Ethical Decision Making

Activity 6-1a

Format: Small Group

Time Frame: 30 minutes

Description
This activity provides students with an opportunity to practice making decisions using a multi-step ethical decision-making model and sample classroom scenarios.

Materials
- One Ethical Decision-Making Model page per student
- One scenario page per group

Instructions
1. Using the ethical decision-making model presented in class, determine how your group would handle the assigned scenario.
2. Identify a spokesperson to share your thought process and proposed resolution with the class.

Ethical Decision-Making Model

1. Gather facts
    - Listen to rationale
    - Compare actions (what is happening) with rhetoric (what is being said)

2. Determine ethical dilemma

3. Identify principles that impact the situation

4. List alternatives

5. Compare alternatives

6. Consider consequences of each alternative
    - The greater the consequences the greater the need for careful decision-making
    - Questions to consider:
        - Could you or someone else suffer physical harm?
        - Could you or someone else suffer serious emotional pain?
        - Could the decision hurt your reputation, undermine your credibility, or damage important relationships?
        - Could the decision impede the achievement of any important goal?

7. Make decision

Ethical Dilemma 1 – Boosting Exam Grades

You are team teaching a course in hydraulics and recently administered a mid-term exam. You grade the exams and find the mean grade to be 65%. The passing score is a minimum of 70%. When you submit the exams to the lead instructor, he says that you were too harsh in your scoring. He is going to give everyone 10 extra points. He is the senior member of the team and the person responsible for your invitation to become part of the team. This is your first time teaching the course and you really liked the opportunity.

How will you handle this dilemma?

Ethical Dilemma 2 – Demeaning Language

An international student in your class comes to you with a concern that the Fire Technology Program's student advisor is using demeaning language towards him. The student believes that this is because the advisor lost a family member in the World Trade Center attack. As a result, the student is thinking about leaving the program. The advisor is a great supporter of your efforts and thinks that you may be asked to accept a fulltime position in the near future.

How will you handle this dilemma?

Ethical Dilemma 3 – Adding Points to Midterm Grades

After grading a mid-term exam worth 40% of the semester grade, a student approaches you about her score. She is one point short of passing and presents a reasonable argument as to why she selected one answer over another. After considering the request you decide to give her the point and ask her not to tell anyone else. As she walks away, another student approaches you and says, "I only missed it by two points and if you give points to her, then I should get my points too!"

How will you handle this dilemma?

Ethical Dilemma 4 – Copyright

You have a training class scheduled for tomorrow. The course materials have just arrived by air express, but a copyrighted journal article reprint required for the training is missing. There isn't enough time to reship the article in time for the training, but you have a personal copy.

How will you handle this dilemma?

Ethical Dilemma 5 – AWOL Instructor

You are working late at the academy when you overhear the instructor tell the recruits that during this evening's drills he will need to leave for a short period of time. He instructs the students to continue on with the ladder evolution drills while he's gone. He is the only instructor on duty.

How will you handle this dilemma?

Ethical Dilemma 6 – Drinks on the House

After a long day of live fire training for the recruit academy, you and your staff decide to stop by the local pub for a drink to discuss the events of the day. After sitting down you notice that there are several recruits there as well. When your drinks arrive the bartender tells you that they're on the house. The bartender is the father of one of the recruits who happens to be struggling.

How will you handle this dilemma?