Ethical Competence

"as a skill to choose right"

2011-04-08
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Overview

1. What am I talking about?
2. Houston, do we have a problem?
3. Having a dilemma?
4. What is the right thing to do?
5. Do you agree?
6. Why not?
What am I talking about?

Ethics – the study of morality

Our perceptions about right and wrong

Is there any final answer?

Laws

Norms

Morality

Contracts

Etiquette
What am I talking about?

Normative ethics – prescribing morality

by determining what is right and wrong

Axioms

Duties

Still, any final answer?

Morality

Virtues

Responsibility
A metaphor for morality

Foto: Clemens v. Vogelsang
Societies are systems regulated by morality

Philosophers study the system …

…while psychologists study how we learn, reason and use morality

Both aspects are important for ethical competence. One regards the content and the other the process.

Moving target!??
Houston, do we have a problem?

So how do we know that we are facing a situation that calls for deliberation?

Recent example: Fukushima — designed for earthquakes and tsunamis, but not well enough for what happened. Were the consequences predictable?
Houston, do we have a problem?
Having a dilemma?

Moral problems are (per definition) very difficult

Can we choose between two goods or two evils?
Do we even know what is good and what is evil?

Can we learn how to choose better?

Codes of Ethics?
How to handle moral problems?

I'm just manipulating squiggles and squiggles to produce Chinese language behavior. But I don't understand Chinese. This rule book is in English.

在這屋裡的任何人或物一定懂中文。

[Whoever or whatever is in that room is an intelligent Chinese speaker!]

http://www.gla.ac.uk/departments/philosophy/Personnel/susan/WebpagesCoCo67/AmieKirsty/chinese.html
How to handle moral problems?

To decide means to choose

How can we go about?

  Heteronomy – knee-jerk, intuitive, dogmatic
  Autonomy – reflective, systematic, questioning
How to handle moral problems?

Morality can only come in question if there is a choice…

…and every choice has moral implications

Ethical decision making builds on ethical competence

Does not mean being nice, good or ”moral”

Means to have sense for when moral problems can arise and be prepared to handle these in a suitable way.
What is the right thing to do?

We cannot know for sure, but by supporting autonomy and blocking heteronomy we will at least have ground for a choice.
What matters in the situation?

People and their diverse interests!

- espoused
- unconscious
- and hidden

”protected”

Interests affect other people and are affected by other people — a good start for thinking systematically
Support structuring
Support evaluation
DOESN'T EXPECTING THE UNEXPECTED

MAKE THE UNEXPECTED

BECOME THE EXPECTED?
So, how to do this?
Do you agree?

(Moral) problems are social — we should learn to keep the surroundings in the loop

Can the skill to philosophize be taught?

Can it be assessed?

Does it have to be assessed?
Why not?

The key to learning is the iterated ”why”!