

February greetings, friends and colleagues of Ethical Reasoning in Action!

Below are updates, events, and stories from ERiA that you may find of interest. Please share how you are using the 8KQ in your classes, programs, work, and daily life—we would love to hear your stories and, with your permission, to share them in an upcoming newsletter!

Ethical Reasoning in Action at JMU

Madison Leads – Mollie Zenz

The Madison Leads Conference is a one-day student leadership conference for JMU students to explore their abilities and apply them to their involvements on campus. Mollie Zenz, Ethical Reasoning in Action Fellow from Orientation, facilitated a breakout session called "Leading Ethically" at the Madison Leads student conference on February 8. Thirty undergraduate student leaders forged connections between leadership theory and the 8KQ to talk through scenarios as a group, before deciding on a course of action.

Teaching 8KQ to Chemistry Students – Nate Wright



Dr. Nate Wright, Professor of Chemistry, values developing students' ethical reasoning skills in addition to technical skills, so he regularly invites ERiA to facilitate an interactive experience. Faculty fellow and marketing professor Dr. Joe Derby, Liv Stephens from Strategic Planning and Engagement,

and Katrina Libera facilitated an ethical reasoning workshop for about 45 junior Chemistry students in late January. After an 8KQ introduction, students applied the questions to a custom-developed case (by Joe and Nate) relevant to the chemistry industry. Joe is a trained chemist and worked in the industry for many years. Students broke into small teams to analyze the scenario and were charged with deciding what to do regarding restarting production in a chemical plant after an explosion – restart in same location, restart in same location and store hazardous chemical offsite, or move production elsewhere. Each location choice raises social, environmental, and ethical concerns beyond the technical considerations. Tragically, a chemical explosion occurred that same Friday at a manufacturing plant with some similarities to the hypothetical scenario in Houston, Texas.

Teaching 8KQ to Non-native Speakers – Jennifer Little

Over the past year, the [International Study Center](#) has been exploring ways in which to bring the 8 Key Questions to its unique population on the JMU campus. ISC students have lower English proficiency than domestic students, so the center started their exposure by asking the students to first define the keywords of each of the questions. This was a pivotal first step as many of the responses from students were definitions such as “whiteness, light-skin” for *Fairness* and “care about the feelings of friends” for *Responsibility*. Some of these answers stem from still learning the English language, while others can be attributed to differences in cultural backgrounds. For example, Liberty means different things in a society that generally emphasizes more collectivism than individualism. Once the terms and their meanings were broken down and put in the context of their use in 8KQ Ethical Reasoning, students were better able to apply the 8 Key Questions effectively. ISC students built up to the *It's Complicated* scenario by being exposed to smaller challenges and activities in their classes where the 8KQ terminology could be reinforced in linguistically appropriate ways. The ISC is very excited about the inclusion and focus on Ethical Reasoning as part of its larger program.

Ethical Reasoning at Conferences

APPE – Christian Early



The Association of Practical and Professional Ethics ([APPE](#)) held its annual meeting in Atlanta this year February 20-22. Christian Early presented a medical ethics scenario focusing on parental decision-making using the 8KQ in caring for a child diagnosed with cerebral palsy. The presentation showed the flexibility and helpfulness of the 8KQ approach without having to resort to complicated and contested ethical theories or commitments. Those in attendance appreciated the practicality and applicability of 8KQ ethical reasoning as well as the benefits of deliberating as a group.

Teaching Ethical Reasoning to Accountants Using the 8KQ – Molly Brown

College of Business Associate Dean [Molly Brown](#), a member of the accounting faculty, has found ways to weave the 8 Key Questions into the work she does teaching professional ethics to practicing accountants. In December, as an ethics instructor for the Virginia Society of CPAs, she conducted a workshop at Navy Federal Credit Union's headquarters in Vienna, Virginia using the Narcan scenario from this year's *It's Complicated* program (you can find the Overdose video [here](#)). CPAs must complete continuing education programs each year, and this two-hour

workshop fulfilled a requirement for Maryland and DC licensees in the Navy Federal office. Molly found that the workshop participants brought different perspectives to the exercise than the JMU freshmen she had worked with in August. In addition to the scenario itself, the accountants discussed ways that they might use the 8 Key Questions to solve ethical dilemmas that they face in their profession, such as issues involving fair presentation of accounting information and treatment of confidential information. Feedback from the workshop was overwhelmingly positive.

Molly will be conducting a similar workshop next June at the Institute of Management Accountants' annual meeting in Atlanta as part of their professional ethics track. She enjoys sharing this part of the JMU culture with her fellow accounting professionals.

Ethical Reasoning in Action Beyond

ERiA in Rwanda – Katrina Libera



Katrina Libera represented ERiA in Rwanda as part of an ongoing partnership between JMU and several higher education programs in Kigali. African Leadership University (ALU), a private university in Rwanda, is interested in intertwining the 8KQ into their first year programming, as well as making it a

required class throughout their students' university experience. Katrina also met with representatives from Aegis Trust, a nonprofit organization that works to prevent crimes against humanity and post-genocide peace building around the world. In Rwanda, they work to educate and provide restorative justice to perpetrators and survivors of the genocide that took place 25 years ago. Both ALU and Aegis expressed a strong desire to build a partnership with ERiA in incorporating ethical reasoning skills into their programming.

8KQ in Doctor of Education Program, VCU – Tomika Ferguson

[Dr. Tomika Ferguson](#), Co-Coordinator of the Doctor of Education Program in the School of Education at Virginia Commonwealth University, teaches the doctoral course “Frameworks for Decision-Making: Ethical Perspectives.” In the course, students are challenged to develop a critical lens to focus on in-depth analyses of ethical issues and problem solving using research, ethical theories and decision-making frameworks. For the past three Spring semesters, she has experimented with incorporating the Eight Key Questions (8KQ) ethical reasoning strategy and gives this report from her experience: “I have found that the 8KQ reasoning strategy is ideal for this course because of the opportunity it gives to challenge how educational leaders consider their approach to decision-making and how they navigate the relationships between themselves and their community and work environment in an intentional, disruptive manner. The 8KQ framework takes them out of their comfort zone and it deepens the significance of ethical reasoning for all levels of individuals, freshmen to doctoral students to senior administrators. For me, it has illuminated the importance of the intersected identities of educational leaders. The integrity and flexibility of the framework can lead students to acknowledge their bias and preconceived ideas of people and solutions while simultaneously collaborating with a diverse group to select an appropriate decision. Students cannot escape discussions where they may critique how social identities, privilege, and power influence ethical reasoning. All students can find an opportunity to connect with or relate to FORCLEAR within their decision-making as K-12 and higher education leaders. I look forward to continuing to embed the 8KQ framework in future courses, and to provide students an opportunity for personal and professional transformation as ethical leaders.”

8KQ and Bridgewater College Ethics Requirement

Local Bridgewater College requires all students to take a course containing an ethics component. Since 2018, the Teacher Education program has required its candidates to learn how to use the 8 Key Question ethical reasoning

strategy. On January 30, Elizabeth Sanchez and Bill Hawk led about 30 future teachers through the 8KQ using a scenario involving a difficult situation that they are likely to face in their teaching careers.

Temple University and 8KQ Ethical Reasoning

The general education program at Temple University requires a two-course Intellectual Heritage sequence, “The Good Life” and “The Common Good.” Most of the 5500+ incoming students take both courses. Faculty and program reviews have suggested that these courses, due to their normative orientation, could use a more explicit component in ethics. On January 26-28, Bill Hawk served as an external reviewer talking with faculty about the 8KQ strategy, which was positively received.

Contact Ethical Reasoning in Action

To request a custom workshop or consultation, reach us at ethicalreasoning@jmu.edu.

We wish you the very best,

Bill, Lori, Christian, and Katrina