Addressing & Assessing Personal Responsibility

Beginning in Fall, 2014 required in 4 components:
Communication
Language, Philosophy & Culture
American History
Government/Political Science

Overview

- ❖ **Definitions of Personal Responsibility**
  - ❖ **Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB)**
  - ❖ **American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U)**
- ❖ **A few FAQs**
- ❖ **Implementing Personal Responsibility Assignments**
- ❖ **Assessing Personal Responsibility**
- ❖ **Further Guidance**

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Definition of Personal Responsibility

"the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making."

We are "held to" the THECB definition. However, the AAC&U definition (from which the THECB definition was derived) provides additional guidance.

American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U)

Defines Ethical Reasoning as:

. . . reasoning about right and wrong human conduct. It requires students to be able to assess their own ethical values and the social context of problems, recognize ethical issues in a variety of settings, think about how different ethical perspectives might be applied to ethical dilemmas and consider the ramifications of alternative actions. Students' ethical self identity evolves as they practice ethical decision-making skills and learn how to describe and analyze positions on ethical issues.

A few FAQs

What are we actually assessing?

"**What can be evaluated using a rubric [or embedded exam questions] is whether students have the <u>intellectual tools </u>to make ethical choices.**"

[Emphasis added]

AAC&U VALUE Rubric for Ethical Reasoning

Do I have to assess whether students behave responsibly?

NO

- ❖ **Students are expected to *understand* personal responsibility & make connections to ethical decision-making.**

- ❖ **This objective does NOT necessarily address whether students *behave* responsibly.**

What are realistic expectations for students in lower-level courses?

❖ **The AAC&U VALUE rubric for Ethical Reasoning (located under *Resources*) moves from Self Awareness to Recognizing Issues, to Evaluating Different Perspectives/Concepts.**

❖ **Thus, entry-level, core courses might focus on self-awareness and recognition of issues rather than more challenging skills such as evaluating concepts.**

❖ **The Lumina Foundation's Degree Qualifications Profile (aligned with LEAP) also provides direction for faculty expectations.**

Excerpt from the Lumina Foundation's *Degree Qualifications Profile* RE Ethical reasoning *

❖ **Analytic reasoning, the use of information resources, communication, and diverse perspectives must inevitably be brought to bear on situations, both clear and indeterminate, where tensions and conflicts, disparities and harms emerge, and where a particular set of intellectual skills is necessary to identify, elaborate and resolve these cases. Ethical reasoning thus refers to the judicious and self-reflective application of ethical principles and codes of conduct resident in cultures, professions, occupations, economic behavior and social relationships to making decisions and taking action.**

❖ **At the associate [or lower course] level, the student**

  ❖ **Describes the ethical issues present in prominent problems in politics, economics, health care, technology or the arts and shows how ethical principles or frameworks help to inform decision making with respect to such problems**

  · http://www.luminafoundation.org/files/resources/dqp.pdf

see page 17

Implementing Personal Responsibility Assignments

Implementing Personal Responsibility Assignments

❖ This could be a speech or paper that requires students to consider the ethical consequences of some course of action, and/or consider their personal ethical stance in the process &/or how ethical frameworks inform decision-making.

❖ For example, students might be required to identify & explain ethical issues inherent in euthanasia, consider their personal stance on the issue and how it relates to a framework for ethical decision-making (e.g.: Code of Medical Ethics or Ethics of Euthanasia).

Sample Topics Across Components . . .

❖ ***Communication:*** plagiarism or journalistic integrity

❖ ***Language, Philosophy & Culture:***

    ❖ *Foreign Language:* study of ethical frameworks within a particular culture regarding family values, taboos or religious practice

    ❖ *Philosophy:* the right to die, environmental ethics, or not causing harm to others

❖ ***American History:*** slavery or segregation

❖ ***Government/Political Science:*** redistricting or campaign finance

Assessing Personal Responsibility

Assessing Personal Responsibility Assignments

❖ **Rubrics for written or oral assignments**

    ❖ *For a place to start, see the LEAP ETHICAL REASONING VALUE Rubric included in this folder*

❖ **Multiple-Choice embedded exam questions**

❖ **SUGGESTION: Provide hypothetical scenario(s) & create exam questions that refer to it. Questions may be a set of Multiple-Choice items or essay questions. Essay items would be scored using a short rubric.**

Communication

❖ *Sample Student Learning Outcome* *

Students will demonstrate the ability to credit sources.

❖ *Method*

Rubric

❖ *Standard*

At least 70% of students will receive a proficiency of 4 or 5 (where 5 = mastery) on each relevant criterion on the rubric.

* **See pdf** *"Creating Quality Student Learning Outcomes"* **for a self-guided tutorial on developing SLOs.**

Language, Philosophy & Culture

❖ *Sample Student Learning Outcome*

Students will be able to identify and communicate frameworks for ethical decision-making from ancient Greek texts.

❖ *Method*

Rubric for embedded exam essay questions about features of Greek Culture, e.g., slave-owning or a woman's place in the Greek world & history (Persian Wars).

❖ *Standard*

At least 75% of students will satisfactorily identify ethical arguments in Plato's dialogues; 75% of students will be able to clearly discuss the relevance of these discussions to their lives.

American History

❖ *Sample Student Learning Outcome*

Students will identify the implications of historical actors' ethical/unethical conduct.

❖ *Method*

Rubric for embedded exam essay questions

❖ *Standard*

At least 75% of students will identify ethical implications of historical actors' conduct by receiving a "meets standards" (4) or higher on a scale of 1 to 5.

Gov't/Political Science

❖ *Sample Student Learning Outcome*

Students will be able to identify the individual ethical obligations of a public servant.

❖ *Method*

Rubric

❖ *Standard*

At least 70% of students will receive a "meets standards" (3) or higher on a scale of 1 to 4 on each relevant criterion on the rubric.

The AAC&U rubric for *Ethical Reasoning* follows.

It may be used "as is," adapted for use, used as a source of ideas for creation of your own rubrics or not used at all.

This rubric is available in Word under *Resources*.

ETHICAL REASONING VALUE RUBRIC

for more information, please contact value@aacu.org

The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The core expectations articulated in all 15 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can by shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success.

Definition

Ethical Reasoning is reasoning about right and wrong human conduct. It requires students to be able to assess their own ethical values and the social context of problems, recognize ethical issues in a variety of settings, think about how different ethical perspectives might be applied to ethical dilemmas and consider the ramifications of alternative actions. Students' ethical self identity evolves as they practice ethical decision-making skills and learn how to describe and analyze positions on ethical issues.

Framing Language

This rubric is intended to help faculty evaluate work samples and collections of work that demonstrate student learning about ethics. Although the goal of a liberal education should be to help students turn what they've learned in the classroom into action, pragmatically it would be difficult, if not impossible, to judge whether or not students would act ethically when faced with real ethical situations. What can be evaluated using a rubric is whether students have the intellectual tools to make ethical choices.

The rubric focuses on five elements: Ethical Self Awareness, Ethical Issue Recognition, Understanding Different Ethical Perspectives/Concepts, Application of Ethical Principles, and Evaluation of Different Ethical Perspectives/Concepts. Students' Ethical Self Identity evolves as they practice ethical decision-making skills and learn how to describe and analyze positions on ethical issues. Presumably, they will choose ethical actions when faced with ethical issues.

Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

- Core Beliefs: Those fundamental principles that consciously or unconsciously influence one's ethical conduct and ethical thinking. Even when unacknowledged, core beliefs shape one's responses. Core beliefs can reflect one's environment, religion, culture or training. A person may or may not choose to act on their core beliefs.
- Ethical Perspectives/concepts: The different theoretical means through which ethical issues are analyzed, such as ethical theories (e.g., utilitarian, natural law, virtue) or ethical concepts (e.g., rights, justice, duty).
- Complex, multi-layered (gray) context: The sub-parts or situational conditions of a scenario that bring two or more ethical dilemmas (issues) into the mix/problem/context/for student's identification.
- Cross-relationships among the issues: Obvious or subtle connections between/among the sub-parts or situational conditions of the issues present in a scenario (e.g., relationship of production of corn as part of climate change issue).

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Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

	Capstone	Milestones		Benchmark
	4	3	2	1
Ethical Self-Awareness	Student discusses in detail/analyzes both core beliefs and the origins of the core beliefs and discussion has greater depth and clarity.	Student discusses in detail/analyzes both core beliefs and the origins of the core beliefs.	Student states both core beliefs and the origins of the core beliefs.	Student states either their core beliefs or articulates the origins of the core beliefs but not both.
Understanding Different Ethical Perspectives/Concepts	Student names the theory or theories, can present the gist of said theory or theories, and accurately explains the details of the theory or theories used.	Student can name the major theory or theories she/he uses, can present the gist of said theory or theories, and attempts to explain the details of the theory or theories used, but has some inaccuracies.	Student can name the major theory she/he uses, and is only able to present the gist of the named theory.	Student only names the major theory she/he uses.
Ethical Issue Recognition	Student can recognize ethical issues when presented in a complex, multilayered (gray) context AND can recognize cross-relationships among the issues.	Student can recognize ethical issues when issues are presented in a complex, multilayered (gray) context OR can grasp cross-relationships among the issues.	Student can recognize basic and obvious ethical issues and grasp (incompletely) the complexities or interrelationships among the issues.	Student can recognize basic and obvious ethical issues but fails to grasp complexity or interrelationships.
Application of Ethical Perspectives/Concepts	Student can independently apply ethical perspectives/concepts to an ethical question, accurately, and is able to consider full implications of the application.	Student can independently apply ethical perspectives/concepts to an ethical question, accurately, but does not consider the specific implications of the application.	Student can apply ethical perspectives/concepts to an ethical question, independently (to a new example) and the application is inaccurate.	Student can apply ethical perspectives/concepts to an ethical question with support (using examples, in a class, in a group, or a fixed-choice setting) but is unable to apply ethical perspectives/concepts independently (to a new example.).
Evaluation of Different Ethical Perspectives/Concepts	Student states a position and can state the objections to, assumptions and implications of and can reasonably defend against the objections to, assumptions and implications of different ethical perspectives/concepts, and the student's defense is adequate and effective.	Student states a position and can state the objections to, assumptions and implications of, and respond to the objections to, assumptions and implications of different ethical perspectives/concepts, but the student's response is inadequate.	Student states a position and can state the objections to, assumptions and implications of different ethical perspectives/concepts but does not respond to them (and ultimately objections, assumptions, and implications are compartmentalized by student and do not affect student's position.)	Student states a position but cannot state the objections to and assumptions and limitations of the different perspectives/concepts.

See *Resources* section for additional guidance.