

Ethics & Decision Making Workbook



Student Conflict and Resolution Services

Offices of the Dean of Student Life

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Definitions

Morals

Principals that guide the understanding right and wrong.

Values

A set of standards that influence behavior.

Ethics

A set of moral principals and patterns of choice that guide behavior.

Integrity

Wholeness in the quality of being honest and morally upright.

1. Discerning what is right and wrong
2. Acting on what you have discerned, even at personal cost
3. Stating openly that you are acting on your understanding of right and wrong

Steven Carter, *Integrity*

I. Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development

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Jean Piaget (1896-1980) was one of the most influential researchers in the area of developmental psychology during the 20th century. Piaget originally trained in the areas of biology and philosophy and considered himself a "genetic epistemologist." He was mainly interested in the biological influences on "how we come to know." He believed that what distinguishes human beings from other animals is our ability to do "abstract symbolic reasoning." Piaget's views are often compared with those of Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), who looked more to social interaction as the primary source of cognition and behavior. This is somewhat similar to the distinctions made between Freud and Erikson in terms of the development of personality. The writings of Piaget (e.g., 1972, 1990; see Piaget, Gruber, & Voneche) and Vygotsky (e.g. Vygotsky, 1986; Vygotsky & Vygotsky, 1980), along with the work of John Dewey (e.g., Dewey, 1997a, 1997b), Jerome Bruner (e.g., 1966, 1974) and Ulrick Neisser (1967) form the basis of the constructivist theory of learning and instruction.

While working in Binet's IQ test lab in Paris, Piaget became interested in how children think. He noticed that young children's answers were qualitatively different than older children which suggested to him that the younger ones were not dumber (a quantitative position since as they got older and had more experiences they would get smarter) but, instead, answered the questions differently than their older peers because they thought differently.

There are two major aspects to his theory: the process of coming to know and the stages we move through as we gradually acquire this ability.

Process of Cognitive Development. As a biologist, Piaget was interested in how an organism adapts to its environment (Piaget described as intelligence.) Behavior (adaptation to the environment) is controlled through mental organizations called schemes that the individual uses to represent the world and designate action. This adaptation is driven by a biological drive to obtain balance between schemes and the environment (equilibration).

Piaget hypothesized that infants are born with schemes operating at birth that he called "reflexes." In other animals, these reflexes control behavior throughout life. However, in human beings as the infant uses these reflexes to adapt to the environment, these reflexes are quickly replaced with constructed schemes.

Piaget described two processes used by the individual in its attempt to adapt: assimilation and accommodation. Both of these processes are used throughout life as the person increasingly adapts to the environment in a more complex manner.

Assimilation is the process of using or transforming the environment so that it can be placed in preexisting cognitive structures. **Accommodation** is the process of changing cognitive structures in order to accept something from the environment. Both processes are used simultaneously and alternately throughout life. An example of assimilation would be when an infant uses a sucking schema that was developed by sucking on a small bottle when attempting to suck on a larger bottle. An example of accommodation would be when the child needs to modify a sucking schema developed by sucking on a pacifier to one that would be successful for sucking on a bottle.

As schemes become increasingly more complex (i.e., responsible for more complex behaviors) they are termed structures. As one's structures become more complex, they are organized in a hierarchical manner (i.e., from general to specific).

Stages of Cognitive Development. Piaget identified four stages in cognitive development:

1. **Sensorimotor stage (Infancy).** In this period (which has 6 stages), intelligence is demonstrated through motor activity without the use of symbols. Knowledge of the world is limited (but developing) because it's based on physical interactions / experiences. Children acquire object permanence at about 7 months of age (memory). Physical development (mobility) allows the child to begin developing new intellectual abilities. Some symbolic (language) abilities are developed at the end of this stage.
2. **Pre-operational stage (Toddler and Early Childhood).** In this period (which has two sub-stages), intelligence is demonstrated through the use of symbols, language use matures, and memory and imagination are developed, but thinking is done in a nonlogical, nonreversible manner. Egocentric thinking predominates
3. **Concrete operational stage (Elementary and early adolescence).** In this stage (characterized by 7 types of conservation: number, length, liquid, mass, weight, area, volume), intelligence is demonstrated through logical and systematic manipulation of symbols related to concrete objects. Operational thinking develops (mental actions that are reversible). Egocentric thought diminishes.
4. **Formal operational stage (Adolescence and adulthood).** In this stage, intelligence is demonstrated through the logical use of symbols related to abstract concepts. Early in the period there is a return to egocentric thought. Only 35% of high school graduates in industrialized countries obtain formal operations; many people do not think formally during adulthood.

Many pre-school and primary programs are modeled on Piaget's theory, which, as stated previously, provides part of the foundation for constructivist learning. Discovery learning and supporting the developing interests of the child are two primary instructional techniques. It is recommended that parents and teachers challenge the child's abilities, but NOT present material or information that is too far beyond the child's level. It is also recommended that teachers use a wide variety of concrete experiences to help the child learn (e.g., use of manipulative, working in groups to get experience seeing from another's perspective, field trips, etc).

Piaget's research methods were based primarily on case studies [they were descriptive]. While some of his ideas have been supported through more correlation and experimental methodologies, others have not. For example, Piaget believed that biological development drives the movement from one cognitive stage to the next. Data from cross-sectional studies of children in a variety of western cultures seem to support this assertion for the stages of sensorimotor, preoperational, and concrete operations (Renner, Stafford, Lawson, McKinnon, Friot & Kellogg, 1976).

Values Assessment

Name: _____

1. Briefly Review the following lists (Self, Spiritual, Vocation, Relationships, Community) and circle those items in each area that you value. You may circle all that apply add your own if you so desire.
2. Bring this completed assignment with you and be prepared to discuss it in class. You will not be allowed to participate in the workshop without the assignment.

Values Related to Self:

Academic accomplishment	Spirituality	Clothes
Academic degrees	Personal development	House
Education	Appearance and image	Attention
Intellectual growth	Physical fitness	Approval
Knowledge	Recognition	Sex
Achieving goals	Self-respect and esteem	Skills
Affiliation and belonging	Wisdom	Vacations
Courage	Social Status	Memories
Decisiveness	Addictions	Cars
Affluence	Doing something well	Time
Economic security	Athletic prowess	Gardening
Wealth	Physical health	Admiration
Self-indulgence	Emotional health	Technology
Balance	Material possessions	Love
Hobbies	Television	Fame
Creativity	Movies	Writing
Enjoyment	Integrity	Speaking
Music	Reading	Researching
Happiness and joy	Legacy	Ideas
Humor	Dreams, goals, visions	Dancing
Influence and impact	Fulfillment	Logic
Politics	Contentment	Other: _____
Self-actualization	School	Other: _____
Religion	Teams	Other: _____

Spiritual Values:

God	Balance	Ethics
Religion	Morality	Reflection
Honesty	Meditation	Moderation
Aesthetics	Retreats	Responsibility
Introspection	Duty	Inner peace
Wisdom	Fulfillment	Love
Contentment	Forgiveness	Heaven
Optimism	Faith	Other: _____
Hope	Respect	Other: _____
Tolerance	Integrity	Other: _____

Values Assessment

Vocational Values:

Achieving goals
Promotions
Affiliation and belonging
Autonomy and independence
Change and variety
Achieving results
Compensation
Family-like environment
Diverse perspectives
Variety of skills
Influence and impact
Activity
Authority
Collaboration
Vision and goal
Competence
Creativity
Productivity
Justice

Loyalty
Rewards
Self-respect and esteem
Balance
Challenge
Duty
Dreams
Courage
Expertise
Trust
Location
Recognition
Status
Responsibility
Developing others
Doing something well
An organization
Dignified treatment
Position

Profits
Symbols of success
Time
Job security
Opportunities
Technology
Title
Rate of return
Ideas
Bonuses
Respect
Advancement
Office
Perks
Other: _____
Other: _____
Other: _____

Relationship Values:

Family
Camaraderie
Bonding
Diversity and perspectives
Respect
Children
Friends

Love
Sense of community
Developing others
Dignified treatment
Cooperation
Fellowship
Support

Loyalty
Sex
Goodwill
Harmony
Other: _____
Other: _____
Other: _____

Community Values:

Helping others
Location
Neighborhood
Altruism
Service
Sense of community
Duty
Humanitarianism
Contributing time
Contributing money
Contributing resources

Justice
Volunteering
Diversity
Publicity
Other: _____
Other: _____
Other: _____

Values Assessment

2. Rank the top five items in each list with “1st” being the item you most value. Do not have “ties.” Each item should have a different rank.

Rank	Self	Spiritual
1 st		
2 nd		
3 rd		
4 th		
5 th		

Rank	Vocational	Relationship
1 st		
2 nd		
3 rd		
4 th		
5 th		

Rank	Community
1 st	
2 nd	
3 rd	
4 th	
5 th	

3. Out of the twenty-five values you ranked, generate the top five things you value most with “1st” being the item you most value. Do not have “ties.” Each item should have a different rank and you should only have five listed.

Rank	Overall Values
1 st	
2 nd	
3 rd	
4 th	
5 th	

Values Reflection

Relist the top five overall things you value from the values assignment.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Where did you get this set of values?

Which of these is the most important to you? Why?

Do you promote this value? If so, how?

Have you ever tried to convince someone else to act on this value? How did you attempt to do this? What was the end result?

II. Kohlberg's Moral Stages

Citation: Crain, W.C. (1985). *Theories of Development*. Prentice-Hall. pp. 118-136. Retrieved June 2008 from <http://faculty.plts.edu/gpence/html/kohlberg.htm>

KOHLBERG'S METHOD

Kohlberg's (1958a) core sample was comprised of 72 boys, from both middle- and lower-class families in Chicago. They were ages 10, 13, and 16. He later added to his sample younger children, delinquents, and boys and girls from other American cities and from other countries (1963, 1970).

The basic interview consists of a series of dilemmas such as the following:

Heinz Steals the Drug

In Europe, a woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a pharmacist in the same town had recently discovered. The drug was expensive to make, but the pharmacist was charging ten times what the drug cost him to make. He paid \$200 for the radium and charged \$2,000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about \$ 1,000 which is half of what it cost. He told the pharmacist that his wife was dying and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the pharmacist said: "No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money from it." So Heinz got desperate and broke into the man's store to steal the drug-for his wife. Should the husband have done that? (Kohlberg, 1963, p. 19)

Kohlberg is not really interested in whether the subject says "yes" or "no" to this dilemma but in the reasoning behind the answer. The interviewer wants to know why the subject thinks Heinz should or should not have stolen the drug. The interview schedule then asks new questions which help one understand the child's reasoning. For example, children are asked if Heinz had a right to steal the drug, if he was violating the pharmacist's rights, and what sentence the judge should give him once he was caught. Once again, the main concern is with the reasoning behind the answers. The interview then goes on to give more dilemmas in order to get a good sampling of a subject's moral thinking.

Once Kohlberg had classified the various responses into stages, he wanted to know whether his classification was *reliable*. In particular, he wanted to know if others would score the protocols in the same way. Other judges independently scored a sample of responses, and he calculated the degree to which all raters agreed. This procedure is called *interrater reliability*. Kohlberg found these agreements to be high, as he has in his subsequent work, but whenever investigators use Kohlberg's interview, they also should check for interrater reliability before scoring the entire sample.

KOHLBERG'S SIX STAGES

Level 1. Preconventional Morality

Stage 1. Obedience and Punishment Orientation. Kohlberg's stage 1 is similar to Piaget's first stage of moral thought. The child assumes that powerful authorities hand down a fixed set of rules which he or she must unquestioningly obey. To the Heinz dilemma, the child typically says

that Heinz was wrong to steal the drug because "It's against the law," or "It's bad to steal," as if this were all there were to it. When asked to elaborate, the child usually responds in terms of the consequences involved, explaining that stealing is bad "because you'll get punished" (Kohlberg, 1958b).

Although the vast majority of children at stage 1 oppose Heinz's theft, it is still possible for a child to support the action and still employ stage 1 reasoning. For example, a child might say, "Heinz can steal it because he asked first and it's not like he stole something big; he won't get punished" (see Rest, 1973). Even though the child agrees with Heinz's action, the reasoning is still stage 1; the concern is with what authorities permit and punish.

Kohlberg calls stage 1 thinking "preconventional" because children do not yet speak as members of society. Instead, they see morality as something external to themselves, as that which the big people say they must do.

Stage 2. Individualism and Exchange. At this stage children recognize that there is not just one right view that is handed down by the authorities. Different individuals have different viewpoints. "Heinz," they might point out, "might think it's right to take the drug, the pharmacist would not." Since everything is *relative*, each person is free to pursue his or her *individual* interests. One boy said that Heinz might steal the drug if he wanted his wife to live, but that he doesn't have to if he wants to marry someone younger and better-looking (Kohlberg, 1963, p. 24). Another boy said Heinz might steal it because

maybe they had children and he might need someone at home to look after them. But maybe he shouldn't steal it because they might put him in prison for more years than he could stand. (Colby and Kauffman. 1983, p. 300)

What is right for Heinz, then, is what meets his own self-interests.

You might have noticed that children at both stages 1 and 2 talk about punishment. However, they perceive it differently. At stage 1 punishment is tied up in the child's mind with wrongness; punishment "proves" that disobedience is wrong. At stage 2, in contrast, punishment is simply a risk that one naturally wants to avoid.

Although stage 2 respondents sometimes sound amoral, they do have some sense of right action. This is a notion of *fair exchange* or fair deals. The philosophy is one of returning favors--"If you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours." To the Heinz story, subjects often say that Heinz was right to steal the drug because the pharmacist was unwilling to make a fair deal; he was "trying to rip Heinz off," Or they might say that he should steal for his wife "because she might return the favor some day" (Gibbs et al., 1983, p. 19).

Respondents at stage 2 are still said to reason at the preconventional level because they speak as isolated individuals rather than as members of society. They see individuals exchanging favors, but there is still no identification with the values of the family or community.

Level II. Conventional Morality

Stage 3. Good Interpersonal Relationships. At this stage children--who are by now usually entering their teens--see morality as more than simple deals. They believe that people should live up to the expectations of the family and community and behave in "good" ways. Good behavior means having good motives and interpersonal feelings such as love, empathy, trust, and concern for others. Heinz, they typically argue, was right to steal the drug because "He was a good man for wanting to save her," and "His intentions were good, that of saving the life of someone he

loves." Even if Heinz doesn't love his wife, these subjects often say, he should steal the drug because "I don't think any husband should sit back and watch his wife die" (Gibbs et al., 1983, pp. 36-42; Kohlberg, 1958b).

If Heinz's motives were good, the pharmacist's were bad. The pharmacist, stage 3 subjects emphasize, was "selfish," "greedy," and "only interested in himself, not another life." Sometimes the respondents become so angry with the pharmacist that they say that he ought to be put in jail (Gibbs et al., 1983, pp. 26-29, 40-42). A typical stage 3 response is that of Don, age 13:

It was really the pharmacist's fault, he was unfair, trying to overcharge and letting someone die. Heinz loved his wife and wanted to save her. I think anyone would. I don't think they would put him in jail. The judge would look at all sides, and see that the pharmacist was charging too much. (Kohlberg, 1963, p. 25)

We see that Don defines the issue in terms of the actors' character traits and motives. He talks about the loving husband, the unfair pharmacist, and the understanding judge. His answer deserves the label "conventional "morality" because it assumes that the attitude expressed would be shared by the entire community—"anyone" would be right to do what Heinz did (Kohlberg, 1963, p. 25).

As mentioned earlier, there are similarities between Kohlberg's first three stages and Piaget's two stages. In both sequences there is a shift from unquestioning obedience to a relativistic outlook and to a concern for good motives. For Kohlberg, however, these shifts occur in three stages rather than two.

Stage 4. Maintaining the Social Order. Stage 3 reasoning works best in two-person relationships with family members or close friends, where one can make a real effort to get to know the other's feelings and needs and try to help. At stage 4, in contrast, the respondent becomes more broadly concerned with *society as a whole*. Now the emphasis is on obeying laws, respecting authority, and performing one's duties so that the social order is maintained. In response to the Heinz story, many subjects say they understand that Heinz's motives were good, but they cannot condone the theft. What would happen if we all started breaking the laws whenever we felt we had a good reason? The result would be chaos; society couldn't function. As one subject explained,

I don't want to sound like Spiro Agnew, law and order and wave the flag, but if everybody did as he wanted to do, set up his own beliefs as to right and wrong, then I think you would have chaos. The only thing I think we have in civilization nowadays is some sort of legal structure which people are sort of bound to follow. [Society needs] a centralizing framework. (Gibbs et al., 1983, pp. 140-41)

Because stage 4, subjects make moral decisions from the perspective of society as a whole, they think from a full-fledged member-of-society perspective (Colby and Kohlberg, 1983, p. 27).

You will recall that stage 1 children also generally oppose stealing because it breaks the law. Superficially, stage 1 and stage 4 subjects are giving the same response, so we see here why Kohlberg insists that we must probe into the reasoning behind the overt response. Stage 1 children say, "It's wrong to steal" and "It's against the law," but they cannot elaborate any further, except to say that stealing can get a person jailed. Stage 4 respondents, in contrast, have a conception of the function of laws for society as a whole--a conception which far exceeds the grasp of the younger child.

Level III. Postconventional Morality

Stage 5. Social Contract and Individual Rights. At stage 4, people want to keep society functioning. However, a smoothly functioning society is not necessarily a good one. A totalitarian society might be well-organized, but it is hardly the moral ideal. At stage 5, people begin to ask, "What makes for a good society?" They begin to think about society in a very theoretical way, stepping back from their own society and considering the rights and values that a society ought to uphold. They then evaluate existing societies in terms of these prior considerations. They are said to take a "prior-to-society" perspective (Colby and Kohlberg, 1983, p. 22).

Stage 5 respondents basically believe that a good society is best conceived as a social contract into which people freely enter to work toward the benefit of all. They recognize that different social groups within a society will have different values, but they believe that all rational people would agree on two points. **First they would all want certain basic rights, such as liberty and life, to be protected. Second, they would want some democratic procedures for changing unfair law and for improving society.**

In response to the Heinz dilemma, stage 5 respondents make it clear that they do not generally favor breaking laws; laws are social contracts that we agree to uphold until we can change them by democratic means. Nevertheless, the wife's right to live is a moral right that must be protected. Thus, stage 5 respondent sometimes defend Heinz's theft in strong language:

It is the husband's duty to save his wife. The fact that her life is in danger transcends every other standard you might use to judge his action. Life is more important than property.

This young man went on to say that "from a moral standpoint" Heinz should save the life of even a stranger, since to be consistent, the value of a life means any life. When asked if the judge should punish Heinz, he replied:

Usually the moral and legal standpoints coincide. Here they conflict. The judge should weight the moral standpoint more heavily but preserve the legal law in punishing Heinz lightly. (Kohlberg, 1976, p. 38)

Stage 5 subjects, - then, talk about "morality" and "rights" that take some priority over particular laws. Kohlberg insists, however, that we do not judge people to be at stage 5 merely from their verbal labels. We need to look at their social perspective and mode of reasoning. At stage 4, too, subjects frequently talk about the "right to life," but for them this right is legitimized by the authority of their social or religious group (e.g., by the Bible). Presumably, if their group valued property over life, they would too. At stage 5, in contrast, people are making more of an independent effort to think out what any society ought to value. They often reason, for example, that property has little meaning without life. They are trying to determine logically what a society ought to be like (Kohlberg, 1981, pp. 21-22; Gibbs et al., 1983, p. 83).

Stage 6: Universal Principles. Stage 5 respondents are working toward a conception of the good society. They suggest that we need to (a) protect certain individual rights and (b) settle disputes through democratic processes. However, democratic processes alone do not always result in outcomes that we intuitively sense are just. A majority, for example, may vote for a law that hinders a minority. Thus, Kohlberg believes that there must be a higher stage--stage 6--which defines the principles by which we achieve justice.

Kohlberg's conception of justice follows that of the philosophers Kant and Rawls, as well as great moral leaders such as Gandhi and Martin Luther King. According to these people, the

principles of justice require us to treat the claims of all parties in an impartial manner, respecting the basic dignity, of all people as individuals. The principles of justice are therefore universal; they apply to all. Thus, for example, we would not vote for a law that aids some people but hurts others. The principles of justice guide us toward decisions based on an equal respect for all.

In actual practice, Kohlberg says, we can reach just decisions by looking at a situation through one another's eyes. In the Heinz dilemma, this would mean that all parties--the pharmacist, Heinz, and his wife--take the roles of the others. To do this in an impartial manner, people can assume a "veil of ignorance" (Rawls, 1971), acting as if they do not know which role they will eventually occupy. If the pharmacist did this, even he would recognize that life must take priority over property; for he wouldn't want to risk finding himself in the wife's shoes with property valued over life. Thus, they would all agree that the wife must be saved--this would be the fair solution. Such a solution, we must note, requires not only impartiality, but the principle that everyone is given full and equal respect. If the wife were considered of less value than the others, a just solution could not be reached.

Until recently, Kohlberg had been scoring some of his subjects at stage 6, but he has temporarily stopped doing so. For one thing, he and other researchers had not been finding subjects who consistently reasoned at this stage. Also, Kohlberg has concluded that his interview dilemmas are not useful for distinguishing between stage 5 and stage 6 thinking. He believes that stage 6 has a clearer and broader conception of universal principles (which include justice as well as individual rights), but feels that his interview fails to draw out this broader understanding. Consequently, he has temporarily dropped stage 6 from his scoring manual, calling it a "theoretical stage" and scoring all postconventional responses as stage 5 (Colby and Kohlberg, 1983, p. 28).

Theoretically, one issue that distinguishes stage 5 from stage 6 is civil disobedience. Stage 5 would be more hesitant to endorse civil disobedience because of its commitment to the social contract and to changing laws through democratic agreements. Only when an individual right is clearly at stake does violating the law seem justified. At stage 6, in contrast, a commitment to justice makes the rationale for civil disobedience stronger and broader. Martin Luther King, for example, argued that laws are only valid insofar as they are grounded in justice, and that a commitment to justice carries with it an obligation to disobey unjust laws. King also recognized, of course, the general need for laws and democratic processes (stages 4 and 5), and he was therefore willing to accept the penalties for his actions. Nevertheless, he believed that the higher principle of justice required civil disobedience (Kohlberg, 1981, p. 43).

What would you do?

Read each scenario and decide how you would respond to each situation. Use only the information provided to make your decisions. Record your decisions in the space provided on the next page.

1. You and one of your friends, who lives across campus, regularly compete at computer games. He recently purchased a costly new game and installed it on his PC. You have since played the game numerous times when in his room. He has become proficient at it since he can practice whenever he wants. He offers to install the game on your computer from the same disk. You're not sure if you should do this, as it is licensed to be installed on only one computer, but he says he does it all the time. Since you are very competitive and hate losing to your friend, you consider it. Do you copy the game on your PC?
2. Yesterday, you drove your friend and his child to the mall. After shopping, in the parking lot, your friend notices that his child has picked up a small, inexpensive (\$5) item that has not been paid for. Your friend reprimands the child then indicated that he is ready to go. You ask if he's going to go back and pay for the toy. He says it's not worth the hassle; the line in the store was very long and the toy was really inexpensive. How do you respond?
3. You are taking an exam and are sitting in the back portion of the room. As you stretch to give your cramping hand a break, you notice two people cheating. It is clear that both are involved. You know the name of one of the students, but not the other. It's a class of 100 students, and you don't think you would be able to recognize the second student, since you only see the back of their head. What do you do?
4. You are drinking in your friends Residence Hall room with several other people, all of whom you know to varying degrees. There is a knock at the door and everything stops. You realize that most of you are underage when your friend says "Oh @#%&!" and grabs a glass pipe and small bag of marijuana from under her seat. She throws them onto a pile of clothes that is relatively close to where you are sitting and opens the door to the RA on duty and two UPD officers. The officers enter the room and everyone is asked remain seated and present their IDs. You are the last one to show your ID and notice that the second officer is paying close attention to the pile of clothes next to you. He keeps your ID, watches you for a moment then asks you directly who the marijuana belong to. What do you do?
5. Last semester, you and your roommate were both documented for underage drinking and placed on a probationary status. The two of you talked and agreed, even promised each other, that you would look out for each other so you wouldn't get in trouble again. Earlier tonight, your roommate went to an off campus party and has returned to your room extremely intoxicated. You are worried about his/her well being, but know that if you call for help, he/she will most likely be documented again. What do you do?

III. Carol Gilligan and the Morality of Care

An Overview of Moral Development and Moral Education

Citation: Nucci, L. (2007). Carol Gilligan and the morality of care. *Moral Development and Moral Education: An Overview*. Chicago, IL: University of Illinois. Retrieved June 3, 2008 from University of Illinois at Chicago, College of Education, Office for Studies in Moral Development and Education, Overview Web site: <http://tigger.uic.edu/~lnucci/MoralEd/overview.html>

Reference: Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge.

A second major critique of Kohlberg's work was put forth by Carol Gilligan, in her popular book, "In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development" (1982). She suggested that Kohlberg's theories were biased against women, as only males were used in his studies. By listening to women's experiences, Gilligan offered that a morality of care can serve in the place of the morality of justice and rights espoused by Kohlberg. In her view, the morality of caring and responsibility is premised in nonviolence, while the morality of justice and rights is based on equality. Another way to look at these differences is to view these two moralities as providing two distinct injunctions - the injunction not to treat others unfairly (justice) and the injunction not to turn away from someone in need (care). She presents these moralities as distinct, although potentially connected.

In her initial work, Gilligan emphasized the gender differences thought to be associated with these two orientations. The morality of care emphasizes interconnectedness and presumably emerges to a greater degree in girls owing to their early connection in identity formation with their mothers. The morality of justice, on the other hand, is said to emerge within the context of coordinating the interactions of autonomous individuals. A moral orientation based on justice was proposed as more prevalent among boys because their attachment relations with the mother, and subsequent masculine identity formation entailed that boys separate from that relationship and individuate from the mother. For boys, this separation also heightens their awareness of the difference in power relations between themselves and the adult, and hence engenders an intense set of concerns over inequalities. Girls, however, because of their continued attachment to their mothers, are not as keenly aware of such inequalities, and are, hence, less concerned with fairness as an issue. Further research has suggested, however, that moral reasoning does not follow the distinct gender lines which Gilligan originally reported. The preponderance of evidence is that both males and females reason based on justice and care. While this gender debate is unsettled, Gilligan's work has contributed to an increased awareness that care is an integral component of moral reasoning.

Educational approaches based on Gilligan's work have emphasized efforts to foster empathy and care responses in students. Perhaps the most comprehensive treatment of these issues may be found in Nel Noddings book, "The challenge to care in schools" New York: Teachers College Press, 1992.

Ethics Reflection

List 5 people who you think have good ethics? (may be fictional, living, or deceased)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Why do you think they are ethical?

List 5 people you think do not have good ethics? (may be fictional, living, or deceased)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Why do you think they are not ethical?

Which person from your list has had the most influence on your development of ethics? Why?

IV. Terrell W. Bynum

A revolution ignores moral issues at its peril, argues Simon Rogerson and Terrell Ward Bynum

Cyberspace: The Ethical Frontier

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Computing technology is the most powerful and flexible technology ever devised. For this reason it is changing everything - where and how we work, learn, shop, eat, vote, receive medical care, spend free time, make war, friends and love.

The information revolution has become a tidal wave that threatens to engulf and change all that humans' value. Governments, organizations and individual citizens therefore would make a grave mistake if they view the computer revolution as "merely technological". It is fundamentally social and ethical.

As information technology accelerates, opportunities widen to satisfy the human thirst for knowledge, as well as the desire to be the dominant species on the globe and in the universe. But the newly-found powers of computing come at a price - dependence. Information is now the life blood of society and its organizations, and our dependence grows daily with the advance of the global information net and multimedia.

In the eyes of society, we exist and our needs are addressed through digital icons which represent us in the computer. National insurance numbers, driving license numbers, bank account numbers and credit card numbers are all examples of these icons. We are reliant on such computerized icons to be able to function successfully. Without them, we become invisible "non-citizens" with little hope of opportunities for success or of help in times of need.

Information, as the new life-blood of society, empowers those who have it; but it also disenfranchises those who do not. Wealth and power flow to the "information rich", those who create and use computing technologies successfully. They are primarily well-educated citizens of industrialized nations. The "information poor" - both in industrialized countries and in the third world - are falling further and further behind.

This yawning "information gap" grows steadily wider as employment opportunities, education, medical care, shopping, voting, and other aspects of life move into cyberspace. The resulting inequality will lead to dissatisfaction and social turmoil.

The new research field of "computer ethics" examines the social and ethical impacts of information technology. In United States, where the computer revolution is most advanced, it is already well established. There are academic journals, conferences, research centers, textbooks and university modules. In the United Kingdom, De Montfort University in Leicester recently established the Centre for Computing and Social Responsibility, which hosted ETHICOMP95 in late March of this year. This international conference on computer ethics attracted scholars from 14 nations and placed the UK at the cutting edge of computer ethics research.

Such research underpins action that must be taken not simply to harness, in a socially sensitive way, the power of the information technologies, but to survive its revolution. Action must take place on various fronts and must involve people from all walks of life.

They can focus on three topics: ethical development, ethical technology and ethical application. These three were the main themes of ETHICOMP95.

Ethical Development considers the way information systems are developed. Ethical dilemmas surrounding any proposed system should be identified, debated and resolved. Professionals must be encouraged to involve their sponsoring clients and the users of the systems in the development activities. In the past, the methods and practices used in developing systems were primarily oriented towards technological and economic issues. In the future, such practices should be enriched by including societal and ethical considerations. Computer professionals must act in an ethical manner that promotes socially sensitive applications.

Mary Prior of De Montfort University, even suggested at ETHICOMP95, that all computer professionals should take a Hippocratic Oath that commits them to work for the benefit, and not towards the destruction, of human society and the world it inhabits.

Ethical Technology is concerned with the actual technologies that we use to build the systems which transfuse the information lifeblood into organizations in the global community. The technologies must be scrutinized and each advance must be considered from an ethical standpoint before being applied to any business or societal problem.

Such action is no different from safeguarding actions of many other industries; for example, the pharmaceutical industry which is meticulous in considering the pros and cons of producing new drugs based on the latest medical advance. Why is this so? It is because an ill conceived medical application can be very damaging and even life threatening to the recipient. With the advance of information technology, it is not difficult to see that it too has the potential to be very damaging and even life threatening. So, those involved must ensure that it becomes "Ethical Technology".

Ethical Development and Ethical Technology are concerned with the building blocks of systems and the way those systems should be built. Ethical Application is concerned with the game-plan with developing and implementing strategies which allow the technology to be applied in an ethically sensitive manner.

While small groups of individuals and organizations of all shapes and sizes can formulate strategies, it is probably the strategies adopted by those responsible for public policy and legislation which will have the greatest impact on Ethical Application. Strategies must be in place which address a growing number of public policy questions resulting from advances and application of Information Technologies. Here are some of the questions that need to be addressed:

- How should society cope with resulting unemployment and underemployment?
- How should governments and businesses deal with possible exploitation of poor countries by wealthy countries and multinational conglomerates?
- How can society provide people with jobs that are interesting, fulfilling and challenging?
- How will education in cyberspace be planned, administered and financed?
- How can safeguards be introduced to ensure that the poor are not excluded from employment opportunities, education, shopping, medical care, entertainment and many more things on the global information net?

Information technology concerns especially computer professionals who design and create new information systems and devices. Recently, national and international organizations, such as the International Federation of Information Processors (IFIP), the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), the British Computer Society (BCS) and the Institute of Data Processing Management (IDPM), have recognized the need for new codes of ethics to inform and advise members about relevant social and ethical issues.

In the US, the ACM has established a new committee on professional ethics; and national accrediting bodies, like the Computer Sciences Accreditation Board and the Accreditation Board for Engineering Technology, now require that accredited university curricula in the computing sciences include mandatory instruction in the social and ethical effects of information technology.

In Europe and other industrialized parts of the world, Professor Jacques Berleur of the Facultes Universities Notre-Dame de la Paix, Belgium has been leading IFIP's efforts to establish a world-wide ethics code for computer professionals.

At the University of Kent in Canterbury, Duncan Langford has developed "a framework for the establishment of research ethics committees for computer science research and development." Such work is important in raising the profile of computer ethics among the professional community.

Computer ethics, however, should be the concern of everyone, not simply computer professionals. The future of society and the advancement of human values are too important to be left simply to technologists. Governments, public policy makers, organizations and private citizens must all take an interest and make their contributions. Current technology should be exploited in a socially and ethically sensitive way; and relevant strategies should be developed for future applications.

Perhaps the most radical view of the importance of computer ethics as a field of research is that of Krystyna Gorniak from the Research Center on Computing and Society at Southern Connecticut State University. She believes that computer ethics is the most important theoretical development in ethics since the Enlightenment 200 years ago.

Towering figures in ethics like Jeremy Bentham and Immanuel Kant, she says, developed their monumental ethical systems in response to a world revolutionized by printing and industrial technology. Their new and powerful ethical systems emerged from prior technological revolutions and were very appropriate to the world at the time. Now, however, in a world of teleworking and virtual-reality meetings, of telemedicine and cybersex, a powerful ethical theory must emerge to provide guidance and decision making tools for the coming "cyber society".

Computer ethics, says Professor Gorniak, will likely be the birthplace of the next major advance in ethical theory.

If, as Professor Gorniak suggests, the ethical and social implications of information technology are so important, then why does the world at large seem to ignore them? One possible answer is that computing technology quietly seeps into our lives without being noticed. For example, in the Vatican City there is a library of magnificent illuminated texts. But it is not the manuscripts themselves which make the greatest impression on visitors; it is the multimedia computers that allow visitors to browse digital copies of these tomes.

Paradoxically, the physical artifacts have given way to their computerized icons. This is a vivid illustration of how we have become dependent on the power and potential of information

technology to provide whatever information we require in whatever format we desire without realizing it. This throws a veil over the vitally important issues in computer ethics.

The brave new world of the information society - with its robots and global nets, telemedicine and teleworking, interactive multimedia and virtual reality - will inevitably generate a wide variety of social, political, and ethical questions. What will happen to human relationships and the community when most human activities are carried on in cyberspace from one's home? Whose laws will apply in cyberspace when hundreds of countries are incorporated into the global network? Will the poor be disenfranchised - cut off from job opportunities, education, entertainment, medical care, shopping, voting - because they cannot afford a connection to the global information network? These and many more questions urgently need the attention of governments, businesses, educational institutions, public advocates and private individuals. We ignore ethics and computing at our peril!

Internet Ethics

Rank the following list on a scale from 1 to 13, with 1 being the most acceptable through 13 being the least/not acceptable.

Situation	Rank
Reading your roommate's email	
Sending friends emails containing ethnic, racial or sexual jokes	
Sending messages anonymously or by using an identity other than your own	
Forwarding messages without the permission of the original author	
Using your university email account to make money	
When creating an online profile, pretending to be someone you are not	
Using foul, degrading or insensitive language when responding to blogs or open chat forums	
Posting provocative pictures of yourself on your Facebook/MySpace page	
Cutting and pasting chunks of information from online sources into your written assignment without citation	
Posting video of people on YouTube who did not know they were being recorded	
Downloading and sharing music, movies and videogames	
Posting embarrassing pictures of someone else on your Facebook/MySpace page	
Posting a comment on someone's wall/ blog that you intend to harm them	

Decision Making

Put these seven steps used to make decisions in the correct order.

Steps	Order
Choose the best ethical alternative	
Define the ethical problem when it arises	
Evaluate the alternatives	
Formulate alternatives	
Implement the best alternative	
Monitor and assess the outcome	
Seek additional assistance/advice	

Questions to ask yourself when trying to make a decision:

- Is it legal
- What does my gut tell me about my decision
- Would I want my mother to know
- Would I want my actions and the consequences to be on the front page of the newspaper
- Would my parents do this
- Would I want this done to me or someone I care about

Things to avoid:

- The clearly illegal
- That which violated basic human rights
- The dangerous
- The incredibly stupid
- The insensitive (to human needs or feelings)
- The inefficient or impractical
- The irritating or annoying

KEY: 1. define the ethical problem 2. formulate alternatives 3. evaluate the alternatives 4. see additional assistance/advice 5. choose the best ethical alternative 6. implement the best alternative 7. monitor and assess the outcome

