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:** Discuss the role of context and experience in ethical decision-making and actions ([VCECD018](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCECD018))

**Existing activity:** Investigating why people apply different reasoning in different circumstances.

**Summary of adaptation, change, addition:** Investigating how context and experience can influence ethical decision-making in a work context.

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Existing learning activity | Adaptations, changes or extensions that can be made |
| As a class, students discuss ‘exceptions to the rule’ for the following examples:   * Lying is always wrong * Caring is always good.   Students can draw on personal experience, or things they have witnessed in the media/pop culture. | Teacher extends the discussion and prompts students to find possible ‘exceptions to the rule’ for the following:   * Lying to your boss is always wrong * Caring for your colleagues is always good.   (It might be useful to draw the analogy between familiar settings, such as sporting teams and conflict resolution, and unfamiliar settings of the workplace and collegiate dynamics to scaffold students’ thinking on these questions.) |
| Teacher introduces the distinction between context and experience.   * Context influences how individuals prioritise and reason when faced with ethical decisions and the likely outcome relative to each specific situation * Experience is utilised when making informed choices and/or predicting the likelihood of outcomes in given ethical situations based on prior knowledge.   Students explore the following questions:   * Do we change the way we act or make decisions depending on the context of any given situation? * How does experience play a part in our ethical decision-making? | Teacher provides the following question to students and asks them to consider how context and experience might influence their thinking on the issue: ‘Lying on a job application is always wrong’.  Teacher prompts students to respond to the question, then unpack their thinking with the following questions:   * What’s the difference between confidently promoting yourself, talking up your experience, and outright lying? * If everyone else is lying on their applications, why shouldn’t you? * Is it ever okay to lie on an application? Why/Why not? |
| Students explore a set of fictional ethical dilemmas given by teacher, and analyse and explore the influence of context and experience in each case. | Students then select one workplace skill and write a short paragraph about their strength in this area (presenting the strength in as positive a light as possible) without lying.  Students conclude the activity by considering how different questions might be answered from different points of view and that these different perspectives can influence decision-making. They reflect on how they can use the understanding to help their own decision-making. |

Considerations when adapting the learning activity

* Teacher needs to consider that they are moving from student-lived experience and knowledge to speculating on the similarities between their prior knowledge and what they might face when they are in a career. Linking work scenarios to parallels seen in students’ school/social lives can assist students to answer the questions.
* Teacher could replace the given ethical dilemma in the workplace with one from the resource in ‘Additional resources’ below, or extend the discussion by getting students to consider multiple scenarios.

Additional resources to help when adapting the learning activity

* For an in-depth overview of teaching ethical principles and a range of examples, visit and download the [VCAA Sample Program Year 7–8: The role of context and experience](https://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/Resource/LandingPage?ObjectId=92f47912-1ee3-4059-8b9d-7e96878270f8&SearchScope=All).
* Small Business, [Common ethical workplace dilemmas](https://smallbusiness.chron.com/common-ethical-workplace-dilemmas-748.html)

Benefits for students

Know yourself – self-development:

* As they explore their responses to questions of ethics, students build self-awareness by unpacking their values and beliefs.
* Considering how context and experience can influence actions (and reasons behind actions) helps students understand the need to be adaptable.

Know your world – career exploration:

* By exploring questions of ethics in a work setting, students learn more about the nuances of the world of work.

Manage your future – be proactive:

* As they consider how knowing more about context and experience can change their understanding of an issue, students experience thinking critically and creatively, and learn about their own decision-making processes.