

December 2020 Newsletter from ERiA

Winter Greetings, friends and colleagues of Ethical Reasoning in Action!

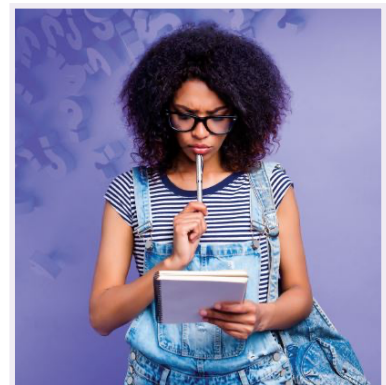
Below are updates and stories from ERiA that you may find encouraging in the midst of these challenging and uncertain times. The newsletter is intended to bring attention to the good teaching, scholarship, and work being done at JMU and elsewhere. Exceptionally difficult ethical situations are being navigated daily, especially in educational contexts. How can the 8KQ help us perceive the ethical issues at stake more clearly and make the important decisions that we face more ethically?

Ethical Reasoning in Action at JMU

It's so Complicated

ERiA received results back from facilitators who volunteered to read through the ethical reasoning worksheets from incoming students. The current global Covid-19 pandemic overshadowed the majority of ethical issues identified. Covid-19 disrupted our social world and has brought to the foreground how much we rely on connection and contact with each other for meaning in our lives.

The second most identified ethical issue was protesting racial discrimination through supporting Black Lives Matter and with it also protesting other forms of discrimination against gender, disability, and religion. Many students reflected on specific incidents of targeted discrimination, either against themselves or against their friends or family, and they asked what they should do. Some students were concerned about deep differences of outlook within families and reflected on whether they should speak up and other students reflected on how far freedom of speech goes. For both these groups of students, questions of freedom and liberty were on their mind.



Other students identified ethical issues that we encounter every day as we go about attending classes, forging friendships, and living on planet earth as citizens. Students imagined facing issues relating to end-of-life, addiction, voting, loneliness, consumption (diet and fashion), sustainable living, immigration policies, and life with allergies. In many ways, this world goes on and life raises all the issues that it did even before there was a pandemic.

Here is an example from one student who is reflecting on whether JMU should open with in-person classroom instruction:

Fairness:	How can we keep students safe while having in-person classes?
Outcomes:	What can we do to slow the spread of Covid-19?
Responsibilities:	Should we have to wear masks?
Character:	What is the best way for me to come to class safely?
Liberty:	Will my freedoms be lost if I don't wear a mask?
Empathy:	What will be the best way for all students to learn?
	Do students like online classes?
Authority:	Do teachers want to teach online or do they prefer in-person classes?
Rights:	Do students have a right to choose?

Election, 8KQ, and the Educator Code of Ethics

Lisa Clark Schick (College of Education)

In EDUC 300: Foundations of American Education, we examine the ethics of teaching and apply the 8KQ to case studies and to our responses to real world situations and experiences. This year, during the week prior to the 2020 Presidential Election we used the 8KQ to consider how we could respond in the event our favored candidate were to lose the election. Guided by the 8KQ, students worked in small groups crafting ethical questions to inform their responses. In the uncertain days following the 2020 Presidential Election we revisited our 8KQ considerations and compared them with the [National Education Association Code of Ethics](#). From this, students created scenarios that may occur in their future classroom and considered how they should respond based on their interpretation of one of the 8KQs and the expectations of the NEA Code of Ethics. Students raised questions such as:



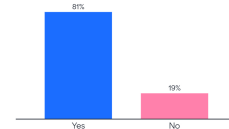
Outcomes:	How will treating someone different(ly) because of who they voted for affect my relationship with them?
Character:	How will my actions after the election reflect my character?
Responsibilities:	Is it more responsible to protest or to remain calm?
Rights:	How can I uphold my rights including freedom of speech while respecting others?

Presentations and Publications

JMU Libraries Champion 8KQ Ethical Reasoning

Following a well-received presentation at the Virginia Library Association Conference in 2019, ERIa enthusiasts from JMU Libraries were invited to reprise that effort for a webinar hosted by the [Association of Southeastern Research Libraries](#). Jenne Klotz, Bob Martin and Michael Trocchia presented on October 13, 2020 to 100 participants. After discussing the history of ERIa on campus and at the Libraries, the 8KQ were introduced. Next came a short video of a public library's actual experience with the decision to deploy Narcan to fight the opioid epidemic and train library staff to administer it. Participants were asked to reflect on their own library environments and use the 8KQ to begin asking questions around the issue of Narcan deployment. Interactive polling was a key hook to get the virtual audience engaged. A robust discussion followed with numerous questions submitted by chat. *It's Complicated* can easily be used for in-person or virtual groups as a way to introduce the 8KQ to a wider audience. Use these links to view the [slides](#) and [recording](#).

Should your library accept the donated Narcan?



Parents Council Uses 8KQ to Decide Whether to Open with In-person Classes

As part of Family Weekend, JMU Parents Council held its annual Fall meeting on October 15th — this time virtually. ERIa facilitated an ethical reasoning workshop for the whole council, comprised of 114 families. Members of the council were given a brief overview of the 8KQ strategy and current findings in decision science that inform and support it. The council grappled with the daunting ethical reasoning question: Should JMU hold in-person classes in the spring? Many participants expressed appreciation for the ability of the 8KQ approach to highlight a broad array of ethical considerations and with it a greater sense of awareness for the complexities involved in making ethical decisions. Participants called the session amazing, incredible, and engaging. Thank you to Tracey Kite and Sherry King of Parent Relations for organizing the event.



Anticipatory Ethical Reasoning Changes Student Perspectives on New Technologies



Drs. Emily York and Shannon Conley, School of Integrated Sciences, [published](#) an experimental approach for engaging undergraduate STEM students in ethical reasoning when evaluating the potential implications and outcomes of technological innovation from a design strategy perspective. *Creative Anticipatory Ethical Reasoning*, or CAER, integrates three key components—scenario analysis, design fiction, and ethical frameworks—in an innovative and powerful design strategy. They report that students who embraced CAER experienced a profound shift in their conception of what constitutes *responsible* innovation and ethical conduct in science and technology. Specifically, integrating stakeholder perspectives with ethical reasoning and scenario analysis significantly altered their perceptions. Instead of seeing new technologies as welcome solutions for societal problems, students experienced the possibility of negative moral consequences following technological innovation. York and Conley suggest that CAER could be a useful pedagogical practice for expanding students' ethical awareness and sensitivity to unforeseen and morally problematic outcomes of technological innovation.

Where Will You Find Adopters of the 8KQ Strategy?

MAINE MARITIME ACADEMY
A COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING, MANAGEMENT, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Northwestern

BRIDGEWATER COLLEGE



VCU



LONGWOOD
UNIVERSITY



Contact Ethical Reasoning in Action

How are you using the 8KQ in your classes, programs, work, research, professional and daily life? Hearing your stories and, with your permission, reading them in an upcoming ERiA newsletter helps to nurture the JMU academic community into a culture where ethical reasoning flourishes! Send your experiences, ideas, and insights to ethicalreasoning@jmu.edu.



All the very best,

Bill Hawk and Christian Early

Ethical Reasoning in Action
James Madison University

ASK "FORCLEAR"
<http://www.jmu.edu/ethicalreasoning>



The Eight Key Questions

What key questions should I (we) use to evaluate the ethical dimensions of a situation?

Fairness	How can I (we) act justly, equitably, balancing interests?
Outcomes	What possible actions achieve the best short- and long-term outcomes?
Responsibilities	What duties and/or obligations apply?
Character	What actions help me (us) become my (our) ideal?
Liberty	How do I (we) show respect for personal freedom, autonomy, consent?
Empathy	How would I (we) act if I (we) cared about all involved?
Authority	What do legitimate authorities (e.g. experts, laws, god/s) expect?
Rights	What rights, if any (e.g., innate, legal, social) apply?

Use the "FORCLEAR" acronym to help you remember all 8KQ.

Learn more at jmu.edu/ethicalreasoning

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