

**Using EthicsGame<sup>1</sup> to Develop Ethical Identity and Awareness**  
**MOBTS 2018**  
**Joy E. Beatty**  
**University of Michigan – Dearborn**

**ABSTRACT**

This session introduces the EthicsGame simulations and explains how the author has used them in both undergraduate and graduate organizational behavior classes. EthicsGame is a set of online tools designed to teach ethical awareness, critical thinking, and ethical decision making. The underlying framework incorporates and compares deontological, teleological, justice, and virtue theories of ethics. Participants will receive access to a demo account to try the Ethical Lens Inventory (assessing one's ethical preferences) and a brief Ethics Exercise. The presenter will also show other available resources on the site. Please bring your laptop to participate.

Keywords: Ethics, self-assessments, simulations

**Introduction**

This session is about teaching ethics frameworks and ethical decision making. Ethics are a core element of management education, and business schools are responsible for developing students' ethical decision making abilities. However, students may find the concepts of ethics to be abstract and dry since they are often framed with abstract moral philosophies. Further, students may see ethical decisions as obvious and their own ethical decisions as superior ("Of course my decisions are ethical"); their standards for recognizing ethical and unethical acts are presumed to be self-evident ("I'll know an unethical act when I see it"). Their inherent ethical frameworks are implicit, unspecified, and typically unexamined.

This session will present a discussion and brief demonstration of the EthicsGame simulation materials designed to teach and apply ethical decision making. Since 2011, I have used Ethics Game materials in 18 sections of organizational behavior and management skills classes, at the undergraduate and graduate level, and in both face-to face and online classes. In my College of Business organizational behavior classes, we use their underlying model and materials as a portion of our assessment of ethics for our AACSB efforts.

**Theoretical Foundations**

One of our roles as teacher is to encourage students to be more aware and reflective their own ethical perspectives. Research has shown that individuals may have a biased perspective of their own ethical actions (Shalvi et al., 2015), suffering from a blind spot about their own ethics.

<sup>1</sup> *EthicsGames materials are used with permission of EthicsGame, [www.ethicsgame.com](http://www.ethicsgame.com)*

Hedberg (2017) notes that students benefit from developing greater reflective practice about their own ethical perspectives and how they compare to others. Further, understanding one's own ethical values and perspectives is an aspect of developing one's identity or sense of self (Swanwon & Dahler-Larsen, 2008).

Ethics are often taught as an individual-level construct, yet ethics can be influenced by social context – specifically, referent others and team influences (Baker, 2013). Developing an awareness of other peoples' ethical frameworks and considering how different ethical perspectives may play out in a decision making scenario can also expand students' understanding of ethics.

Research by Lau (2009) has shown that ethics education matters because it improves students' ethical awareness and moral reasoning. Business faculty are encouraged to consider the range of effective approaches to address ethics in their classes. The current generation of students is more experienced with the online environment, and the kind of interactive learning that it supports (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). This makes the Ethics Game online platform especially appealing.

### **Learning Objectives**

- To introduce participants to the EthicsGame suite of tools and its underlying 2x2 ethical model
- To complete the Ethical Lens Inventory and compare group results
- To discuss how EthicsGame tools can be incorporated into curriculum and assessment efforts

### **Exercise Overview**

The EthicsGame suite of tools visualizes students' ethical preferences by creating a 2 x 2 plot, and provides a framework to discuss an ethical decision making model. Students complete a short assessment on their preferred ethical perspectives, and receive a report that identifies their ethical "lens". The report describes their lens in detail. Teacher reports include a map that shows the anonymized results for all class members, arrayed on a 2x2 graph. This graphic allows students to compare their ethical perspectives to others and to apply a language to describe them (e.g., through the values of autonomy, equality, rationality, and sensibility).

Ethics Game materials are available online at [EthicsGame.com](http://EthicsGame.com). Ethics Game materials are like other case and assessment materials (e.g., Harvard and Ivey cases, Strengths Finder assessment) in that they require registration and a fee. I have arranged for free access during the session for up to 25 participants for a brief demonstration of one of the activities, the Ethical Lens Inventory.

I should also note that I am not an employee of EthicsGame, and I do not receive any payments or benefits from the company for presenting this workshop.

### Session Description

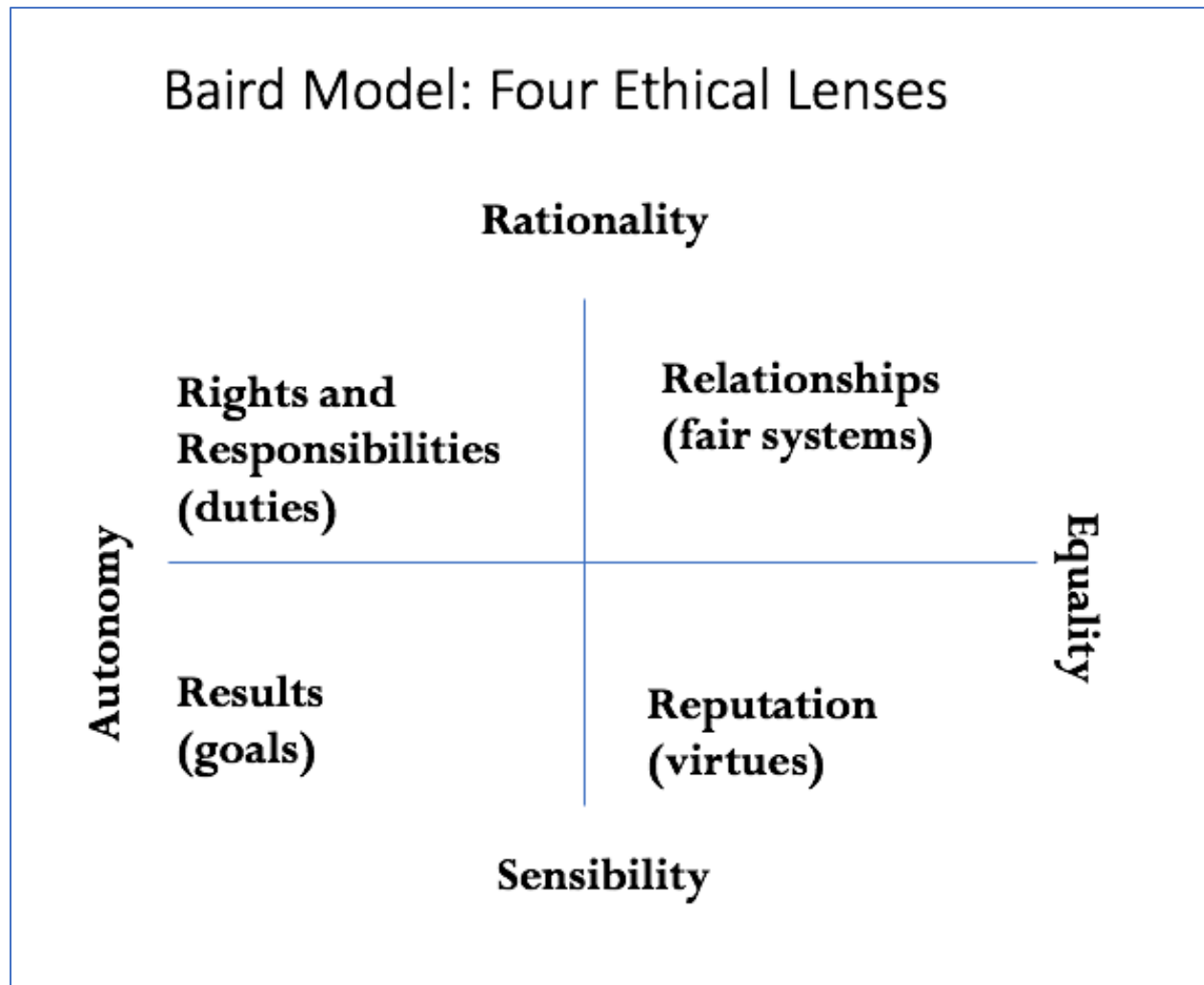
60-minute session plan (see accompanying handouts at the end of the document):

Topic	Time (minutes)
Introduction: what is Ethics Game?	00 – 04
Ethical lens framework: 2x2 model and its connection to well-known ethical perspectives (e.g., deontological, teleological, justice, and virtue theories)	05 - 10
Ethical Lens Inventory: Participants complete the Ethical Lens Inventory using their own laptop and a free demo account	11 – 20
The presenter shows aggregate results of the Ethical Lens Inventory and leads a discussion and comparison of the results. This segment demonstrates one way that the assessment can be used in class. Comparison graphs from prior classes will also be shared.	21 – 35
Ethical decision making model: Five step decision making model that draws upon the 2x2 ethical framework	36 - 40
Review of application resources: Table Exercises, Ethics Exercise demonstrations, and Hot Topics Simulations. Each of these formats gives students practice in applying the ethical decision making process in different ways. Table exercises are traditional paper-and-pencil discussion cases. Ethics Exercises (EE) and Hot Topics (HT) simulations are online resources. EE allows a more focused inquiry of a particular portion of the model, and the HT exercises allow a more complete application of the process. These formats will be briefly shown, and I will share a comparison of their strengths and weaknesses.	36 - 56
Conclusion	56 – 60

## References

- Baker, D. F. When moral awareness isn't enough (2013). *Journal of Management Education*, 38(4): 511-532.
- Hedberg, P. R. (2017) Guiding moral behavior through a reflective learning practice. *Journal of Management Education*. 41:4:514-538.
- Lankshear, C. & Knobel, M. (2006). *New literacies: Everyday practices and classroom learning* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.
- Lau, C. L. L. (2009) A step forward: Ethics education matters! *Journal of Business Ethics*, 92: 565.
- Shalvi, S., Gino, F., Barkan, R., & Ayal, S. (2015). Self-serving justifications: Doing wrong and feeling moral. *Current Issues in Psychological Science*, 24(2):125-130.
- Swanson, D. L., & Dahler-Larsen, P. (2008). Toward an ethical sense of self for business education. In D. L. Swanson & D. G. Fisher (Eds.), *Advancing business ethics education* (pp. 191 – 220). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

The Baird Model is a composite of traditional ethical frameworks, arrayed on the dimensions of [autonomy to equality] and [rationality to sensibility]. Each quadrant is seen as a different lens on ethical issues. The Ethical Lens Inventory assessment will give each student results somewhere on this 2 x 2 space, along with a brief outline of the strengths and weaknesses (“blind spots”) in each lens.



# Core Ethical Philosophies

## RATIONALITY

(reason/head)

### *Rights Based Theories (Deontological)*

- An ethical action is doing ones duty and following ethical standards of action
- Plato/Kant

### *Relationship Lens (Justice/Systems Theories)*

- An ethical action is one that will sustain integrity-building environments
- Amos/Rawls

## AUTONOMY

### *Results Lens (Theological Theories)*

- An ethical action is one where the act creates the greatest good for the greatest number
- Utilitarianism -Epicurus/Mill

## EQUALITY

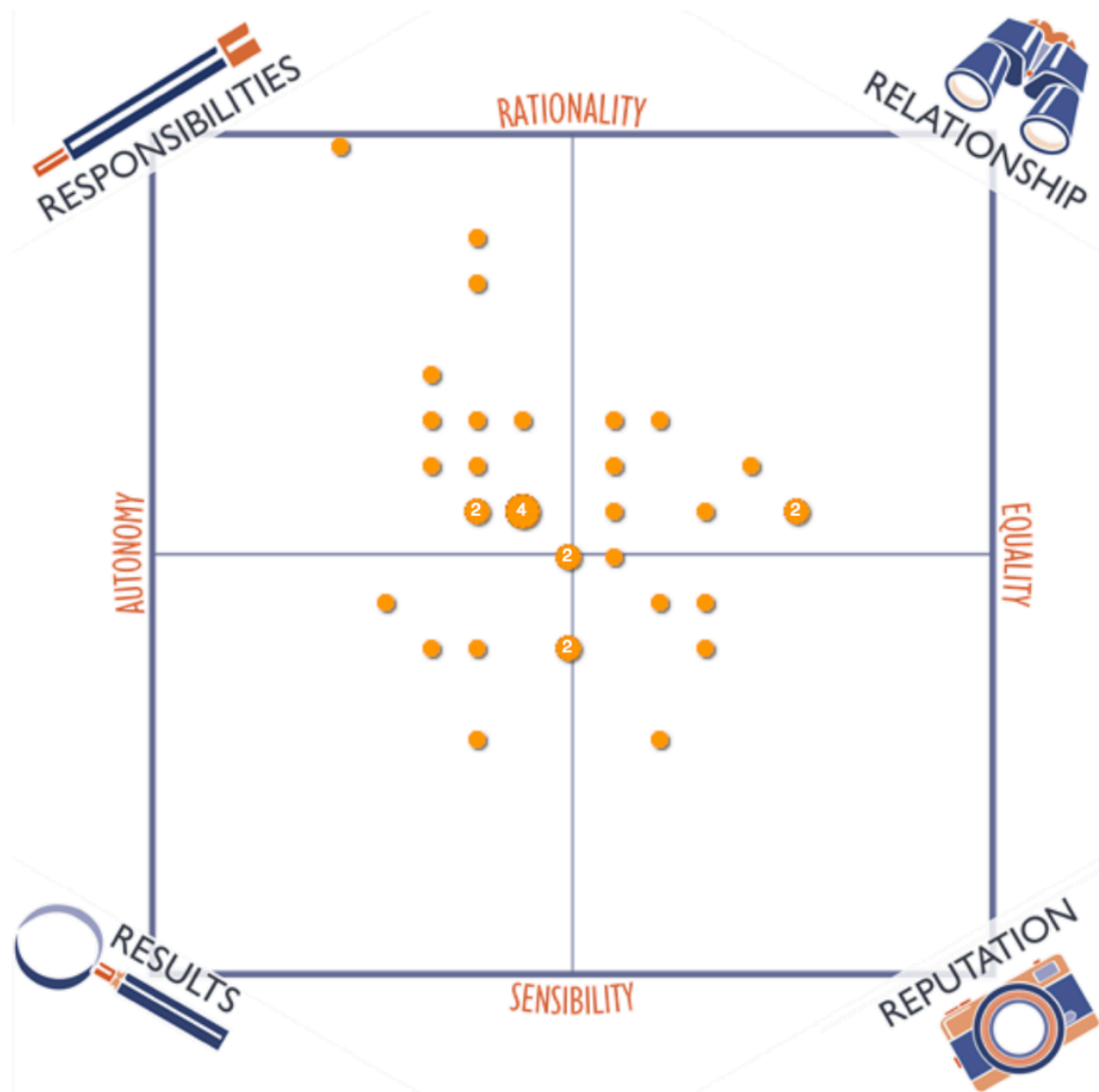
### *Reputation Lens (Virtue Theories)*

- An ethical act is one that is consistent with good character
- Aristotle/MacIntyre

## SENSIBILITY

(intuition/heart)

Winter 2018 – Graduate Org Behavior class results





## Your Assigned Lens

## Relationship Lens

Using this vantage point is like looking through binoculars: we look around our own community as we seek justice. As you work through the scenario, you are responsible for holding the perspective, questions, and values of this lens. To help you remember what those are, you can refer to the chart below:

Concepts	Path of Intention	Path of Empathy	Path of Integration
<i>Foundational questions</i>	"What is a fair system?"	"What is appropriate subordination of my own rights to those of the group?"	"What is my place in the web of life?"
<i>Tools and practices</i>	Tradition; group activities	Evaluation of emotional climate of group	Commitment to justice; service
<i>Key phrase</i>	"I am fair."	"I use power wisely."	"I am part of all that is."
<i>An ethical act ...</i>	Is consistent with good character for a particular role	Is made with awareness of the interplay of mind and emotions	Supports and enhances the meaning I have given to my life
<i>My goal is to ...</i>	Create a set of processes to assure a just and fair community	Reach the correct evaluation of an event based on group response	Be aware of my place in a sacred community
<i>I have gifts of ...</i>	Inclusiveness and an innate sense of fairness	Compassion and interconnectedness with others	Generosity and a forgiving heart
<i>My blind spot is ...</i>	An overconfidence in process	Difficulty finding the appropriate emotional response to an event	Masking pain with exclusiveness
<i>My vice is ...</i>	Ambition and abuse of power	Groupthink	Elitism
<i>I risk ...</i>	Authoritarianism	Emotional entrainment	Over-identifying with group
<i>Hubris</i>	"I am exempt."	"I don't have to evaluate the emotions of others."	"I have the Truth."
<i>My crisis is ...</i>	Separation	Resenting demands of others	Lack of meaning and isolation





## Reputation Lens

### Your Assigned Lens

Using this vantage point is like looking through a camera: each picture focuses on a person, or people, to help identify the roles that we have in this life. As you work through the scenario, you are responsible for holding the perspective, questions, and values of this lens. To help you remember what those are, you can refer to the chart below:

Concepts	Path of Intention	Path of Empathy	Path of Integration
<i>Foundational questions</i>	"What is a good character?"	"What is a healthy, functioning conscience?"	"How can I be a servant leader?"
<i>Tools and practices</i>	Personal reflection; community conversation	Empathy; gratitude; self-awareness	Fellowship; intimacy; attention
<i>Key phrase</i>	"I am virtuous."	"I serve others."	"I am special...just like everyone else."
<i>An ethical act ...</i>	Creates a fair system	Cares for people and institutions to assure fair allocation of power and goods	Contributes to each person knowing that they are part of "all that is."
<i>My goal is to ...</i>	Cultivate virtues within a tradition	Empathize and integrate my emotion and intellect	Become aware of my sacred identity
<i>I have gifts of ...</i>	Personal virtues and principled leadership	Sensitive conscience and emotional maturity	Gentleness, empathy, and a long view of life
<i>My blind spot is ...</i>	Unrealistic role expectations	Lack of self-awareness	Over-committing to role and losing self
<i>My vice is ...</i>	Hardness of heart	Unreflective action	Refusal to make commitments
<i>I risk ...</i>	Becoming self-righteous	Failing to manage my emotions	Becoming engulfed and overwhelmed
<i>Hubris</i>	"I am entitled."	"I know that I'm good."	"I'm special!"
<i>My crisis is ...</i>	Being misunderstood	Losing my authenticity	Losing the center of meaning



## Results Lens

## Your Assigned Lens

Using this vantage point is like looking through a microscope: our attention is focused on the present as we have choices that help us reach the goals we have set for our life. As you work through the scenario, you are responsible for holding the perspective, questions, and values of this lens. To help you remember what those are, you can refer to the chart below:

Concepts	Path of Intention	Path of Empathy	Path of Integration
<i>Foundational questions</i>	"What do I want?"	"What are mutually good results?"	"How can I be a partner in creating a better world?"
<i>Tools and practices</i>	Experience; action and reflection	Awareness; self-efficacy	Imagination
<i>Key phrase</i>	"I have choices."	"I seek 'win-win' solutions."	"I am co-creator of what is."
<i>An ethical act ...</i>	Has good results	Creates the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people	Serves the greater good, resulting in harmony and satisfaction
<i>My goal is to ...</i>	Identify the goals of life	Creatively imagine solutions that lead to higher goods	Be aware of participating in a sacred plan
<i>I have gifts of ...</i>	Self-directed choices	Respect for others, living with ambiguity, and integrity	Optimism, enthusiasm, flexibility, and hope
<i>My blind spot is ...</i>	Expedience and being satisfied with too little good	Maintaining consistency between actions and self-views	Becoming angry and resentful
<i>My vice is ...</i>	Greed	Freeloading	Pride
<i>I risk ...</i>	Reducing all to a cost/benefit analysis	Ignoring imbalances of power	Losing perspective
<i>Hubris</i>	"Expedience is fine!"	"I know what you need and want."	"My way is the best/only way."
<i>My crisis is ...</i>	Failure	Guilt	Discouragement



## Your Assigned Lens

## Rights and Responsibilities Lens

Using this vantage point is like looking through a telescope: taking a very long view to find the ideal values that are important for human beings. As you work through the scenario, you are responsible for holding the perspective, questions, and values of this lens. To help you remember what those are, you can refer to the chart below:

Concepts	Path of Intention	Path of Empathy	Path of Integration
<i>Foundational questions</i>	"What are my rights and responsibilities?"	"What is a caring response to this situation?"	"What is my relationship to the whole?"
<i>Tools and practices</i>	Reason; research	Awareness; self-soothing	Individual piety; reflection
<i>Key phrase</i>	"I am responsible."	"I am caring."	"I delight in my work."
<i>An ethical act ...</i>	Fulfills the duties and obligations of the ethical actor	Is done with care and concern for others involved	Allows me to carry out my obligations with joy
<i>My goal is to ...</i>	Create a set of principles to determine duty	Develop the ability to evaluate emotions and respond from care	Be aware of participating in a sacred purpose
<i>I have gifts of ...</i>	Autonomy and responsibility	Commitment to caring for others	Living fully in the present, humility, faith, and trust
<i>My blind spot is ...</i>	Belief that motive justifies the method	Inability to accurately match data to emotional response	Masking pain with busyness
<i>My vice is ...</i>	Judgmentalism	Martyrdom	Alienation from my best self
<i>I risk ...</i>	Becoming autocratic	Cold-heartedness	Spiritual dryness
<i>Hubris</i>	"I'm excused."	"I know what is best."	"I can do it alone."
<i>My crisis is ...</i>	Alienation	Exhaustion	Emptiness and isolation

The Baird Decision Model – incorporates the perspectives of the four lenses to fully explore the decision options.

The five step model is below. For faculty interested in knowing more about the model, email or contact Joy Beatty for additional details. You can also contact EthicsGame directly for a demonstration of their products. Contact Jeannine Niagaris, at [jniagaris@ethicsgame.com](mailto:jniagaris@ethicsgame.com).

