Pedagogical Strategies for Teaching Moral Minimalism

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Pedagogical Strategies for Teaching Moral Minimalism

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ABSTRACT

In 1986, Stephen Satris’s article, “Student Relativism,” meant to “offer analysis of, and suggest some methods for dealing with, a quite particular and peculiar problem in teaching philosophy...I speak of the problem of student relativism.” (Satris, 1986, p. 193) The problem has not gone away. However, psychological research suggests that the problem of relativism, a problem especially critical for teaching business ethics (or any other class in applied philosophy) is not insolvable. This paper, extending earlier work by R. McGowan, provides a brief account of research by Lawrence Kohlberg and William Perry on the structure of thought exhibited by students, gives evidence of that structure, and offers pedagogical strategies for overcoming that structure and attaining moral minimalism in the classroom.

Introduction

When he-who-shall-not-be-named told Harry Potter, “There is no good or evil, there is only power,” J.K. Rowling identified a central problem for our time, namely, ethical relativism.

If Voldemort is correct, no standards exist for judging right and wrong; the exercise of power is the default mechanism for resolving dispute. Rowling could have had Stephen Satris’s 1986 article in mind. Satris’s “Student Relativism” meant to “offer analysis of, and suggest some methods for dealing with, a quite particular and peculiar problem in teaching philosophy...I speak of the problem of student relativism.” (Satris, 1986, p. 193) The problem has not gone away.

However, psychological research suggests that the problem of relativism, a problem especially critical for teaching ethics (or any other class in applied philosophy) is not insolvable. This paper presents a brief account of research by Lawrence Kohlberg and William Perry on the structure of thought exhibited by students, provides evidence of that structure, and offers practical suggestion for attaining moral minimalism in the classroom.
Pedagogical Strategies for Teaching Moral Minimalism

Richard J. McGowan, Matthew K. McGowan, & Garrett J. McGowan

The Structure of Student Thought

When Satris wrote, the research by Lawrence Kohlberg and by William Perry et al was not as widely known as it is now. Today, most professors understand that people, including students, develop in orderly, predictable though not invariably, ways, and that people, including students, do not necessarily develop skill at moral reasoning over the course of a lifetime but alone one semester. In short, research has shown what professors have observed: people stop developing, willfully or otherwise. When confronted with a moral or intellectual challenge, especially to their world view, i.e., their sense of self and their place in the world, people often disengage from the hard work of thinking. That is, people often resist the cognitive challenge, as Kohlberg calls such challenges, or cognitive dissonance, as Perry refers to the challenges. In the classroom, a student may resist learning and avoid the necessity of adjusting his or her orientation toward the world and altering his or her identity. Such a person demonstrates "the wish to retain earlier satisfactions or securities... the reluctance to admit one has been in error... and most important, the wish to maintain a self one has felt oneself to be." (Perry et al, 1968, p. 52)

Perry observed common patterns that would avoid the difficulties of accommodating challenge, including retreat (182), i.e., when a person drops to a lower level of skill and solves the problem, in this case, by not taking those risks is even riskier. For example, students who are provoked may direct their frustration from oneself, "I have felt myself to be." (Perry et al, 1968, p. 99)

Hence, Perry's and Kohlberg's work could be said to chart the comfortable plateaus on which people reside while they check their advance. For faculty teaching ethics, who typically receive students who exhibit the general structures observed in Perry's work and Kohlberg's work! Is their work relevant to a person teaching ethics?

The Reality of Today's Students

If our experience is reliable, then students are indeed in Kohlberg's stage 4 and Perry's stage of relativism. Satris' observation still holds. We asked business majors in ethics classes, business majors in business classes, and science majors in science classes to respond to the question, "Can ethics be taught? If so, how? If not, why not?" Student responses (see appendices) show what professors face in the classroom. The responses reflect a wide range of students from two different courses at two different schools: a business ethics course and a chemistry course. We analyzed the responses and characterized the responses into three categories: multiplicity, corresponding to Kohlberg's stages 1 and 2; 'student relativity, corresponding to Kohlberg's stages 3 and 4; and intersubjectivity, corresponding to Kohlberg's stages 5 and 6.

Table 1 illustrates the classification system and sample responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 Classification System and Sample Responses</th>
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<tr>
<td>Classification</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiplicity (M)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Relativity (R)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intersubjectivity (I)</td>
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In stage 3, the "interpersonal concordance orientation, good behavior consists of pleasing others and gaining their approval. (Kohlberg, 1981, p. 18) As anyone who has ever observed teen-agers for a little time understands, in this stage, people follow peer pressure and conform to the group.

On the other hand, the stage 4 thinker is orient toward rules and maintaining the social order for its own sake. Students in this stage make law-abiding, dutiful citizens though if questioned, they might not fully be able to articulate why. The short answer is the authority of laws and of social order.

Perry's analog for Kohlberg's stage 4 is what he calls the stage of relativism. In this mode of thought, the student believes that "all knowing and valuing is contingent on context." (Perry, 1968, 134) As Satris (1986) remarked, this structure of thought is "one of the most serious, pervasive, and frustrating problems confronting most philosophers today." (193) Nonetheless, the relativity of stage 4—right and wrong is relative to the external environment—can become more critical and other-directed stages 5 and 6.

The stage 5 or 6 thinker makes a "clear effort to define moral values and principles that have validity and application apart from the authority of the groups or people holding these principles and apart from the individual's own identification with these groups." (Kohlberg, 1981, p. 146) However, it occurs, cognitive dissonance may lead to upward development. Kohlberg observes that upward development is more a matter of changing the structure of thought "rather than the mere addition of more difficult content from outside." the student. (Kohlberg, 1981, p. 146) In other words, and similar to Perry's findings "a student's movement from one Position to another involves the reorganization of major personal investments." (Perry et al, 1968, p. 49) Students must rearrange their manner of thinking to meet the challenge that moral dilemma, with its cognitive conflict, poses. Rearranging thought, though, "involves the risk subjective and objective." (Perry et al, 1968, p. 178)

As noted above, students can willfully embrace the lower structures of thought. For Perry, lower stages include dualism, where "the world of knowledge, conduct and values is divided as the small child divides his world between his family and the vague inchoate outside." (Perry et al, 1968, p. 59), and multiplicity, where "no judgments about opinions can be made." (Perry et al, 1968, Glossary) In these stages, knowledge is offered similar observations, citing isolation, rationalization, decision, and denial as examples of immature defense mechanisms. Further, Hart and Chmiel (1992) found that the use of these mechanisms inhibits moral growth.

However, some students when confronted with a challenge develop their moral reasoning. Their growth is consistent with what Kohlberg observed, namely, that either a real or a classroom-induced moral dilemma has the capacity to produce development (Kohlberg, 1981, pp. 27-8, 146-7) However it occurs, cognitive dissonance may lead to upward development. Kohlberg observes that upward development is more a matter of changing the structure of thought "rather than the mere addition of more difficult content from outside." the student. (Kohlberg, 1981, p. 146) In other words, and similar to Perry's findings "a student's movement from one Position to another involves the reorganization of major personal investments." (Perry et al, 1968, p. 49) Students must rearrange their manner of thinking to meet the challenge that moral dilemma, with its cognitive conflict, poses. Rearranging thought, though, "involves the risk subjective and objective." (Perry et al, 1968, p. 178)
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The language of the student responses were analyzed in context. For example, the phrase, “A person’s ethics may change over time,” could indicate a student at the level of multiplicity whose ethics may change to suit the convenience of the situation. The phrase could suggest a student at the relativity stage who believes that society may change its standards over time, and that a person’s moral standards must change accordingly. Or the phrase could represent a student at the highest stage, one who views ethical development as a lifelong process in which a person’s moral standards develop and evolve.

It is interesting to observe that Kohlberg’s stages one through four and Perry’s first three stages of intellectual growth in the college years all include some degree of relativism. In Kohlberg’s stages 1 and 2 and up to Perry’s second main stage, multiplicity, ethics are thought to be relative to self-interest. In cultural relativity, ethics are relative to society, groups, or organizations.

The following table (see Table 2) provides sample responses of students at the stage of multiplicity. The phrases are indicative of the student’s sentiment, but we classified the responses based on the context of the overall response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2 RESPONSES OF STUDENTS IN MULTIPLICITY STAGE.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Hard to teach an adult; adults simply do not want to be told what to do or how to act.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• People and most managers follow what feels right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A person should be able to be more open-minded about opposing ethical opinions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ethics and moral standards depend on the individual and their upbringing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Everyone encounters unique experiences and has different values, so what one person deems ethical, another may think is unethical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Every person has his/her individual feelings on what is right or wrong.</td>
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The following table (see Table 3) provides various responses representative of cultural relativity in development and understanding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 3. RESPONSES OF STUDENTS IN CULTURAL RELATIVITY STAGE.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Society…insight to what is ethically right and wrong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ethics can be taught but only within each culture; there is no global ethic that exists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In our culture, children learn rules; Adults are also able to “learn” ethics by watching others and understanding societal norms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Violating a code of conduct that society has deemed unacceptable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• People don’t come to ethical understanding on their own, they inherit societal standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ethics is a very difficult concept to understand because ethics can differ from one group of people to another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• These morals should closely relate to ethics of a society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rights are made by businesses, government…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ethics is a group morality.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The responses from our students suggest that most students are at Perry’s stage of multiplicity or relativity. Since there are few students at the advanced stage of moral development, we need to look for ways that we, as professors, can advance their moral development.

The Move to Moral Minimalism

If our student responses are typical, then the ‘enemy’ of an ethics class is ethical relativism in either form, i.e., ethical subjectivism or cultural relativity. The goal of an ethics class is, by default if for no other reason, is to have students take seriously the notion of moral minimalism, the position that a floor of universal moral standards exists or could exist. We propose five strategies that can be used to move students towards moral minimalism, for, if a student thinks that there is a floor of universal moral standards, they are more apt to seek them and a professor more likely to have a critical and constructive classroom.

Given our student responses though, most students are unlikely to adopt moral minimalism by fiat. They might need to be shown two things: first, the pattern of thought they display; second, the inadequacy of relativism. A quick

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 4 RESPONSES OF STUDENTS IN COMMITTED LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• People…find themselves in situations where those standards are challenged...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Each person has his or her moral standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ethics are learned and evolve through time from the moment a person is born.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ethics are learned and evolve throughout their lifetime; by dealing with circumstances and learning from our mistakes, we continue to develop our ethics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If ethical relativism were okay and there were no “universal moral standards,” total and utter chaos would result and what happened September 11 would be justified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A more effective way to teach ethics may simply be to have a discussion course of these touchy issues where each individual does their own research and thinking and then opinions are shared and thrown out to be either supported or shot down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I would like a class which teaches what ethics are, what is part of it, what is considered ethical, and what considerations must be made for an ethical decision.</td>
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Many students indicated that a person learns moral standards at a young age, i.e., during childhood. The implicit message was that adults could not be taught ethics. This attitude might indicate an unwillingness to learn ethics past youth, a phenomenon that would preclude professors being able to influence moral development and teach ethics. Some comments included: “The most influential time of a child is when they are young. “I think ethics can be taught, but it must be taught at an early age.” Some students stated outright that ethics could not be taught.

Several responses indicated that knowing ethics and acting ethically are two different issues. These responses are consistent with the idea of moral sensitivity supported by James Rest, and also relate to Rest’s concept of moral character. Moral sensitivity is a person’s awareness of how actions affect others. Some student comments include the following. “Just because it can be taught doesn’t mean that people will follow the correct ethics; it depends on the individual if they will follow them.” “A general code of ethics can be taught. That does not, however, mean that code of ethics is always followed.” “…whether or not the individual will make decisions based on the ethics he or she has been taught.” “Knowing ethics however, does not guarantee an adherence to ethical behavior.”

The responses from our students suggest that most students are at Perry’s stage of multiplicity or relativity. Since there are few students at the advanced stage of moral development, we need to look for ways that we, as professors, can advance their moral development.
Pedagogical strategy to achieve both goals, that is, dispatch relativism and get students thinking seriously about ethics, is to assign the paper we assigned and read them carefully for their specific language. We advise assigning the paper on the first day of class so students can see immediately how they think.

A pedagogical consequence is that the assignment compels one of the strongest arguments students raise on behalf of ethical subjectivism. Students frequently argue that “ethics and moral standards depend on the individual and their upbringing,” that “ethics cannot be taught because I believe that one’s ethical values are a result of personal experience and morals, which cannot be taught,” or that “it is very important to remember that different people have had different interactions in their lives, and therefore can have varying moral standards.”

After reading a dozen or so examples of this response, it becomes obvious to the students that, while students “have had different interactions in their lives,” students themselves exhibit patterns and are “alike.” In reading to students what they have said about how unique everyone is, students repeatedly encountered the same response. Further, the assignment invites a safe passage to the idea that ethics are universal and transcultural. What threatens students is the notion that “universal” principles are the same thing as absolute principles. One student thought it was “dangerous to bring,” that “ethics cannot be taught because I believe that one’s ethical values are a result of personal experience and morals, which cannot be taught,” or that “it is very important to remember that different people have had different interactions in their lives, and therefore can have varying moral standards.”

A fourth argument can now be offered: the Golden Rule appears across cultures. One way to have this lesson really sink in is to read variations on the Golden Rule and have the students identify the source. For instance, one source advises to “regard your neighbor’s gain as your own gain and regard your neighbor’s loss as your own loss” and another advises “do unto others as you would have others do unto you.” Some sources state that “what you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others” and “as you deem yourself, so deem others.” One source goes so far as to say that “None of you truly have faith if you do not desire for your brother that which you desire for yourself” and another source says “what is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor.” The sources—Taoism, Christianity, Confucianism, Sikhism, the Quran and the Talmud, respectively—suggest that cultures have the same broad moral injunction. The hunt for moral minimalism is not futile.

A fifth way to show the viability of moral minimalism is to ask students who their heroes are. A fifth way to show the viability of moral minimalism is to ask students who their heroes are. A fifth way to show the viability of moral minimalism is to ask students who their heroes are. A fifth way to show the viability of moral minimalism is to ask students who their heroes are. A fifth way to show the viability of moral minimalism is to ask students who their heroes are. Perry, W. et al. (1968) *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years* NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

In short, ethical judgment is possible, ethical relativism is inconsistent with normal, everyday experience, and the cardinal demand of ethical relativism, i.e., the universality of toleration, is incoherent, empirically misplaced, and finally, destructive in its consequent, miserable results. Why tolerate the behavior of Nazis, Osama bin Laden, or Jeffrey Dahmer?

We think that if students can be enticed into the position of taking ethical judgment seriously, teaching ethics and having engaged citizens will be both probable and productive. While the majority of students enter class as relativists, they are quite capable of leaving class committed to some sort of moral minimalism. If they commit to the possibility that a floor of universal moral principles exists, they are more likely to be civically responsible to others in the world.

**Resources**


people are not ethically similar because they were born with a greater sense of right and wrong. They are taught to behave in a certain manner throughout their lives. The ethical behavior that they demonstrate is a result of the moral standards that they have been taught." This is not to say that many times morality and ethics teach the same things. I would just point out that they have different origins and are accented differently depending on the groups.

12. “Everyone has their own personal ethics to abide by.” “There are universal moral standards.” Osama bin Laden. “A set of universal moral standards must be created.” Each person has their own set of ethical standards that they feel are correct, but we must remember to continue to hold universal more standards to unite us.

13. “People don’t come to ethical understanding on their own, they inherit society’s standards.”

14. “A child has to make up their own mind if the believe that same grounds for ethics, because this varies for each individual.” “People’s ethics and morals vary, not one individual is alike so neither should their beliefs.”

15. “A child is taught how to express their emotions in acceptable ways that adhere to the accepted morals or standards of society” “moral norms are not absolute in that they change from culture to culture and over the course of time.”

16. “A child learns from all these outside factors what is considered right and wrong.” “Ethical values” “Children are exposed to many contributing sources that reinforce ethics (more specifically what is socially acceptable)….today students are being taught in classes….to reinforce their moral standards.”

17. “Everyone encounters unique experiences and has different values, so what one person deems ethical, another may think is unethical. There is not the sacred book of ethics that we can all pick up and read.” “We can teach ethics by instructions how to think ethically and rationalize all decisions.” “Their surrounding will dictate appropriate standards to follow. However, everyone must decide whether or not to apply ethics that they have learned.”

18. “What the person might find offensive or harmful might not be to another individual….it is important to remember to rationally examine the given situation by determining the moral obligations that are expected.”

19. “Ethics cannot be taught because I believe that one’s ethical values are a result of personal experience and morals, which cannot be taught.” Experience teaches ethics (not books) “I interpret” “epistemological solipsism”

20. “Our ethical standards are rooted in history and tradition.” “The concept of ethics is viewed differently by groups of people and even individuals.” “There is perhaps no other issue, save religion, which lends itself to relativism. A common notion is that ethical standards are to be adaptable to each individuals lifestyle. Unfortunately many people prescribe to this idea resulting in a variety of views on an issue that seriously needs a uniform standard.” “There is really no solid way to get around this argument” i.e. that ethics differ individual to individual.

21. “Ethics and morals are something that are unique to every individual.” “As we begin to decipher between right and wrong, we establish our own unique ethical structure that guides our decision-making process throughout life.” “We begin to adapt ethical standards to fit our own personal identity and character.”

22. “Looking at case studies….forces the student to rationally examine the given situation by determining the moral obligations that are expected.”

23. “Ethics is a very difficult concept to understand because ethics can differ from one group of people to another.” “What is reasonable is always debatable, and who is to determine what is reasonable and what is wrong.” “Who is to tell me how to live my life?” “I feel confident that we can successfully present all sides to a debate and decide what works best for us as individuals, or us as a group, but we should never attempt to solve what works best for the whole.”

24. “what each and every person does with his or her education is irrelevant.” “many people never grasp the learning or decide to act indiscriminately.”

25. “Adults “dircern right from wrong…creating their own system of ethics.” The children learns from parents but as an adult, “will review this ethical system and alter it as they see fit.” Yet this student sees ethics developmentally and sees the inadequacy of stages 1 and 2.

26. “each person individually defines ethics and it is my belief that ethics cannot be taught.” “every individual has his/her personal feelings on what is right or wrong.” “because one gets ethics from his/her feelings, and since feelings cannot be taught, it makes teaching ethics impossible.” “each individual has a unique lifestyle.” “We are not people that have the exact feeling on a subject”

27. “Ethics can be taught because ethics is the study of morality, rather than morality itself.” “The way one learns how someone can learn ethics is similar to how someone learns to study other sciences.”

28. “society will often have an idea of what the norm should be for a certain ethical standard. If thus will seek to enforce this standard upon those that live within this society. The majority will soon adapt rather than be considered to be outside of the societal norm.”

29. “everyone has his or her own set of personal ethics that they feel are a fair standard to live their life by, whether it is right or wrong” “after a textbook definition of ethics.” This basically says to me that everyone has standards or beliefs that they have adopted that helps understand what is right or wrong.” “A decision is measured right or wrong based on personal and society standards…The problem is people have different sets of standards.” “Each individual decides what is the right decision for them even if it is wrong”

30. “I will attempt to look at the ethical influences that help us form our moral beliefs.” After stating that changes occur>
31. “We are all taught different things at young ages because everyone has different standards and ideas of what is right and wrong.” Inspirational people in children’s lives may have different opinions of what is right and wrong. The exploration of ethics is how people learn “there is no list of right and wrong things” “I have to develop what I feel is good ethical behavior, "there is no ethical behavior and unethical behavior and the definitions of these are different to many people in the business world." 

32. Very textually driven/ sees that ethical judgments differ. 

33. “I am aware that although morality is the basis of ethics, there cannot be the presumption that morality does not define ethical. For that to be true there would be cultural specific ethics.” 

34. Ethics can be taught “People are taught and learn ethics by growing up in their families, friends they hang around with, and the culture we grow up in establishes our morals.” 

35. “When faced with the question whether or not ethics can be taught I am filled with mixed emotions." To me, ethics is the decisions a person makes based on their beliefs and the consequences of those decisions. 

36. “Everyone has their own set of ethics” Ethics is a continual learning process throughout life. 

37. “Ethics simply take the morals that we have made for ourselves and put them in a different perspective” “This will allow them to begin to learn what is ethically right and wrong..." If everyone has their own ideas of right and wrong “The teaching of ethics needs to start with ideas that everyone knows are right and wrong.” 

38. The definition of ethics “is very broad but that leaves room for each individual to develop their own special code of ethics that best fit their them.” This is “experience” “everyone has their own ideas of right and wrong” “The teaching of ethics needs to start with ideas that everyone knows are right and wrong.” 

39. “How can we even know that one thing is right and the other is not with first going through that exact experience?” “One person’s set of ethics may differ from another’s and we can never really say who is right or wrong.” 

40. Ethics can be taught/ analogy to religious conversion. “Every person’s ethics is a thing that is created from the morals of that particular person.” “Every person has morals one way or another.” “The culture we grow up in establishes our morals.” 

41. No indicators 

42. “Shakespeare, in his play HAMLET, wrote, ‘to thine own self be true.’” A person ethics are often their own compilation of various existing moral tenets.” “The person alone must guide the development of his ethics...these chosen ethics must fit with the lifestyle the person has selected.” “Knowledge about ethics serves to make people understand that fundamentals of ethics are based on the lifestyle the person has selected.” 

43. “I am first going to discuss ethics and morals and my opinions and definitions of the two.” “In my opinion...” “To me,..." "personal morals” “By this time, hopefully, a person has the basic ideas of right and wrong in their minds.” “An individual uses their personal morals when making this decision” “one can be ethical and not necessarily moral” “morals are something that is personal to you...ethics are more social and related to society.” 

44. “Ethics can be taught to people, but it is very important to remember that different people have had different interactions in their lives, and therefore can have varying moral standards.” “If you even though in some circumstances there are universal moral standards such as one should not murder.” “A person can be taught...but in the end the final decision is a personal one.” “Ethics can be taught to a very diverse group of people through the discussions of universal morals.” “On the other hand, other moral principles are not universal.” 

46. “If morals had no been taught...we would have no standards to conclude that acts of terrorism are evil. The rescue efforts of thousands of fire-fighters would not be seen as good either.” 

47. “Actually learning and practicing good ethics is one hundred per cent completely up to the individual.” “Which ethical approach chosen is right and which ethical approach chosen is wrong is a debatable topic.” “Ethics can be taught if done tastefully and thoughtfully.” “Ethics should be taught as a subject that has no final answer.” “The fact that what is right for one person is not necessarily right for the next” “there is no real way to say what the best answer is” “But should teach that “There are no right or wrong answers.” “There are no completely correct answers but yet some that are better than others.”” 

48. “good’ and ‘right’ have different meanings for all people.” “although ethical behavior may mean something completely different to each individual it is something that can be taught to a willing mind.” many people...have different views on what ethical behavior is.” “common ground” < people can agree “Although no one will ever agree on what is right and good, it doesn’t mean that you should not bother teaching or learning the basis of ethical behavior.” “No two people will ever have the exact same views on what is ethical” “the idea of what is good and right” “Ethics is a set of standards that is obtained at a young age and then continuously reinforced through experiences in life.” “Note: The student is unaware that ethics comes from within or that they change” 

50. Every individual analyzes every situation differently. “There are no concrete answers to what is right and what is wrong. These vary by cultures and societies, even neighbors.” “Because of the obscurity in the determination of right and wrong varies between people and cultures. Moral standards cannot be taught.” “Standards are observed and internalized.” “assuming right and wrong could be defined as serious concept that could be taught, it would still be impossible to teach ethics.” “There is no clear definition of right and wrong to set moral standards.” 

51. “Accepting that ethics can be taught just implies that you can stand back and observe your morals in a comparative and analytic way.” 

52. “Everyone has their own definition and their own views on what is considered ethical behavior and what is not.” “who says what is right or wrong?” “everyone...shares different views on what is right and what is wrong” “there is no clear black and white definition of what constitutes as ethical.” 

53. Each person has different ethics and no one person’s ethics can be labeled as right or wrong “no two people have the exact point of view is placed before students — plagiarism.” 

54. If ethics cannot be taught, the ethical relativism is okay.” “If ethical relativism was okay and there were no “Universal Moral Standards, total and utter chaos would result and what happened September 11th would be justifiable.” 

55. “Shi feel however that you cannot teach people to be ethical, but you can teach them what is ethical.” Discussion of Kohlberg in the paper/ mention of the word “universal” 

56. “The outcome of [learning ethics in a class] wholly depends on the person” "an ethical perspective” “ ‘By saying that ethics cannot be learned is not taking responsibility for your own decisions.” 

57. “Ethics is a set of standards that is obtained at a young age and then continuously reinforced through experiences in life.” “Note: The student is unaware that ethics come from within or that they change” 

58. Every individual analyzes every situation differently. “There are no concrete answers to what is right and what is wrong. These vary by cultures and societies, even neighbors.” “Because of the obscurity in the determination of right and wrong varies between people and cultures. Moral standards cannot be taught.” “Standards are observed and internalized.” “assuming right and wrong could be defined as serious concept that could be taught, it would still be impossible to teach ethics.” “There is no clear definition of right and wrong to set moral standards.” 

59. “Accepting that ethics can be taught just implies that you can stand back and observe your morals in a comparative and analytic way.” 

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same ethical beliefs. (after repeatedly asserting that children have the ethics of their parents) he sees the problem but does not see the solution.

68. "It may take many years for a person to believe and follow the ethical standards of society. "It is a person's choice as to whether or not he is going to be open to society's moral standards."

69. "Ethical codes, from one culture to another, are more alike than different people invoking golden rule for all societies clear understanding of universal ethics.

70. "Argument occurs because ethics means different things to different people" ethics begins when we critically examine the moral standards we have accepted from family, friends, a society ethics is life long "business activities cannot exist unless some minimal standards of ethics exist."

71. The question of right and wrong "I believe ethics can't be taught in its entirety, but people can be made aware of the values and regulations and the punishments that would result of those guidelines weren't followed." Teaching ethics: ultimately the student... must be willing to accept that material.

72. "The real question is who is right or what about ethical beliefs... He divorce is in its entirety, but" - See problem can't articulate well.

73. "Ethics is difficult to define because ethical behavior denotes different meanings to different people" let's talk about childhood as the base for future decisions.

74. "As each person matures he/she develops a personal set of values of what is ethical or not. What might seem ethical to some may seem the opposite to others. For example it is almost a universal rule of ethics not to kill another human being. Yet, some... like the followers of Osama bin Laden... "Each person has different backgrounds and this creates different views of ethics..."

75. "We learn from our friends, peers, and mentors in adolescence what is perceived as right and wrong... "religion, morality, and the golden rule. Studying these sources can supply the basic standards for evaluation ethical versus non-ethical decisions."

76. "Each person has different backgrounds and this creates different views of ethics..."

77. "I think people have values and morals that they go by and those are impossible to change for anyone." As I grow older... I've learned a few of those values... That I learned from my family what's legal what's ethical... The student sees this point.

78. With corporations going globally, it can even be harder to distinguish what is ethical because culture moral change that are created. Where in the United States to torture women is wrong, in Afghanistan is not... (written by a foreign-born student... hence the language is a second language)

79. "Every person has his or her own ideas about right and wrong as well as what is fair and unfair. No matter what each individual may inherently believe, it is critical that he or she strictly adhere to those beliefs in all situations are encountered. "we are mature enough to develop our own versions of ethical standards." we must learn to create our own values. "whether this is ethical in the business world is in the eye of the beholder"

80. "The best teachers can be people we look up to... it really hard job to do because many times they do not know exactly what is ethical or what is not." it is sometimes very difficult to figure out what the right thing to do." From a foreign student/ ethics = knowledge.

81. "Ethics are a set of morals and values that everyone possesses. However, everyone has a different set of morals and values... most people have a relatively similar set of ethics but not all." "every person who enters the business world will bring their own ethics..."

82. Everybody has their own set of moral standards, each society has its own moral standards, too, which allows for a wide variety of personal ethics. "The key to teaching these ethics is to provide more or less a system of guidance that someone can choose to follow or not follow."

83. "...Whether these [moral] standards are reasonable or not. This is determined by the individual situation that is being faced by the person or organization. Kohlberg's stage 5. > The person sees the conflicting views and this creates different views of ethics..."

84. "Each person sees the conflicting views and this creates different views of ethics."

85. "I think people have values and morals that they go by and those are impossible to change for anyone." As I grow older, I've changed a few of those values... That I learned from my family what's legal what's ethical... The student sees this point.

86. "Everyone has personal ethics to which they adhere. The grounds by which these personal ethics are made or learned differ from person to person... whose personal values should the business reflect?"

87. "Without ethics in business... everyone would be acting in an unethical manner, or personal manner." Ethics "is a topic that requires both diligence and careful examination." it is possible to make a student aware of the proper or acceptable ethical standards one should abide by.

88. "What we determine as right and wrong become our set of ethics that we live by... an individual can be taught what ethical behavior is considered to be by another individual, but in the end, people must determine their own ethical standards... "how people develop their set of ethics is much like picking our ethics off the clothes...the ethics you have in your own life fit you and who you are..." There must be moral standards that are developed and followed."

89. "Ethics is a very gray subject." I also believe that people's ethics are different all over the world. "You have to have someone there to tell you what is right and wrong according to what your society believes in."

90. "Ethics are the principles and morals that are norms in society." Law "is the glue that holds society together."

91. "The teaching of it is often tricky due to its subjective concepts" "one's person's specific code of ethics is most likely to be different from anyone else's" Student: society and people usually have similar ethics though "How is it possible to reconcile the differences?" "an easy starting point is to draw common beliefs... but it is often the case that no town people feel exactly the same concerning any given issue." "but the moral reasoning used to determine whether something is right or wrong should be employed using similar meth-
Appendix B:
Student Responses from a Chemistry Course

1. Note some anger “Each person can have his or her moral standards.”
2. group invoked: “majority rules” “ethics is group morality” yet, “ethics is...a very individual idea”
3. “society or government...”
4. can’t teach by lecturing; teach by example, especially from parents
5. no clear or useful indicators or language
6. “it is my feeling that we all have a set of ethics...” parents
7. ethics requires openness and will; ethics involves “a thought process”
8. “a person’s moral beliefs come from family”
9. knowing ethics does not equal being ethical
10. ethics can only be taught at an early age “morals should closely relate to the ethics of a society”
11. “rules are made by businesses, lawmakers...” for this person, rules are outside or external to the individual
12. “can instill ethics in others by expressing how they feel...” It’s “up to the individual to agree or not”
13. “a well-educated person is more likely to be ethical” “society influences ethics, too, though”
14. handwriting too hard to read
15. “a set of ethics must be consistent”; ethics are “taught at an early age”
16. “ethics can be taught to certain extent”; doing is not the same as thinking
17. respondent suggests that people should assume personal responsibility for moral decisions; ethics are learned from birth “through our entire lives” “decisions must have support”
18. parents invoked; development is observed in people
19. I’d like “a class which teaches what ethics is, what is part of it, what is considered ethical, and what considerations must be made for an ethical decision”
20. “Teaching a person ethics is like teaching a person faith. It cannot be done.” (intratable isolation/retrrenched multiplicity)
21. “I’m not sure.” We must “uphold the dignity of humanity and nature.”
22. “ethics can be learned but not taught... learned by observation”
23. “society and government...” “everyone has their own idea about ethics”
24. “the will to learn is key” respondent states that people can’t/don’t change their character
25. ethics is taught by mentors
26. “ethics are ‘formed’ at a young age”
27. “ethics is something that can never be taught” “ethics is inherent in all individuals”
28. “...code of ethics are the laws that you agree to follow”
29. “I don’t think a person can be taught to be ethical.”
30. “parents...” reinforced in classrooms “It’s the little voice that tells you...”
31. “No, no one can tell you what to do”
32. “You can clue people into behavior and mannerisms that are acceptable”
33. “Ethics can be taught...the rules you should follow and why can also be taught” “No teacher, especially at the collegiate level, has much of an impact in the development of a person’s ethics.”
34. Ethics are “the principles or standards of human conduct” people must be open and willing to learn
35. “environment teaches...” “in the end, everyone has to make their own choices based on what they feel is right”
36. “culture teaches...”
37. “society...” the will is important
38. Ethics is “what society in general believes to be proper” Ethics are “hard to teach because students are not faced with ethical challenge”
39. “Everyone has their own beliefs and opinions”
40. “It is dangerous to teach ethical behavior” because it “conflicts with human ability of free thought and reasoning.” Ethics is “collective morality”