From the Editor

One of the perks of being on this side of the editorial pen is the chance to interact between issues with many great students and teachers. While many of the contacts do not result in publication it is always invigorating to hear what is going on in classrooms, on campuses, and in the minds of philosophers of all ages.

In this issue I am happy to be able to share information on the philosophy for children program at Coastal Carolina. Smith and Oxley's write up of their program is both informative and inspiring. One aspect of their article that I hope everyone will find interesting in their extended discussion of specific teaching moments and how they are built into their program.

It is also with great pleasure that I am able to bring to you again the winners of the Kids Philosophy Slam. The various responses by students K–12 are a continual reminder of what young people are capable of doing.

The issue closes with a review of a guidebook for teachers who are attempting to implement or improve their own philosophical work with students. Please remember that we are always looking for quality submissions of reviews, essays, art, or other philosophically informed works.

On a final note, behind the scenes I have been working with Doug Umberger, an editorial intern, on a variety of forthcoming changes to *Questions*. Be sure to follow us on Twitter and Facebook and keep in touch via email.

Best,

Rory

National Historic Building Survey, ME-123-6

Portland Head Light

The Summer Ethics Academy: Teaching Ethics to Young Leaders

Renée Smith and Julinna Oxley

The Summer Ethics Academy is housed in the Jackson Family Center for Ethics and Values at Coastal Carolina University as part of the Center's outreach programs that seek to bring discussions of ethics to the community. Its central aim is to teach participants, rising sixth graders, how to engage in ethical reflection, and, more ambitiously, to help them become positive role models and to build their "moral confidence." The rationale behind choosing this particular age group is that it is both a transitional period in children's moral development, where they begin to be capable of more abstract moral reasoning skills,[1] and a particularly vulnerable period, as children transition from elementary school to middle school.[2] The goal is thus to encourage children who emerge as role models in school to develop desirable characteristics that we would want other children to emulate in middle school. Students were chosen by their fifth grade teachers and principals on the basis that they were role models, were teachable, had passable 5th grade reading skills, and could work with others. Participants were academically, economically, ethnically, and socially diverse. The program ran for four years (2004-2008) on CCU's campus during the summer, and now continues during the school year.

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Overview of the Summer Ethics Academy

The authors of this paper, two faculty members in the department of philosophy, designed and implemented the summer program. Smith was the sole director the first two years, and she and Oxley divided the responsibilities the next two years. The directors were responsible for every element of the program, including working with schools and parents to select children and facilitate their participation, arranging transportation, purchasing, buying, and preparing food and craft supplies, writing the curriculum, and training the assistants, and implementing the day to day activities with the children. The first year, the SEA had fifteen students for three days in July; by the fourth year, there were two one-week sessions with roughly twenty-five students each. Five area elementary schools participated the first year, and by the fourth year, eight participated. For each week of the Academy, four to five university students participating in an ethics scholarship program and course of study, the Jackson Scholars (JSs), assisted as group leaders and facilitators. The children, the Jackson *Junior* Scholars (JJSs), were transported to and from the university by local school buses generously provided by the Horry County school district. The program scheduled two morning sessions, an afternoon session, and then a recreational activity such as swimming or ping-pong daily. Morning and afternoon snacks, as well as lunch in the college dining hall, were provided. On the final day, the students visited a local campground owned by the family (the Jacksons) that funds the Ethics Center, where they presented what they learned during the week to the family, ate lunch, and played video games and miniature golf.

The university students (JSs) who served as group leaders had taken one or two courses in ethics, such as Contemporary Moral Issues, Ethical Theory, or Business Ethics; also, they were trained in Philosophy for Children's "community of inquiry" approach to teaching ethics to the kids.[3] This method emphasizes asking philosophical questions together *with* the children, not giving them answers on how to live each day. The aim was to enable the kids to think through the moral issues that they face in everyday life, and engage in critical thinking through stories, games, and activities. The college students facilitated discussion, and encouraged the children to explain *why* they have the ideas that they do, even if they are in line with standard moral rules and expectations. The "community of inquiry" approach requires encouraging everyone to participate, including those who are reluctant to speak up, and so the college students were trained to promote mutual respect in all activities and encourage discussions free of ad hominem attacks. During each week of the SEA, each JS led a group of three to five children in conversations about ethics. Armed with pens, paper, presentation tablets, and Post-It notes, they worked together as a small group then discussed their ideas with the whole class. Each day, students were randomly assigned to a different table, so that each child got to know the other participants and each JS.

Program Goals

The learning goals implemented in the SEA focus on three areas: (1) developing moral reasoning abilities (i.e., changing the way they reflect on ethical issues), (2) becoming positive role models (i.e., changing their behavior) by expanding the horizons of one's moral thinking, and (3) building their "moral confidence" (i.e., changing the way they feel about themselves) to act as moral leaders in their communities. Specific learning goals include:

Area (1):

    Reason using moral principles,

    Predict the possible outcomes of actions,

    Consider alternative courses of action,

    Recognize the facts relating to particular situations,

    Recognize those affected by certain actions,

Understand the importance of motives and intentions,

Identify virtuous character traits,

Learn to discuss moral problems and morally difficult decisions,

Area (2):

Recognize the needs of others,

Appreciate others' opinions and points of view,

Listen to others,

Make morally sound decisions,

Modify one's opinions in light of reasons,

Area (3):

Reflect on one's skills as a leader

Reflect on one's own moral development.[4]

Over the course of the four years, we created activities that would be effective both on a personal level, in that they would address issues that the children deal with daily, and on an academic level, in that they would hone critical thinking skills. Each of the activities aim to satisfy the program goals in at least one of three ways: the activity (1) introduces the children to some of the major considerations of theoretical ethics: consequences, happiness, rules and duties, virtue and character, moral community, and moral dilemmas, (2) applies moral standards to particular issues in applied ethics, such as lying, bullying, violence, or the environment, or (3) promotes reflection on the student's feelings and actions regarding herself, her family, her friends, and those around her.

Five Ethics Academy Activities

Each activity proceeds in four phases: (a) reading a short story or some other prompt, watching a video, or listening to the director's introduction of the topic, (b) having a philosophical discussion of the topic, (c) reflecting on one's own thoughts, ideas and behavior, and (d) doing a game, skit, posters, drawing, or some other activity to reinforce and illustrate the main ideas. The creative projects were presented to the Jackson family on the last afternoon of the program. We created fourteen activities by the fourth year; five activities are illustrated here: two introduce issues in theoretical ethics, two focus on applied ethics, and one is a personal reflection activity. Each activity is geared toward meeting the learning goals of Area 1, 2, or 3.

THEORETICAL/NORMATIVE ETHICS

(1) Writing the Unwritten Rules

In this activity, each group took note of any "written rules" they encountered on their walk across campus on their way to lunch. When they returned from lunch they made a list of the written rules they had seen; for example, "Stop," "No Skateboarding," "No smoking," etc. They discussed why there are such rules, how we learn these rules, if it is ever permissible to break them, and the consequences of breaking them. Then, they came up with a list of "unwritten rules," rules that we are expected to follow but that are not posted anywhere. Rules like, "respect your parents and teachers," "don't hurt people or animals," "do your homework," seem very different from the so-called "written rules." The kids discussed these rules as they did the written rules and compared the two types of rules: which are more important, how do they differ, is there some unique feature that one type has that the other does not? The class discussed final impression and the conclusions drawn were listed on poster-sized Post-It notes and displayed on the wall.

The aim of this activity was to tease out the difference between a moral rule, a conventional rule, and a civil rule (or law). This distinction can be illustrated in how one answers the question, "why not break this rule?" (. . . because it is wrong, because it is not traditionally done, because it is against the law).[5] In doing so, the kids could reflect on what motives govern our actions, the consequences of various types of actions, recognize the effects of actions on others, and identify principles that are common to various types of rules (e.g., it is wrong to harm others). After this, the children would create (written) rules for the Summer Ethics Academy, and justify the rules on the basis that they were good and reasonable.

(2) What's So Golden About the Golden Rule?

This activity meets the learning goals that involve understanding a conceptual distinction in types of moral principles and reasoning using moral principles, by investigating the difference between the Golden Rule and the Reciprocity Rule (or what Gregory Kavka calls the "Copper Rule"[6]). The students began by reading a scene adapted from Matthew Lipman's novel *Lisa*, which introduces the Reciprocity Rule, or the idea that being fair requires reciprocity and getting even with others.[7] In the adapted story, Owen trips Ty, and to get even with Owen for tripping him, Ty knocks over Owen's ice cream cone. Afterwards, Ty and his friend Jonathan reflect on the incident and whether getting even and 'doing to others what you do to them' is a good idea, especially if it's a mean trick. After reading the vignette, the students then answer questions:

1. What is likely to happen when we retaliate? Can retaliating really get things even? Is it right to respond to a wrong by returning in kind?

2. State the Golden Rule and give examples of when it is used.

3. How is the Golden Rule different from the Reciprocity Rule of, "An eye for an eye"?

4. How is getting even different from a) paying back a debt; b) returning a favor; c) offering a favor; d) only doing a favor if someone does one for you.

5. Is Ty's action an example of using the Golden Rule? Why or why not?

6. Summarize what you think is the main idea of the Golden Rule and then explain whether or not it is a good rule to use in morality.

The children's answers to these questions were insightful and honest. They admitted that they usually wanted to retaliate to others for wrongs done to them. This opened up a discussion of the variety of ways one can "get even" and whether retaliating against others ends up going in a vicious cycle of retribution. In answering question 6, they mostly came to the conclusion that retaliating isn't always necessary, but nearly all of the children agreed that there are some situations, such as when other countries attack ours, where reciprocity is the best course of action.

This discussion led to the applied ethics portion of the activity, a video documentary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., which showed his home being burned and his family attacked, as well as his insistence on non-violence and the "I Have A Dream" speech. The children then discussed whether or not he was right to pursue a non-violent path over a violent method for achieving social justice and whether Dr. King properly insisted on the Golden Rule rather than the Reciprocity Rule. Most students believed Dr. King was right to not try to get even with those who burned his home, for he was committed to nonviolence, and not to getting even with people who tried to hurt him. The students had studied Dr. King and Malcolm X in their school curriculum and were eager to discuss these alternative approaches to achieving civil rights in light of the Golden Rule/Reciprocity Rule distinction.

APPLIED ETHICS

(3) "Society and Fairness" Game

This activity seeks to meet learning goals that help kids recognize the facts relating to particular situations, recognize the needs of others, and appreciate others' opinions and points of view. It is a character role-playing game, a re-interpretation and practical application of John Rawls's "Veil of Ignorance" argument in his *A*

Theory of Justice.[8] Each student gets an "Identity" or character card, and is to remember his or her identity while playing the game. The point of the exercise is to find out how life is both fair and unfair, and to ask how we can make society more fair. The 'identities' distributed include, among others:

- Air Force General with a partner at home, three children, and living on Air Force Bases around the world
- Pastor with a stay-at-home partner and two children, living in church parsonage
- Divorced Retail Salesperson who has joint custody of two children, living in a rented two-bedroom home.
- Single unemployed Mother with three young children receiving state welfare assistance living in State-run housing projects

The identities were varied and ranged from citizens in jail to multi-millionaires. Perhaps the most interesting part of the game was going around the room to see each child's reaction to his or her identity. They would laugh when someone got the "homeless person" card and wanted to trade it, and they would brag when they got the "professional actor" card. We very often had to remind the students that life is difficult and that people going through hard times might end up in undesirable places in life and that we shouldn't laugh at these situations. Once each student had a card, they discussed questions pertaining to the concept of fairness such as, *Is life fair? In what ways is life fair, and in what ways is it unfair? What are the differences in how people answer? Is it related to their position in social life?*

Following this discussion, the students were asked to imagine that we (everyone in the room) are members of the government and must decide how to spend the tax money that we collect. After some initial apprehension at the prospect of taking the perspective of government leaders and with some coaching about the possible benefits to offer (job training, unemployment assistance, day care, special funding for people with artistic projects, money for public roads), their creative juices started flowing. They brainstormed numerous ways to run our society to make it fairer. In each group, there was an 'underprivileged' character, and the students would usually choose programs that would meet that person's needs (though sometimes they would focus on that person and not others). Afterwards, the students were ask to reflect on their method for deciding how to spend their tax money (by choosing programs based on need, common interests, or income), but they were rarely able to articulate their method and said yes to every proposed method. After each group presented their fair society to the rest of the class, the students were asked which benefits and services were most important in society. In general, they agreed on certain public goods and services (roads, schools, fire departments) because they benefitted everyone in society. This exercise was valuable for getting students to engage with the idea of social justice in a practical and fun way. Moreover, it addressed most of the learning objectives in area (2)

by expanding their moral horizons by considering the needs of others, taking alternative perspectives, and imagining ways to solve a diverse set of problems for the overall good of society.

(4) Must we ALWAYS tell the truth?

A second applied ethics activity aims to meet learning goals related to moral thinking by focusing on familiar sorts of situations in which children might be compelled to lie. After watching an early scene from the movie *Liar, Liar*,[9] where a father lies to his son, the students had a philosophical discussion of lying, examining whether lying is justified, in what situations it is justified, and why truth-telling is important. Then the students play a game called "The Hot Seat," which is an exercise in applying utilitarian reasoning by thinking about the overall consequences of lying and telling the truth. In this game, the players are given a stack of cards and divided into groups of two. A moral dilemma is written on each card. The first player picks a card and poses the dilemma to another player who is in the "hot seat." The players then ask a series of questions to the person in the hot seat. Everyone began with the following dilemma:

You and a friend go to the music store in the Mall. Your friend tells you that he (or she) is going to steal a CD—which you then see him or her do. As you are leaving the store, the alarm goes off and the manager comes over to the two of you. Your friend reveals the CD, and then says to the manager, "Oops, sorry, that was an accident." The manager then turns to you. "Is this true? Was it an accident?" What do you do? Do you tell the manager the truth (that your friend intended to steal the CD) or do you lie?

The students first considered the distinction between short-term consequences and long-term consequences and then asked what would be the (short and long-term) consequences of lying and telling the truth. They then were asked whether lying in this situation would be disrespectful to the other person or someone else and how lying or telling the truth in this situation would affect themselves. Finally, they had to decide whether they would lie or tell the truth in that situation and explain how they would do it, and what might happen afterwards.

The students' answers were intriguing because they took into account the complexity of the situation and how different parties would be affected. Although they frequently believed lying was justified on the basis of their own self-interest, the students were able to imagine different courses of action and considered various alternatives, and were able to come up with very nuanced ways to handle moral dilemmas. This popular activity fostered student learning outcomes essential to moral thinking and moral problem solving, namely, considering alternative courses of action, identifying motives for choosing one action over another, imagining and predicting possible short-term and long-term consequences for oneself and others, and making choices based on this reasoning.

PERSONAL ETHICAL REFLECTION

(5) Leadership, Character and Virtue

Several activities were designed to meet the area goal of helping students to increase their moral confidence by reflecting on their skills as a leader and their moral development. The activity, *Character Cards*, involved distributing approximately 30 cards, each with a different admirable character trait listed on it. Each child drew a card and introduced it in her group by describing a person that has the trait and giving an example of the sorts of actions that exemplify that trait. For example, one person might draw the card that says "loyalty." Then, he might say that his friend Mark is particularly loyal because he always includes him in the basketball games at his house, he does not talk about him behind his back, and he keeps his promises to him. He might then try to come up with other examples of being loyal. Each of the members of the group took a turn discussing the character cards each child had drawn. The JSs facilitated discussion asking, for example, if being loyal is easy or difficult and why, if it can be learned and how so, etc. Then the children ranked the character traits in terms of which trait they thought was the most important. They had to come to an agreement in their group through discussion before passing their remaining cards to the next table. Then each table discussed the new cards they received and did the exercise again with the new virtues, describing someone who had that trait, why it was virtuous, whether it was easy or difficult to act in accordance with that virtue, and how it compared to other virtues.

This activity is designed for the children to think about and discuss virtues in a personal way, by getting them to identify real people and real actions that exemplify these traits, so that they could develop skills for recognizing, emulating, and modeling the virtues. Many of the kids had talked about character in school, but they seemed very interested in identifying virtuous character traits in themselves and in their friends and family. This is particularly remarkable since, according to some of the teachers and principals' letters recommending the children, many of our children had not had their finer qualities recognized very frequently. While these children were admired by other kids, they were not necessarily the most virtuous on the block, so the program sought to build their moral confidence by focusing their attention on positive role models and traits and helping them to see that they were leaders and role models to their brothers and sisters, their neighbors, and their schoolmates. We emphasized that they had special responsibilities as a role model, and after reflecting on the virtues and leadership, the children created skits or did an art project expressing the best way could be leaders in their own lives.

Reflection

The program was assessed each year in an attempt to objectively measure the program's success in meeting its stated goals. Two assessment tools were used: a quantitative pre-test and post-test on the children's moral attitudes and two qualitative surveys of their experience at the SEA, one administered on the last day of the program and another administered to some of the participants, now in middle school, several months after completing the program. We share here some of the qualitative feedback we received, as that is the most useful for our discussion; we have not yet analyzed the quantitative surveys.

First, we asked the students what they learned by participating in the SEA. They said they learned a lot about ethics and how to be a good person, how it was important to learn about ethics and morality, and that they were proud to have been recognized for being the sort of kids other children look up to. Then we asked them about their favorite part of the SEA. Interestingly, their favorite aspects of the program had little to do with the academic activities described here–they particularly enjoyed eating in the campus dining hall and swimming at the pool. Third, we asked the kids whether they enjoyed the SEA, and the kids unanimously characterized the program as fun and worthwhile and said they would recommend it to a friend.

The most important feedback we received on the SEA involves the college students. Each year, the kids unanimously indicated that the best part of the SEA was being around the college students and being on a college campus. The college students, we are proud to say, were patient, energetic, creative and kind role models for the students, and they worked to create an intimate community that would be comfortable and engaging for the children. Children who never imagined going to college were able to interact with the college students both in the classroom and during the recreational hours, when the kids could talk with them about their personal lives, play games, joke around with them, and bond with them. When we interviewed them several months after the program, the children were more interested in being in contact with the college students than they were other SEA participants. We learned that a successful ethics training program requires *actual role models*, and that the university students–not the directors–were ideal role models. In the end, the philosophical reflection on morality, which we aimed to facilitate in the activities described here, must be combined with admirable role models in order to have a positive effect on the future leaders of our community. The SEA seeks, in its own way, to accomplish this.

Notes

1 Lawrence Kohlberg, *The Philosophy of Moral Development: Essays on Moral Development*, Vol. 1 (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981).

2 Larry Nucci argues that intervention at this particular stage in a child's development has been shown to be successful, at least when targeting "already bright, sensitive, good children." See his "Nice is Not Enough: The Discovering Ethical Leadership Seminar," in *Studies in Moral Development and Education*, 2000, available at http://tigger.uic.edu/~lnucci/MoralEd/pracitices/leaderseminar.html. See also Leslie K. Grier and Ira J. Firestone, "The Effects of an Intervention to Advance Moral Reasoning and Efficacy." From *Child Study Journal* 12-4 (1998): 267.

3 See, for example, Laurance Splitter and Ann Sharp, *Teaching for Better Thinking: The Classroom Community of Inquiry* (Hawthorn, Vic.: Australian Council for Educational Research, 1995); and Michael Pritchard's summary of it in "Philosophy for Children," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, available at http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/children.

4 William Edgington's "To Promote Character Education, Use Literature for Children and Adolescents," *The Social Studies* 93-3 (2002): 113–119, was instructive in creating this list of goals.

5 While these sorts of distinctions may coincide with those in Kohlberg's theory of moral development (*The Philosophy of Moral Development*) and "social domain theory" (Nucci, "Nice is Not Enough"), the aim is for students to investigate an important distinction in kinds of laws and rules.

6 Gregory Kavka, *Hobbesian Moral and Political Theory* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), chapter 12.

7 Matthew Lipman, *Lisa* (Upper Montclair, NJ: Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children [Montclair State College], 1976).

8 This exercise is an adapted version of David Shapiro's "Action Learning and Moral Philosophy with Children" *International Journal of Applied Philosophy* 14-1 (2000): 27–33.

9 *Liar, Liar* directed by Tom Shadyac, starring Jim Carrey, Imagine Entertainment, 1997.

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