

Strategies for Improving Bioethical Reasoning Skills by David Hunter, School of Biomedical Science, University of Ulster.

1. Justification: Why focus on skills?

1. Little consensus on the know that
2. Limited time means self directed learning our best shot
3. Internalization of ideals

"Lead them with coercion order them with punishment the people will avoid wrongdoing but will have no shame. Lead them with *De* virtue and order them with *Li* ritual and they will have shame and learn to fit in." (Confucius, Analects)

2. Skills:

Categories:

Cognitive

- Analyzing arguments
- Questioning assumptions

Cooperative

- Respect
- Questioning

Moral Discernment

- Determining what is relevant
- Whose Interests Matter

Moral Agency

- Knowing how to choose
- Understanding who is responsible for decisions
- Understanding that sometimes there are no right answers

Moral Engagement

- Empathizing
- Understanding different perspectives

3. How to teach these?

One tool: the Community of Inquiry

What is it?

A community devoted to the intellectual goal of understanding and the pursuit of ideas, in this case ethical ideas.

It is student driven, and the role of the teacher is to facilitate discussion not to lecture nor impart knowledge

At this point it is probably best to make explicit the procedures of a COI

1. Source
2. Generate Questions
3. Sort Questions (& ask Why?)
4. Begin (& Chart)

5. Feedback & Conclude

Important: The teacher acts as a facilitator not as a lecturer, ideally you ask purely procedural rather than substantive questions.

The Role of Procedural Questions

These are:
Not substantive
Challenge people to think and clarify their thinking

How does this impart the above skills?

Facilitating fosters them by rewarding skill use, asking for skill use with procedural questions and by assigning explicit skill tasks or roles.

Likewise participating fosters certain virtues:

4. Virtues of Participants in a COI

Charity
Humility
Respect
Creativity
Listening
Understanding
Courage
Curiosity
Empathy
Open mindedness

5. Suggested Readings:

<http://www.p4c.org.nz/index.html> (Excellent explanation of COI & how it can be useful)

<http://sapere.org.uk/what-is-p4c/>

<http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/inquiry/index.html>