



Ethical Theories Used in Teaching STEM Ethics

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Introduction

Using the context of teaching bioethics as a point of departure, this session will share pedagogical techniques used to facilitate students' learning of ethical theories and development of their ability to analyze complex ethical issues in STEM disciplines.

Pedagogical Techniques

Mindful Reading/Question for Consideration (QFC) Assignment

Small (and Larger) Group Discussions

Analysis of Case Studies Presented in Rachels' "Ethical Theory & Bioethics"

Homework: Question for Consideration (QFC)

The goal of this assignment is to generate discussion among prepared students and to provide a means of tracking course participation.

1. Identify a passage in Rachels' "Ethical Theory & Bioethics" that has affected your thinking in some way and write it down.
2. Prepare a Question for Consideration (QFC) related to the passage and bring it with you, along with your selected passage, to share with your colleagues.

Ideally, workshop participants will complete this **before** our Wednesday morning session!

Small and Large Group Discussion of QFCs

1. Break into groups of three or four.
2. Share the selected passage from the reading and your Question for Consideration (QFC) with group members. (Approximately 7 minutes)
 - Explain your reasons for selecting the passage (e.g., Why did it stand out to you as especially significant? Was it challenging, insightful, disturbing, truthful, etc.?)
 - Explain your reasons for asking this QFC (e.g., Why is this question and finding an answer to it important to you?)
3. Reconvene as a larger group and allow each small group to share (a) which QFC their group determined was most interesting (and why) and (b) the primary focus of the small group discussion.

Ethical Theories in Brief

Utilitarianism emphasizes the importance of consequences of actions; in particular the consequences should maximize pleasure and minimize suffering for the greatest number of individuals affected by the action.

Kantian Ethics prioritizes respect for moral agents' autonomy and reason as the proper basis of moral judgments. This duty-based theory of ethics emphasizes motives for acting rather than the consequences of actions.

Ethical Theories in Brief

Virtue Ethics focuses on what it is to be a good person rather than merely adhering to moral principles or rules.

Feminist Approaches to Ethics is a way of doing ethics that serves as a corrective to ethical theories by including perspectives and experiences of women and other historically marginalized groups.

Questions?

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