The Effect of Emotive Content on Knowledge Acquisition and Ethical Sense Making Using an Ill-Structured Case Example

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Abstract

Social workers encounter ethics related challenges on a daily basis. These real-world problems are incredibly complex and can produce intense emotional reactions. The use of ill-structured case examples as an instructional strategy to teach ethical lessons is well-supported in the literature, however, case examples often lack an emotional or affective component. Given the importance of crafting cases for learners, more research is needed to better understand how to construct and present case examples to enhance learning outcomes, specifically related to the influence of emotive content. This study was conducted to assess the effect of emotive content on knowledge acquisition and ethical sense making.

The current study employed a posttest only control group design. Emotive content was defined as information related to the character’s emotional reactions or feelings, background, beliefs, physical appearance, and/or goal focus of the character. The ethical dilemma involved the use of social media between a teenage client and student intern at a family service agency.

Study materials were placed inside plain packets, each having a unique identification number. The first packet contained the case example and open ended question prompts. The second packet contained the knowledge acquisition questions and demographic related questions. Participants were not permitted to access the first packet while completing the second packet. All questions were presented in a fixed order.

Participants were graduate level Master of Social Work students at a university on the coastal U.S. In total, 71 students participated in the study. The emotive group (n = 37) was comprised of 32 women and five men. The non-emotive group (n = 34) was comprised of 30 women and four men. The mean age for student participants was 29.63 (SD = 8.37). There were no statistically significant differences between the two groups.

An independent samples t-test indicated that scores were significantly higher for the non-emotive group (M = 4.91, SD = .96) than the emotive group (M = 4.40, SD = .96), t(69), = -2.22, p = .030, d = .53. An independent samples t-test indicated that scores were significantly higher for students in a field placement (M = 4.77, SD = .96) than students not in a field placement (M = 4.23, SD = .97), t(69) = 2.02, p = .047, d = 0.56. No differences were found between the emotive and non-emotive groups in ethical sense making scores or feelings toward the main characters.

Results contribute the growing body of literature regarding the effect of emotion in processing and manipulating complex information. The results suggest that the addition
Now that we have working knowledge of ethics, it is important to discuss some of the models we can use to make ethical decisions. Understanding these models can assist us in developing our self-management skills and relationship management skills. These models will give you the tools to make good decisions, which will likely result in better human relations within your organization. Note there are literally hundreds of models, but most are similar to the ones we will discuss. Most people use a combination of several models, which might be the best way to be thorough with ethical decision making... unethical behaviors. Ethical thinking involves the intricate process used to consider the impact of our actions on the individuals or institution we serve. While most decisions are routine, we can unexpectedly face an ethical dilemma when unusual situations occur suddenly for which an immediate response is needed. The foundation of ethical decision-making involves choice and balance; it is a guide to discard bad choices in favor of good ones. Therefore, in making ethical decisions, one of the first questions to consider is 'what a reasonable man would do in this situation?' For tougher... Values involve emotion, knowledge, thought, and ultimately choice of response.