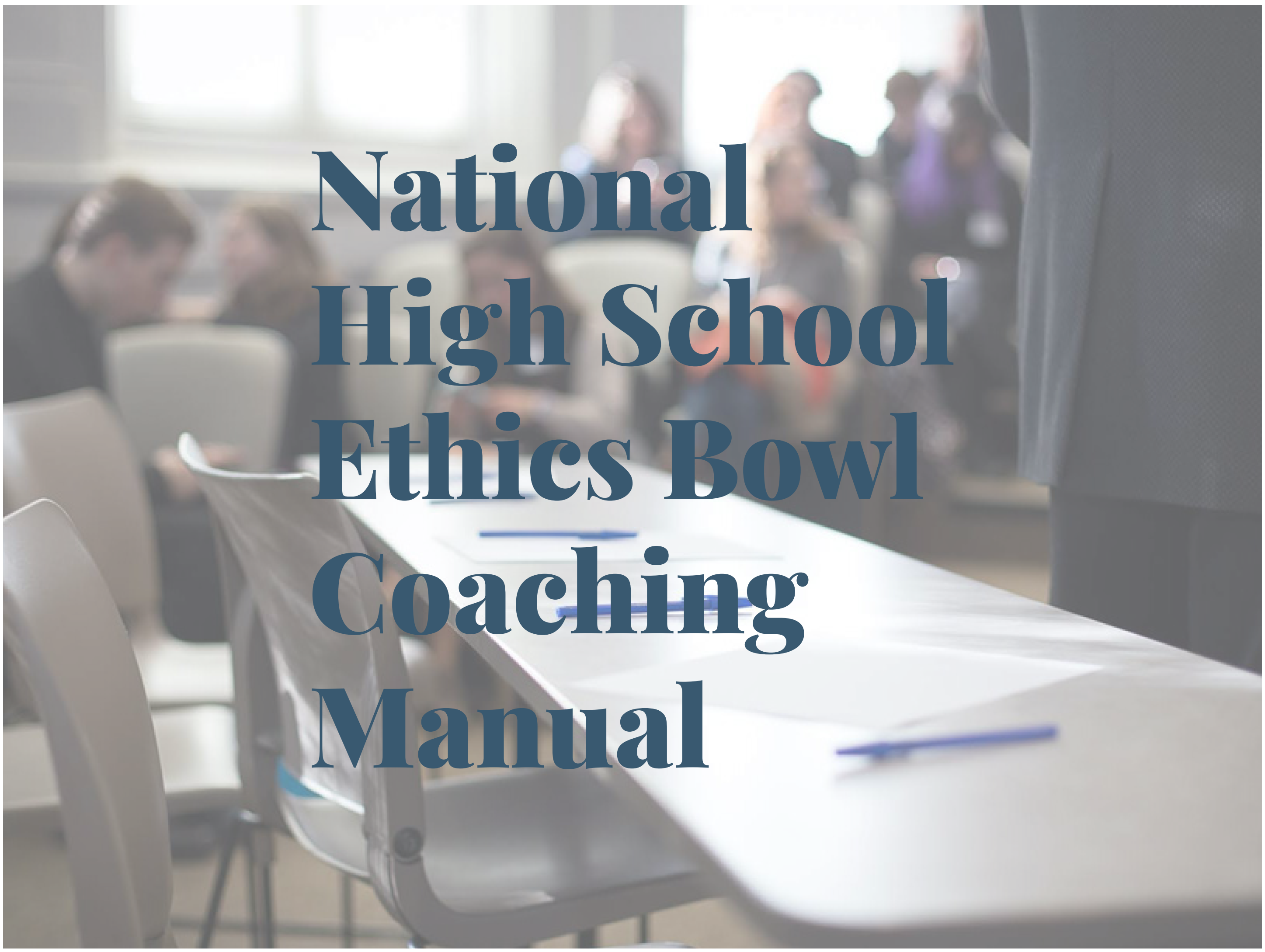
Penn's Project for Philosophy for the Young



National High School Ethics Bowl Coaching Manual

By Dustin Webster - University of Pennsylvania[1]

Made possible by the University of Pennsylvania Penn's Project for Philosophy for the Young[2] and the Philadelphia High School Ethics Bowl.

Supporters of the Philadelphia High School Ethics Bowl Include:
The University of Pennsylvania School of Arts and Sciences
The University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education
The University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School
The Barbara and Edward Netter Center for Community Partnerships, and
The Andrea Mitchell Center for the Study of Democracy

2023

[1] Editorial support from Afton Greco and Karen Detlefsen. Design by Shreya Bansal.
[2] philosophy4young.org

Table of Contents

1 What is the National High School Ethics Bowl?

The National High School Ethics Bowl is a competition in which teams of high school students discuss case studies that present ethical dilemmas. It is not a debate, where students argue opposing positions, but is instead meant to be a collaboration where the teams work together to think through the ethical dimensions of each case. The ethics bowl is also not a philosophy competition. While teams often learn about and bring up ethical theory, doing so is not required to be successful. Teams need only to demonstrate that they have carefully considered the many issues involved in each case, and that they have attempted to explain why these issues are significant or important, and perhaps what some possible solutions may be.

The ethics bowl is a fun and rewarding experience for all of those who are involved. The methodology of and preparation for the bowl helps develop students who are careful thinkers, strong at evaluating arguments, and open minded. Participating in the bowl is often a student's first experience with philosophical thinking, and it has sparked an interest in philosophy for many.

This guide is meant to be detailed, but also accessible for someone who is coaching or thinking about coaching an ethics bowl team. It is by no means exhaustive of the methods for ethics bowl preparation, but it will provide the basic information to get started, as well as suggestions of activities and strategies for developing a team.

Much of this guide is framed in terms of the bowl day competition. However, the vast majority of the ethics bowl experience is spent meeting together and preparing, with the actual competition making up only a very small part of what it means to participate in the ethics bowl. Most of the fun comes from talking through the cases.

Notes:

1. An additional wealth of information about the bowl and coaching a team can be found at the main NHSEB website: https://nhseb.unc.edu/ and at the NHSEB Academy website, which is created specifically to support teams and coaches in their preparations: https://nhsebacademy.org/
2. This manual provides an overview of the bowl and advice for coaches. It is not a comprehensive guide to the rules of the ethics bowl. In addition to reading this guide, it is very important that you read the "Official Rules and Guidelines" which is available on the national bowl website.
3. Regarding these rules, although the manual is based on the official rules, the details can vary from regional to regional, and there is often at least some flexibility.

2 Structure of the Ethics Bowl

Overview

*This is a basic overview. Much more detail is provided in Chapter 5: Preparing for the Round.

An ethics bowl is made up of multiple rounds, with two teams competing in each round. A round is divided into several parts, and the teams earn points for their performance in each part.

An ethics bowl season extends over the first half of the school year. Most regional bowls take place in the winter (December through early February). The winning team of each regional bowl competes in one playoff round for entry into the national championship. The national competition takes place in the spring, usually in April, at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Each fall, a set of 15 ethical dilemma case studies is released by the national bowl organization. Each round uses a case selected from this set, but the students will not know which case until the round begins. It is important to note that there are two case sets used each year. One for the regional bowls, and a new case set is released, usually in February, for use in the national bowl.

Basic Structure of the Ethics Bowl

Case 1 is revealed

- Team A presents on Case 1
- Team B provides a commentary of Team A's presentation on Case 1
- Team A Responds to the Commentary
- The judges ask questions of Team A and Team A responds

It then repeats, but reversed, with a new case.

Case 2 is revealed

- Team B presents on Case 2
- Team A provides a commentary of Team B's presentation on Case 2
- Team B Responds to the Commentary
- The judges ask questions of Team B and Team B responds

Round ends.

Each round involves one moderator, who serves as the timekeeper and keeps the round organized. There are also three judges. Judges come from a variety of backgrounds, but given the nature of the bowl, and the fact that regional bowls are often sponsored by universities, judges are frequently university faculty and students, often from philosophy departments. In addition to asking questions, the judges score each round part according to a rubric. The team with the highest judges scores wins. Some regional bowls add other awards as well, based on a variety of criteria.

Most regionals are structured with a number of seeding rounds in the first part of the day. Then based on these results, teams place into the elimination rounds. Most bowls have a semi-final and final round, although some larger bowls add a quarter final. Teams can expect to usually participate in a minimum of 3-4 rounds, and a maximum of 5-6 rounds in a bowl day, depending on how they perform.

3 Starting a Team

Preparing for the ethics bowl consists primarily of working through the 15 cases in the case set, and being ready to discuss the ethical dimensions of each one. Most teams meet once a week for about an hour, but this varies based on how long they have to prepare, and how much preparation students do outside of team meetings.

A team consists of 3-7 students, but only 5 students can sit for a given round. However a team can substitute students in and out between rounds. (This can sometimes be flexible depending on the bowl).

All official information about the bowl, including the case sets can be found on the National High School Ethics Bowl Website, at https://nhseb.unc.edu/.

Below is a general overview of how to get started. More details about preparation come later in the guide. But here are the first few things a coach wanting to start a team should do and read, as well as a suggestion of how a team might spend the first 3 to 5 meetings.

Initial Steps of Starting an Ethics Bowl Team

For the Coach:

1. Gather a team of students.
2. Review the current year's "Official Rules, Procedures, and Guidelines" available on the bowl website.
    a. Don't worry yet about the details, just get a sense of how the bowl functions.
3. Skim the "Moderator Script" available on the bowl website. This will provide an overview of how a round of the bowl runs.
4. Browse the materials on the NHSEB Academy website: https://nhsebacademy.org/. Watch judge and moderator training videos. (This can come later). The purpose of all of this is to gain a general understanding of how the bowl works.

For the team:

1. Generally explain what the ethics bowl is.
2. Get the official case set from the bowl website. Read and discuss one of the cases. At this point, just casually talk through student opinions and what makes the case interesting.
    a. This step is to garner interest and get students excited.
3. Watch a video of an ethics bowl round.
    a. Either by searching online, or linked through the bowl website, find a video of a high school ethics bowl round.
    b. Determine which cases they use in the video (an archive of all cases is

available on the bowl website).
    c. Read the case for part 1 of the round.
    d. Watch at least part 1.
    e. Discuss the video and case with your team.
4. Use the rest of the initial team meetings to casually talk through the rest of the 15 cases. Spend only 15-20 minutes on each case. This is just for students to get an overview.

After completing these initial steps, the team is ready to start preparing in a more structured way.

Next Steps of Preparation

After the team is familiar with the basics of the structure of the bowl and the cases, it is time to start deeper and more organized preparations. Depending on the time available and interest of the team, these preparations can be more or less involved. Each of these steps will be described in additional detail in the following pages of this guide.

Basics

1. More thoroughly prepare each case.
    a. Teams often used a shared Google doc, or something like, it to keep track of their notes for each case. It is often easiest to build these notes around how they are planning on structuring a presentation for each one.
2. Dive more deeply into the parts of an ethics bowl round, and decide on basic strategies for each case and round part.
    a. Which team member will speak for which part of the presentation? Who will be handling the commentary and response sections? What are the general ways the team will approach each of these sections? What is the basic strategy for dealing with judges' questions? The team needs to work out some of these questions to at least a minimal level.
3. Engage in practice ethics bowl rounds.
4. For as many cases as possible, the team should engage in practice rounds either by dividing in half, bringing in others to serve as the other team, or having the coach perform the role of the opposing team. This is one of the most effective strategies for preparation after the team is familiar with each case.

Advanced Stages

Advanced preparations generally consist of having the team engage in various activities that help them develop the skills and types of thinking that will help them succeed in the bowl. These activities can be more or less directly related to the bowl, and can also be used after the regional takes place to continue to develop the team for the next year. Depending on the coach's comfort level and background knowledge, advanced preparation might also involve a discussion of various ethical theories.

4 The cases

Overview

A good way to begin working through the cases is to simply read them one by one and lead a casual dialogue in which students explore their reactions and initial feelings about each case. They should try to understand which position they most agree with and why, but they should also try to think of alternative positions, and why those alternatives may be attractive to others. It is often a good strategy to start with a free flowing discussion, and then after a variety of plausible positions have been offered by the group, to push them to explore alternative ideas in more depth. Each case has several study questions listed at the end. These can also be helpful to spark initial dialogue and thinking about the case.
The case studies used for the ethics bowl are a mix of real life cases drawn from the

Using Ethical Case Studies

news and current events, and fictional cases meant to draw out a particular type of ethical dilemma. The case studies are designed to not have an obvious answer, and to leave room for discussion of a variety of positions on the topic. Importantly, whether fictional or not, the point of working with case studies is to tease out and think through a particular ethical issue or decision, not to find an empirical answer. The dilemmas presented in the cases are not so much problems to be solved as they are scenarios to spark an examination of the costs and benefits of a variety of ways of approaching the problem at hand. Using ethical case studies might be new for coaches and students, and there are two things worth noting about this practice.

First, using a case study means for the most part accepting what is laid out in the brief scenario, and not extrapolating (or even necessarily researching) further details. To a certain extent, this is a kind of suspension of disbelief, or taking the case solely at face value. Students will sometimes have a tendency to add to or change the details or facts of the case in order to make a point or to try to get out of the dilemma (in a 'have your cake and eat it too' kind of way). While changing some details can be useful in understanding certain ideas associated with the dilemma, students should make sure they address the case as it is written.

Second, and similarly, students should be wary about relying on personal experiences and anecdotes as evidence for positions about the cases. Such experiences can absolutely be helpful examples or counterexamples, but any conclusions drawn from these experiences must clearly apply more broadly to the ethical issues in the case. For example, imagine students debating the merits of homework. A student who is arguing against homework says, "I've never turned in my homework and I still passed the class." Such a statement may explain why this student personally does not value homework, or why homework is personally not valuable to them, but it is less useful as evidence for why homework is not valuable in general. (Drawing such a conclusion is a type of 'logical fallacy' which may be helpful to introduce and learn about in later stages of preparation). The general argument might be that homework does not necessarily mean that students will do better in school, and one might be able to make reasonable arguments for why this is the case, but one's own personal experience does not mean that the same will be the case for everyone.

Some cases might seem ripe for additional research about the topic. There will be more on this later in the guide. For now, extra research may be helpful to teams, but is not required, and depending on how it is used in an ethics bowl round, it might actually be detrimental. Importantly, it should be remembered that the point of the cases is not to solve them empirically, but instead to think through the ethical dilemmas they present.

Next Steps for Discussing Cases

After the initial discussion of the case, the next step is to start to think more systematically through the issues which are presented in each. Some important things to look for are:

Relevant Facts- What are the pieces of factual information from this case that are important to consider.

Stakeholders- Who are the people or entities who will be affected by the outcomes or the actions discussed in each case. Who has an ethical stake in each case, and why? For example, in a case questioning whether or not students should have homework, the stakeholders might be the students, the teachers, the parents, and more broadly, perhaps the school itself or how 'education' is defined.

Major Issues or Ethical Questions- What are the major issues that the case brings up? It can also sometimes be helpful to list questions that the case generates. What is the problem? Sticking with the homework example, some issues could be: What is the value of homework? How do we think about students' time? What gives the school/teacher the right to mandate things for the students? Etc.

Main positions- Often this will at first appear as a binary yes/no situation. Either students should have homework, or they should not. However, asking what other possible positions present themselves, and why those might be attractive can enlighten the issues of the case. For example, maybe homework should be optional, or maybe the specific assignments should be student generated. Asking why these positions might be interesting can be a useful exercise.

Evidence for Main Positions or Ethical Issues- Basically, what evidence is there that some positions or ideas might be better than others, and what evidence is there against those ideas or positions.

There may be other categories that you and your team find helpful to carve out and discuss, but whatever method you choose, it is important to systematically and thoroughly analyze each case.

Next Steps for Discussing Cases

Equally important, once the discussion becomes more systematic, is to start outlining the cases and keeping notes of the team's thoughts and discussions. Many teams opt for shared online notes, such as a Google Doc or file in Dropbox for this purpose. It can be helpful to have a standard template for analyzing each case. A standard template not only makes it easier for teams to think through new cases, but can also help them be more organized when constructing their presentations. These notes will be important when teams are studying to prepare for the bowl.

The following pages are an example of an outline template, and the basics of one way of analyzing a case, using a case from the 2019/2020 regional bowl case set. There are many ways to keep notes on cases. This is but one suggestion.

Case Outline-Example

This is an example using Case 1: Bearing Witness, Bringing Change, or Trauma Porn? from the 2019/2020 regional case set, of how a team might initially outline a case. The case is included in this guide, immediately following this outline.

The categories of the outline are: 1. Pertinent facts of the case. 2. Stakeholders. 3. Possible positions. 4. Questions about the case. Likely, some of these categories will have overlap. For example, most of the positions could also be reframed as a question, and vice versa. Also, this particular case provides many of the possible positions in the case study itself. Here, I included these in the pertinent facts section.

After reading a case, listing items in these categories might be helpful for a team to begin to map out how they would approach it in a round. You may want to brainstorm these categories in this order, or in some other order (i.e. start with the questions).

What follows below is based on this author's perceptions of the case, and is meant as an example.

1. **Pertinent Facts**
    a. New York Times published photos of conditions in an Alabama prison
    b. Photographs were graphic, showing violence and death
    c. The case itself outlines several possible positions
        i. These photographs have the capacity to make public care about this issue
        ii. Azoulay-the photographs actually create a moral obligation for the viewer to try to help
        iii. There is value in the idea of "bearing witness" or refusing to ignore injustice. This avoids the problem of indifference.
        iv. Photos are exploitative. They harm the victims.
        v. People might view photos but not take action
        vi. Photos place unfair burden on victims
        vii. Photos further dehumanize oppressed groups
        viii. Many people view the photos as a kind of entertainment, and not something of ethical import.

2. **Stakeholders**
    a. Subjects of the photographs
        i. It is their suffering and likeness being shared
    b. General public or audience of the photos
        i. They are viewing the photos, and (either actively or not) responding
    c. New York Times or journalists
        i. They are deciding which photos to take and publish
    d. Workers in the prisons or similar positions (including aid workers)
        i. They are perhaps partially responsible for the conditions captured by the photos, and/or immediately responsible for attempting to fix the problem.

3. **Possible Positions**
    a. It is right, or at least ethically permissible to take and share the photos
        i. People have a right to know, and photos are more impactful than other forms of information
        ii. Sharing the photos will raise awareness and bring aid to victims
        iii. Bearing witness is important. We need reminders of the injustices in the world.
        iv. Viewing photos actually creates a moral obligation to respond. Explain how.
        v. Some of the objections (consent, stereotyping, etc.) are not as significant as they may at first seem.
    b. It is not ethically permissible to take and use these photos
        i. There are many problems of consent
        ii. The victims should not be used instrumentally for remedying these injustices
        iii. Other ways of disseminating the information are good enough, and avoid the ethical problems of the photos.
        iv. Viewing the photographs does not create an ethical obligation to respond, and as such they are consumed purely as entertainment which is based on the suffering of others.
        v. The public may be exposed to photographs they do not want to see involuntarily (i.e. by them showing up on a social media feed)
        vi. The sharing of the photos increases problematic stereotypes and power dynamics.
    c. There are some circumstances in which this is permissible, and others where it is not.
        i. For example, with the proper consent, and the proper context, certain types of photos may be permissible to share

4. Questions
    a. Does the potential good that these photos can provide outweigh or justify the potential harm that taking/sharing them might cause? (Utilitarianism)
        i. Can many problematic actions be incorrectly justified by the argument of "serving the greater good?"
    b. Why would someone desire to look at these photographs in the first place?
    c. What is the role of consent?
        i. Is consent necessary?
        ii. Is consent possible in these situations?
        iii. Does consent change the ethical permissibility of sharing the photos?
        iv. Is the consent of the audience necessary before they view the photos?
    d. Would other ways of informing the public of these injustices (other than images) be effective?
        i. What is unique about viewing a photo, versus reading a description?
    e. Does using these photos to garner money or support overly shift the blame onto the victims?
    f. Does it matter if the photos are actually affecting the contributions of money or support for the problem?
    g. How and why might these photos contribute to increased stereotypes?
    h. Could these photos desensitize people to violence, suffering, etc?

i. Is empathy the same thing as moral obligation?
   i. Can the photos increase empathy and awareness, but not moral obligation? Does this matter?
j. What is our moral obligation toward others who are suffering?
   i. Does knowledge of suffering change our moral obligation? Or, does the obligation exist independently of our knowledge of any particular circumstances of suffering?
k. Would this case be different if the victims themselves were the ones sharing the images?

#1: Bearing Witness, Bringing Change, or Trauma Porn? (2019-2020 Regional Case Set Case)

In 2019, The New York Times received thousands of photographs taken inside an Alabama prison and depicted appalling living conditions, gruesome injuries, and death. The Times initially published just five of these photos in an article opened with the question: "Would we fix our prisons if we could see what happens inside them?" In support of the decision to publish the photos, some have argued that showing these horrific images1 brings attention to the costs of social problems like mass incarceration, which are often hidden from public view and scrutiny. Graphic photos, on this view, have the capacity not only to inform the public, but to make them care about those depicted. Images can elicit a response by making the situation feel more real and urgent to onlookers, resulting in demands for change. Filmmaker and professor Ariella Azoulay goes even further, arguing that photographs of suffering and injustice actually create a moral obligation on the part of the viewer. Azoulay claims that photographers and people who allow their pain and suffering to be photographed assume that one day the pictures will find an audience who will do something about it. If pictures fail to bring about change, it is because audiences have failed to live up to their obligations.

Even if an individual viewer cannot help to bring about change, some suggest there might be value in "bearing witness." Refusing to push unpleasant realities out of one's mind might be a sign of moral strength or evidence of compassion. In a 2003 essay, Susan Sontag points out that the existence of the Holocaust Memorial Museum and the lack of a similar museum chronicling slavery in the U.S. enables Americans to conceive of evil as something committed by other people in other countries. It would be more honest to recognize our own history, even if it cannot be changed. Even if one can do nothing more than observe films or photographs of tragedy and atrocity, paying attention to it is a way of recognizing it as wrong and affirming the humanity of those who suffer. Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel, a writer, advocate, and Holocaust survivor said "We tell these stories because perhaps we know that not to listen, not to want to know, would lead you to indifference, and indifference is never an answer."

Some criticize the publication of images like these, and see depictions of gruesome or tragic events as exploitative. Critics suggest that these depictions may harm a victim of injustice or their family members. One blogger suggests that many view shocking images or share them on social media to feel politically engaged without actually taking action or reflecting on injustice. Others argue that it is unfair for victims of trauma to shoulder the additional burden of sharing their pain publicly in order to garner public concern. To some, the way images of violence and injustice are perpetuated only seems to further dehumanize oppressed groups. These images are shared in ways that seems more like an awful kind of entertainment than something of ethical import.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What moral value, if any, is there in viewing photos or videos of tragedy and injustice? To what extent does this value depend on whether the viewer can do, or actually does, anything about it?
2. Does viewing an image of pain, suffering, or injustice make a person responsible for doing something about it?
3. What moral considerations ought someone be mindful of when creating, publishing, viewing, or sharing images of tragedy and suffering?

Outside Research on Cases

Some cases, particularly those based on factual or current events, may lend themselves to students engaging in additional research on the topic. As far as the rounds of the bowl, there is no requirement to bring in outside research, but it is also not against the rules. If teams do opt to use outside research in a bowl round, they should do so in a deliberate and considered manner, as this may not always be the best strategy.

First, the bowl aside, if a case sparks an interest in a student, and encourages them to learn more about a particular topic or issue, that definitely should be encouraged! Not only is this good for the student, but learning more about whatever is presented in the case can only improve their thinking around the topic. In fact, for teams in the later stages of preparation, or with more time, researching into some of the details of the various cases can be a great way to broaden their expertise on the issue, and prepare them for something like the judges question part of the round, where a variety different topics and issues can come up.

However, as cautioned earlier, teams should not substitute empirical facts for careful ethical thinking, and they should be cautious if quoting outside sources in a round. If they do choose to do this, they should always mention where they found the information, why it is important, and be careful to situate it within their overall argument or discussion. The homework example is not the best for this, but for the sake of illustration, assume a team discovers an empirical study that finds homework is not beneficial to learning outcomes. This could be a useful fact to bring up in the case, but it does not supplant the question of whether or not homework is ethical. It may be evidence for an argument around this question, but the team needs to do more than just supply this fact. If the team quotes a research study as the sole evidence for why homework is not ethical, a good judge (or opposing team) will ask something like, “Well let’s assume that study is wrong, and that homework is helpful. Is it still unethical to assign homework?” The team needs to be prepared to answer such a question.

Activity: What’s Missing?

This activity can help teams as they think through the various issues and positions that arise in the cases.

1. Start with a position that the team has found about the case. I.e. from the earlier case Bearing Witness, Bringing Change, or Trauma Porn?, that journalists taking photos of trauma is unethical because they are unlikely to be able to obtain the consent of the subjects.
2. Ask the team to make a list of facts that might change that position. For example: If the journalist did get consent. If the images were not circulated widely and used only for governmental purposes, etc.
3. For each of the factual changes, discuss why that particular fact makes a difference.

5 Preparing for the Round

Overview

Once the team is comfortable with working through and outlining each case, it is time to start considering round strategy. At this point, it is a good idea to spend a short amount of time looking at the judges score sheet and the scoring rubric, in order to get a sense of how the various parts of each round are weighted, and the types of things that the judges are looking for. One of the most important things to remember about the scoring is that teams are not necessarily evaluated on how well they argue one particular position. Instead, they are scored on how fully and carefully they consider ALL of the ethical dimensions of the case. Also, a team will not necessarily lose points if they change or adapt their positions during the course of the round. In fact, doing so can show flexibility, and demonstrate the team's thoughtfulness when presented with a new idea or question which they may not have previously considered.

These statements are qualified because even though there is no official scoring or evaluation of these aspects, like presentation style, in a round, it is possible that they can subconsciously influence even the most objective judge. Scoring ethics bowl rounds is a difficult task for judges, and teams should spend some time considering their presentation aesthetic.

One important part of the round which has not yet been mentioned is the moderator's question. When each case is revealed at the beginning of a round, the moderator will announce the case and then read the question associated with the case. This question may be one of the study questions which are included at the bottom of each case in the set, or it could be something different. Part of the team's job in the presentation, and a scoring criteria, is to answer that question. Of course, answering the question is only part of what they should do during the presentation, but it is important for them to at least try to address the question directly at some point.

Activity-You Be The Judge

A useful activity to undertake at this point is to watch a video of a round of the ethics bowl and have your team act as judges and score the round. You can pause the video between parts of the round to discuss the scores everyone assigned, and how they thought the team could improve. It also may be useful to pause the video before the judges questions section, and have your team think of questions that they would ask if they were the judges. You may also want to, at some point, give each team member a score sheet, and have them score the teams in the video. Then, at the end, compare and discuss each member's scoring.

Detailed Structure of an Ethics Bowl Round

Below is a more detailed outline of the parts of a round, with timing and possible points included. The times below are based on the national rules, but it is possible that they will vary somewhat based on the particular regional competition.

Round Preparations

- Teams and judges introduce themselves
- Coin toss assigns Team A and Team B

Part 1: Case 1

- Case 1 revealed, Team A conference (2 minutes)
- **Team A presents on Case 1 (5 minutes, 15 points)**
- Team B conference (1 minute)
- **Team B commentary on Team A's presentation (3 minutes, 10 points)**
- Team A conference (1 minute)
- **Team A responds to the commentary (3 minutes, 10 points)**
- Judges conference (usually about 1 minute)
- **Judges ask questions of Team A and Team A responds (10 minutes, 20 points)**

Part 2: Case 2

- Case 2 revealed, Team B conference (2 minutes)
- **Team B presents on Case 2 (5 minutes, 15 points)**
- Team A conference (1 minute)
- **Team A commentary on Team B's presentation (3 minutes, 10 points)**
- Team B conference (1 minute)
- **Team B responds to the commentary (3 minutes, 10 points)**
- Judges conference (usually about 1 minute)
- **Judges ask questions of Team B and Team B responds (10 minutes, 20 points)**

End of round

*in national competition, presentation section is lengthened to 6 minutes

In addition to the points listed above, each team can earn an additional possible **5 points** for a **'Respectful Dialogue'** score. This is based on the ethics bowl being focused on collaboration, and not adversarial argumentation.

The total points each team can earn for each round is 60 points.

Round Preparation Template

There are many ways that teams choose to structure their presentations and approaches for the various parts of the rounds. What is important and helpful is less the particular structure which a team chooses to use, but more that they have some way of organizing their presentations. Teams cannot use notes during a round, and they will not know which cases will be used until each round has begun. It can be much easier to remember their approach to each case if they prepare in a structured and organized way. Below is a general suggestion of how a team might organize and prepare for a round which could easily be adjusted and modified to fit a team's circumstances and strengths.

Note:
It is important to remember that presentation style is not directly scored by the judges. Also, teams are not scored on who, or how many team members speak. Any, all, or even only one team member can speak in a round, and that fact should not influence the scoring. For example, some teams opt to have one person primarily responsible for each case, and that team member does the majority of the talking if that case shows up in a round. If a team chooses to use a particularly unorthodox presentation style (i.e. only one member speaking) it might be a good idea to acknowledge this strategy to the judges at the beginning of the round.

Sample Roadmap for a Round

PART A
Presentation
Suggested times for each part will vary by case, but are included primarily to illustrate how the presentation might be weighted (i.e. which parts generally deserve more attention).

- **Team Member A:** Introduction and outline stakeholders (~30 sec)
  - Brief description of main facts of case.
  - Who or what are the actors that have something to gain or lose? Why?
- **Team Member B:** Discuss the moderator's question that is asked for the case (~2 min)
  - Why is the question significant?
  - What would one need to consider in order to answer the question?
  - How would the team answer the question, and why? (i.e. what is the position which the team believes is most ethically reasonable in this case?)
- **Team Member C:** Additional moral dimensions of case (~1 min)
  - Apart from the main question, what are other important moral dimensions of the case?
  - How might these additional factors contribute to how one thinks about the case?
- **Team Member D:** Possible objections/alternative positions (~1.5 min)
  - Are there other ways to think about this case?
  - What are the strengths of these alternative positions?
  - Try to preemptively anticipate and address questions the opposing team or judges may ask.

Response to Opposing Team's Commentary
General Strategies:
- If the opposing team asks a number of questions, assign a team member to respond to each. For example, Member A will listen to and respond to the first point/question, Member B responds to the second point/question, etc.
- If the opposing team primarily argues an opposite viewpoint, have some members expand on the opposing team's argument. Why might they be correct? Then, have other members explore the weaknesses of their argument.
- **Engage as directly as possible with what the opposing team offers. Avoid simply reiterating points already made in the presentation.

Judges Questions
General Strategies:
This can be the most difficult part of the round.
- Elect the 1 or 2 team members who feel most confident thinking on their feet to engage the question initially, giving other members more time to think.
  - If it makes sense or is necessary, ask a clarifying question to the judge to buy time or get a better understanding of the question.
  - It is fine for the team to take a few moments after the question to confer before answering.
- Each member takes responsibility for answering questions which are aimed at their part of the initial presentation (if possible to discern).

Part B
Commentary of Opposing Team's Presentation
- **Team Member A:** Positively engages with their presentation, and attempts to expand on points the opposing team made, suggests ways to strengthen the argument, or acknowledges places where the argument was strong.
- **Team Member B:** Listens for and addresses ethical considerations in the case which the opposing team failed to address.
- **Team Member C:** Listens for and addresses any alternative positions which the opposing team failed to acknowledge or explore.
- **Team Member D:** Provides a few questions which by answering, might strengthen the understanding of the case. (This can happen interspaced throughout the commentary, or as its own section).

Examples of Case/Round Preparation Documents

Example #1
The following template was created by Kate Sundeen, teacher and coach of the team from The Academy at Palumbo. A blank template is included here, followed by an example of a completed template made by the students using Case #8 from the 2020/2021 Regional Case Set.

__Roles__
Intro:
First Speaker:
Second Speaker:
Third Speaker:
Wrap-Up:

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Case ##:

What's the Ethical Tension/Dichotomy: .

Who and/or What is impacted by the ethical choice(s) presented: .

Case Questions: .</td></tr>
<tr><td>Points to make for:</td><td>Real-Life Examples:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Points to make against:</td><td>Real-Life Examples:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Points that find middle ground:</td><td>Real-Life Examples:</td></tr>
<tr><td>The other team says:</td><td>What we can say to build on/respond to their points:</td></tr>
</table>

Case #8: Who gets to be fashionable?

What's the Ethical Tension/Dichotomy: .

Who and/or What is impacted by the ethical choice(s) presented: .

Case Questions: .

Paraphrase of the ethical problem: Many stores in which the majority of Americans buy their clothes produce their products in a fast and cheap manner. This is done in order to keep up with the demands of the consumer to have clothes that correspond with the trends of the time. This results in companies paying their workers in foreign companies low wages, using cheap material, in order to produce large quantities of clothing for a wide range of people from different socioeconomic backgrounds to be able to afford.

Points to make for: Here are the things that make this an ethical problem...	Real-Life Examples:
- **Contribution of climate change:** Fast fashion hurts the environment because many of the clothing people buy ends up in landfills. Clothing and textile makes up 8% of landfill waste or 11.2 million tons.	- **Contributes to climate change:** McKinsey's research shows that fashion companies were responsible for some 2.1 billion metric tons of greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions in 2018, about 4 percent of the global total.
- **Stealing from smaller businesses and reselling it:** Larger corporations are often found stealing designs of smaller businesses that don't have the resources to defend themselves. They resell them at lower prices than the original creator could afford to and push them out of business.	- **Stealing from smaller businesses and reselling it:** Urban Outfitters won a lawsuit against the Navajo Nation for its use of indigenous patterns on underwear and water flasks.
- **Exploitation of workers:** In order to keep costs low, corporations employ people in third world countries to make their clothing. There aren't strict regulations for the proper way to treat employees and they are severely underpaid.	
- **Poor Quality Clothing:** In order to keep costs down, clothing is made cheaply which impacts durability and longevity. This contributes to the fast rate people keep buying clothes at.	
- **Researching sustainable brands is hard:** It's difficult and time-consuming for consumers to figure out whether a brand is actually sustainable or not.	

Points to make against: Here are the things that do not make it an ethical problem... **-Lower socioeconomic classes afford clothes:** Fast fashion allows those of a lower socioeconomic status to still enjoy different trends and styles. **- More sustainable clothing from businesses hurt the economy through a ripple effect:** If fast fashion clothes become more sustainable and prices rise, the businesses lose customers, which causes them to lose money. If the companies lose money, their workers will be let go because they cannot pay them. This makes these workers unable to spend money at other businesses, which then hurts the economy, possibly leading to recession.	Real Life Examples: **-Lower socioeconomic classes afford clothes:** People who use SNAP benefits are still able to buy what they want **-More sustainable clothing from businesses hurt the economy through a ripple effect:** During the Covid-19 pandemic, some restaurants and bars were closed, which causes the Food Distribution Industry to take a hit.
Points that find middle ground: **- Steps that companies can take to be more ethical:** Companies can devise programs within their company in order to limit the harmful effects their business creates. **- Fast fashion consumers holding companies accountable:** Advocate for companies to take measures to limit the devastation their company creates.	Real Life Examples: -H&M divided a program that recycles their old clothes that customers no longer want into new merchandise.
The other team says:	What we can say to build on/respond to their points:

Example #2
The following two templates were created by Ryann Rouse, teacher and coach of the team from Carver high School. This worksheet is built around the study questions of the case. This could also be expanded to add more questions about the case that the team generates themselves.

1. Discussion Question #1

Stance
Counter
Rebuttal

2. Discussion Question #2

Stance
Counter
Rebuttal

3. Discussion Question #3

Stance
Counter
Rebuttal

Example #3

Case # **Title:**
Team Roles/Speaker Order: Case Lead: Big Ideas Question #1: Big Ideas Question #2: Big Ideas Question #3:
Summary of Case Facts:
Core ethical problems/tensions:
Case Questions and Analysis Questions:
Framing philosophy and how you're using it:
Real world examples that help illustrate the problem/tension:
Real world examples that help support your response to the issues presented:

Considerations and Activities By Round Part

Rarely will a team have the time to engage in all of these preparatory activities in depth. The following are suggestions that can be, even just in part, when thinking through the structure of the round.

Presentation

What is significant about the presentation is that this is the only part of the round that the team can have almost totally prepared beforehand. While the team will not know exactly what question they will be asked, it should be easier enough to slightly adapt a part of the presentation to address the question. This is an opportunity for the team to start strong, and give a clear and organized presentation of how they have thought through the case.

Activity- Beyond rehearsing the presentation for each case, it could be helpful for a team to practice applying whatever structure or format they have decided on to other, new cases. For this activity, give the team a case from a previous years' case set which they have not seen before. Then, give them a short amount of time to work with the case to build their presentation. Then have them present. This can help a team internalize their roles for the presentation, and help them think on their feet.

Response to Opposing Team's Commentary

It is unlikely that the presentation will be able to cover every aspect of the case that the team thought through during their initial stages of preparation. The team should note what they are leaving out of the commentary, and assume that the opposing team might bring these ideas up. If they more or less settle on one particular position, they should brainstorm the ways in which that position might be attacked and critiqued, and how they would respond.

Activity- Beyond practice, it can be helpful to simply brainstorm and list all of the ways the positions they discuss in the presentation could be critiqued or questioned. If they use examples in their presentation, it can be helpful to think of counterexamples for each, and how they might respond.

Commentary on Opposing Team's Presentation

It is very important during the commentary part of the round that the team engages the presentation of their opponents, and does not simply launch into their own presentation about the case. It is also important that they don't simply critique the argument, but try to work collaboratively to improve the argument. Sometimes they may disagree and want to argue an opposing perspective. This is fine, but it is still important that they engage directly with the opposing team's presentation.

Activity- Find videos online of the ethics bowl rounds, and have the team prep the same cases used in the video. Then, watch the presentation, assume the role of the opposing team, and practice giving a commentary based on the presentation of the team in the video.

'Strengthen, Don't Critique': It can be especially helpful during this practice to ask the team to make comments and ask questions that will strengthen the argument they just watched, rather than critique it. Being able to do this well will be valuable during the round.

Judges Questions

Beyond what is listed above, teams can ask for and should be allowed to take a few moments after a judge poses their question to confer together and think about answering. However, it is important that they do not use too much time conferring, as the clock won't stop during this time. It is also a good idea for the team to consider the length of their answers to ensure that every judge has the time to ask a question. This is not required, nor is it officially the team's responsibility, but it is probably a good practice to try to hear from and engage with each of the three judges.

Activity- Watch videos of rounds and assume the role of the judges. Create questions the team thinks they would ask if they were judging.

For each case, brainstorm as many questions about aspects of the ethical dilemma as they can. Think through how they might approach these various questions.

6 Facilitating an Ethical Dialogue

In its ideal form, an ethics bowl round aspires to be an inquiry based dialogue examining an ethical issue. The two teams of students along with the judges are engaging in a conversation of a topic with the goal of gaining a better understanding of the ethical dilemma as well as of their own ideas and positions. Even if the actual round falls short of this ideal, much of the preparation for the ethics bowl will involve the team engaging together in conversations about each of the cases. These discussions will likely constitute the bulk of the early work the team will do. The coach's role during these discussions is to act as the facilitator, not only to keep the conversation organized and on track, but also to help to push the students' thinking, and to guide them in their consideration of the case. Though this dialogue may be characterized as 'philosophical' in nature, it does not require any special knowledge of philosophy. It does help, however, for one to have a sense of some strategies for the facilitation of an inquiry based dialogue.

The facilitation strategies suggested in this manual are adapted from the Philosophy for Children (P4C) Community of Inquiry method created by Matthew Lipman and Ann Margaret Sharp. Although this method was originally intended for your children, the basic structure and suggestions are effective for the facilitation of any inquiry based dialogue with participants of any age or skill level.

The facilitator's role is to track and organize the conversation, not to direct the conversation. It is important that the students are able to explore and grapple with the ideas themselves, as learning how to challenge one another's positions and respond to those challenges is an important skill for the ethics bowl round. However, students may also have a tendency to explore the issues in the case in a haphazard or abrupt way. For example, it is often the case that when someone offers a position on an issue, a student's impulse is to immediately offer a counter or alternative position. Students have been trained all through their schooling to be critical, but they often struggle to fully explore the positives of ideas before moving on. Conversely, if they find themselves more or less in agreement on a position it may also be hard for them to explore the alternatives, especially if those alternatives seem initially more difficult to defend.

The best thing a coach can do in facilitating these dialogues is to try to help the teams draw out the major ideas that they think are important in each section, and then fully explore all of the positives and negatives of each idea. This is not always an easy skill, but it becomes more natural with practice.

One thing to remember is that a facilitator should only intervene when necessary, and should do so in clear and specific ways. This keeps the conversation student centered, with students directing their comments and questions to one another, as opposed to the facilitator as an authority. The following section of this manual consists of a list of some useful and common facilitation 'moves' that will be helpful when guiding these dialogues. A move is essentially how the facilitator will interject to guide and clarify the discussion. With new or less experienced groups, the facilitator will have to take on modeling these moves and intervene more frequently. The goal over time as groups become more experienced is to shift this role to the students themselves. As much as possible, the facilitator should phrase interventions as questions to make sure the students' ideas are being represented accurately. The following prompts are suggestions only, as each facilitator must find their own personal style that is natural and comfortable.

Common Facilitation Moves

Naming: labeling what the students are doing, so that they begin to internalize the moves

- "Sarah just gave a reason: because it's the most fair."
- "John is disagreeing with Sarah."
- "So are you agreeing with Sarah's reason?"
- "Are you disagreeing with Sarah's position?"

Distilling: identifying the core idea of a contribution to make it clear to the group

- "So you are saying that the best reason is to think about 'what is the most fair?'"

Locating: keeping the inquiry on track (focused and moving forward)

- "Sarah just challenged John's reason about freedom."
- "It seems like we are all disagreeing with this position."
- "How is what you are saying connected to what John just said?"
- "What does this mean for the question we are trying to answer?
- "So are you offering a new position for our question?"
- "So far it seems like some of us think that yes, its ok to steal sometimes for certain reasons, and others think that no it is never ok to steal. So far, the evidence for it never being ok to steal has been about fairness and the law."

Probing: encouraging clear, critical, and creative thinking

- Reasons:
  - "Why do you think that?"
  - "What is your reason for that position?"
- Examples:
  - "Can you think of an example for that?"
  - "Can anyone think of an example that supports Sarah's position?"
  - "Can anyone think of an example that challenges Sarah's position, or an example of when this might not seem right?"
- Challenging:
  - "Does anyone disagree?"
  - "If someone disagreed with this position, what might they say?"
  - "Is the idea that it is not ok to steal always true?"

- Connecting:
  - “It seems like you are building off of John’s idea. Can you explain how it connects?”
  - “How are you responding to what John said?”
  - “What are you responding to?”
- Clarifying:
  - “Are you saying that [insert paraphrase]?”
  - “What do you mean by, ‘it’s not fair’”
  - “How does the idea of fairness connect to stealing?”
  - “Can anyone help me understand and explain what John means?”
  - “Can someone restate what Sarah just said?”

7 Advanced Preparation

After a team has the basics down, there are many more ways in which they can continue to learn and practice the skills that they will use in the ethics bowl. Below are some activities and strategies for ethics bowl preparation. These all can be adapted to fit the particular needs of a team and coach.

Fishbowl

The fishbowl can be applied to any number of activities, and can be especially useful in later preparation as teams are honing their presentation strategies.

1. Some of the team members participate in an activity. This could be a practice round, a discussion of a case, etc.
2. Other team members observe the activity without participating.
3. The observers can have something specific to look for, or a general overview of the activity.
4. The observers offer feedback on what they saw.

For example, if a team wants to practice building on the positions and ideas that other offer, instead of always applying a critical lens, the students in the fishbowl can have a dialogue about a case with this goal, and the fishbowl observes can track moments that they thought were particularly strong in this area.

Write your Own Case

When working through the ethics bowl cases, it can be very helpful to have students think of ideas for cases, or even write their own cases. This can help students understand the structure of a case study of an ethical dilemma, and may also help them with strategies for unpacking and discussing cases in the bowl. A good way to start case writing would be to consider the official cases for the ethics bowl, and which cases they thought were better or more interesting than others. Then, they should consider why they felt that way, and see if they can draw out objective criteria for what makes a good or bad ethical case study.

As a bonus for this activity, each year the national bowl organization holds a "State Your Case" competition in which students can submit cases they have written themselves. The winners get a prize, as well as the possibility that their case will be included in a future official case set. The information about this conference is shared annually on the national bowl website.

What is a Philosophical/Ethical Question?

This activity can be adapted to think about primarily what makes a question an 'ethical' question, but it can also be helpful for students to think about what makes a question philosophical in general.

There are 4 general types of philosophical questions that students are likely to encounter. They are:

- <u>Logic/Meaning:</u> What something means
- <u>Normative/Ethical:</u> What should be the case (right/wrong)
- <u>Epistemic:</u> Knowledge/How we know what we know
- <u>Metaphysical:</u> Reality, or what can/cannot exist

Important Criteria for Philosophical Questions

<u>Central/Significant:</u> The question must be meaningful. For students, this often means that it is related to their lives. This helps them to be interested and invested in thinking and talking about the question. But, even if a question does not fit this criteria, it should be a question that is generally meaningful for a significant group of people.

<u>Contestable:</u> The question should have more than one possible right answer. It must be possible to reach potential answers through reason and discussion alone. (For example, not an empirical question that can be answered using science or measurement).

<u>Stranger test:</u> The question should be worded in a way that anyone could understand (does not require insider/privileged knowledge). If I asked any random person this question, would they know what I was talking about?

Question Traps

- Unanswerable Questions
  - Ex. What would happen to her if she doesn't do her homework?
  - There is no way to know, and discussion would simply be speculation
- Questions within a Question/Assumptions
  - When is it ok to lie?
  - Assumes that there is a time when lying is permissible
- Questions which are not contestable enough
  - Can you pretend to be sick to stay home from work?
  - Of course you can. The issue might be, should you
- Questions that are too broad
  - Is it ever ok to lie?
  - The group may very quickly determine that yes, it sometimes is. The issue is when is it ok to do so?

Quick fixes in these cases can be to add words like "never, always, ever" etc. (but watch out for problems noted above), or to reframe an issue as a normative or 'should' question.

Formulating Question Practice

This is an example of how students might be introduced to the concept of asking philosophical questions. You might say something like: “We ask lots of questions in our daily life. Today, we are going to see if we can figure out the different types of questions by organizing questions into groups. We will then think about which types of questions are the most useful to ask for philosophy, and why.” The questions below are examples, and you may want to add to or change them.

1. **How many people can fit into a trolley car?**
    a. What would you need to do to answer this question?

    b. What type of question is this? Give this question a label.

2. **May I skip school tomorrow?**
    a. What would you need to do to answer this question?

    c. What type of question is this? Give this question a label.

3. **Is it okay to lie?**
    a. What would you need to do to answer this question?

    b. What type of question is this? Give this question a label.

4. **Why do people get angry?**
    a. What would you need to do to answer this question?

    c. What type of question is this? Give this question a label.

5. **What makes someone a good friend?**
    a. What would you need to do to answer this question?

    c. What type of question is this? Give this question a label.