

CHAPTER 1

Synopsis: Core Concepts

Chapter 1 answers the question, “Where do my beliefs, values and ethics come from?” It is intended to start students thinking about their own ethics and about the process of making ethical decisions. The core concepts covered are:

- Exploring the language of ethics
- The external forces that shape our beliefs, values and ethics, such as family, religious teachings, education, peer and social pressure and culture
- The internal attitudes that affect our ethical decisions, such as locus of control and moral growth or development
- Using the SMART strategy to change behaviours (omit for a shorter course)

Learning Objectives

The learning objectives for chapter 1 are listed here, along with the exercises in the text which support each objective.

1. **Explain the difference between ethics, values, morals, beliefs and assumptions.** Exercise 1.1 focuses on this objective. The exercise is intended to promote class discussion.
2. **Examine the origins of personal ethics.** The questions embedded in the text of this chapter, in conjunction with exercises 1.2 and 1.3, focus on this objective. Exercises 1.2 and 1.3 are intended to promote personal reflection.
3. **Describe how locus of control influences ethical behaviour.** The questions embedded in the text focus on this objective. An additional in-class exercise on this subject is included in the PowerPoint presentation and lesson plan. The exercise is intended to promote class discussion.
4. **Identify compromises people make and reflect on how those compromises undermine ethical thinking and behaviour.** Exercise 1.5 focuses on this objective. The exercise is intended to promote self-reflection.

Sample Lesson Plan

1. Introduce the course by handing out a course outline and a weekly schedule. Discuss your goals for the students and how you will evaluate them. Encourage them to participate in class discussions - after

all, ethics is all about the way people interact and relate to each other. Break the students into groups of three or four and, after allowing them about 5 minutes to talk together, have them introduce each other to the rest of the class. The sooner students get to know each other the sooner they'll feel comfortable sharing their opinions.

2. Give an overview of chapter 1 by referring to the core concepts covered in the chapter. Discuss the meaning of the quotation on PowerPoint slide 1-2. Students could be given 5 minutes to discuss with two or three others sitting beside them what sorts of things matter most, what things matter least and when are the former at the mercy of the latter? When are the former not at the mercy of the latter?

3. Give the class 10 minutes to do exercise 1.1, then have each group present their definitions to the class. Present the definitions on PowerPoint slides 1-3 to 1-5, noting similarities and differences to their definitions.

4. Use PowerPoint slides 1-6 to 1-8 to explore the external forces that shape a person's ethics. Prepare some anecdotes and examples to demonstrate the effect family, religion, education, etc., have on forming our beliefs, values and ethics. Use the questions on these slides to promote class discussion. Break the class into small groups to do exercise 1.4. Encourage them to do exercises 1.2 and 1.3 at home. These exercises encourage personal reflection.

5. Use PowerPoint slide 1-9 to explain locus of control. Have the students break into small groups to discuss the questions on slides 1-10 and 1-11.

6. PowerPoint slides 1-12 to 1-14 explain Kohlberg's theory of cognitive moral development and Gilligan's theory of women's development. Consider using the discussion questions below if time permits.

7. PowerPoint slides 1-15 and 1-16 sum up the different factors that influence the ethical choices we make.

8. Explain the SMART strategy, referring to the textbook. Break the class into small groups and have each group choose a goal and apply the strategy to that goal. Then either in groups or individually, have students fill out the exercise at the end of chapter 1, creating four statements of intent and SMART

action plans. They might choose goals such as improving their study habits, improving their work skills or relationships in a specific way, etc.

Critical Thinking - Discussion Questions

After explaining Kohlberg's and Gilligan's theories, ask the class:

Which theory of moral development do you prefer?

Do you think these theories accurately show the difference between males' and females' approach to making ethical decisions?

Do the two theories contradict each other? In other words, is it either one or the other?

Could you combine the two theories?