. (3) There are different perspectives as to what the definition of an ethical decision is. For example, most adults think using drugs is an unethical action whereas many young people reason that using drugs is a personal affair. Have students generate a list of issues they think are ethical and ones that they face that they believe are not ethical decisions. Have them interview other students and adults to see if they agree. Present and discuss results with class.

**Comparing problems to better understand them.** Design a set of problems that you think would interest the students and put each one on an index card. Put the cards in a basket and have students each draw one. Have them think about their problem and write some thoughts using a decision making model. Then have them discuss it with a small group or the large group. As a follow-up activity, review the same problems and discuss these questions: Are there problems that are similar to the problem posed? How is the similar problem the same as the present one? How is the similar problem different than the present one? Is there any information from the similar problem that can provide insights to understanding the present problem? Sample problem contrasts:

- Curfew for an 8 year old compared to a 14 year old
- Taking music off the web without paying vs. shoplifting the music from a store
- Not telling the truth about cheating vs. not telling the truth about your friend's bad haircut
- Failing a promise to watch someone's pet vs. failing a promise to watch your friend's favorite TV show so you can tell them what happened after they return from out of town.

Starred ★ activities  
within each subskill  
go together!



## Subskill 2: CATEGORIZING PROBLEM TYPE

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 4: Integrate Knowledge and Procedures

*Execute plans, Solve problems*



**Culture clashes.** Find examples of situations where cultures clash. Determine which clashes are based on different values (e.g., loyalty to family vs. individual independence) and which are based on disagreement about how the underlying value is expressed (e.g., respect to elders shown by looking elder in the eye vs. holding head down and not looking directly at elder). In some culture clashes the underlying values may not be easily identifiable unless one has substantial knowledge about the culture. Discuss with students the importance of having enough information about the cultures to appropriately understand the cultural clash.

**National and international conflicts.** Have students find examples of national and international conflicts, from large to small. Ask them to explain what the conflict is about and analyze the kinds of problems involved. Working on other skills (such as ES-1 Communicating Well, EM-6 Making Peace), have students determine a course of action to share their ideas for solving the issue with the parties involved.

#### Assessment Hints

##### Categorizing Problem Types

Use a set of problems, both ethical and nonethical, and have students identify which ones are ethical problems.

Use multiple-choice, true-false, short answer, or essay tests to assess student's knowledge of categorizing problems.

Use news clips or written scenarios and have students categorize the problem: clashing values (which values?), ethical failure (what kind?), outward form of the same value (which value?).

Starred ★ activities  
within each subskill  
go together!



## Subskill 3: ANALYZING ETHICAL PROBLEMS

*Creative and Expert Implementer  
Real-life Example*

As an expert in analyzing problems, **Albert Einstein** was able to understand complex scientific problems and phenomena AND relate his understanding of these phenomena to how they are applied (or should be applied) to the human social world. Having a deep sense of social justice and social responsibility, Einstein worked as a pacifist in the later half of his life arguing against the use of technological products for the potential harming of other humans (e.g., the atomic bomb).

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 1: Immersion in Examples and Opportunities

*Attend to the big picture, Learn to recognize basic patterns*

**Identifying critical elements in personal stories.** (1) Have a community member come to class (high school student or young adult) who tells a personal story with an ethical dilemma embedded in it. The community member describes the problem's critical elements. Afterwards, in groups, students summarize the dilemma by identifying who was involved in the dilemma, and when and where it took place. (2) Do the same activity with an example from a book or film/show.




#### Level 2: Attention to Facts and Skills

*Focus on detail and prototypical examples, Build knowledge*

**Perspective taking of characters/groups in conflict.** Have students watch a film or read a book about a conflict. Facilitate a class discussion about what perspectives each of the parties had and why.

**Seeing different sides of the problem.** (1) Present to the students a well-described dilemma that contains multiple perspectives of what the dilemma is. Discuss with the students the multiple perspectives of the dilemma, and compare and contrast these perspectives. Help them identify what all of the perspectives are and why it's important to know them all. (2) Bring in at least two visitors with different perspectives on a problem. Ask the visitors to help the students understand their particular perspectives. (3) Use a salient dispute in the community or school and have student groups try to outline the different perspectives.

Starred  activities within each subskill go together!



## Subskill 3: ANALYZING ETHICAL PROBLEMS

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 2 (continued)

**Defining the problem or issue in news articles.** Collect news articles, and with the class, define the problem of a few news articles. Have students practice defining the problem of other news articles in small groups in which they are to identify and record the main idea/conflict presented in the article.

**Defining the main conflict in stories/plots.** Discuss with students how almost all literature, movies, and television shows are about a conflict. Using literature, movies, or television shows, students determine the main conflict.



**Making visual maps of problems.** Present a description of a problem to the class, preferably a problem in the community (such as the one students work on in the starred activities in Subskill 1). Have the students make a visual map of the problem, answering the following questions: What is the problem? Who is involved in the problem? What are the perspectives of each party involved? Where is the problem occurring? When is the problem occurring? When does the problem have to be resolved? Encourage the students to be creative in how they visually represent the problem. **Assess** students' visual map of the problem for accuracy, completeness, and creativity.

#### Level 3: Practice Procedures

*Set goals, Plan steps of problem solving, Practice skills*

**Understanding conflicts and parties' goals.** Discuss with students how many conflicts in ethical problems involve individuals or groups having different goals, needs, and assumptions. Present examples of such conflicts to the class and have them discuss each party's goals, needs, and assumptions in resolving the problem for each example.

**Analyzing embedded dilemmas in readings.** Have students read a story (Literature or Social Studies reading) with an ethical dilemma embedded in it. Help the students define the dilemma by answering any or all of the following: what the problem is, who is involved, and what the parties' goals are.

**Identifying biases in social problems.** Using activities from ES-5 Preventing Social Bias, have the students practice identifying their own and others' biases in describing specific social problems.

Starred ★ activities  
within each subskill  
go together!






## Subskill 3: ANALYZING ETHICAL PROBLEMS


### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 3 (continued)

**Identifying biases in a community problem.** Have the students identify their own and others' possible biases in describing the community problem in the starred Level 2 activity. 

#### Level 4: Integrate Knowledge and Procedures

*Execute plans, Solve problems*

**Understanding why a problem is occurring.** In order to understand why a problem is occurring, students must be able to correctly identify what the problem is, who the parties are and what their goals are, how the problem came to be, and when and where the problem is occurring. Have students choose one problem that interests them (a list of ideas is given below, or using the community problem from the starred activities in Levels 2 and 3) and write a report detailing what the problem is and speculating about why it is occurring. 

Example problems to write about:


- Butterfly ballot (the confusing Florida ballot in the 2000 U.S. presidential election)
- Machine ballot counting
- Children not getting enough to eat
- Global warming
- Illiteracy

#### Assessment Hints

##### Analyzing Problems

Use multiple-choice, true-false, short answer, or essay tests to assess student's knowledge of problem analysis (e.g., what the problem is, who is involved and what their perspectives and goals are, where and when the problem is occurring).

Present a new problem to the students and have them analyze it with short answer or essay.

Starred  activities within each subskill go together!



## Create a Climate to Help Students Better Understand Ethical Problems

Encourage students to be optimistic about being able to understand and solve ethical problems. Be a model this optimism as well.

Encourage students to carefully and systematically think about a problem.

### Sample Student Self-Monitoring Understanding Ethical Problems

*Encourage active learning by having students learn to monitor their own learning*



#### Gathering Information

Do I know how to identify what information I need to solve the problem?

Is the information I have about the problem fact or opinion?

Is the information about the problem that I have unbiased and accurate?

Do I have enough information about the problem?

#### Categorizing Problem Types

Are there clashing values in this dilemma? If yes, what are they?



Is this problem due to a lack of ethical sensitivity, judgment, motivation, or implementation?

Is this a problem of the same value being expressed in different ways? What value is it? How is it being expressed differently?

#### Analyzing Ethical Problems

Did I identify all the people involved in the problem?

Did I identify when the problem is occurring?

Did I identify where the problem is occurring?

Did I identify the central issue of the problem?



Do I know what my goal is in this problem?

Do I know what other people's goals are that are involved in this problem?

Do I understand the perspectives of the other people that are involved in this problem?

Do I understand why the problem is occurring?



## Selections to Post in the Classroom For Understanding Problems

### PROBLEM SOLVING STEPS

adapted from Bransford's IDEAL (Bransford & Stein, 1984)

1. Identify the problem
2. Define the problem
3. Explore strategies (break problem into sub-problems)
4. Plan
5. Act on ideas
6. Look for the effects
7. Look for potential biases (e.g. ideological blindness)

***Good problem solvers go down and up. Poor ones jump to 5.***

## Ethical Judgment 2

# Using Codes & Identifying Judgment Criteria

(Know rules and practices)

*This skill addresses the Minnesota Comprehensive Goals of Productive Group Participant, Purposeful Thinker, Self-directed Learner, and Responsible Citizen*

### WHAT

Codes are what we know and use to act respectfully and responsibly in different domains or contexts. The different sources of codes include explicit and implicit rules, laws and ethical standards, which may vary from one context to the next. Contexts may be local, such as school, family, and work, or broader, such as national and international.

### WHY

Students need to know different sets of codes and be able to apply them in the appropriate context. Applying the appropriate sets of codes in different contexts is a necessary element of ethical reasoning and is important in acting prosocially (Oliner & Oliner, 1988). Also, valuing and appropriately applying codes is important for practicing good citizenship.



### HELP STUDENTS FIRST LEARN

To value cooperation and know how to cooperate (see EM-5)

### SUBSKILLS OVERVIEW

Characterizing codes  
Discerning code application  
Judging code validity



## Subskill 1: CHARACTERIZING CODES

*Creative and Expert  
Implementer  
Real-life Example*

As former Secretary of State, **Madeleine Albright** had to learn sets of codes from many cultures and when and how to apply them. Ms. Albright had to excel in this skill in order to effectively communicate and negotiate with other countries.

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 1: Immersion in Examples and Opportunities

*Attend to the big picture, Learn to recognize basic patterns*

**Implicit codes in varying contexts.** Most codes are implicit (what “feels right”) and vary across different contexts. Bring to the students’ attention the implicit nature of many codes and how they vary across situations. Examples include: (1) implicit dress codes for formal events (e.g., symphony concerts, funeral) and informal events (e.g., football game, beach party) and (2) how students refer to teachers/principal (Mr./Ms./Mrs. Last Name) and friends (first name only). Also, present film clips from movies about people from another time or place visiting the US now. Discuss with students what they might do if they were unsure of implicit codes in a situation (would they watch others? ask someone else? who would they ask?).



#### Level 2: Attention to Facts and Skills

*Focus on detail and prototypical examples, Build knowledge*

**Exploring family codes.** (1) Exploring codes in different contexts. Have students explore their family codes or rules in various contexts. Ask them to be objective observers of their family’s culture (in other words, ethnographic researchers). *Possible contexts:* Eating a meal together, going out to eat, watching television, holiday gatherings with relatives. Possible questions to explore (example using eating dinner together as a family): What kind of behavior is expected (no singing at the dinner table, no elbows)? How are you expected to be groomed (clean hands to eat, combed hair, shirt and shoes)? What is the order of events (first we pray, then we pass the food around until everyone is served, then we all pick up our forks and eat)? What actions do people have to take (pray before eating)? What roles do people play (Dad always says the prayer)? What kinds of things can you say or talk about (we talk about current events)? What things can’t you do or say (no swearing, no games at the table)? How do things start (Mom calls us to eat)? How do they end (unless you have cleanup duty, when you are finished you ask to be excused from the table)? (2) Comparing codes. Have the students share their codes for one activity and note the family differences. (3) Cultural differences. Through research or interviews of community members from different cultures, have students find examples of people who have different codes for the same activities.

Starred ★ activities  
within each subskill  
go together!



## Subskill 1: CHARACTERIZING CODES

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 2 (continued)



**Exploring school codes.** (1) With a uniform set of questions, have students find out about their school code from different members of the community (one student interviews the custodian; one interviews a cook, etc.). Students report and compare notes. (2) With a uniform set of questions, have the students explore the codes at other contemporary schools by interviewing students and staff from other schools nearby. (3) With a uniform set of questions, have the students explore the codes at other schools historically by interviewing their elders or older siblings about their experiences in the same grade.

**Exploring community codes: public behavior.** Have students interview different community members about appropriate behaviors in particular public/community locations. First all students interview their families, next their neighbors, then business folk, then politicians, etc. Students collect the information in a binder and compare across interviewee categories. Community contexts: playground/park, stores, street, etc.

**Community member work codes.** Have students interview community members who work in different domains (hospital, grocery store, day care) about the different codes of each interviewee in their work and how the interviewees apply them. Ask students write a report of their interview and/or present it to the class.

#### Level 3: Practice Procedures

*Set goals, Plan steps of problem solving, Practice skills*

**Exploring citizenship codes.** (1) Have students interview different community members about citizenship. Students collect the information in a binder and compare across interviewee category. (2) Facilitate discussion among the students on what it means to be a good citizen in your community (e.g. respecting and having concern for others, being of service to their community, taking personal responsibility for their actions and intentions). (3) Have students compare and contrast their results from the Level 2 activity ("Exploring community codes") to this activity. What are the similarities and differences in the codes that the community members discussed for public behavior codes and citizenship codes? How much do they overlap? Are there any codes unique to citizenship? (4) Read essays by other students about what it means to be a good citizen, then have students write an essay on their conceptions of citizenship.

Starred ★ activities  
within each subskill  
go together!



# Subskill 1: CHARACTERIZING CODES

## Ideas for Developing Skills

### Level 3 (continued)

**Citizenship differences.** In lessons on specific countries, discuss with students the differences in what citizenship means in different countries and under different political/social systems. Ask students to describe how they could be good citizens if they were living in that country.

**Exploring school codes in other countries.** (1) Have students communicate with students in another country to find out about the school codes there (if possible, have students from more than one country communicate with your students). (2) Have guest speakers who are from (or are very familiar with) other countries talk to your class about the school codes in their country. Help the students come up with a specific set of questions to ask, and have students compile their responses into a written report.

#### Exploring international codes.

(1) Consensus. Have students read one or more of the documents listed below. Have them gather more information from the web or library and report on it. Invite experts to answer questions about the document and its impact.

United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

Kyoto Global Warming agreement.

Nuclear Arms Test Ban Treaty.

(2) National Citizenship. Conduct research on citizenship in other countries (selected by student or teacher). Report on similarities and differences with U.S. citizenship.

**Future codes.** Ask students what kinds of places they would like to go, activities they would like to do when they are adults, and have them find written sources about these things, or interview someone familiar with those things about the codes there. Have students write a report of their findings.

### Level 4: Integrate Knowledge and Procedures

*Execute plans, Solve problems*

**Code Mentor.** Assign each of your students a younger child to mentor (kindergarten or first grade) in terms of helping the students learn school codes across contexts. Plan mentoring activities together that allow your students to “teach” school codes to the younger students.

Starred ★ activities  
within each subskill  
go together!

### Assessment Hints

#### Characterizing codes

Give students a wide range of problems from multiple contexts (e.g., school, family, political, environmental) and ask them to describe the appropriate set of codes to each context, and if they don't know, have them list how they would find out.

Have students write a report on their interview findings and present the report to the class and hand it in to the teacher.

Give students an ethical dilemma that pertains to the social order and rule in the community, such as respect or responsibility. Ask the students to respond to it either in writing or by role playing how the person would respond. Questions for the students to answer include: (a) What codes would this person think applied to this problem? (b) How would the person use and apply each code to this problem? (c) Which code do you think should be used to solve the dilemma, and why? These can be contextualized by culture or location or time.

Ask students to write an essay on their conception of citizenship.



## Subskill 2: DISCERNING CODE APPLICATION

**Creative and Expert  
Implementer  
Real-life Example**

As former Secretary of State, **Madeleine Albright** had to learn sets of codes from many cultures and when and how to apply them. Ms. Albright had to excel in this skill in order to effectively communicate and negotiate with other countries.

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 1: Immersion in Examples and Opportunities

*Attend to the big picture, Learn to recognize basic patterns*



**Knowing and applying codes.** Present to students film clips from movies about people from another time or place visiting the US now. Ask the students to identify which codes the character(s) is violating in the scenario. Ask if it is enough to only *know* the codes (versus knowing how to apply them). Have students discuss what code the characters should have applied.

#### Level 2: Attention to Facts and Skills

*Focus on detail and prototypical examples, Build knowledge*



**School codes in ethical dilemmas.** Give students an ethical dilemma that pertains to the social order and rule in the school, such as respect or responsibility. Discuss with students what school codes apply to this dilemma. Questions for the students to answer include: (a) What codes apply to this problem? (b) When should \_\_\_\_\_ [character A] use and apply each code to this problem (c) Which code do you think should be used to solve the dilemma, and why? Ask the students to role play the appropriate code.

**Annotated checklists of codes in different contexts.** Have students complete checklists of their own codes used in different contexts and explain why a particular code is appropriate for a particular context.

Starred ★ activities  
within each subskill  
go together!





## Subskill 2: DISCERNING CODE APPLICATION

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 3: Practice Procedures

*Set goals, Plan steps of problem solving, Practice skills*


**Compare/contrast code applications.** Ask students to write an essay on the codes that exist in two different contexts, in which they describe when they apply them and compare and contrast their applications. For example, codes at a basketball game and shopping mall: What are the codes and when and how are they applied? What are their similarities? What are their differences? Students can also interview family or community members about codes in two contexts that the students are not very familiar with, and then compare and contrast the interviewee responses about the codes.

**Readings on citizenship codes.** Have students read stories that involve citizenship issues (respect, responsibility, courtesy). Discuss with students what these issues mean and when and how to apply them in situations with strangers (at the grocery store, mall, concert).

#### Level 4: Integrate Knowledge and Procedures

*Execute plans, Solve problems*

**Cultural variation of codes.** Discuss with students how codes are often different in other cultures. For example, the behavioral codes when meeting someone new can vary from culture to culture. In some cultures you shake hands and look people in the eye; another culture you hug and kiss; in others you bow. Have students (individually or in groups) find examples of codes that vary by culture for the same situation and learn to do them. Encourage them to find examples of cultural variation of codes in the community if possible (using observation methods). Also, if possible, ask community members to assess how well the student can follow the codes and use them in the appropriate context. **Assess** by having students write reports of their findings.

Starred  activities  
within each subskill  
go together!

#### Assessment Hints

##### Discerning code application

Give students a wide range of problems from multiple contexts (e.g., school, family, political, environmental) and ask them to describe the appropriate set of codes to each context, and how they should be applied.

Have students write an essay comparing and contrasting codes in two different contexts or cultures.

Give students an ethical dilemma that pertains to the social order and rule in the community, such as respect or responsibility. Ask the students to respond to it either in writing or by role playing how the person would respond. Questions for the students to answer include: (a) What codes would this person think applied to this problem? (b) How would the person use and apply each code to this problem? (c) Which code do you think should be used to solve the dilemma, and why? These can be contextualized by culture or location or time.

Ask students to write an essay on their conception of citizenship and how to apply their ideas of citizenship to a particular situation.



## Subskill 3: JUDGING CODE VALIDITY

**Creative and Expert  
Implementer  
Real-life Example**

**Confucius**, the ancient Chinese philosopher and teacher, created and taught a comprehensive set of codes for humans. When Confucius was born, the Chinese government was going through many rapid changes, and many Chinese citizens no longer respected the established behavioral guidelines. Confucius brought back a set of codes through his philosophy and teachings. His ideas were the single strongest influence on Chinese society from around 100 BC to the AD 1900's. His philosophy still has much influence in Chinese society today as well as other societies around the world.

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 1: Immersion in Examples and Opportunities

*Attend to the big picture, Learn to recognize basic patterns*



**Necessity of classroom codes.** Discuss with students why classroom codes or rules are necessary. Emphasize that codes have a reason behind them (e.g., raising hands allows teacher to listen to everyone in an orderly manner rather than “noise” from many students) and that codes need to be followed by everyone in order to fulfill their purpose. You can also discuss school codes, public behavior codes in your community, and citizenship codes. Discuss what would happen if there were no codes.

**Sport and game codes.** Identify different practices for a particular game or sport (e.g., football league differences: NFL, CFL, AFL). Discuss whether or not the different rules are valid codes. Discuss necessary features of a code (e.g., that it be fair, that all agree to it, that it is not harmful, that it is traditional).

#### Level 2: Attention to Facts and Skills

*Focus on detail and prototypical examples, Build knowledge*



**Building classroom codes.** Have the class collectively decide what classroom codes should be established. Ask students to justify each code as to why it should be used and enforced. Have students decide how the codes should be enforced (i.e., what should be done when codes are not followed). Afterwards, assist students in evaluating the codes they just created. Does each code have a purpose or reason for existing? How good is this reason? How will this code be implemented and enforced? Is the enforcement fair? You can also do this activity for school codes, public behavior codes in your community, and citizenship codes in which students would hypothetically create their own ideal school/community.

Starred ★ activities  
within each subskill  
go together!



## Subskill 3: JUDGING CODE VALIDITY

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 2 (continued)

**Historical comparison of codes.** Select historical practices that contemporary societies think are vulgar or immoral. Compare the underlying codes that supported these practices. Compare with practices today. Discuss criteria for establishing and supporting a 'good' code.

Starred ★ activities within each subskill go together!

#### Level 3: Practice Procedures

*Set goals, Plan steps of problem solving, Practice skills*

**Examples of conflicting codes in the community.** Find examples of codes that conflict (or have conflicted) in community issues/problems. Discuss what the purpose is/may have been for the codes, whether the purpose was good, and how the conflict of codes could be or was resolved. Did the best codes prevail in the end? Was the means by which the codes "won" (e.g., protests, changes in laws, war) acceptable? ★

**Historical examples of conflicting codes.** In historical examples where codes conflict (e.g., Gandhi and the Indian liberation), have students define what the conflicting codes are. Discuss what the purpose may have been for the codes, whether the purpose was good, and how the conflict of codes was resolved. Did the best codes prevail in the end? Was the mean by which the codes "won" (e.g., protest, war) acceptable?

#### Level 4: Integrate Knowledge and Procedures

*Execute plans, Solve problems*

**Current examples of conflicting codes.** Have students choose a current problem in the US or another country in which codes conflict (e.g., sweatshops that employ children). Ask students to define what the conflicting codes are, describe what the purpose may have been for the codes, whether the purpose was good, explain different ways the conflict of codes could be resolved, and evaluate which resolution of conflicting codes is best and why. In conjunction with other skills (e.g., EA-1 Communicating well) or with community organizers, have students take action on their ideas about resolving a code conflict. ★

#### Assessment Hints

##### Judging code validity

Give students a wide range of problems from multiple contexts (e.g., school, family, political, environmental) and ask them to describe the appropriate set of codes to each context, explain why the codes are important, and determine the purpose of the code.

Present a description of a set of codes and how the codes might have come to be. Ask students to evaluate means by which the codes were created and the appropriateness (or "goodness") of the codes themselves.





## Create a Climate to Develop Using Codes

- Encourage students' commitment to making the best decisions for family, school, neighborhood, and community. Have the student refer to his or her commitments periodically for assignments.
- Encourage students' commitment to be a good citizen within school, family, community, state, country, and world (e.g. respecting and having concern for others, being of service to their community, taking personal responsibility for my actions and intentions).
- Promote students' feeling and taking responsibility/accountability for their actions through disciplining students with immediate consequences and a given reason and helping parents with discipline plans that include giving reasons to student when disciplined.
- Emphasize the importance of feeling connected to others. Establish classroom community by encouraging students to collaborate on assignments and projects. Encourage respectful interactions among students in class, and encourage students to connect with other students outside the classroom (or their "group" or "clique") and members in their community.
- Encourage students' commitment to justice/fairness. Discuss students' experiences of injustice. Read about leaders for social justice. Perform a social justice action in the community.

## Sample Student Self-Monitoring

### Using Codes

*Encourage active learning by having students learn to monitor their own learning*

#### **Characterizing codes**

Do I know how to identify what codes, rules, and laws apply to this problem?

Do I know how to apply the codes to this particular situation?

What are the implicit codes in this situation?

#### **Discerning code application**

Did I identify all of the appropriate rules that apply to this problem?

Did I identify all of the appropriate laws that apply to this problem?

#### **Judging code validity**

Do I know how to evaluate whether the codes in this situation are appropriate or good?

What codes, rules, or laws would my parents/teacher/principal/neighbor/friend use in solving this problem?

Have I evaluated whether the codes in this situation are appropriate or good?



## Ethical Judgment 3

# Developing General Reasoning Skills

(Think skillfully)

*This skill addresses the Minnesota Comprehensive Goals of Purposeful Thinker.*

### WHAT

Reasoning is a type of thinking in which a person draws a conclusion that is based on a particular set of information (Overton, 1990). In order to be a reasonable conclusion, it cannot be any random conclusion. Instead, the conclusion must be consistent with the information at hand. If it isn't consistent and coherent, the reasoning is flawed. Flawed reasoning is the source of many prejudices and harmful actions.

### WHY

Reasoning helps us improve how we do things (Calne, 1999) and how we treat one another. For example, reason stopped the practice of slavery worldwide. Reason challenges our human biases of preferring the familiar and discrediting those who are different, and it has generated knowledge to allow us to travel half way across the world in one day. It has helped us create vaccinations, irrigation systems, self-governance systems, and many more things that have improved the human condition. In today's complex societies, reasoning is *necessary* to effectively function and participate in multiple systems.



### HELP STUDENTS FIRST LEARN

Understanding problems (see EJ-3).



## SUBSKILLS OVERVIEW

### Subskill 1: Reasoning impartially

Thinking deliberately

Distinguishing facts from non-facts

Avoid: Exaggerating the advantages and disadvantages of an alternative

Avoid: Minimizing the drawbacks of an alternative

Avoid: Minimizing the advantages of other alternatives

Avoid: Denying possible negative consequences of an alternative

### Subskill 2: Using sound reasoning

Using logic

Having adequate support for conclusions

Evaluating the validity of a claim

### Subskill 3: Avoiding human reasoning pitfalls

(List of pitfalls on page 49)

## Kinds of Reasoning

Though the ability to reason is often perceived to be (and certainly can be!) an abstract, highly complex skill, children begin to learn and use reasoning at an early age. For example, young children understand the use of "if ... then ..." conditional statements (Braine, 1990). More complex forms of reasoning, such as formal deductive reasoning, start to emerge at around 10-12 years of age (Overton, 1990). Below are examples of more complex forms of deductive and inductive reasoning.

**Deductive Reasoning** - making inferences from general propositions to particular propositions

Examples of different kinds of deductive reasoning:

- Scientific reasoning (scientific laws and principles are applied to particular observations)  
For example, Newton's observation that whenever one drops something, it tends to fall to the ground, which helped lead to the Law of Gravity.
- Mathematical reasoning (mathematical laws are applied to particular observations)

**Inductive Reasoning** – making inferences from particular propositions to general propositions

Examples of different kinds of inductive reasoning:

- Pragmatic reasoning (based on knowledge of context)  
For example, when the temperature outdoors is 0 degrees, I reason that I should wear a coat.
- Statistical reasoning (based on probability)  
For example, if I have to reason who is the taller of a couple, the husband or the wife, I will reason 'wife' because men tend to be taller than women.



## Subskill 1: REASONING OBJECTIVELY

**Creative and Expert  
Implementer  
Real-life Example**

**Oliver Wendell Holmes** was one of the great Supreme Court Justices of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was known for his objective examination of the facts and law. He was very opinionated about what a democracy should be; however, he always kept an open mind and believed in letting others have their say and opportunity. Justice Holmes had excellent reflection skills to keep his own ideas and philosophies in check while objectively listening to and examining others' ideas and opinions of the law.

### Ideas for Developing Skills


#### Level 1: Immersion in Examples and Opportunities

*Attend to the big picture, Learn to recognize basic patterns*



**Facts vs. non-facts in a subject area.** One of the best rules for reasoning objectively is that, wherever possible, there must be independent confirmation of the facts. If there isn't an independent confirmation, anyone can argue that his or her viewpoint represents the facts. (1) Have students act out role plays on a topic relevant to your lesson. Ask other students to describe the role plays. Ask the class to determine what in the descriptions are facts and what are opinions. (2) Play a newscast about something familiar to the students or relevant to the subject matter being studied. Ask students to discern what aspects of the newscast are factual, half-truths, or opinions. For example, one could use news broadcasts from the aftermath of the November 2000 election in which (a) the Bush camp described the Gore camp as 'trying to steal' the election, even though they were following a common protocol in asking for a recount in a close election; (b) the meaning of 'counting the ballots' was disputed. As a result of these and other ploys, the public was confused about what the 'facts' were. (3) Select a set of statements from the subject matter, some of which are facts, some opinion. Present them to students and have them determine which is which. **Assess** the students by giving them a new set of statements and have them identify which are facts and non-facts.

**Distinguishing impulsive and deliberate reasoning.** Present to students various scenarios of impulsive and deliberate reasoning in complex situations via written stories or videos. Discuss with the students the differences between impulsive and deliberate reasoning and decision-making made by the characters. **Assess** with multiple-choice, true-false, or short answer tests of impulsive and deliberate reasoning skills.

Starred  activities within each subskill go together!





## Subskill 1: REASONING OBJECTIVELY

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 2: Attention to Facts and Skills

*Focus on detail and prototypical knowledge, Build knowledge*

**What are facts in a particular subject area?** Discuss that facts are based on empirical (observable, or research-based) evidence, and they don't mix in opinion or emotion. (1) Invite an expert from a particular discipline and ask them to discuss the facts they look for when solving discipline-specific problems. (2) Direct students to find examples of facts and non-facts in a particular subject area. Have students report the facts and non-facts in a particular subject area problem and assess their thoroughness and accuracy.



**Types of reasoning biases.** Discuss with students the following kinds of biases to which people are susceptible:

(1) Exaggerating the advantages of an alternative that the person favors. For example, Mike wants to buy a bike. He finds one that he loves that's a 12-speed, has cool colors, and is more than he can afford. He also sees one that is a 10-speed, good quality, and within his price range. Mike rationalizes to himself that the 12-speed is the one he should have because it has 2 more speeds than the other one.

(2) Minimizing the drawbacks of an alternative that the person likes. Mike tells himself that he can borrow the extra money he needs for the bike he likes from his dad, who just lent him money last week for a scooter.

(3) Minimizing the advantages of an alternative that the person doesn't like. Mike doesn't think that the good quality of the other bike is very important. He'd rather be seen on a cool, flashy bike than on something boring (though dependable).

(4) Denying possible negative consequences of a given alternative. If Mike were thinking more rationally about this purchase, he would admit to himself that his dad will not probably lend him any more money until he pays him back for the scooter.


(5) Exaggerating the disadvantages of alternatives. Mike thinks that no one at school will like him if he has the 10-speed bike because it is not cool. Present a reasoning situation to students (like the bike example above). Ask students to brainstorm examples of each bias that people might use in the example situation. **Assess** student's knowledge and identification of types of reasoning biases with multiple-choice, true-false, or short answer tests.

#### Level 3: Practice Procedures

*Set goals, Plan steps of problem solving, Practice skills*

**Getting the facts.** There are different sources of facts for different areas of life. In a specific domain or life area, discuss with students how facts are valid, which are sought, which are unimportant. Ask students to define a topic or area of research that they are interested in and have them list the **valid** and **relevant** facts in that area. **Assess** students' findings.



Starred  activities within each subskill go together!



## Subskill 1: REASONING OBJECTIVELY

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 3 (continued)

**Identification of biases in thinking.** Have students practice identifying their own and others' biases in the decision-making process, including identification of alternatives, judging of alternatives, and final judgment of which alternative. Use examples from periodicals of local disputes, from international disputes, from a particular classroom subject matter, or intercultural examples. Have students identify alternatives and reasons mentioned, identify possible underlying biases, and suggest an alternative supported by unbiased reason. **Assess** this process.

#### Level 4: Integrate Knowledge and Procedures

*Execute plans, Solve problems*



**Getting the right facts for problem-solving.** Have students identify the types of information that are factually important for a particular discipline. Then have students specify which facts they need (which questions to ask) in order to solve a particular problem in the discipline. They should then try to solve the problem with the help of an expert, or alone, with their success judged by an expert.

Starred ★ activities  
within each subskill  
go together!



## Subskill 2: USING SOUND REASONING

**Marie Curie** was an expert in scientific reasoning. Through her scientific experiments, she discovered the radioactivity of certain elements. Her discoveries have made great contributions to science and are the basis not only for some of our energy sources today, but also for many current medical treatments (such as chemotherapy).

**Creative and Expert  
Implementer  
Real-life Example**

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 1: Immersion in Examples and Opportunities

*Attend to the big picture, Learn to recognize basic patterns*

**Is it true?** Take one or two of the types of ways to validate a claim that Carl Sagan identified (listed below). Present examples of this kind of thinking in a particular area of life or discipline. Ask students to find or make up other examples. For example, present statements that make claims with no evidence, such as “girls are smarter than boys.” Present only one side of a debate. For example, “the economy will suffer if workplace safety rules are increased.” Present statements by an ‘authority,’ such as the idea that Michael Jordan likes Nike shoes, which has the implicit message that you will play like Jordan if you use Nikes. Discuss how these types of reasoning are erroneous.

#### The Fine Art of Baloney Detection

(from Carl Sagan's *The Demon-haunted world: Science as a candle in the dark*)

##### What to do to evaluate the validity of a claim:

- Wherever possible there must be independent confirmation of the facts.
- Encourage substantive debate on the evidence by knowledgeable advocates of all points of view.
- Arguments from authorities carry little weight—they make mistakes. In science there are no authorities, just experts.
- Spin more than one hypothesis and think of the tests required to prove it.
- Try not to get overly attached to one hypothesis just because it's yours. Think of reasons to reject it. If you don't, others will.
- Quantify. If you can measure something, you are better able to discriminate among competing hypotheses. What is vague and qualitative is open to many explanations and truth is harder to find.
- If there is a chain of argument, **every** link in the chain must work (including the premise)—not just most of them.
- *Occam's razor*. When you have a choice, choose the simplest hypothesis.
- Always ask whether the hypothesis can be, at least in principle, falsified. Propositions that are untestable, unfalsifiable are not worth much.



## Subskill 2: USING SOUND REASONING

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 1 (continued)



**Defining sound reasoning.** To determine if an argument or stated reasoning is sound, a person must determine two things. (1) Does the conclusion logically follow from the preceding statement? (2) Is the preceding statement (or premise) true? Discuss what this means so that students can learn basic patterns of sound reasoning. Give examples of unsound reasoning to students, some with weak logic and some with untrue premises, and have students identify whether they are unsound and why. Use examples, such as

- Preceding statement (or premise): Dark clouds are coming this way and the wind is picking up.
- Logical conclusion: A storm is approaching. Therefore, we should roll up the windows in the car.
- Illogical conclusion: It's going to be a nice day, so we should go swimming.
- Untrue preceding statement (or premise): The sun is purple and so it is turning the clouds purple.

#### Level 2: Attention to Facts and Skills

*Focus on detail and prototypical knowledge, Build knowledge*


**Arguments from authorities.** Arguments from authorities should carry little weight on their own because individual authorities make mistakes. Discuss examples from advertising in which a doctor advocates a particular product. Discuss why their endorsement is a poor reason for selecting the product, even though it might be emotionally appealing.

**Quantify** (use statistics to support hypothesis/argument). If you can measure something, you are better able to discriminate among competing hypotheses, because what is vague and qualitative is open to many explanations and truth is harder to find. Discuss issues in a particular domain that generate disagreements. Discuss how to support the different arguments with particular quantifications. Have students bring in more examples. For example, television news seems to convey that African Americans are on welfare more or commit more crime. Is this true? A look at actual statistics will contradict these impressions.



**Identifying the elements of logic.** Have students practice identifying the premises, conclusions, and logic indicators (e.g., since, thus, implies, consequently, because, so, if) in simple logic statements. Then have them evaluate whether the conclusion follows from the premise. Examples:

- We haven't seen a bird all day, so there must be no birds in this area.
- Tom will win the race this year because he won the race last year and has trained hard this year.
- If you don't go to other people's funerals, they won't go to yours.
- Cats can swim; thus, my cat Barry can swim.

Starred  activities within each subskill go together!



## Subskill 2: USING SOUND REASONING

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 2 (continued)

**Having adequate support for conclusions.** In many situations, students must seek and obtain information themselves and then make a conclusion based on the information they have. An important skill they must learn (besides gathering accurate information, see EJ-1 for activities) is to obtain *enough* and the *right* kind of information to adequately support a conclusion. Choose an issue and have students state a possible conclusion for the issue. Then brainstorm as a class what kind of information would support the conclusion, what kind of information would contradict the conclusion, and how much support is needed for the conclusion to be strong.

#### Level 3: Practice Procedures


*Set goals, Plan steps of problem solving, Practice skills*

**Sound reasoning in scientific reasoning.** (1) Describe to the students what scientific reasoning is (based on the scientific method), then have them apply it in a particular assignment or project. (2) Invite a scientist as a guest speaker to discuss the steps he or she takes to ensure impartial reasoning in his or her daily work.

**Chains of argument.** Important to reasoning well is the use of arguments. If there is a chain of arguments, every link in the chain must work (including the premise)—not just most of them. Present common issues in a particular domain (e.g., global warming, advertising to children, advertising tobacco or alcohol, use of the internet). Initially, present several hypotheses and the facts that support them. Point out the necessary elements in drawing a reasonable conclusion. In a later lesson, present reasoning about the issues that lacks a connecting argument or is incomplete (e.g., global warming isn't happening because this winter was the coldest in many years), and have students identify the places where reasoning breaks down. Have students apply what they have learned in a new context by presenting new issues similar to the one already studied.



**Reasons for rejecting an argument.** When reasoning, it is important to not get overly attached to one hypothesis just because it is yours. Present hypotheses in a particular domain and ask students to think of reasons to reject it based on what they know. Then label the reasons into good reasons and poor reasons (based on Sagan's criteria listed in this section). Do this regularly for topics being studied.

Starred  activities  
within each subskill  
go together!



## Subskill 2: USING SOUND REASONING

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 3 (continued)

**Occam's razor.** An important general tool to use when trying to understand a phenomenon is *Occam's razor*—that when you have a choice, choose the simplest hypothesis. Present different issues and different hypotheses that people use to explain them. Based on what they know in the domain, ask students to identify which hypothesis is the simplest. For example, some people claim that alien abduction is the best explanation for the abduction experiences that people have had. A simpler reason, that has much more empirical evidence, is that the individuals were in a semi-dream state when the 'abductions' occurred.

**Structured controversy.** The steps for a structured academic controversy (Johnson & Johnson, 1997), involving the use of sound reasoning, are as follows:

- (1) Select an issue relevant to what you are studying. Select two or more opinions on the issue.
- (2) Form advocacy teams by putting the students into groups for each different opinion. Either put together a list of supporting statements for each opinion, or have students research the opinion and come up with their own supporting statements (if this is done, provide guidance and feedback for the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the supporting statements they generate). Each group prepares a persuasive statement based on the supporting statements of their opinion.
- (3) Have each group present its persuasive case to the other groups without interruption. Students in the listening groups should listen carefully and take notes to learn the other opinion well. Students listening should also evaluate the other positions based on the logic and soundness of the position.
- (4) Have open discussion among the groups with advocacy of their own position and refutation of other positions (respectfully), specifically based on how sound their position or argument is.
- (5) Groups trade positions on the issue to take another group's perspective. The group must present the other perspective to the others as sincerely and persuasively as the original group did. The group can add new facts, information, or arguments to the position (based on what they have already learned) to make it more persuasive.
- (6) All individuals drop their advocacy and group-orientation to discuss the positions again and try to come to a consensus about which position has the soundest argument, looking at the logic of the argument and supporting evidence of the position. The position can be one that is a synthesis of two or more, as long as the position's argument is deemed to be sound by all individuals and isn't just a compromise.

Starred ★ activities  
within each subskill  
go together!



## Subskill 2: USING SOUND REASONING

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 3 (continued)

**Making an argument on a social issue.** Have each student choose a debated social issue (e.g., animal rights, nuclear power) and take a stance on the issue. (1) Have students put together a set of arguments to support their viewpoint. Emphasize to students that the goal of the exercise is to have enough supporting evidence to make a strong conclusion. Break this exercise into steps: (a) choosing an appropriate issue, (b) finding information and evidence about their issue, (c) determining how much evidence is needed for a strong conclusion, and (e) writing an essay containing a description of the issue, the supporting evidence, and the conclusion. (2) Have students find all the arguments against their position. Then have them respond to the arguments with the evidence they collected previously. **Assess** the student's essay for each of the points named above.

#### Level 4: Integrate Knowledge and Procedures

*Execute plans, Solve problems*

**Mentoring others in decision-making.** Assign students a younger student who needs assistance in an area of reasoning. Prepare the older students carefully so they can model sound reasoning. (Lack of preparation may leave both students frustrated.)

**Proving it.** When you have a hypothesis, make sure to prepare for the possibility that it is wrong. One way to do this is to spin more than one hypothesis to think of the tests required to prove them. (1) Present issues to students, and ask them to generate hypotheses and tests for each hypothesis. (2) Have them test one or more of the hypotheses with the tests they designed.

**Evaluating arguments in debates and constructing their own argument.** (1) Either set up a student debate on a particular issue or have students watch a debate. Before the debate, discuss the issue with the class and have them jot down arguments they think are particularly strong in the issue and why. After the debate, have the class write down what the strong arguments were that were made by the debate participants. Have them compare and contrast them to the ideas they jotted down before the argument. (2) Have students design and implement their own debate on a relevant topic. **Assess** students by having them write an essay, taking a stance on the issue and constructing their own argument by using sound and supportive information.



Starred ★ activities  
within each subskill  
go together!



## Subskill 2: USING SOUND REASONING

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Assessment Hints

##### Using sound reasoning

Use multiple-choice, true-false, short answer, or essay tests to assess student's knowledge of sound reasoning skills.

Present new examples of unsound reasoning to students, some with weak logic and some with untrue premises, and have students identify whether they are unsound and why.

Give logic statements/problems to students and have them identify the premises, conclusions, and logic indicators.

Present an argument and have the students evaluate its strength (i.e., how much information is presented to support the issue and how well the information supports the issue).

One type of sound reasoning is *scientific reasoning*, which uses principles such as these:

- ◇ Scientists should investigate questions that can be tested
- ◇ Hypotheses should be tested with controlled studies
- ◇ Theories should be based on empirical evidence
- ◇ Generalizations should be made cautiously
- ◇ All methods, theories and conclusions should be reviewed by professional colleagues





## Subskill 3: AVOIDING HUMAN REASONING PITFALLS

Creative and Expert  
Implementer  
Real-life Example

**Medical researchers** have to be very careful to avoid human reasoning pitfalls, such as observational selection (explained on page 49). If they are not careful, their research and work could mean life or death for some patients.

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 1: Immersion in Examples and Opportunities

*Attend to the big picture, Learn to recognize basic patterns*

**Reasoning fallacies.** Select one or more of Carl Sagan's 'Fallacies of logic and rhetoric' (p. 49). Present examples of the fallacy, and ask students figure out the flaw. After students are familiar with the type of fallacy, ask them to find or create more examples. For example: (1) *Ad hominem*: Use statements from someone but attack the person not the statement (e.g., 'John says that 2 plus 2 is 4 but he's ugly so what does he know?') (2) Observational selection (confirmatory bias): Present a video of a character and secretly tell half the class that the person is stupid and they should write down all the stupid things he or she does; tell the other half of the class (also secretly) that the person is smart and they should write down all the smart things he or she did. Afterwards, ask groups to write down the **opposite** information from what they were watching for. Compare the sizes of the lists. The list of what was looked for should be much longer.



#### Level 2: Attention to Facts and Skills

*Focus on detail and prototypical knowledge, Build knowledge*

**Weasel words.** People often use acceptable words to label their less-than-acceptable goals or ideas (e.g. Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile [ICBM] = "peacekeeper"). Have students look for or generate a list of terms that each mask the true meaning of the real idea they express.

**Statistics of small numbers**, or generalizing from a few cases. For a particular domain, give students sets of statements, some of which are based on anecdotal evidence (a couple of cases) and others that are based on large numbers. Discuss how a vivid example can draw our attention and make us forget the numbers that contradict the example. For example: "The Surgeon General says that smoking tobacco greatly increases a person's chances of dying young (or getting some disease). But my uncle smoked and he lived till he was 99."



Starred ★ activities  
within each subskill  
go together!





Starred ★ activities within each subskill go together!

### Assessment Hints

#### Avoiding human reasoning pitfalls

Use multiple-choice, true-false, short answer, or essay tests to assess student's knowledge of reasoning pitfalls.

Present new examples of reasoning pitfalls to students and have students identify what they are.

Have students find examples of reasoning pitfalls in a particular subject area and assess their examples.



## Subskill 3: AVOIDING HUMAN REASONING PITFALLS

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 2 (continued)

**Suppressed evidence**, or half-truths. Present examples of half-truths from a particular domain and have students find more examples. Point out in the examples why the statements are half-truths. Have students think of what evidence is needed to make the half-truths into “full” truths. For example, “Toothpaste X is the toothpaste most recommended by dentists [based on 3% of the dentists who responded to our survey sent to 1,000 dentists around the country].” The added information in brackets is not given to the viewers so it sounds like most dentists really like toothpaste X, when in reality, only 3% of the sampled dentists responded, and out of those 30, all of them still did not choose X.

**Straw man**, or caricaturing a position – misrepresenting it – to make it easier to attack. In arguing for his/her own position on an issue, the person may resort to misrepresenting the other position to make it easier to attack. Find an example in a news show in which two people on different sides of an issue misrepresent the other side. Use the issue as a class research project, in which the students research the issue and find the facts, opinions, and arguments of each side of the issue. Then present the news show and have students discuss how one side (or both) misrepresented the other side. Note: this activity can also be done with academic journal articles instead of news shows.

#### Level 3: Practice Procedures

*Set goals, Plan steps of problem solving, Practice skills*

**Confusion of correlation and causation**. Have students find or create examples, such as, “I, as a teenager, am sleepy in the morning. This may be because the sun rises in the morning.” – **Not**. Research shows that teens both need more sleep and are on a delayed sleeping shift—finding it hard to get to sleep before midnight. Discuss how confusing correlation and causation can lead to erroneous reasoning.

**Non sequitur**, or linking unrelated claims. Have students find or create examples, such as, “Our nation will prevail because God is great” and “you’re short so I’m smarter”.

**Post hoc, ergo propter hoc**, or it happened after X so it was caused by X. Find examples of this kind of reasoning or have students make them up. For example, the Vikings won after I stopped going to their games, so they won because I didn’t go. **Assess** by putting together a set of problematic statements (based on the Sagan list of fallacies) and have the students indicate what is wrong (what fallacy is evident) in each statement.

## Subskill 3: AVOIDING HUMAN REASONING PITFALLS

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 3 (continued)

**Inconsistency in a subject area.** For example, to say that the decline of life expectancy in the former Soviet Union is due to failure of communism without a comparable statement that the high infant mortality rate in the U.S. is due to the failure of capitalism. Find examples of this kind of reasoning or have students make them up, relevant to the subject area. **Assess** by putting together a set of problematic statements (based on the Sagan list of fallacies) and have the students indicate what fallacy is evident in each statement.

Starred ★ activities within each subskill go together!

#### Level 4: Integrate Knowledge and Procedures

*Execute plans, Solve problems*

**Creating, exchanging, and correcting reasoning pitfalls.** Have groups of students write about an issue, intentionally adding multiple reasoning pitfalls into the paper. The groups exchange papers and identify which reasoning pitfalls were used in the paper and how they should be corrected.



#### What not to do: Fallacies of Logic and Rhetoric

- *ad hominem* (Latin: “to the man”)—attacking the arguer (the person) and not the argument
- argument from authority (“So-and-so says.”)
- argument from the adverse consequences that will result if hypothesis rejected
- appeal to ignorance—the claim that whatever has not been proved false must be true, and vice versa. Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.
- special pleading, often to rescue a proposition in deep rhetorical trouble (e.g., “God moves in mysterious ways”)
- begging the question (assuming the answer)
- observational selection (confirmatory belief)—counting the hits and ignoring the misses (noticing only the evidence that supports your claim and ignoring all the rest)
- statistics of small numbers (generalizing from a few cases)
- misunderstanding of the nature of statistics
- inconsistency (e.g., to say that the decline of life expectancy in the former Soviet Union is due to failure of communism without a comparable statement that the high infant mortality rate in the U.S. is due to the failure of capitalism)
- *non sequitur* (linking unrelated claims, e.g., “Our nation will prevail because God is great”)
- *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* (Latin: it happened after X so it was caused by X)
- excluded middle ground or false dichotomy (it’s either one extreme position or the other)
- slippery slope, related to excluded middle (there is no middle ground)
- confusion of correlation and causation (In summer ice cream sales and rapes increase—this doesn’t mean that eating ice cream causes rapes. It has to do with a third variable—warm weather.)
- straw man—caricaturing a position (misrepresenting it) to make it easier to attack
- suppressed evidence/ half-truths
- weasel words (InterContinental Ballistic Missile [ICBM] = “peacekeeper”)





## Create a Climate to Develop General Reasoning Skills

- Encourage students' commitment to use reason to make decisions. Discuss with them human tendencies to lose control (and do harm) when emotions are high.
- Encourage students to carefully and systematically think about a problem.
- Acknowledge that many decisions are made with 'intuition' but that intuition is trained by experience (like culture) and can produce biases against new people and ideas. Working on reasoning skills helps you intervene when your instinctive intuitions are based on harmful bias.
- Have the student refer to his or her commitments regularly for completing assignments
- Promote students' feeling and taking responsibility/accountability for one's own actions. Discipline students with immediate consequences and a given reason. Help parents with discipline plans that include giving reasons to student when disciplined. Discuss related dilemmas with slight variations.
- Encourage students' commitment to be impartial when they have time to reason throughout the judgment process. Discuss human tendencies to favor one individual over another, or not consider all options, or misjudge the probability of consequences occurring.



## Sample Student Self-Monitoring Developing General Reasoning Skills

*Encourage active learning by having students learn to monitor their own learning*

### **Reasoning objectively**

Am I thinking carefully about the problem and my reasons?

Am I distinguishing facts from non-facts?

Am I exaggerating the advantages of an alternative I favor?

Am I minimizing the drawbacks of an alternative that I favor?

Am I minimizing the advantages of an alternative that I don't like?

Am I not considering the possible negative consequences of an alternative I favor?

Am I exaggerating the disadvantages of an alternative that I don't like?

### **Using sound reasoning**

Am I thinking logically about my reasons?

Do I have enough support for the conclusions or decisions I am making?

Does the information that I am basing my reasoning on have independent confirmation of the facts?

Have I considered all of the evidence by knowledgeable advocates on all points of view?

Have I thought of more than one hypothesis to explain the issue?

Am I overly attached to one particular hypothesis?

Have I quantified what I am measuring?

Does EVERY link in my chain of argument work?

Have I chosen the simplest hypothesis?

Can my hypothesis be falsified?

### **Avoiding human reasoning pitfalls**

Am I attacking the argument or the person making the argument?

Am I blindly accepting the argument from an authority?

Am I making an unwarranted special pleading that provides no empirical support?

Am I taking into account ALL of the evidence (and not selectively ignoring the evidence that does not support my position)?

Am I generalizing from a few cases and ignoring the large numbers?

Am I being inconsistent in making comparative arguments?

Are the claims that I am making unrelated?

Are the causal claims I am making logical and plausible?

Could the causal claim I am making have a third variable that I am not considering?

Is there a middle-ground argument or position that I am not considering?

Am I accurately representing the position I am arguing against?

Is any of my evidence half-truths?

Are any of my words or terms misleading?



## Selections to Post in the Classroom For General Reasoning Skills

### DISPOSITIONS OF CRITICAL THINKING (Ennis, 1987)

- Seek a clear statement of the thesis or question
- Seek reasons
- Be well informed
- Use and mention credible sources
- Consider the total situation
- Remain relevant to the main point
- Keep in mind the original or basic concern
- Look for alternatives
- Be open-minded
- Take a position when the evidence and reasons are sufficient to support that position
- Seek as much precision as the subject permits
- Deal in an orderly manner with the parts of a complex whole
- Use critical thinking abilities (skills)
- Be sensitive to others' feelings, level of knowledge, and degree of sophistication
- Use one's critical thinking abilities



# Developing Ethical Reasoning

(Decide right and wrong)

*This skill addresses the Minnesota Comprehensive Goals of Purposeful Thinker, Responsible Citizen.*

## Ethical Judgment 4

### WHAT

Students make judgments and decisions every day about how to get along with others. Students use ethical reasoning to make each and every one of these decisions. In using ethical reasoning, they think about how their decision may affect others or themselves, what codes/rules/laws they should be following, or what is the most fair/just/kind/dutiful decision.

### WHY

Just as general reasoning skills are necessary to function and participate in today's complex society, so are *ethical* reasoning skills. More highly developed forms of ethical reasoning are positively related to a number of constructs and behaviors, including but not limited to

- ethical behavior (Thoma, 1994),
- decision-making and job performance in specific professions (Rest & Narvaez, 1994),
- a concern for others and a stronger sense of lessons learned in past experiences (Pratt, Norris, Arnold, Filyer, 1999),
- leadership status and number of close friendships (Schonert-Reichl, 1999)
- strength of conscience in adolescence (Hart, 1988).



### HELP STUDENTS FIRST LEARN

Taking the perspectives of others (see ES-4 for assessment ideas).  
Identifying options and consequences of actions (see ES-6 and ES-7).  
Some skill in controlling social bias (see ES-5 for ideas).  
Developing general reasoning skills (see EJ-1 for assessment ideas).

### SUBSKILLS OVERVIEW

Judging perspectives  
Reasoning about standards and ideals  
Reasoning about outcomes

#### Contexts for Ethical Decision-Making

For media literacy	At school
With friends	On the street
In public places	In businesses





## **Ideas for Promoting Ethical Judgment in the Classroom**

Students develop their judgments about getting along with others in the following sequence. In order to stimulate growth, teachers can design the classroom in many different ways. Teachers' behavior in the classroom fosters particular types of reasoning:

### **Personal Interest Reasoning**

- Teachers should focus on discipline/setting limits.
- Teachers should encourage children to learn cooperative skills by using cooperative learning, peer mediation and conflict resolution.
- Teachers should use role-playing, simulations and discussions to encourage good peer relations and avoid discrimination against differences.

### **Maintaining Norms Reasoning**

- Teachers should set up bilateral agreements with student groups to meet current needs.

### **Post-conventional Reasoning**

- Teachers should emphasize choosing behavior that would be expected of others in similar circumstances and foster discussions about how an ideal society should be established.



## Subskill 1: JUDGING PERSPECTIVES

Former U.S. Supreme Court Justice, **Thurgood Marshall** was an expert in judging perspectives. During a time when racial segregation was the norm, Justice Marshall first worked for NAACP, winning the *Brown v. Board of Education* case. As Supreme Court Justice, Marshall opposed decisions that he believed supported arbitrary police practices, neglected the poor, or chipped away at civil rights. He was known for his principled judgments, which were not always popular at the time.

**Creative and Expert  
Implementer  
Real-life Example**

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 1: Immersion in Examples and Opportunities

*Attend to the big picture, Learn to recognize basic patterns*

**A look at perspectives in reasoning biases.** (1) Fiction. Use a film or story that presents the story differently depending on the character who is telling the story (e.g., Japanese film *Rashomon*, story *Moonstone*.) (2) Real simulation. Watch the film *Brown Eyes*, *Blue Eyes* or read the book about it. Discuss how one's circumstances can change one's perspective. (3) Game simulation. Use a simulation game that privileges one group over another and assess the attitudes of each group. Then switch roles and assess again.



**Perspectives on the OJ Simpson case.** Have students gather information about reactions to the OJ Simpson trial. Discuss the different perspectives on his guilt and innocence and what might have caused the difference in perspectives.

**Criteria for judging perspectives in a subject area.** Discuss agreed-upon criteria for judging the validity of a perspective in a particular subject area. For example, perspectives on global warming can be examined from a scientific perspective (are humans creating conditions to eliminate plant and animal life at a record rate?), a historical perspective (is the world progressing or regressing?), and a social studies perspective (is industrial development of a nation better than not?). Distinguish using the agreed-upon criteria from using pure feeling. Show examples from the subject area. After some aided practice, have students work in groups on specific problems, applying the criteria.

#### Level 2: Attention to Facts and Skills

*Focus on detail and prototypical knowledge, Build knowledge*

**Impartiality in the legal system.** Bring in a local judge to discuss the nature of impartiality. Focus on the relationship between impartiality and fairness. How does impartiality help the judge make fair decisions? How does the judge practice impartiality?



Starred ★ activities within each subskill go together!



## Subskill 1: JUDGING PERSPECTIVES

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 2 (continued)

**Stepping outside the box.** Give students an ethical dilemma of in-group versus out-group. Students practice taking the perspective of the out-group members (i.e. stepping outside the box) and make their decision using that perspective. For example, out-group members could be people who live in another country, another city, in another culture or religion, who are extremely poor, who are ill, who are elderly. Have students discuss why it is important to take the perspective of out-group members.

#### Level 3: Practice Procedures

*Set goals, Plan steps of problem solving, Practice skills*



**Bias in judgments.** Discuss the following facts (or others like them) and discuss what might be causing them:

- Women criminals tend to receive harsher punishments than men with the same records.
- African-American males tend to receive harsher punishments than white men with the same records.
- Tall men are more likely to get promoted, get the job, win the election.
- Fat women are more likely to not get promoted, not get the job, not win the election.

Have the students describe how they would practice impartiality to counter each of these facts (this can build on the Level 2 activity of impartiality).


**Applying discipline for misbehavior.** Discuss cases of peer misbehavior and how to make a decision about consequences. Use real or imaginary cases. Try to use a standard of impartiality. Discuss potential biases.

#### Level 4: Integrate Knowledge and Procedures

*Execute plans, Solve problems*



**Public Policy.** Identify several public policy issues (e.g., freedom of speech for hate groups, right to carry handguns, abortion, etc.) or policy issues in your own community. Have students identify the positions that people have on the issue and what perspective that different individuals bring to the issue that affects their judgment. Let students select criteria for judging the validity of the positions and apply them. Students report on their work.

Starred  activities within each subskill go together!

#### Assessment Hints

##### Judging perspectives

Use multiple-choice, true-false, short answer, or essay tests to assess students' knowledge of judging perspectives and detecting bias in others' perspectives.

Present new examples of biased and unbiased reasoning to students and have students identify whether they are biased and why.

## Subskill 2: REASONING ABOUT STANDARDS AND IDEALS

Creative and Expert  
Implementer  
Real-life Example

One of the most influential moral philosophers in history, **Immanuel Kant** was an expert in reasoning about standards and ideals. Kant argued that moral principles are categorical imperatives, or absolute standards of reason that have no exceptions and cannot be related to pleasure or practical benefit.

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 1: Immersion in Examples and Opportunities

*Attend to the big picture, Learn to recognize basic patterns*


**Judging codes.** (1) Students conduct research on how groups or individuals (e.g., religious leaders, city councils, state legislators, bioethicists) decide which codes are valid and which invalid (e.g., religious tradition, community tradition, reason, experts). (2) Interview an elder about a specific set of codes. How does the elder decide whether or not the code is a good one? (3) Sometimes codes can only be judged when they are applied because they can be applied in different ways. Find examples of this in a particular domain or culture.

**Stories and essays addressing ideals.** Students read texts that focus on an ideal (e.g., justice: *Les Miserables*, benevolence: *The Giving Tree*, beauty: *Strong Wind*, truth: *King Solomon and the two mothers*). Students identify the definition of the ideal in the text and explain how it applies in the story.

**Domain standards.** Invite an expert from a particular field of study to class. Ask the expert to identify the standards of excellence in their area of work, why the standards are important (socially), how the standards are instituted in their field, and how this affects the expert's work in the field. For example, a health professional could talk about standard of care and equal distribution of care; a judge could talk about the standard of justice and how this is ensured in the legal system.

**My standards and ideals.** Students identify the standards and ideals of their heritage with one of the following activities, then write an essay about what they learn. Questions they explore during the activity should include: What are the sources for the standards and ideals? How are the sources accessed? How does one respect the standards and ideals? What happens when one violates them? (1) Students interview parents or guardians about the standards and ideals they hold in the family. (2) Students interview community elders (religious or cultural) about the standards and ideals of the community. (3) Students investigate their heritage and its standards and ideals.



Starred  activities within each subskill go together!



## Subskill 2: REASONING ABOUT STANDARDS AND IDEALS

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 2: Attention to Facts and Skills

*Focus on detail and prototypical knowledge, Build knowledge*

**Creating reasons for options.** In decision-making situations, a person thinks of all possible options, and then chooses one of those options based on a reason. Present an ethical dilemma to the students. Have students practice generating reasons for as many options as possible, focusing on reasons that are based on standards and ideals. In small groups, have the students generate reasons, based on standards and ideals, for as many options as possible. **Assess** students by having them complete this activity individually.

**Exploring reasoning in other judgment processes.** Explore with the students the different kinds of judgment processes used in your own and different communities (e.g. U.S. legal system, peace circles, community mediation). If possible, invite an individual who works in one of these judgment processes. Discuss with students how reasoning about standards and ideals is a part of these processes.


**Exploring standards in a subject area.** Have students obtain information about the standards for excellence in a particular subject area (e.g., scientific research, legal system, business). Discuss how these standards compare and contrast with standards in other areas of study.



**Community member's experiences of ideals and standards.** Have students interview non-relative adult community members about one of the following ideals: justice, truth, benevolence, and beauty. Students ask the community member to tell them a story about an experience of justice, truth, benevolence, or beauty, in which s/he better understood the ideal by seeing or experiencing how it was upheld or violated. Have students present their interview findings to the class.

**Violation of ideals.** After exploring what the ideals mean according to scholars and community members, bring it to a personal level. Students discuss what instances of justice and injustice can look like. Have students discuss (or journal) personal experiences of injustice. Do the same for experiences of lack of truth, benevolence, or beauty.

**Forms of duty: obligations and commitments.** Have students think of an adult family member's obligations and commitments, and their own obligations and commitments. Define and contrast these standards and then have the students describe and discuss how they influence the ethical decision-making process. Use a specific issue that interests them: for example, saying 'no' to a peer.

Starred  activities within each subskill go together!



## Subskill 2: REASONING ABOUT STANDARDS AND IDEALS

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 2 (continued)

**Understanding benevolence.** Define and contrast different forms of benevolence with the students (e.g., kindness, charity, altruism). Students discuss how they have seen these concepts in their own community and how it affected other people or the community. Then students think about how they have shown these concepts in their own past behaviors, or how they can show them in future behavior. The students then describe and discuss how these concepts influence the ethical decision-making process.

#### Level 3: Practice Procedures

*Set goals, Plan steps of problem solving, Practice skills*


**Personal balance sheet with standards** (based on Mann, Harmoni, & Power, 1991). Presented with an ethical dilemma, students make a personal balance sheet, in which they have 2 columns with the headings of options and standards. Students then list all of the options with corresponding standards, which they discuss with their parents/guardian. Based on this discussion, students make a decision and state their reason (which should be based on community or family standards and ideals) behind it. They then defend it in a group or classroom discussion.

**Ethical dilemma discussions.** Use hypothetical or classroom-based ethical dilemmas to start a discussion on what standards or ideals one can apply to making a decision about the dilemma. Make sure students are applying their religious/cultural/ community codes. See appendix for description of an ethical dilemma discussion. **Assess** by giving students a description of an ethical dilemma, and ask students to describe all ethical actions that one could take to resolve the dilemma. Describe reasons (based on standards and ideals) for taking each action.

**Justice in ethical dilemmas.** Present to the students ethical dilemmas that involve issues of justice that could happen (or have happened) in their community. Students explore what justice means in their community and apply it to the dilemmas. The students then discuss how concepts of justice can be applied in their reasoning and decision-making process. This activity can also be done with the other standards of benevolence and truth.

**Understanding ethical dilemmas in other cultures.** Discuss with students how ethical ideals may vary in other cultures. If appropriate, use cultural differences that exist in your community. For example, how would having one of the following ideals as a priority affect your deliberation about an ethical dilemma: (1) Obeying your elders; (2) Trying not to do anything wrong in this life that you will pay for in your next life; (3) Respecting creation. Ask students to apply their own religious/cultural perspectives.



Starred  activities within each subskill go together!



## Subskill 2: REASONING ABOUT STANDARDS AND IDEALS

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 4: Integrate Knowledge and Procedures

*Execute plans, Solve problems*

#### Recognizing the ambiguity in ethical dilemmas and arguments.

“Moral dilemma” means that there is a clash of 2 or more values so that it is hard to decide on what is right or wrong. Present to the students real-life ethical dilemmas where there are no clear “right” or “wrong” answers. Facilitate a discussion with the students in resolving these dilemmas. Have students identify the cultural/religious perspectives of the community in their discussion, including their own heritage.



**Ethical dilemmas involving multiple cultural differences.** Discuss the possible standards behind ethical/moral practices in other cultures. If possible, use ethical/moral practices of different cultural groups within the community. Some concrete examples include girls not being able to wear the ‘veil’ in French classrooms, girls and women not being allowed in public without a male relative in Afghanistan, and boys being expected to sacrifice themselves for the Palestinian cause. Then have the students research what the reasons behind these practices are, using media resources and cultural experts. **Assess** the students’ reports of their research results.

**Ethical dilemmas in a particular field.** Identify a real-life ethical dilemma in a particular field and an expert who would be willing to come to class to discuss the ethical dilemma with students. Present the ethical dilemma to students and have the expert assist in facilitating a discussion about the dilemma among students. **Assess** by having students write an essay about the dilemma afterwards and have the expert assess them.


#### Assessment Hints

##### Reasoning about standards and ideals

Use multiple-choice, true-false, short answer, or essay tests to assess students’ understanding of justice.

Present new ethical dilemmas to students and have students list the possible optional actions and reasons, based on standards and ideals, for each action.

Present different dilemmas based on different standards (e.g., justice, benevolence, obligations, etc.) and have students identify what standards apply to each dilemma.

Starred  activities within each subskill go together!



## Subskill 3: REASONING ABOUT OUTCOMES

*Creative and Expert  
Implementer  
Real-life Example*

Supreme court justice, *Thurgood Marshall*, was an expert in reasoning about outcomes. He had a profound sense of social justice and made many decisions (some of them controversial) based on his deep commitment to justice and civil rights. During a time when racial segregation was the norm, Justice Marshall won the *Brown v. Board of Education* case. As Supreme Court Justice, Marshall opposed decisions that he believed supported arbitrary police practices, neglected the poor, or chipped away at civil rights. He was known for his principled judgments, which were not always popular at the time.

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 1: Immersion in Examples and Opportunities

*Attend to the big picture, Learn to recognize basic patterns*

**Outcomes of legal cases in the news.** Students bring in news stories about judgments that were made concerning transgressions of individuals. Discuss (a) what perspective the individual judged might have about the outcome and why (such as personal gain or loss), (b) what perspective the judge might have about the transgression and why (such as level of harm to the community), (c) public reaction to the case and what drives the reaction and (d) the perspective of the students' heritages (religious, cultural).



**What is fair?** Have students react to community- or school-related controversial issues with the following questions: What is there to be worried about? Who benefits or doesn't from the situation? What is a fair outcome and why? They should apply reasoning that includes their own religious/cultural codes to the discussion. Issues could include: (a) Hockey coach allowing his team to watch pornographic films in the hotel during away games. (b) Student cheating in order to get an A in a class. (c) Player cheating on the football field, pretending he caught a pass when it actually hit the ground.

**Social justice.** Students read about leaders for social justice and discuss why justice is important to these leaders. Have students find out about social justice in their own community, and find out which groups advocate for what kind of justice. Students discuss what outcomes these groups would like to see as a result of their work in social justice. If looking at multiple kinds of social justice groups, students can compare the desired outcomes of the different groups. After finding out what has happened and is happening in the community, students then think of a social justice action that they can participate in within their community. What outcome do they want to see as a result of their social justice action?

Starred ★ activities within each subskill go together!



## Subskill 3: REASONING ABOUT OUTCOMES

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 2: Attention to Facts and Skills

*Focus on detail and prototypical knowledge, Build knowledge*




**What is a good outcome?** Select a particular ethical ideal (justice, benevolence, truth, etc.) in a specific domain (parent's work, particular community issue, particular school issue). Have students investigate the nature of a good outcome based on using one of these ideals. How do people measure outcomes? What time line do they use? What is good? Have them interview elders and parents about their opinions. NOTE: This activity can be paired with the starred activity in Subskill 2 (Reasoning about standards and ideals) Level 2. The community member could talk about what a good outcome was (or would/should have been) in their experience.

**Thinking about fairness in ethical dilemmas.** Present to the students ethical dilemmas that were solved one way or another. The dilemmas can be real-life dilemmas that occurred in school, the community, or the news; hypothetical ones; or dilemmas that appear in curricula content. The students then discuss the outcomes. What criteria did people apply in making a decision? How was the outcome positive or negative? **Assess** with essays on a teacher-selected or student-selected dilemma.

**Thinking about preserving ideals in solving ethical dilemmas.** Present to the students ethical dilemmas that involve issues of duty, loyalty, justice, benevolence, or another ideal. The dilemmas can be (a) real-life dilemmas that occurred in school, the community, or the news, (b) hypothetical ones, or (c) dilemmas that appear in curricula content. The students then discuss how the ideal can be preserved in making a decision and what the outcome of the ideal should be.

#### What Students Need to Know to Seek Assistance in Making Ethical Judgments

- Where to seek help in deciding
- Who to ask for help
- How to ask for help
- How to use other's insight

Starred  activities  
within each subskill  
go together!






## Subskill 3: REASONING ABOUT OUTCOMES

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 3: Practice Procedures


*Set goals, Plan steps of problem solving, Practice skills*

**Focusing on outcomes in a particular domain.** In order to make good decisions, people need a lot of information about the possible consequences of particular decisions. Within a particular domain, some outcomes are perceived to be better than others. In order to make a decision, people need to emphasize some aspects of a problem more than others (e.g., in business, increasing sales and income is a priority for shareholders. If this requires laying off many people—a negative side effect for them—so be it because it is less important than the priority). Have students investigate (through interviews of people in the field, internet research, books, etc.) the desired outcomes in a particular domain (e.g., in medicine, it is discovering a cure for a dreaded disease). Students should find out as much as they can about the side effects of positive outcomes. Report to class. If possible, have a local expert from a specific domain come to class and talk to students after their investigation. 

**Personal balance sheet with outcomes** (based on Mann, Harmoni, & Power, 1991). Present students with an ethical dilemma involving fairness or other ethical standard have them make a personal balance sheet, in which they have 3 columns with the headings of options, codes, and outcomes. Students then list all of the options with their corresponding codes and possible outcomes in the next 2 columns. Students discuss the options and outcomes with their parents/guardian. Based on this information, students make a decision they think is most fair and state their reason behind it. They then defend it in a group or classroom discussion.

**Ethical dilemma discussions.** Use hypothetical or classroom-based ethical dilemmas to discuss what standards or ideals one can apply to making a decision about the dilemma AND what the outcomes would be for these applied ideals. Make sure students are applying their religious/cultural/community codes. See appendix for description of an ethical dilemma discussion. **Assess** by giving students a description of an ethical dilemma. Ask them to describe all ethical actions one could take to resolve the dilemma and describe reasons (based on standards and ideals) for taking each action.

**Prisoner's Dilemma.** Present the students with a hypothetical case, which consists of 2 prisoners who go before a judge. In a plea-bargaining arrangement, the judge presents them with the possible options and consequences: (1) if only one confesses, the confessor will be released and the nonconfessor will go to jail for 10 years, (2) if both confess, both go to prison for 5 years, and (3) if neither confesses, both go to prison for a year. The students can then discuss what codes may be underlying each option and what the most ethical option would be. For specific details, see Kidder's (1995) *How Good People Make Tough Choices*, pp. 181-182.

Starred  activities  
within each subskill  
go together!



## Subskill 3: REASONING ABOUT OUTCOMES

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 4: Integrate Knowledge and Procedures

*Execute plans, Solve problems*



**Ethical outcomes in a particular field.** Have students work in a particular domain, identify problems and their resolutions, and determine if the outcomes were good for that domain and whether or not the outcomes were ethical. Bring in an expert who will assess the students on their interpretations.

**Simulation of real decision-making.** In a particular field (e.g., stock market) provide students with a simulation in which they act as an 'expert' who must make decisions (e.g., buying or selling stocks) that have real costs. Students should identify what outcomes they were striving for, how successful they were at achieving them, what side effects they created, and how they would change their behavior next time.

#### Assessment Hints

##### Reasoning about outcomes

Use multiple-choice, true-false, short answer, or essay tests to assess students' understanding of certain standards (e.g., fairness, benevolence, loyalty, etc.) and the likely or common outcomes of each standard.

Present new ethical dilemmas to students and have students list the possible actions to be taken in the dilemma, the standards of reasoning to be used for each action, and the possible outcomes for each action.

Present different dilemmas based on different standards (e.g., fairness, benevolence, loyalty, etc.) and have students identify what standards apply to each dilemma and what outcomes could occur for each applied standard.

Starred ★ activities  
within each subskill  
go together!





## **Create a Climate to Develop Ethical Reasoning Skills**

- Encourage students' commitment to use ethical reasoning to make decisions. Discuss with them human tendencies to lose control and do harm when emotions are high.
- Encourage students to carefully and systematically think about a problem and consciously use a decision-making process to make ethical decisions.
- Encourage students to discuss ethical decisions with their parents and elders.
- Remind students that their decisions affect family, school, neighborhood, and community.
- Encourage students' commitment to justice/fairness through discussing students' experiences of injustice, reading about leaders for social justice, or performing a social justice action in the community.
- Encourage students' commitment to be impartial throughout the judgment process. Discuss human tendencies to favor one individual over another, or not consider all options, or misjudge the probability of consequences occurring.



## Sample Student Self-Monitoring Developing Ethical Reasoning Skills

*Encourage active learning by having students learn to monitor their own learning*

○

### **Judging perspectives**

Am I thinking carefully about the problem and my reasons?

Do I know what my biases are?

What biases do I have that would affect my decision?

Do I know how my biases affect my decision-making process?

Am I considering others' perspectives?

### **Reasoning about standards and ideals**

○

What would be the most just or fair decision, based on standards and ideals?

How do my obligations and commitments affect my decision?

Am I objectively prioritizing my ethical ideals, standards, and the outcomes?

### **Reasoning about outcomes**

Do I know what all of the consequences would be?

Am I considering all of the consequences?

○

How do I want others to be affected by my decision?

What would be the most just or fair decision, based on the outcomes?

Am I objectively prioritizing my ethical ideals, standards, and the outcomes?

# Reflecting on the Process and Outcome of Ethical Action

(Think back)

## Ethical Judgment 5

*This skill addresses the Minnesota Comprehensive Goals of Purposeful Thinker, Responsible Citizen, Self-directed Learner, and Productive Group Participant.*

### WHAT

Reflection is an important metacognitive (or thinking about thinking) skill. It consists of examining one's thinking processes and outcomes. For students to consistently make good ethical decisions, they must reflect on both their *judgment process* and their *resulting decision*.

### WHY

Being able to reflect on thinking processes and outcomes is related to growth in social understanding, ethical behavior, and expertise. Reflection is what distinguishes humans from animals. Animals are ruled by instincts, whereas with reflection and self-awareness, humans can change their instinctive behaviors when they are harmful.

### HELP STUDENTS FIRST LEARN

Ethical reasoning (EJ-4).



### SUBSKILLS OVERVIEW

#### **Subskill 1: Monitoring one's reasoning**

Monitoring the reasoning processes before, during, after  
Monitoring the products of reasoning

#### **Subskill 2: Reasoning about means and ends**

Assessing viability of options  
Determining appropriateness of actions  
Assessing effects of actions



**Creative and Expert  
Implementer  
Real-life Example**

## Subskill 1: MONITORING ONE'S REASONING

Supreme Court Justice, **Ruth Bader Ginsburg** is an expert in monitoring her reasoning. Justice Ginsburg is known for her scholarly, balanced opinions.


### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 1: Immersion in Examples and Opportunities

*Attend to the big picture, Learn to recognize basic patterns*



**What is reflection? Self-monitoring.** Reflection involves monitoring your reasoning process and assessing the decision you made. Focus students' attention to what monitoring their reasoning looks like. Present to students examples of decision-making situations (e.g., you see your friend cheating on a test). Assist the students through the reasoning process by cueing them to think about options to think about, what each option represents (honesty, loyalty, etc.), and the reasons behind the options. Write the process on the board, and help them to collectively make a decision. Then review the process with the students, seeing if they should have discussed more issues, options, or reasons. After the review, point out to students that they were reflecting on their reasoning process.

Starred  activities within each subskill go together!

**Emotions and reflection.** Emotions can both be a guide to decision-making and a hindrance. When stable, emotions can temper cold reason (e.g., city council evicting a non-profit food shelter because putting a parking ramp in that location would make money). However, when inflamed, emotions can derail good reasoning (e.g., community members screaming irrationally at city council members at a hearing about the food shelter eviction). Have students watch or read examples of both types of emotional influence and discuss. What outcomes result from these extreme emotional states? Does this mean that emotion should not play a role in reasoning and reflection? (No, just extreme emotion).

### Assessment Hints

#### Monitoring one's reasoning

Present examples of reflection and non-reflection that vary in emotional intensity. Have students identify examples of good reflection with stable emotions. Also have students identify examples of poor reflection and explain why it is poor.

Use multiple-choice, true-false, short answer, or essay tests to assess students' knowledge of monitoring reasoning skills.

Use a new ethical dilemma (with the character's judgment process described) and have students evaluate (or reflect on) the reasoning process that the character used.

## Subskill 1: MONITORING ONE'S REASONING

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 2: Attention to Facts and Skills

*Focus on detail and prototypical knowledge, Build knowledge*

**Reflecting on the decision-making process.** In order for students to reflect on their reasoning process, they need to know what a typical reasoning process typically should look like. Present a decision-making algorithm to them, like the one below. Guide them through the process using examples (such as a community problem or decision to be made) and reflect on the process afterwards.




- Identify problem and decision to be made
- Consider all consequences (both positive and negative) of all alternatives, especially how alternative may affect others (including individuals in both the in- and out-group)
- Evaluate options (WHY and HOW about each alternative)
- Make a decision

**Awareness of difficulty of different dilemmas.** Students should understand that different dilemmas or decision-making situations make different demands on them. Give students a variety of ethical dilemmas with a large range of difficulty. Ask students to record in a journal which ones are easy and which ones are difficult and explain why. Ask students to think about difficult ethical dilemmas they encountered in the past and describe what was difficult about them.

**The thinking strategy of summarizing.** Present to students various ethical dilemmas. Ask students to develop various summaries or “maps” of the dilemmas. Record a description of the dilemma to help them remember all of the relevant information, and record their thought process through the dilemma (i.e., a description of the content and sequence of their decision-making process). Discuss with students when and why using this strategy might be most helpful.

**The thinking strategy of self-questioning.** Present to students various ethical dilemmas. Ask students to use self-questioning to remember important information about the dilemma and to review the thought process used to resolve the dilemma (i.e., the content and sequence of their decision-making process). Discuss with students when and why using this strategy might be most helpful.

Starred  activities  
within each subskill  
go together!





## Subskill 1: MONITORING ONE'S REASONING

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 3: Practice Procedures

*Set goals, Plan steps of problem solving, Practice skills*



**Describing own judgment process.** Present students with ethical dilemmas. Have them make a decision and write it down. Then ask the students to describe the judgment process that they used (e.g., thinking about specific options, consequences, codes, and reasons). Ask students to present the ethical dilemma to an adult (e.g., parent, family member) and have the adult think through the dilemma out loud, while the student records the process. Finally, have them compare their judgment process to their interviewee's, and a comprehensive judgment process that the teacher presents in class (e.g., the process used in the Level 2 activity). Students evaluate their strengths and weaknesses in completing the judgment process.

**Journaling about decision-making process.** Have students keep a journal for a week or two. Ask them to write down at least one decision they made each day and whether they monitored their reasoning process during or after they made a decision. Ask them to evaluate how monitoring their reasoning (or not monitoring their reasoning) influenced the decision they made.

**Ethical conflict/dilemmas discussion and self-monitoring.** Students debate about ethical situations and decision-making (use community problems or issues if possible). In Haan, Aerts, and Cooper's (1985) *On Moral Grounds*, the authors provide five guidelines for the discussion. After students debate, they describe how their thinking process should be improved in the future (e.g., take new factors into account, weigh certain consequences more heavily than others, etc.) when making decisions in the particular ethical situation discussed. Have students describe their ethical decision-making process before and after the debate. Ask the students to reflect on what they learned.

#### Level 4: Integrate Knowledge and Procedures

*Execute plans, Solve problems*



**Mentoring others in decision-making.** Assign students a younger student who needs assistance in an area of reasoning. Prepare the older students carefully to ensure that they are able to guide the younger student through a thorough decision-making process and ask concrete questions about whether everything was considered. Explain to the older students that the younger students probably do not have the reflection skills that they do, so they need to be very explicit and concrete in their reasoning guidance with the child. Use real-life, curriculum-based, or simple problems.

Starred ★ activities  
within each subskill  
go together!



## Subskill 2: REASONING ABOUT THE MEANS AND ENDS

*Creative and Expert  
Implementer  
Real-life Example*

**Biomedical ethicists** often deal with difficult issues of biological technology and human life. They are constantly engaging in reasoning about means and ends, often making decisions about life-or-death issues.

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 1: Immersion in Examples and Opportunities

*Attend to the big picture, Learn to recognize basic patterns*

**What is reflection? Means and ends.** Reflection involves monitoring your reasoning process and assessing the decision you made. Focus students' attention to what assessing their decision looks like. Present to students examples of decision-making situations (e.g., you see your friend cheating on a test). Assist the students through the reasoning process by cueing them to think about options, what each option represents (honesty, loyalty, etc.), and reasons behind the options. Help them to collectively make a decision. Then review with them the viability of the options, the effects of the decision on others and self, and the overall appropriateness of the decision. After the review, point out to students that they were assessing the adequacy of the decision.



#### Level 2: Attention to Facts and Skills

*Focus on detail and prototypical knowledge, Build knowledge*

**Reflecting on the products of decisions.** Present to students both hypothetical and real-life examples of decision-making situations in which a poor decision was made. Assist them in assessing the poor decision. Have them evaluate each of the following: the viability of the options, the effects of the decision on others and self, and the overall appropriateness of the decision. Ask them to determine why the decision was poor, based on their evaluation of the three criteria. Have students make a new decision and go through the three criteria again to ensure that it's a good decision.



Starred ★ activities within each subskill go together!



## Subskill 2: REASONING ABOUT THE MEANS AND ENDS

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 3: Practice Procedures

*Set goals, Plan steps of problem solving, Practice skills*

#### Exploring means and ends in fictional character's judgment

**processes.** Give students ethical dilemmas in which the character makes a decision and the character's judgment process and decision are described (e.g., in literature, court case, movies). Ask students to describe the judgment process that the character used and to evaluate whether the character's decision was appropriate. Questions for the students to answer include the following. What options did the character consider? Were there other options that the character did not consider? What consequences did s/he think about in making his decision? What codes, standards, or ideals did the character consider? What was the deciding factor of the character's decision? Do you think the character's decision was appropriate? Why or why not?



**Evaluating judgment process and outcome.** Present students with an ethical dilemma in which they make a decision about what to do (use real-life decision-making situations in your school and community). Afterwards, students reflect on their decision, evaluating the viability of the options, the effects of the decision on others and self, and the overall appropriateness of the decision. Ask them to state whether the judgment made was the most ethical and why.

#### Assessment Hints

#### Reasoning about means and ends

Use multiple-choice, true-false, short answer, or essay tests to assess students' knowledge of reasoning about means and ends skills (e.g., assessing the viability of the options, the effects of the decision on others and self, the overall appropriateness of the decision).


Use a new ethical dilemma (with the character's judgment process described) and have students evaluate, or reflect on, the means and ends of the character's judgment process.

#### Level 4: Integrate Knowledge and Procedures

*Execute plans, Solve problems*



**Mentoring others in decision-making.** Assign students a younger student who needs assistance in an area of reasoning. Prepare the older students carefully to ensure that they consistently help the younger student reflect on whether the decision was good. Use real-life, curriculum-based, or simple decision situations.

Starred  activities within each subskill go together!



## Create a Climate to Develop Reflection Skills

- Encourage students' commitment to use reasoning to make decisions. Discuss with them human tendencies to lose control (and do harm) when emotions are high.
- Encourage students to carefully and systematically think about a problem and consciously use a decision-making process to make ethical decisions.
- Encourage students' commitment to making the best decisions for family, school, neighborhood, and community. Have the student refer to his or her commitments periodically for assignments
- Promote students' feeling and taking responsibility/accountability for their actions. Discipline students with immediate consequences and a given reason. Help parents with discipline plans that include giving reasons to student when disciplined. Discuss related dilemmas with slight variations.
- Encourage students' commitment to be impartial throughout the judgment process. Discuss human tendencies to favor one individual over another, or not consider all options, or misjudge the probability of consequences occurring.





## Sample Student Self-Monitoring Developing Reflection Skills

*Encourage active learning by having students learn to monitor their own learning*



### **Monitoring one's reasoning**

Did I define the problem accurately and entirely?

How difficult is this problem?

How much time did I spend making my decision?

Do I need to spend more time thinking about it?

Have my emotions affected my reasoning?

Did I think of all of the options?

If there are new options, how do they weigh against the other options considered?



Did I consider all of the consequences?

What is the probability of the consequences occurring?

Did I consider all of the codes, rules, or laws that apply to the problem?

What is the reason for my decision and why is it the best reason?

What is the product of my reasoning? Is it appropriate?

### **Reasoning about means and ends**

How workable are the possible options that I thought of?



What are the effects of the decision on others?

What are the effects of the decision on myself?

How appropriate is the decision?

How appropriate are the consequences that result from the decision?

# Planning to Implement Decisions

(Plan action)

*This skill addresses the Minnesota Comprehensive Goals of Purposeful Thinker, Responsible Citizen, and Self-directed Learner.*

## Ethical Judgment 6

### WHAT

Planning is the crucial step between making a judgment and implementing it. In planning to carry out an ethical decision, the student needs to think about what actions are required, possible obstacles, alternative actions, and resources that may be needed.

### WHY

Good planning skills are related to successful ethical implementation. Sometimes everything else goes right for an ethical action (e.g., noticing the problem, making a decision, being motivated to do it, having the resolve) but failure occurs in setting up the steps to complete an action.

### HELP STUDENTS FIRST LEARN

Ethical reasoning (EJ-2).



### SUBSKILLS

#### Subskill 1: Thinking strategically

- Goals
- Actions to be taken to carry out decision
- Time, sequence, and locations of future actions

#### Subskill 2: Implementing successfully

- Avoiding obstacles
- Preparing alternative plans

#### Subskill 3: Determining resource use



## Subskill 1: THINKING STRATEGICALLY

**Creative and Expert  
Implementor**  
*Real-life Example*

**Herbert Hoover** was an expert planner. As the 31st president of the United States, President Hoover took his beliefs about what the government's function should be and turned them into realities. Examples of his strategic thinking and excellent planning include the implementation of several programs to conserve of natural resources, protect equality of opportunity, encourage business efficiency, promote scientific research, and build major public works.

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 1: Immersion in Examples and Opportunities

*Attend to the big picture, Learn to recognize basic patterns*

**Awareness of planning.** Over a week, point out situations that require thinking ahead. Include both explicit events, like taking a vacation or having a party, and implicit events, such as playing a game, dressing for school or completing school assignments. Discuss the sequence of actions people take to complete their goals (e.g., knowing action/event to be planned, knowing actions or steps that must take place to carry it out).



**What planning looks like: Goals.** Present students with various scenarios of planning (e.g., taking steps to build a homeless shelter), via written stories, videos, or a presentation by a community member, to describe the planning of a community event. Students discuss how strategic planning, with subgoals and concrete steps, is necessary for effectively implementing a decision or goal. Students also describe the sequence of actions for planning.

**Planning in particular fields.** Bring in one or more experts from the community (e.g., farmer, community organizer, engineer, sport player) to discuss and demonstrate how he or she uses planning in his or her work.

#### Level 2: Attention to Facts and Skills

*Focus on detail and prototypical knowledge, Build knowledge*

**Attention to goals.** In order to plan *anything*, one has to have a goal to plan towards it. Over a week, point out situations that require thinking ahead, and emphasize the goal of the planned event. After a number of examples, start asking to students to identify the goal of the planned situation (rather than you explaining it to them). Then ask them to identify their own planning situations over a week and describe the planning situation and goal of the situation in a journal.

Starred ★ activities  
within each subskill  
go together!



## Subskill 1: THINKING STRATEGICALLY

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 2 (continued)

**Examples of strategic/nonstrategic thinking.** Use books, movies, or television shows in which the characters show, or should have shown, strategic thinking. Discuss with students that planning involves identifying goals and the specific actions that need to be taken to implement these goals. Help students identify the character's goals and determine whether the character had to predict and plan actions to achieve his/her goals. Ask students to identify the actions that the character had to plan (or should have planned) to achieve his/her goals.

**Observing planning.** Have the students watch other people plan out loud. They could watch a teacher plan a party in class or a lesson for next week. They could also be assigned to watch their parent/guardian or community member plan an event (e.g., dinner, holiday event, family trip). Have the students write a description of the planning process, attending to goals, actions and sequence, of their family or community member.



**Ethical planning at work.** Have students visit and interview an adult at a job in which ethical decisions are made (i.e., human welfare is affected). Develop a set of questions about the ethical decisions on the job, such as what kinds of ethical decisions must be made, what kind of planning is done for each kind of ethical decision, which ones are more difficult and is there a special type of planning needed, etc. Students report to class.

#### Level 3: Practice Procedures


*Set goals, Plan steps of problem solving, Practice skills*

**Strategic thinking in planning a class project: goals and steps.** In having students complete a big project for a class assignment, have part of the assignment be planning their project. Ask them to identify their goal in completing the project, specific actions that they need to take to achieve their goal, and a timeline for getting the actions done.

**Planning an ethical decision: Planning sheet.** Present students with an ethical dilemma in which they make a decision about what to do. Afterwards, ask students to plan how they would implement their decision. Have them use a personal planning sheet, in which they would describe in a table or algorithm: (1) their goal in resolving the dilemma, (2) specific actions that they need to take to achieve their goal, and (3) a timeline for getting the actions done.



**Shadowing ethical planning.** Have students observe an adult at work. Students should be prepared to write down what kinds of decisions were made, how they were planned, which decisions were ethical, etc. Students report to class.

Starred  activities within each subskill go together!



## Subskill 1: THINKING STRATEGICALLY

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 4: Integrate Knowledge and Procedures

*Execute plans, Solve problems*

**Thinking strategically about a future career: Goals.** Ask students to identify what they would like their ideal career to be. Ask them to identify the *ultimate goal(s)* they would like to achieve in their career. Then have them describe what *actions* they would need to take to (1) be in the career and (2) achieve their career goal. Encourage them to consult people in their career of choice or find the information in interviews with career exemplars published in magazines or on the web.

**Thinking strategically about getting a part-time job: Strategies.** Ask students to identify a part-time job that they would like to have during the summer or in high school. Have students identify what actions they would need to do to get the job (e.g., how and where would they look for their specified job, whether they would need any training or volunteer experience to qualify for the job, whether they would need to prepare an application or interview and how they would prepare for them, etc.). Have students then create a *timeline* that includes specific *steps* to get the job.



**Thinking strategically about a community problem: Goals and steps.** Present students with a community problem or issue. Ask students to come up with a solution to this problem (either individually, in groups, or as a class). Afterwards, ask students to plan how they would implement their decision. Have them write out a plan that includes: their *goal* in solving the problem, *specific actions* that they need to take to achieve their goal, and a *timeline* for getting the actions done. Have students present their plans to the class.

Starred ★ activities within each subskill go together!

#### Thinking strategically

#### Assessment Hints

Use multiple-choice, true-false, short answer tests to assess students' knowledge of planning skills.

Present to students hypothetical scenarios of individuals partaking in planning and not planning for an activity. Ask the students to identify which scenarios had individuals who planned.

Have students write a report on their planning observations and hand it in to be assessed.

Give students a dilemma where the character has made a decision. Ask the students to describe the character's goal in implementing the decision, specific actions that the character needs to take to achieve their goal, and a timeline for getting the actions done.

Have students record their planning and hand it in to be assessed.

Have students write an essay about their planning (for career or part-time job activities).





## Subskill 2: IMPLEMENTING SUCCESSFULLY

*Creative and Expert  
Implementer  
Real-life Example*

**Civil engineers** are experts in planning. Constructing bridges across rivers and bays, engineers have to identify and overcome a multitude of obstacles in order to build safe bridges for thousands, possibly millions, of people to use. If their plans are not successfully implemented, people's lives are at stake.

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 1: Immersion in Examples and Opportunities

*Attend to the big picture, Learn to recognize basic patterns*

**What planning looks like: Avoiding failure.** Present students with various scenarios of poor planning (e.g., having a birthday party for a friend and forgetting to buy a birthday cake and candles) and discuss why the bad outcome might have happened. Discuss with students how strategic planning needs to include thinking of possible obstacles ahead of time and having alternative plans for these obstacles. Students also describe what other possible obstacles could occur and alternative actions the character could take.



#### Level 2: Attention to Facts and Skills

*Focus on detail and prototypical knowledge, Build knowledge*

**Examples of successful/unsuccessful implementation.** Use books, movies, or television in which the characters show successful and unsuccessful implementation of goals. Discuss with students how the character did or did not implement his/her goal successfully. Emphasize the obstacles that arose and whether the character predicted these obstacles before they occurred. Also focus on the alternative plans that the character generated, or could have generated, to successfully implement his/her decision or goal.

**Identifying obstacles in planning for particular subject area.** Ask students (or assist them) to select a goal in the subject matter. Plan the subgoals and steps to reach the subgoals and ultimately the overarching goal. Write these on a chart, and next to each step, write down possible obstacles and what might be done if they arise.

**Identifying obstacles in ethical dilemmas.** Present students with an ethical dilemma (could also be a community problem or issue). Ask students to come up with a solution to this problem, and have students resolve the dilemma or problem and identify the goal of their solution. Plan the subgoals and steps to reach them and the overarching goal. Write these on a chart, and next to each step, write down possible obstacles and what might be done if they arise.



Starred ★ activities  
within each subskill  
go together!



## Subskill 2: IMPLEMENTING SUCCESSFULLY

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Assessment Hints

#### Implementing successfully

Use multiple-choice, true-false, and short answer tests to assess students' knowledge of planning skills.

Present to students hypothetical scenarios of individuals partaking in unsuccessful and successful planning for an activity. Ask the students to identify which scenarios had individuals who exhibited successful and unsuccessful planning. Ask students to explain possible reasons about why the planning was unsuccessful.

Give students a dilemma where the character has made a decision. Ask the students to describe which obstacles the character may encounter and alternative plans to overcome the obstacles.

Have students record their planning and hand it in to be assessed.

Have students write an essay about their planning (for career or part-time job activities).

Starred ★ activities within each subskill go together!

#### Level 3: Practice Procedures

*Set goals, Plan steps of problem solving, Practice skills*

**Obstacle identification in planning a class project.** In having students complete a big project for a class assignment, have part of the assignment be planning their project. Ask them to identify possible obstacles that may arise in completing their project and alternative actions to overcome the specified obstacles.

#### ★ Planning an ethical decision: Plans for overcoming obstacles.

Present students with an ethical dilemma (could also be a community problem or issue) in which they make a decision about what to do. Afterwards, ask students to plan how they would implement their decision. Have them use a personal planning sheet, in which they would describe in a table or algorithm: (1) possible obstacles that may arise in implementing their ethical decision, and (2) alternative actions to overcome the specified obstacles and successfully implement their decision.

#### Level 4: Integrate Knowledge and Procedures

*Execute plans, Solve problems*

#### Thinking strategically about a future career: Planning around

**obstacles.** Ask students to identify what they would like their ideal career to be. Ask them to identify possible obstacles that could arise in attaining their career and alternative actions that they could take to overcome the obstacles and be in that career. Encourage them to consult people in their career of choice or find the information in interviews with career exemplars published in magazines or on the web.

#### Thinking strategically about getting a part-time job: Obstacles.

Ask students to identify a part-time job that they would like to have during the summer or in high school. Have students identify possible obstacles that could arise in getting the job and alternative actions that they could take to overcome the obstacles and be hired for the job.

#### ★ Thinking strategically about a community problem: Planning around obstacles.

Present students with a community problem or issue. Ask students to come up with a solution to this problem (either individually, in groups, or as a class). Afterwards, ask students to plan how they would implement their decision. Have them write out a plan that includes: possible obstacles that could arise and alternative actions that they could take to overcome the obstacles.

## Subskill 3: DETERMINING RESOURCE USE

*Creative and Expert  
Implementer  
Real-life Example*

Assuring access for all patients needing organs for transplantation, the **United Network for Organ Sharing** (UNOS) developed and maintains the national patient waiting list for organ transplant. UNOS plays a critical role in determining resource (i.e., donated organ) use and distribution.

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 1: Immersion in Examples and Opportunities

*Attend to the big picture, Learn to recognize basic patterns*

**What planning looks like: Resources.** Present students with various scenarios of poor planning (e.g., having a birthday party for a friend and forgetting to buy a birthday cake and candles). Discuss with students how strategic planning needs to include thinking of all possible resources that will be needed and planning how much of the resources will be needed. Students also describe the possible resources may be needed for the example.



#### Level 2: Attention to Facts and Skills

*Focus on detail and prototypical examples, Build knowledge*


**Identifying resources in planning exercise.** Ask students (or assist them) to select a goal in the subject matter. Plan the subgoals and steps to reach the subgoals and ultimately the overarching goal. Write these on a chart. Indicate what resources you will need for each step. Use the list on page for ideas and to ensure comprehensiveness. Here is an example of resources needed for a lesson on communication skills:

*Semantic knowledge resources:* using specific concepts, their principles, and associations to learn the skill (e.g., what “paraphrasing” means and when it should be used)

*Expertise resources:* hearing from an expert to learn about the skill (e.g., a news anchor from a local television station talks to students about the importance of speaking clearly and articulately)

*Procedural knowledge resources:* using a specified procedure or process to learn the skill (e.g., the process of active listening)

*Material Resources:* using concrete materials for the lesson (e.g., a video camera is used to tape student’s speeches so that the student can self-evaluate his/her own speech)

Starred  activities within each subskill go together!



## Subskill 3: DETERMINING RESOURCE USE

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 2 (continued)



**Identifying resources in ethical dilemmas.** Present students with an ethical dilemma (could also be a community problem or issue). Ask students to come up with a solution to this problem, and have students resolve the dilemma or problem and identify the goal of their solution. Plan the subgoals and steps to reach the subgoals and ultimately the overarching goal. Write these on a chart. Indicate what resources you will need for each step. Use the list on page 84 for ideas and to ensure comprehensiveness.

#### Level 3: Practice Procedures

*Set goals, Plan steps of problem-solving, Practice skills*

**Identifying necessary resources for a class project.** In having students complete a big project for a class assignment, have part of the assignment be planning their project. Ask them to identify all possible resources that may need in completing their project and how they can obtain these resources.



**Planning an ethical decision with resources in mind.** Present students with an ethical dilemma (could also be a community problem or issue) in which they make a decision about what to do. Afterwards, ask students to plan how they would implement their decision. Have them use a personal planning sheet in which they would describe all possible resources that may need in carrying out their decision and how they can obtain these resources.

#### Level 4: Integrate Knowledge and Procedures

*Execute plans, Solve problems*

**Thinking strategically about a future career: Resources.** Ask students to identify what they would like their ideal career to be. Ask them to identify all possible resources that may be needed in reaching their career and how they can access these resources. Encourage them to consult people in their career of choice or find the information in interviews with career exemplars published in magazines or on the web.

**Thinking strategically about getting a part-time job: Resources.** Ask students to identify a part-time job that they would like to have during the summer or in high school. Have students identify all possible resources that may be needed in being qualified for, finding out about jobs, and getting the job and how they can access these resources.

Starred ★ activities  
within each subskill  
go together!



## Subskill 3: DETERMINING RESOURCE USE

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 4 (continued)

#### Thinking strategically about a community problem: Resources.

Present students with a community problem or issue. Ask students to come up with a solution to this problem (either individually, in groups, or as a class). Afterwards, ask students to plan how they would implement their decision. Have them write out a plan that includes all possible resources that may be needed and how they can access these resources.



#### Assessment Hints

##### Determining resource use


Use multiple-choice, true-false, and short answer tests to assess students' knowledge of planning skills.

Present to students hypothetical scenarios of individuals partaking in unsuccessful and successful resource planning. Ask the students to identify which scenarios had individuals who exhibited successful and unsuccessful resource planning. Ask students to explain possible reasons why the planning was unsuccessful.

Give students a dilemma where the character has made a decision. Ask the students to describe what resources the character will/may need and how the character could obtain the resources.

Have students record their resource planning and hand it in to be assessed.

Have students write an essay about their resource planning (for career or part-time job activities).

Starred  activities  
within each subskill  
go together!



## Examples of Resources

### **SOCIAL NETWORK RESOURCES**

Family  
 Friendship  
 Service group  
 Neighborhood  
 Social groups  
 Community  
 City  
 Park & Rec  
 State  
 National  
 International

### **SEMANTIC KNOWLEDGE RESOURCES**

Books and other library sources  
 Web  
 Librarians  
 Educators and Intellectuals  
 Business leaders  
 Community experts

### **AUTHORITY STRUCTURE RESOURCES**

School officials  
 Government officials (all levels)  
 United Nations  
 Other Leaders

### **ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES**

Any organization that can give guidance on your problem/issue

### **PERSONAL RESOURCES**

Abilities and skills that you have

### **AGE-GROUP RESOURCES**

Teen groups in various community organizations  
 School groups  
 Senior Citizen groups  
 Children's groups  
 Women's groups  
 Men's groups

### **MATERIAL RESOURCES (types of materials)**

Scraps (from scrap yards)  
 Second-hand (from second-hand stores, recycling places)  
 New  
 Handmade

### **EXPERTISE RESOURCES**

Social networking  
 Design  
 Musical  
 Physical (game/sport, dance)  
 Creating  
 Knowledge  
 Finance  
 Selling

### **FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

Grants  
 Loans  
 Donors  
 Earn money  
 Bartering (use library and experts to find these out)



## Create a Climate to Develop Planning Skills

- Encourage students to carefully and systematically think about a plan before acting on the decision.
- Encourage students' commitment to knowing, using, and accessing resources when planning.

### Sample Student Self-Monitoring Developing Planning Skills

*Encourage active learning by having students learn to monitor their own learning*

0

#### Thinking strategically

What are the goals of implementing the ethical action?

Did I identify all of the actions that are necessary to implement the decision?

What is the sequence of the future actions?

What is the timeline for future actions?

Where do the future actions need to take place?

0

#### Implementing successfully

Did I identify all of the possible obstacles that may arise when I am implementing the decision?

Did I determine all of the alternative actions that I could take when faced with any one of the possible obstacles?

#### Determining resource use

Did I identify all of the resources that I could access to implement my decision?

0

Do I know how to access the resources I need?

How should the resources be used?



# Ethical Judgment 7

## Developing Optimism

(Develop optimism)

*This skill addresses the Minnesota Comprehensive goals of Productive Group Participant and Responsible Citizen.*

### WHAT

Optimism is the sense of having a positive outlook. This positive outlook pervades an entire belief structure:

- having positive attributions toward others
- having hope for a satisfying future
- finding the silver lining in most experiences
- having positive perseverance under adverse conditions.

At advanced levels optimism can be a motivating force for others.

### WHY

With the increase in pessimism in today's society, the consequences of pessimism have proliferated among children: depressed mood, resignation, underachievement, and poor physical health. However, students who learn the skills of optimism are at a reduced risk for depression and show increases in school performance and improved physical health (Seligman, 1995). What one believes makes a big difference.

### HELP STUDENTS FIRST LEARN



Controlling social bias (ES-5).

Caring by connecting to others (ES-2).

### SUBSKILLS OVERVIEW

**Subskill 1: Applying positive thinking skills**

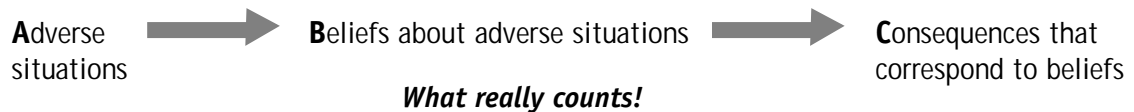
**Subskill 2: Modifying affect in thinking**

- **Decatastrophizing** (thinking about both the best and worst case scenarios in adverse situations) vs. **catastrophizing** (thinking only about the worst case scenario)
- Identifying and countering negative thinking

**Subskill 3: Explaining causes (or attributions) of others' actions**

### ABC MODEL

(Seligman, 1995)





## Subskill 1: APPLYING POSITIVE THINKING SKILLS

*Creative and Expert Implementer Real-life Example*

**Oprah Winfrey** exudes optimism and positive thinking in her television talk show, *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, and her human service activities. Oprah has made a conscious pledge to keep her talk show positive, inspirational, and free of tabloid topics. She is also a dedicated activist for children's rights and a role model for donating time and money to human service organizations. As stated in the introduction to this skill, advanced levels of optimism can be a motivating force for others. Oprah, as a highly optimistic person, has motivated her millions of dedicated viewers to take interest in and spread positive spirits and actions.

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 1: Immersion in Examples and Opportunities

*Attend to the big picture, Learn to recognize basic patterns*

**Positive thinking in social situations.** Discuss with students the importance of being positive when interacting with others. Role play positive and negative thinking with students. Describe a hypothetical social situation for students and role play a person with negative thinking (e.g., point something wrong in everything with a pessimistic attitude) and ask students to interact with you. Then role play a person with positive thinking and have students interact with you. Facilitate a discussion among students about the differences between the two types of attitudes/thinking and which "character" students found more enjoyable and fun.




**Positive thinking on the job.** Invite experts to discuss how they use positive thinking in their work (you may have to search for people who do this consciously). For example, how do professionals who see troubled/disturbed people most of the time (probation officers, social workers, counselors, police officers) maintain a positive outlook?

#### Level 2: Attention to Facts and Skills

*Focus on detail and prototypical knowledge, Build knowledge*

**Understanding how to give others the "benefit of the doubt".** Define the meaning of giving others "the benefit of the doubt." Explain to students that giving other people the benefit of the doubt is one type of positive thinking. Present hypothetical situations to students (e.g., being "accidentally" pushed by another student who has made fun of you in the past) and ask students to role play giving "the benefit of the doubt" to the other student rather than accusing him/her of lying or pushing him/her back.

Starred  activities within each subskill go together!





## **Subskill 1: APPLYING POSITIVE THINKING SKILLS**

### **Ideas for Developing Skills**

#### **Level 2 (continued)**



**Understanding positive thinking in conflicts.** Most people think all conflicts are negative, and when in conflict, think negatively about others or self. Emphasize to students that conflicts can be good; they can actually strengthen relationships and friendships and contribute to positive feelings about oneself and others. For conflicts to be good the people in the conflict need to have positive thinking. They need to want to maintain a good relationship with the other person, be willing to work with the other person to resolve the conflict, and not think negatively about the other person or oneself. Find examples of conflicts in movies or books (e.g., the movie *Stand by Me*) or a community problem that involved positive thinking. Discuss with students how the characters in the book/movie or community members were positive about their conflicts in any way. Point out the intricacy of how someone can be angry with another person and still think about him/her positively at the same time. If using a community problem, ask a community member who has positive thinking to talk about the conflict and people's attitudes during the conflict.

**Scavenger hunt of positive thinking.** Set up an activity with staff in the school building. Have students work in groups to gather a list of positive comments from staff in the building. For example, they have to identify who corresponds to statements like these: "I help you to think about yourself in a positive way (Counselor). "I help you make positive choices for good health" (PE instructor, or kitchen cook). Students have to go to the person and find out if their guess is correct. The staff member is to give students a positive statement or aphorism—that the staff member values—to write down (e.g., "Look at the sunny side of life" or "Every cloud has a silver lining"). Use 5-10 staff/statements. Ask students to reflect on their responses to the positive statements.

#### **Level 3: Practice Procedures**

*Set goals, Plan steps of problem solving, Practice skills*

**Individual practice in giving others the "benefit of the doubt".**

After students have learned what giving others the benefit of the doubt is, ask them to practice doing this with others over the next week. Have them keep a journal, identifying and describing situations in which they have given others the benefit of the doubt (or could/should have).

Starred ★ activities  
within each subskill  
go together!

# Subskill 1: APPLYING POSITIVE THINKING SKILLS

## Ideas for Developing Skills

### Level 3 (continued)

**Using positive thinking in conflicts.** Once students have learned how they can be positive during conflicts, ask them to practice this in their relationships with peers, friends, and family. Have them keep a journal, identifying conflicts that they have had with others. Ask them to describe their positive thoughts during the conflict, or positive thoughts they could have had during the conflict.



**Read nonfiction positive thinking guides.** Students read such books as *The Power of Positive Thinking* (or excerpts from these types of books) and practice one or more techniques suggested. **Assess** by having students write a report on what technique they used and whether they found it helpful or not and why.

**Diagnosing negative thinking.** Select (carefully) examples of negative thinking on television shows, in movies or books. Have students work in groups to suggest positive ways the characters could have thought about the situation.

### Level 4: Integrate Knowledge and Procedures

*Execute plans, Solve problems*

**Mentoring others in positive attitudes.** Assign students a younger student who needs assistance in learning a particular social skill. Prepare the older students carefully to ensure that they keep a positive attitude throughout their interaction with the younger student and help the younger student think positive thoughts about learning the social skill.




### Assessment Hints

#### Applying positive thinking skills

Use multiple-choice, true-false, and short answer tests to assess students' knowledge of positive thinking skills (e.g., giving others the benefit of the doubt, being positive during a conflict with another person).

Provide a description of an adverse situation or conflict. Have the student respond to it by demonstrating positive thinking skills.

Starred  activities within each subskill go together!





**Creative and Expert  
Implementer  
Real-life Example**

## Subskill 2: MODIFYING AFFECT IN THINKING

**Abraham Lincoln** did not engage in catastrophizing thinking during the Civil War. In other words, he did not limit his thinking to only the “worst case scenario” outcome for the war. Instead he remained an optimistic anti-slavery advocate and worked to achieve the best-case-scenario outcome of the Civil War: a reunited United States.

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 1: Immersion in Examples and Opportunities

*Attend to the big picture, Learn to recognize basic patterns*

**Alternative thoughts.** Watch videos/films/television shows in which a character frequently thinks negative thoughts in reaction to events around him (e.g., Woody Allen characters, Jerry Seinfeld). Discern what the character is worried about. Create alternative thoughts the character could have in reaction to the events around him.



**Awareness of adverse events and how one thinks about its consequences: Not catastrophizing.** Explain to students that people can choose to react positively or negatively to adverse events and that how one thinks about the event and others’ actions will affect the outcome of the event. Emphasize to students the importance of not only thinking about the worst case scenario but also the best case scenario. Present an adverse event to the students (either a simple adverse event like the one below, or a larger, real-life community-oriented event) and have them brainstorm about what the worst and best case scenarios could be. Discuss with the students what would happen if the character only thought about the worst case scenario. Example of an adverse event: I had a birthday party at my house and invited 10 of my friends. After we ate cake, a bunch of my friends started whispering and wouldn’t tell me what they were saying.

#### Level 2: Attention to Facts and Skills

*Focus on detail and prototypical knowledge, Build knowledge*

**Lookout Week.** Have students find examples of negative thinking in the news and in their lives. Assign them to keep a record and report the negative thinking they observe. When they turn in their reports, choose some examples of negative thinking that they identified and present them to the class. As a group, brainstorm alternative ways to think about each of these examples.

Starred ★ activities  
within each subskill  
go together!

## Subskill 2: MODIFYING AFFECT IN THINKING

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 2 (continued)

**Countering catastrophic thinking.** Give students specific questions and cues to help them counter catastrophic thoughts (i.e., thinking only about the worst case scenario). Present an adverse event to the students (either a simple adverse event like the one below, or a larger, real-life community-oriented event). Use the following questions (from Seligman's (1995) *The Optimistic Child*) to have students answer after reading various adverse situations: (1) What is the worst thing that might happen? (2) What is one thing that the individual can do to stop the worst thing from happening? (3) What is the best thing that could happen? (4) What is one thing that the individual can do to help make the best thing happen? (5) What is the most likely thing that will happen? (6) What can the individual do to handle the most likely thing if it happens? Example scenarios (from Seligman's (1995) *The Optimistic Child*) include:

- Sandra's mom told her that she expected Sandra to clean the bathroom by the time she got home from work. When Sandra's mom gets home, she sees the bathroom is a mess and Sandra is outside playing.
- Joe is fifteen and likes a particular girl. His friends convince him to ask her out. He manages to get up the guts, and when he asks her, she says no.
- Jackie's parents are fighting a lot. She lies in bed at night and listens to them yell at each other. It seems as if they are fighting more each day.




#### Level 3: Practice Procedures

*Set goals, Plan steps of problem solving, Practice skills*

**Negative thinking in pop music.** Have students evaluate the words of the music they listen to. Ask students to write a report about their evaluations. Instruct them to include in their report whether the words are positive or negative. If there are positive words, describe what is positive, and if the words are negative, describe how the words can be changed to be more positive.

**Practicing decatastrophic thinking.** Ask students to identify adverse events over the next two weeks and write them in a journal. Instruct them to then answer the following questions (from Seligman's (1995) *The Optimistic Child*) for each adverse situation in order to practice decatastrophic thinking: (1) What is the worst thing that might happen? (2) What is one thing that the individual can do to stop the worst thing from happening? (3) What is the best thing that could happen? (4) What is one thing that the individual can do to help make the best thing happen? (5) What is the most likely thing that will happen? (6) What can the individual do to handle the most likely thing if it happens?



Starred  activities within each subskill go together!





## Subskill 2: MODIFYING AFFECT IN THINKING

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 3 (continued)

**Countering negative messages from friends and family.** Have students evaluate the messages they get about life from their family and friends. Using a journal, ask students to identify these messages and then describe how they would change them to be positive. Also ask students to write how they could verbally respond back to the negative message with a positive one and then communicate this to the other person.

#### Level 4: Integrate Knowledge and Procedures

*Execute plans, Solve problems*



**Puppet show.** Have students write a puppet show or a children's book for younger students in which they demonstrate how to decatastrophize and think positively. Have students give the show, or read the book, to younger children.

#### Assessment Hints

##### Modifying affect in thinking

Use media clips or written scenarios that have negative thoughts and have students identify the negative thoughts and write positive thoughts.

Provide a description of an adverse situation. Have the student respond to it describing both the best case and worst case scenario (Level 1) or answer the 6 decatastrophizing questions (Level 3).

Use multiple-choice, true-false, or short answer tests to assess students' knowledge of modifying affect skills (e.g., what catastrophic and decatastrophic thinking is and what the decatastrophizing thought process is).

Starred ★ activities  
within each subskill  
go together!

## Subskill 3: EXPLAINING CAUSES (OR ATTRIBUTIONS) OF OTHERS' ACTIONS

*Creative and Expert  
Implementer  
Real-life Example*

Through his famous speeches, **Martin Luther King, Jr.** was amazing in his ability to create hope and optimism out of issues of racism and social injustice. His speeches convinced many white U.S. Americans to take a stand on the issue of segregation.

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 1: Immersion in Examples and Opportunities

*Attend to the big picture, Learn to recognize basic patterns*

#### Awareness of adverse events and how one thinks about them:

**Attributions.** Explain to students that people can choose to react positively or negatively to adverse events and that how one thinks about the event and others' actions will affect the outcome of the event. Emphasize to students the importance of identifying one's beliefs about the event and changing their negative beliefs to positive beliefs. Present examples of adverse events and various consequences (either a simple adverse event like the one below, or a larger, real-life community oriented event). Have students brainstorm about what the beliefs might be for each consequence. Examples include:

Adverse event: I had a birthday party at my house and invited 10 of my friends. After we ate cake, a bunch of my friends started whispering and wouldn't tell me what they were saying.


Consequence 1: I got really mad and told them all to leave.

Consequence 2: I ignored them and announced that I'm now going to open presents.

Consequence 3: I smiled at them and turned to another friend and whispered something in his ear.

Discuss with the students which consequence and corresponding belief is the most positive and why it's better than the other consequences.



Starred  activities  
within each subskill  
go together!





## Subskill 3: EXPLAINING CAUSES (OR ATTRIBUTIONS) OF OTHERS' ACTIONS

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 2: Attention to Facts and Skills

*Focus on detail and prototypical examples, Build knowledge*



**How to think positively about adverse situations.** Positive or negative reactions to adverse situations greatly depend on the thought processes of the person. Individuals who react negatively to adverse situations often have automatic negative thoughts. They do not question whether these negative thoughts could be inaccurate, and they act on the negative thoughts, which often results in negative consequences. To help students react positively to adverse situations, explain to them that they need to be conscious of their thought process when encountering adverse situations. They can learn to think positively about adverse situations when they catch their automatic thoughts about the situation, evaluate these automatic thoughts (i.e., acknowledging that their automatic thoughts are not necessarily accurate), and generate more accurate explanations. Present examples of adverse situations to the students (either a simple adverse situation like the one below, or a larger, real-life community oriented situation) and go through each of the above steps. Example adverse situations include:

- ◇ My friend has been snapping back at me a lot lately.
- ◇ It's the first week of eighth grade and I don't feel like anybody likes me.
- ◇ My best friend got an invitation to another friend's party, but I didn't.

#### Level 3: Practice Procedures

*Set goals, Plan steps of problem-solving, Practice skills*



**Practicing positive thinking about adverse situations.** Have students in small groups generate their adverse situations through quick brainstorming. Have students respond to them by identifying an automatic negative thought and the likely consequence of the negative thought. Also have them respond to the adverse situation and the consequence of what's decided using the steps below. Have each group role play the two versions of their adverse situations for the rest of the class.

- What is my automatic negative thought?
- What is the belief behind my negative thought?
- What is the evidence for and against my belief?
- What are some other ways of seeing the situation?
- Are any of these other ways more accurate explanations?
- Which is the most accurate way of seeing the situation?

Starred ★ activities  
within each subskill  
go together!



## Subskill 3: EXPLAINING CAUSES (OR ATTRIBUTIONS) OF OTHERS' ACTIONS

### Ideas for Developing Skills

#### Level 4: Integrate Knowledge and Procedures

*Execute plans, Solve problems*

**Monitoring positive thinking about own adverse situations.** Have students keep track of the adverse situations that they experience over a period of time. Have them respond to the adverse situation using the steps in the Level 3 activity. Ask them to describe the situation, the process they used to respond to it, and the outcome of the situation in a journal.



#### Assessment Hints


##### Explaining causes (or attributions) of others' actions

Provide a description of an adverse situation with multiple consequences. Have the student respond to it describing both the beliefs behind each consequence (Level 1).

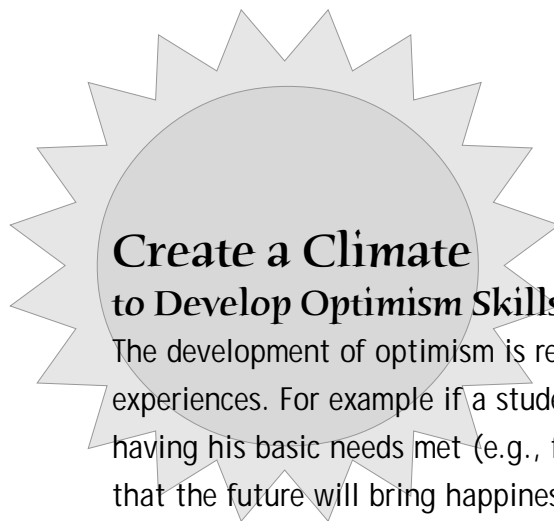
Provide a description of an adverse situation. Ask students to write their automatic thoughts, evaluate the accuracy of these thoughts, and generate other explanations that would be more accurate (Level 2).

Provide a description of an adverse situation. Ask students to answer the questions detailed in the Level 3 activity.

Assess journal entries when journaling is part of the activity.

Starred  activities  
within each subskill  
go together!





## Create a Climate to Develop Optimism Skills

The development of optimism is related to the resolution of past experiences. For example if a student has had difficulty in the past having his basic needs met (e.g., food, shelter) he may be less hopeful that the future will bring happiness and that people have beneficent motives.



To counter students' reinforced pessimistic attitudes, model an optimistic explanatory style to your students and encourage them to think in these ways: (from Seligman, 1995)

<u>Optimistic explanations</u>	<u>Examples</u>
Good events have permanent causes.	"Beth won the geography bee because she's a hard worker and studies for her geography class."
Bad events have temporary causes.	"It takes time to find new friends when you change schools."
Bad events have temporary explanations.	"I stink at math" (vs. "I stink at school" or "I'm not smart").
Good events have global explanations.	"Jerome got to play Peter Pan because he's got a lot of talent" (vs. "Jerome got to play Peter Pan because he's a good singer").
When something negative happens to you and it's your fault, it's due to temporary, specific, and internal causes.	"I got a D on the test because I didn't study hard enough" (vs. "... because I'm stupid"). "I did not make the basketball team because I'm not good at basketball" (vs. "... because the coach doesn't like me").



When you criticize your students, use temporary explanations that are specific to the situation.



When you hear other students use permanent, global criticisms of others ("He flunked his science test ... he's so dumb!"), intervene to offer and argue a more temporary and specific explanation of the negative event ("He did not do well on his science test because he didn't pay attention in class for the last two weeks and didn't study").

## Sample Student Self-Monitoring Developing Planning Skills

*Encourage active learning by having students learn to monitor their own learning*

○

### Applying positive thinking skills

When someone does something wrong to me or someone else that's questionably accidental or out of their control, I give him/her the benefit of the doubt.

When something goes wrong, I know it will work out eventually.

Things work out when I try something for the first time.

When something goes wrong, other things are okay.

○

### Modifying affect in thinking

When something goes wrong, I only think of think of the bad things that can/will happen. (reverse scored)

When something goes wrong, I think of the best case scenario that could happen.

When something goes wrong, I think of how I can change it to make it right.

When something goes wrong, I try to be realistic about what is most likely to happen.

○

### Explaining causes (or attributions) of others' actions

I try to catch my automatic thoughts when I encounter a negative situation.

I evaluate my automatic thoughts when encountering a negative situation.

I try to generate accurate explanations of why the negative situation happened.

## Selections to Post in the Classroom For Developing Optimism

As humans, we can try to explain to ourselves why something bad happened:

**The problem we are having will not last forever.**

**Optimism is a skill.**

**Being optimistic leads to more success in life.**

**Look for the good intention in others.**



# Ethical Judgment Appendix

## Contents

Topic	Page Number
Lesson Planning Guide	101
'Linking to the Community' Worksheet	103
Rubric Examples	109
Journaling	
Papers or Reports	
Group Project	
Special Activities	112
Cognitive Apprenticeship	
Cooperative Learning	
Guidelines for Cross-Age Tutoring	
Reciprocal Teaching	
Ethical Dilemma Discussion	
Linking EJ Skills to Graduation Standards	117
Linking EJ Skills to Search Institute Assets	118
Recommended Resources for Character Education	119
Resources/References for Ethical Judgment	120
Ethical Dilemma Resources with sample dilemma	
Book References Cited in Ethical Judgment Activities	
Citizenship Resources	
References Cited in Booklet	



# Lesson Planning Guide

STEP

WRITE YOUR DECISIONS HERE

1. Select an ethical category and identify the subskill you will address in your lesson(s).
2. Select a graduation standard or academic requirement and identify the sub-components.
3. Match up the ethical sub-skill with the academic sub-components.
4. Generate lesson activities using these elements:
  - (a) Enlist the community's resources. (For ideas, consult the *Linking to the Community* worksheet, pp. 78-83).
  - (b) Focus on a variety of teaching styles and intelligences.  
**Teaching Styles:** Visual, Auditory, Tactile, Kinesthetic, Oral, Individual/cooperative, Olfactory, Gustatory, Spatial  
**Intelligences:** Musical, Bodily-kinesthetic, Spatial, Logico-mathematical, Linguistic, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal
  - (c) Identify questions that you can ask that promote different kinds of thinking and memory.  
Creative Thinking  
Prospective Thinking (predicting, anticipating the future)  
Retrospective Thinking (examining the past)  
Motivational Thinking (focusing, setting goals, ideals)  
Practical Thinking  
Types of memory:  
Autobiographical (personal experience)  
Narrative (storyline)  
Procedural (how to)  
Semantic (what)
5. Create an activity for each level of expertise you will address (worksheet provided on next page). Indicate which activities fit with which lesson. For each activity, indicate how you will assess learning.



## Lesson Planning Guide (continued)

ACTIVITY

Student ASSESSMENT

Level 1: Immersion in Examples and Opportunities (*Attend to the big picture, Learn to recognize basic patterns*)

Level 2: Attention to Facts and Skills (*Focus on detail and prototypical examples, Build knowledge*)

Level 3: Practice Procedures (*Set goals, Plan steps of problem solving, Practice skills*)

Level 4: Integrate Knowledge and Procedures (*Execute plans, Solve problems*)

## CHECKLIST FOR **Linking to the Community**

What resources must be accessed for learning the skill or subskill?

What resources must be identified to successfully complete the skill or subskill?

### 1. SOCIAL NETWORK RESOURCES

***Circle the resources that must be accessed for learning the skill:***

Family___	Friendship___	Service group___
Neighborhood___	Social groups ___	Community___
City___	Park & Rec___	State___
National ___	International___	
Other:_____	Other:_____	

*On the line next to each circled item, indicate the manner of contact:*

Contact in person (P), by telephone (T)

### 2. SEMANTIC KNOWLEDGE RESOURCES

***Circle the resources that must be accessed for learning the skill:***

Books and other library sources___	Web___
Librarians___	Educators and Intellectuals___
Business leaders___	Community experts___
Other:_____	Other:_____

*On the line next to each circled item, indicate the manner of contact:*

Contact in person (P), Email (E), Web (W), Letter (L), telephone (T)



CHECKLIST FOR  
**Linking to the Community**  
 (continued)

**3. AUTHORITY STRUCTURE RESOURCES**

*Circle the resources that must be accessed for learning the skill:*

School officials \_\_\_ Government officials (all levels) \_\_\_ United Nations \_\_\_

Other Leaders: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Indicate the manner of contact for each item:*

Contact in person (P), Telephone (T), Letter (L), Email (E)

**4. ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES**

What types of organizations can give guidance?

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How can they help?

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CHECKLIST FOR  
**Linking to the Community**  
 (continued)

**5. AGE-GROUP RESOURCES**

*Circle the resources that must be accessed for learning the skill:*

- Teen groups in various community organizations\_\_\_\_

Specify:

- School groups\_\_\_\_

Specify:

- Senior Citizen groups \_\_\_\_

Specify:

- Children's groups\_\_\_\_

Specify:

- Women's groups\_\_\_\_

Specify:

- Men's groups\_\_\_\_

Specify:

*Indicate the manner of contact for each circled item:*

Contact in person (P), telephone (T)



CHECKLIST FOR  
**Linking to the Community**  
 (continued)

**6. MATERIAL RESOURCES**

Types of Materials

- scraps (from scrap yards)
- second-hand (from second-hand stores, recycling places)
- new
- handmade

***Identify the resources that must be accessed for learning the skill:***

What stuff do you need for your project?

---



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---

Where can you get it?

---



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---

How can you get it?

---



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*Indicate the manner of contact for each item:*

Contact in person (P), Telephone (T)



# CHECKLIST FOR Linking to the Community (continued)

## 7. EXPERTISE RESOURCES

*Types of Expertise*

social networking _____	design _____	musical _____
physical (game/sport, dance) _____	creating _____	knowledge _____
finance _____	selling _____	

***Identify the resources that must be accessed for learning the skill:***

What expertise is required?

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Who has expertise?

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Can I develop expertise or must I depend on an expert?

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Who can help me figure out what to do?

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*Indicate the manner of contact for each item:*

Telephone (T), Take a class (C), Contact in person (P), Book (B)



CHECKLIST FOR  
**Linking to the Community**  
 (continued)

**8. FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

*Circle the sources that must be accessed for learning the skill:*

Grants\_\_\_      Loans\_\_\_      Donors\_\_\_

Earn money\_\_\_

Bartering (use library and experts to find these out) \_\_\_

*Indicate the manner of contact for each circled item:*

Telephone (T), Letter (L)

**9. PERSONAL RESOURCES**

What abilities and skills do I have that I can use to reach the goal?

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**10. OTHER RESOURCES**

What other resources might be needed or are optional?

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# Rubric Examples

## GUIDES FOR CREATING YOUR OWN RUBRIC

### ***Creating Rubrics***

(Blueprint of behavior for peak or acceptable level of performance)

- ❖ Establish Learner Outcome goals
- ❖ Cluster these characteristics
- ❖ Determine which combinations of characteristics show  
Unsatisfactory, Satisfactory, Excellent 'job'
- ❖ Create examples of work showing different levels of performance
- ❖ List expectations on a form
- ❖ Present criteria to students ahead of time

## RUBRIC FOR JOURNALING

Quality of Journaling		
<p><b>Content: Quantity</b> Few requirements for content are covered.</p> <p>0      1      2      3</p>	<p>Most requirements are included and fairly well.</p> <p>4    5    6    7</p>	<p>Content requirements are thoroughly covered.</p> <p>8    9    10</p>
<p><b>Content: Clarity</b> Entries are difficult to understand.</p> <p>0      1      2      3</p>	<p>Entries can be understood with some effort.</p> <p>4    5    6    7</p>	<p>Entries are easily understood.</p> <p>8    9    10</p>



## Rubric Examples (continued)

### RUBRIC FOR PAPERS OR REPORTS

Qualities of Paper or Written Report		
<p><b>Organization</b></p> <p>The paper is difficult to follow.</p> <p>0      1      2      3</p>	<p>The paper is easy to follow and read.</p> <p>4    5    6    7</p>	<p>All relationships among Ideas are clearly expressed By the sentence structures and word choices.</p> <p>8    9    10</p>
<p><b>Writing Style</b></p> <p>The style of the writing Is sloppy, has no clear direction, Looks like it was written by Several people.</p> <p>0      1      2      3</p>	<p>The format is appropriate With correct spelling, good Grammar, good punctuation And appropriate transition Sentences.</p> <p>4    5    6    7</p>	<p>The paper is well written And is appropriate for Presentation in the firm.</p> <p>8      9      10</p>
<p><b>Content</b></p> <p>The paper has no point. The Ideas are aimless, disconnected.</p> <p>0      1      2      3</p>	<p>The paper makes a couple Of clear points but weakly, With few supportive facts.</p> <p>4    5    6    7</p>	<p>The paper makes one or Two strong points. Support for these arguments Is well described.</p> <p>8      9      10</p>



## Rubric Examples (continued)

### RUBRIC FOR GROUP PROJECT

Evaluation of a Group Project*	Rating
<i>Comprehension:</i> Seemed to understand requirements for assignment.	0 1 2 3 Not Observed
<i>Problem Identification and Solution:</i> Participated in identifying and defining problems and working towards a solution.	0 1 2 3 Not Observed
<i>Organization:</i> Approached tasks (such as time management) in systematic way.	0 1 2 3 Not Observed
<i>Acceptance of responsibility:</i> Took responsibility for assigned tasks in the project.	0 1 2 3 Not Observed
<i>Initiative/motivation:</i> Made suggestions, sought feedback, showed interest in group decision making and planning.	0 1 2 3 Not Observed
<i>Creativity:</i> Considered ideas from unusual or different viewpoints.	0 1 2 3 Not Observed
<i>Task completion:</i> Followed through in completing own contributions to the group project.	0 1 2 3 Not Observed
<i>Attendance:</i> Attended planning sessions, was prompt and participated in decision making.	0 1 2 3 Not Observed
*based on J. Bloomer & E. Lutz, Xavier University, cited in Walvoord, 1998, <i>Effective Grading</i>	

Add Total Score

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Divide by number of items scored with a number

Average: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:































