Embedding career education in the Victorian Curriculum F–10

Ethical Capability, Levels 9 and 10

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

1. Identify an existing learning activity

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

**Relevant content description:** Discuss issues raised by thinking about consequences and duties, in approaches to decision-making and action, and arguments for and against these approaches ([VCECD022](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCECD022))

**Existing activity:** Examining ethical tension between duties and consequences using the example of whether we have a duty to be honest even if this causes unhappiness for others.

**Summary of adaptation, change, addition:** Looking at examples that highlight tensions between duties and consequences in workplace scenarios.

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

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| Existing learning activity | Adaptations, changes or extensions that can be made |
| Teacher checks that class has a general understanding of the ethical terms ‘duties’ (determining what we should do based upon rules, ethical obligations, values or responsibilities we accept) and ‘consequences’ (that is, ‘consequentialism’ which involves weighing up actions against potential outcomes, and considering who those outcomes effect as the main determinant). | In addition, teacher ensures students can distinguish between types of duties, for instance, legal duties, duties of a job or role, or duties that employers have to their employees, and the different types of consequences that may arise from not following those duties. For example, the consequences of not following the law may involve receiving a fine or going to prison, whereas an employer not following duties to employees may risk their employees’ safety, or have unhappy employees who don’t want to work there. |
| The class considers a scenario to highlight tensions that may arise between duties and consequences. For instance, if you catch a friend sending a mean message about another of your friends, do you have a duty to tell them about this regardless of how much additional suffering this causes for all involved? Are you justified in lying if it made everyone happier?  | The class considers scenarios where duties and consequences could come into tension in a work context. Examples may include:* not telling your boss if you have too much work to do, but knowing that your duty is to do the work given, resulting in work not being done properly, or having to work very long hours to get it all done.
* reporting your supervisor or boss for a minor mistake, even if it results in poor consequences for yourself, colleagues, or the business.
* a shop assistant telling a customer they look good in a particular jumper and making a sale, instead of telling the customer what they really think.
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| Teacher runs a class discussion in response to the following question: Should we always aim to follow duties even if there are negative consequences to ourselves and others? Teacher notes when students identify factors that might influence our response, for example, what if there are conflicting duties? Does the number of people this decision affects make a difference? What about the strength of costs and benefits? | In addition to the existing activity, students consider work-related factors that could influence their response. For instance, teacher could introduce situations where restaurants have underpaid employees, claiming it is the only way to ensure the restaurant can stay open. Should society insist on enforcing employer duties to employees if it means that there are fewer people employed in our society? See the ‘Additional resources’ section below for suggestions about explaining workplace rights to young people. |
|  | Teacher encourages students to think about what this means for them personally. Students at Levels 9 and 10 are generally at a chronological age where they can enter the paid work force or undertake volunteer work. Students can be encouraged to articulate how insight gained from this activity may shape the kind of workplace they seek out, or how might influence their behaviour in a current or future workplace.  |

Considerations when adapting the learning activity

* Teachers should reinforce that workplace entitlements or obligations are not sufficient for explaining ethical duties, although ethical duties and obligations may inform workplace entitlements.
* Students can be encouraged to draw upon their own experiences in the workplace if they have them, but adapted examples should be general enough that students without such experiences can still understand. For instance, all students will have some understanding of retail work, even from their experiences as consumers.
* Students could record any career goals that might arise from reflection in their career planning tools such as an e-portfolio or journal.

Additional resources to help when adapting the learning activity

* Fair Work Australia, ‘[A guide for young workers](https://www.fairwork.gov.au/how-we-will-help/templates-and-guides/best-practice-guides/a-guide-for-young-workers)’
* [Young Workers Centre](http://www.youngworkers.org.au/)

Benefits for students

Know yourself – self-development:

* By identifying tensions in what make makes an ethical decision, students communicating their reasoning and ethical perspective with others. This is an essential skill for working well with others.
* When working through ethical tensions like this, students can gain a better appreciation of their beliefs, how these could be challenged in the workplace, and ways in which they might be able to respond.

Know your world – career exploration:

* Exploring scenarios with tensions between duties and consequences can help students understand work from differing perspectives, such as from the perspective of individuals and the broader societal or economic importance of work.

Manage your future – be proactive:

* Including knowledge about workplace entitlements, duties and obligations in discussions about ethical decision-making can help students can help students to navigate the world of work.