Embedding career education in the Victorian Curriculum F–10

Ethical Capability, Levels 7 and 8

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 7 and 8

**Relevant content description:** Explore the extent of ethical obligation and the implications for thinking about consequences and duties in decision-making and action ([VCECD017](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCECD017))

**Existing activity:** Learning about an ethical theory and considering how society might change if this obligation was adhered to.

**Summary of adaptation, change, addition:** Reflecting on how local contexts (or industry aligned to a learning area content) would be affected if ethical obligations were strictly adhered to, such as school cafés or local industry.

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 introduces distinction between:   * actions that we are ethically obliged to do and blameworthy if we do not (e.g. stopping a person from walking into oncoming traffic, at no risk to oneself or others) * actions that are not morally obligatory – those that may be good but cannot be ethically required of people, and do not invite blame if neglected (e.g. writing a thank-you note to your favourite teacher). | Introductory activity runs unchanged. |
| Students sort a list of examples into one of three categories: ethically obligatory, not obligatory, or borderline/‘it depends’.  Examples include walking your dog regularly, saving ‘the Mona Lisa’ from a fire, chopping down a tree because you are bored, and so on. Students give a reason for why they have sorted each example in this way. | List includes examples that students may encounter in workplaces.  Examples include:   * telling your boss if you have a cold * taking 10 minutes to finish your task and help your workmates, although your shift has just finished * using an environmentally friendly but costly product. |
| The class reads a short, written stimulus or watches a short video on a theory of ethical obligation, such as ‘deep ecology’. See ‘Additional resources’ below for suggestions. |  |
| After exploring a theory of ethical obligation, students complete a written task considering how the world might change if everyone lived in accordance with this theory. For example, students reflect on how this obligation might change their interactions with:   * friends and family * travel * pets * shopping. | As an additional task, students are asked to consider how a particular workplace might change if everyone followed this obligation. For example, they consider the impacts on:   * local industry (e.g. tourism, farming, construction, etc.) * local business (e.g. post office, shops, school café, etc.).   Students should be encouraged to consider how workers may respond to these impacts. As a case study that aligns with the example of ‘deep ecology’, students could look at the way farming practices or zoo-keeping have changed with evolving ethical obligations. Students could also identify new job opportunities that may arise from the widespread adoption of the obligation. |

Considerations when adapting the learning activity

* Teachers should create a list of situations, including workplace related examples, for students to sort into the categories of ethically obligatory, not obligatory, or borderline/‘it depends’.
* Detailed knowledge of specific work environments is not required. Teachers should focus on the general activity of these industries, followed by how acting on ethical obligations might affect business/industry.
* Alternatively, someone with an in-depth knowledge of a local workplace (e.g. school café worker) or a workplace related to a learning area context may answer questions from students about how particular theories of ethical obligation would affect their work, as well as share information about their work and career path.
* Teachers should make it clear to students that the written task in the existing activity is not about imposing a particular view that should be followed but rather using a case study to think about the link between obligations and consequences.

Additional resources to help when adapting the learning activity

* Ethical theories to consider in the context of the activity include [deep ecology](http://www.deepecology.org/platform.htm) and [utilitarianism](https://www.utilitarianism.net/acting-on-utilitarianism).
* *Al Jazeera English*, [Mother Earth Law: Giving nature equal rights in Bolivia](https://youtu.be/8ya1dYIarCg)

Benefits for students

Know yourself – self-development:

* Students recognise that life will throw challenges at them and can practise resilience when balancing work and other life commitments. Students explore how their values may impact their decision-making.

Know your world – career exploration:

* Reflecting on the extent of ethical obligations in the context of work helps students to understand work, emphasising its interdependence with the broader Australian society.
* Imagining changes to the world of work because of various ethical obligations encourages students to reflect on the types of work that people are involved with in local communities.

Manage your future – be proactive:

* Students are encouraged to reflect on what might be reasonably expected of them in the workplace, including the extent of what they owe to others. This may inform career exploration or decision-making about future pathways.