



Practice Vignette for Wednesday Afternoon, Everyone

Part 1

Your Mission

Your Institution (University X) has recently selected **ethical reasoning** as its Quality Enhancement Project for institutional accreditation. After some debate, senior leadership put its foot down: ALL students graduating from University X (approximately 3,000 per year) must be exposed to an ethical reasoning curriculum. Further, senior leadership expects to receive evidence of learning improvement across all undergraduate students. The President is realistic. To achieve stated aims, interventions will cost a significant amount of money. Six figures annually, especially for the first two years, is not out of the question.

University X is a mid-sized, residential institution situated in a traditional “college town.” All 1st year students are required to live on campus. Ten percent (10%) of all graduates transferred from other institutions. Ninety-five percent (95%) of courses are taught in-person. Regarding ethical reasoning, there has been no universal definition at University X nor a concerted effort to improve learning prior. Past efforts have been limited to discipline-specific ethics courses in a few majors.

Your team has been chosen by the President to develop a university strategy. Your team represents part of the inner circle, which will also include the Provost and the Dean overseeing General Education.

Who Are You?

Collectively, your team has experience with teaching, faculty development, assessment, accreditation, and administration. Further, you have formed a wide and deep network across campus. Together, your team can get a text response from most administrators within a few hours.

Part 1A. Because of the first 2 ½ days of this workshop, you already have an incredible head start to the plan. Regarding ethical reasoning, consider the resources you bring to bear. List those resources in the space below.

Part 1B. Reflect on the interventions you have learned thus far. List those interventions in the space below.

Name of Intervention	Description	Length	Target Audience	Other Details
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				

Part 2

Vision

This part provides contextual information that will help your team prepare for the following parts. Discuss this part briefly, then move on to Part 3.

Vision: The President aspires for *all students* to demonstrate learning improvement in ethical reasoning skills.

Cognitive SLOs:

1. Students will be able to state, from memory, all Eight Key Questions (8KQ). Alternate assessment: From a list of ways of conceptualizing issues, students will correctly identify the Eight Key Questions.
2. When given a specific decision and rationale on an ethical issue or dilemma, students will correctly identify the KQ most consistent with the decision and rationale.
3. Given a specific scenario, students will identify appropriate considerations for each of the 8KQs. Alternate approach: Students will be able to provide the specific considerations raised or rationale implied when applying every KQ to an ethical situation or dilemma.
4. For a specific ethical situation or dilemma, students will evaluate courses of action by applying (weighing and, if necessary, balancing) the considerations raised by KQs.
5. Students will apply SLO 4 to their own personal, professional, and civic ethical cases.

In 5 years, the level of student ethical reasoning proficiency that your team would like to see as a function of the upcoming improvement initiative is a 2 out of 4 on the rubric. You know that most students at other institutions—who have not received training on 8KQ—typically perform at the Developing (1 out of 4) level on the rubric.

FYI:

- A short orientation (approx. 75 minutes) will typically bump the score up slightly to a 1.2.
 - In addition to a short orientation, an ER infused course implemented with decent fidelity (10-20 hours of intervention) will typically bump up the score to a Good (2 out of 4). More intense and longer doses have led to instances of Excellent (3 out of 4).
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Part 3

Options: Compulsory Classes/Experiences

Next, you and your team scout out existing institutional compulsory classes and/or experiences (e.g., student orientation). In other words, you identify experiences that reach most students [for the scope you are targeting]. Note, it is possible to create a new vehicle (e.g., new required course) but you will need urgency and resources to do so, especially at the institutional level.

Your task: At a superficial level, consider the fit between the following six compulsory classes/experiences (1, 2, 3A, 3B, 3C, and 3D). Which seem like the best candidates to meet your vision and SLOs, why?

List of institutional compulsory classes/experiences:

1. At University X, all students – first time, first year and transfer – experience Orientation. It spans three days (100% of all students).
 2. With rare exception, first-time, first-year students live in residence halls. Each suite meets with their Residence Advisor for approximately 1 hour per month (8 times per academic year) to discuss college life (99% of first-time, first-year students; 90% of all students).
 3. All students must meet general education requirements that total 30 credits. 12 of these credits (four courses) are taken by most students; some transfer credits in (or test out).
 - A. First-Year Seminar: 99% of students.
 - B. Writing 101: 70% of students.
 - C. Writing 102: 92% of students.
 - D. Critical Thinking 171: 99% of students.
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Part 4

Background Check: Which Compulsory Classes/Experiences Will You Target?

Now, let us consider ethical reasoning relative to these vehicles. Is it a good conceptual fit? How is the culture related to them? And, think about the people holding the keys to unlock them: Formal leaders. Informal leaders. Do you know them? How supportive are they of the project? Do they have a record of success?

Your Task: After sorting through the information below: *Which courses/experiences do you plan to target and why? What work do you need to do to secure relationships surrounding these courses/experiences?*

1. Orientation.
 - a. Background and Culture: Orientation has been a pivotal part of University X for 60 years. Last year, Orientation underwent its biggest overhaul in at least a decade. After months of tense negotiations, leaders from academic affairs and student affairs agreed to live with the new Orientation curriculum. *Tired of change* describes the current sentiment in the trenches. Approximately 12 different staff members lead components of Orientation. At many times, the approximately 3,500 new students are split into small groups, facilitated by over 100 upper class student leaders.
 - b. Leadership.
 - i. Director Scooter Smith is a veteran of higher education and well liked. He can initiate training for student employees, and they are typically eager participants. He has told people privately that he is likely to retire in a few years and considers the recent overhaul of orientation as his swan-song project.
 - ii. Vice Provost of Academic Operations: Must approve academic components within Orientation. Not likely to approve a big initiative in Orientation given the recent overhaul.
 - iii. Vice President of Student Affairs Operations: Must approve academic components within Orientation. Not likely to approve a big initiative in Orientation given the recent overhaul.

2. Residence Life

- a. Background and Culture: Residence Life has a good reputation on campus. The basic model of 30 residents per Resident Advisor has worked over the years. One criticism/growth opportunity is that not enough “academics” have been woven into the residence experience.
- b. Leadership
 - i. Director. Lily Sanchez has overseen the unit for four years. At a few meetings, she’s been overheard saying that students need to work on their decision-making skills. She has considerable control over the unit and is well-respected by the VP of Student Affairs. Resident Advisors typically are open to new training and high on implementation.

3. General Education (in general; we’ll get to the specifics shortly)

- a. Background and Culture. General education is HUGE and complicated. Hundreds of instructors from 50 academic departments contribute. Given the structure, change is typically cumbersome and slow. Sometimes, changes must be negotiated among central academic administration, several departments, and even faculty senate.
- b. Leadership. Dean Van Schuster oversees the general education curriculum. Van Schuster has strong support from the provost and is well liked among unit heads and faculty (although not universally so). Van Schuster has a balanced view of change: be open to new ideas but be careful in choosing them and deliberate when implementing them.
- c. Leadership. AUHs¹. The level of influence of any AUH over general education decisions depends on the course. Some courses, like writing 101 and 102, fall under the Writing Department and all instructors of these courses serve under that AUH. Whereas other courses, like critical thinking, are taught by faculty from several departments. Thus, buy-in to initiatives can be even trickier given different department sensibilities.

3A. First-Year Seminar

- a. Background and Culture. Started in 2017, the first-year seminar has been privately called a disaster by many upper-level administrators, and publicly called worse by throngs of faculty. The previous coordinator was reassigned to a different position last year given turbulent relationships in every direction.
- b. Leadership. Last semester Meethal Shah was appointed as interim coordinator. Shah has built great relationships with faculty in past projects. Her #1 goal is to re-establish communication with faculty and reduce levels of hostility. Dr. Shah teaches a course on ethics in her home department of management and is an advocate of ethics education.

¹ AUH: “Academic Unit Head” (aka: Department Head, Department Chair)

- c. AUHs. No course has more cooks in the kitchen than the seminar. 30 departments are represented, and the seminar is a “sensitive” topic among many.

3B & 3C. Writing 101/102

- a. Background and Culture. The Writing 101, 102 sequence has existed for more than two decades at University X. Approximately 60 instructors teach 100 sections of 101 and 130 sections of 102 (most instructors teach both 101 and 102). Additionally, 40% of the sections are taught by adjunct faculty. Given these courses are extremely time intensive – so much essay feedback to provide – the instructors seem tired. Nevertheless, the team works cohesively and enjoys collaborating with one another when they have the opportunity. In the past, they have jumped at the opportunity to make some extra money during the summer. Generally, the faculty feel like the 101 class is highly structured and highly effective. Many have stated that 102 could use more structure.
- b. Leadership. Dr. Leslie Phillips has served as the 1st-year writing coordinator for three years. Phillips is ambitious and looking for a challenge but knows little about ethics or ethical reasoning.
- c. AUH. The administrative structure for the Writing 101 and 102 courses is relatively simple. The vast majority of faculty teaching Writing 101 and Writing 102 serve under the Writing Department. Further, the AUH – Poindexter Hollywood – is a close friend of one of (your) team members, knows about the ethical reasoning project, and calls a potential opportunity “exciting.”

3D. Critical Thinking 171

- a. Background and Culture. Everyone who teaches this course can agree on one thing: critical thinking is important. Other than that, the group agrees on little, including the definition of critical thinking. In fact, the 75 critical thinking courses are taught in roughly even numbers by instructors from the Philosophy, English, Decision Sciences, History, and Economics departments. Each departmental group works as its own clique. “You weirdos don’t bother us, and we won’t bother you.”
- b. Leadership. Dr. Shelly DeFrancis oversees this group. She is a huge proponent of academic freedom and strives to keep administrators out of the classroom.
- c. AUHs. Five of them represent different departments. The Philosophy department head loves the concept of ethical reasoning, and is happy to get folks from his department on board. Two other AUHs are open to a conversation. One couldn’t be reached. The last AUH said over the phone, “if you could see me, you would notice the rotation of my eyeballs.”

Part 5

The Architecture

Thanks to your fellow team members' earnest, intelligent, strategic, and charming ways, the proper trust was built with affiliated leaders and many faculty and staff in the trenches.

Now, consider:

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- Which groups deliver which interventions (the overall curriculum).

- Draw a visual representation of all the stakeholders:

- Are there other people who need to be on board?

Part 6

Setting the Wheels in Motion

Preparation

The next step is ensuring that the faculty and staff who will ultimately deliver the interventions receive appropriate guidance, time, and space to do so effectively. Who is going to deliver these sessions? Do you have access to a faculty developer who can create them?

Build in “Educate the Educator” components within your plan. How much time will it take a faculty member to learn about the 8KQ process, create a scenario (and perhaps other interventions) and incorporate it into their syllabus? How much time might it take for a staff member to deliver a brief introduction?

Assessment

Build in your assessment plan (let us just use the rubric for now). How are you going to collect pre-intervention data? How will you collect post-intervention data? Who in your university will be responsible for overseeing this assessment?

Overall Timeline

Now you have all the components, let's weave them into a multi-year plan! Let us not forget about the cost! How much will it take to support all these components?