MADISON COLLABORATIVE

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COLLABORATIVE
ETHICAL REASONING IN ACTION

MADISON COLLABORATIVE ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORT #1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

for

2013-2014

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Madison Collaborative (MC) Annual Technical Report reflects students' ethical reasoning skills, attitudes toward ethical reasoning, and the effect of the Madison Collaborative on these skills and attitudes, thus far. Note that the 2013-2014 academic year is "Year 1" of the Madison Collaborative intervention plan, reflecting the earliest phase of intervention implementation. While some assessment results suggest statistically significant gains regarding students' ethical reasoning skills and attitudes, gains are typically small and not practically significant. Such results are to be expected given ethical reasoning interventions are just starting to be deployed, and all interventions have not yet been implemented. In subsequent years, students will experience a greater number of MC interventions, several of which are expected be more impactful than those implemented thus far. Therefore, we expect to see larger gains in cognitive and affective ethical reasoning student learning outcomes in future years corresponding to the schedule of planned interventions (See Section 4.4 of the full technical report).

1.1   How did students perform on the Ethical Reasoning Recall Test (ERRT) post *It's Complicated*?

After experiencing *It's Complicated*, on average, incoming first-year students were able to recall almost 6 of the 8 Key Question words. The easiest Key Question to recall was Fairness and the most difficult was Liberty. On average, incoming first-year students correctly explained 4 of the 8 Key Questions. The easiest Key Question to explain was Outcomes and the most difficult was Liberty.

1.2   Did students entering in Fall 2013 score differently on the Ethical Reasoning Identification Test (ERIT) compared to the previous cohort?

Incoming first-year students scored at almost 70% correct on the Ethical Reasoning Identification Test (ERIT). The majority of students (about 68%) scored between 56% and 82% correct.

As expected, first-year students in Fall 2013 scored significantly higher (*mean* = 500.00, *SD* = 100.00) than did first-year students in Fall 2012 (*mean* = 471.90, *SD* = 96.86), on average. This result is likely attributable to Madison Collaborative interventions. That is, first-year students who completed the ERIT in Fall 2013 experienced *The One Book* and *It's Complicated*; however, first-year students who completed the ERIT in Fall 2012 did not experience any Madison Collaborative interventions prior to completing the ERIT.

1.3   How much did students' ERIT scores improve over 1.5 years (Fall 2012 vs. Spring 2014)?

Students scored similarly on the ERIT in Fall 2012 and Spring 2014. After 1.5 years, second-year students scored at almost 70% correct on the ERIT, with the majority of students (about 68%) scoring between 51% and 83% correct. Although ERIT scores did not change very much during the 1.5 year period, scores were slightly more variable in Spring 2014 than they were in Fall 2012.

On average, second-year students in Spring 2014 (*mean* = 491.56, *SD* = 123.80) scored a little higher than they did 1.5 years earlier as first-year students in Fall 2012 (*mean* = 479.48, *SD* = 92.02). The mean difference over time was about 12 points. Although the mean difference was statistically significant, as expected, it was not practically significant.

1.4 How well were first- and second-year students able to apply the ethical reasoning process?

Overall students scored a little above "Marginal" (i.e., a score of 1 on the rubric) on the ethical reasoning essay rubric. The easiest rubric element was A (*Ethical Situation: Identifying ethical issue in its context*). The most difficult rubric element was D (*Ethical Reasoning: Analyzing individual KQs*). As expected, first-year students who entered JMU in the fall of 2013 and participated in *The One Book* and *It's Complicated* scored higher than second-year students who entered JMU the year before and had no such interventions.

Ethical Reasoning – Writing (ER-WR) essay rubric scores were also compared over time for a small group of students who completed this assessment in both Fall 2012 as incoming first-year students and 1.5 years later in Spring 2014 as second-year students. Although, ER-WR scores increased very slightly over the 1.5 year period, students' scores in Spring 2014 were not significantly higher than their scores in Fall 2012. This is not surprising, since this cohort of students had no formal intervention during this time period.

1.5 Do first- and second-year students have different opinions about ethical reasoning?

On average, first-year students rated ethical reasoning skills relatively high in importance (compared to other skills), and similarly to: critical thinking, interpersonal, and oral communication skills. First-year students rated artistic and writing skills as least important. In addition, first-year students most often rated ethical reasoning skills as the second most important skillset.

Unlike first-year students, second-year students typically rated ethical reasoning skills as only moderately important (compared to other skills), and similarly to organization skills. Similar to first-year students, second-year students rated artistic skills as least important. Interestingly, second-year students most often rated ethical reasoning skills as the sixth most important skill. Thus, it appears as though first-year students tend to rate ethical reasoning skills as more important than second-year students. Differences in ratings were likely influenced by exposure to Madison Collaborative interventions (i.e., first-year students experienced *The One Book* and *It's Complicated* whereas second-year students did not).

ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

The Fall 2013 semester was the first semester in which all four MC assessment instruments were administered. These instruments include:

- Ethical Reasoning Recall Test (ERRT)
- Ethical Reasoning Identification Test (ERIT)
- Survey of Ethical Reasoning (SER)
- Ethical Reasoning – Writing (ER-WR)

The chart below shows the alignment between ER assessments and abbreviated SLOs. It is important to note that the four locally developed MC assessments provide full coverage of the SLOs.

ERRT	• SLO 1: Memorization of the 8KQs
ERIT	• SLOs 2 & 3: Identifying the relationship of specific KQs to a decision/rationale scenario
SER	• SLOs 1-5 as well as SLOs 6 & 7: attitudes toward ER
ER-WR	• SLO 5: Applying KQs to one's own personal, professional, and civic life

For the full technical report for 2013-2014, please email mc@jmu.edu.