

The Moral Moments Project Instructor User Guide



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The Moral Moments Project

Instructor User Guide

Introduction

The materials shared for use in your course come from the Moral Moments Project (MMP), a Teaching & Learning with Technology (TLT) Faculty Fellows project created by Dr. Susan Russell, Associate Professor of Theater Arts at Penn State and 2014-2015 Penn State Laureate.

In this guide, you will find a general explanation of MMP along with resources to help you incorporate the program into your courses. The shared materials that you'll be using are intended to be integrated into your courses in very flexible ways – from a one-hour insert, to a lengthier module on any one of the pillars, to a more integrated course including all the pillars. This User's Guide and companion website at <https://moralmoments.psu.edu/> contain the resources you'll need to fully integrate the Moral Moments experience¹.

What is the Moral Moments Project?

Moral Moments is an open conversation, rooted in storytelling, that nourishes decision-making and question-asking. Influenced by current events and course-specific contexts, Moral Moments conversations revolve around current problems and the possibilities they create for community-building and peace. Recent conversations have explored the problems of racial bias, violence against women, ethical decision-making and poverty, for example. The range of topics chosen for discussion can be quite broad but should be situated within the context of the four Pillars of the MMP: Morals, Ethics, Action, and Faith.

The Four Pillars (Figure 1)

All communities can be defined by four pillars of cultural construction:

1. Morals² (your beliefs about how to act in the world)
2. Ethics³ (how your actions align with your beliefs)
3. Actions⁴ (making decisions based on your beliefs)
4. Faith⁵ (what you believe IN)

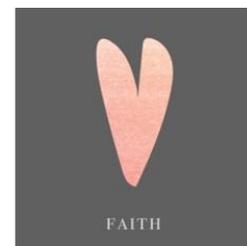


Figure 1. The Four Pillars of the MMP⁶

Supported and framed by these pillars, Moral Moments (MM) promotes personal reflection, community conversations and strategic decision-making. The goal of MM is to create a personal and collective space for critical thinking, contemplation, and decision-making in which understanding and respect for differences can peacefully co-exist alongside our own growing self-awareness. Videos, readings, personal reflections, observations, conversations,

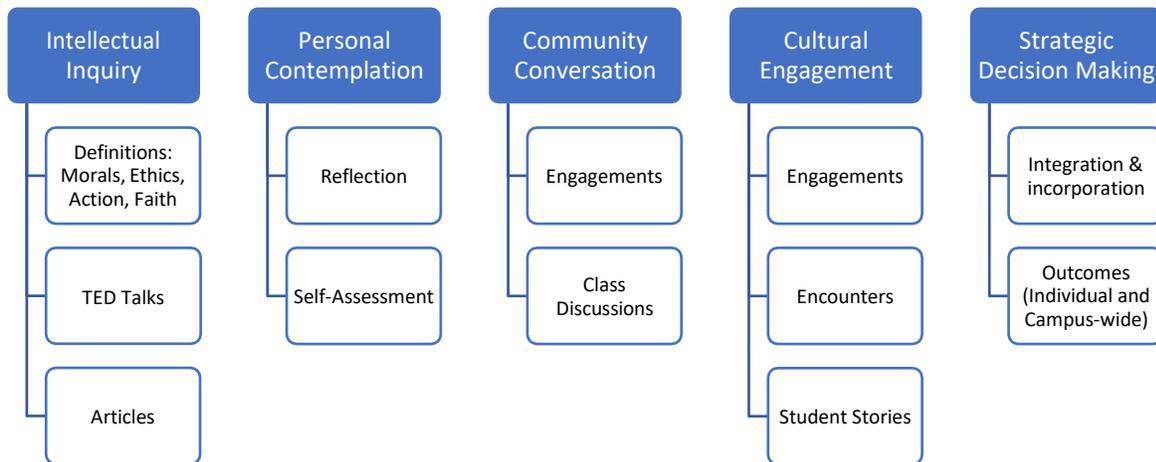
and other activities take place to develop self-awareness and build community connections (within and outside the classroom).

The Essential Elements (Figure 2)

The Moral Moments Project is designed to engage people in Moral Moments “experiences.” Whether for an hour, a day, a semester, or a lifetime, a Moral Moments experience is characterized by five Essential Elements. These elements must be present, regardless of the pillar being explored, to retain the integrity of the program.

Each of the Essential Elements is described below:

- **Intellectual Inquiry** (What can be learned about the pillar I am studying? There is scholarly work and there are diverse perspectives that, when thoughtfully considered, can inform one’s own thinking.)
MM requires STUDY.
- **Personal Contemplation** (What does the pillar mean in my life? Reflection and healthy self-assessment can help a person to make connections between the pillar and their own beliefs and experiences.)
MM requires REFLECTION.
- **Community Conversation** (What does the pillar mean to others? Building skills to engage in conversation with people—including people we don’t know well—creates opportunities to learn about the morals, ethics, actions, and faith that guide others.)
MM requires CONVERSATION.
- **Cultural Engagement** (What can I learn from and share with those who have other viewpoints? Every culture on earth has morals, ethics, actions, and faith. Intentionally engaging in different cultural experiences enriches one’s own perspective.)
MM requires ENGAGEMENT.



- **Strategic Decision-Making** (What practical steps can I take to integrate and bring to life what I’ve learned? A MM experience moves people to action, either immediately or in the future.)
MM requires ACTION.

Figure 2. Essential Elements create the experience that is the MMP.

The Outcomes (Figure 3)

As your students engage with the Pillars and Essential Elements, there are several major outcomes that we hope they’ll achieve: awareness of their own and other’s perspectives, openness to new ideas and their own growing sense

of self, respect and compassion for differences, a willingness towards action, and the ability to think and act critically. Figure 3 illustrates how the Pillars and Essential Elements work together to foster the MMP outcomes.

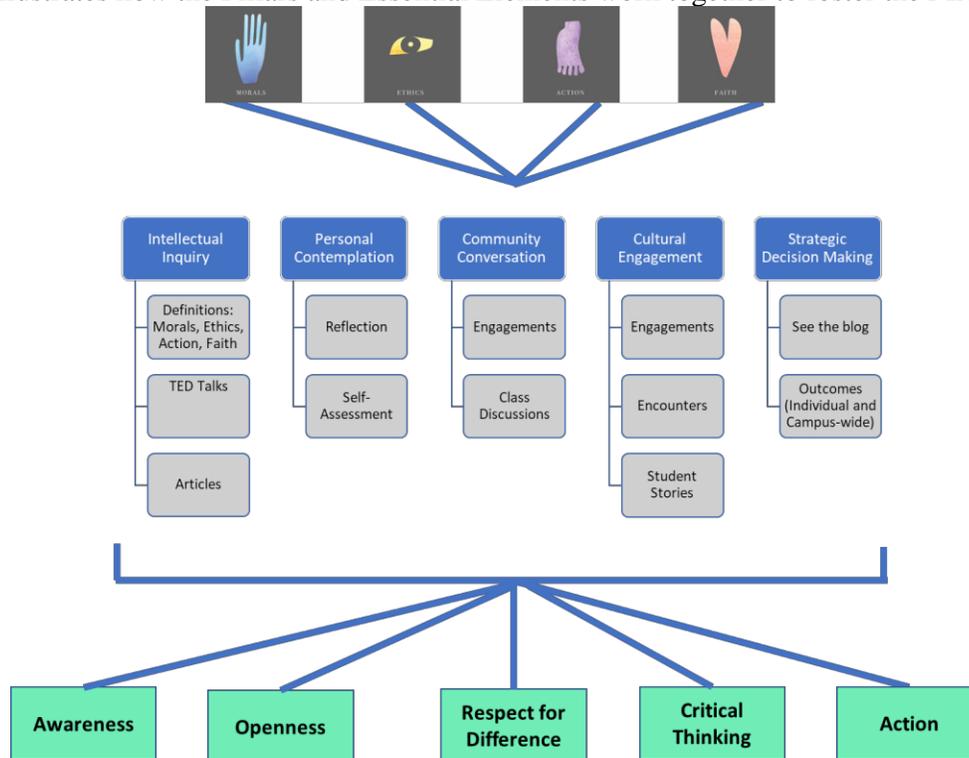


Figure 3. Moral Moments Pillars, Essential Elements, and Outcomes

How do I Integrate MMP into my Course?

Choose your Pillar/s (Figure 1)

First, you'll want to think about your course goals and then choose the MMP Pillar/s (Morals, Ethics, Action, Faith) that can logically support what you are trying to accomplish in your course. MM is very flexible, so you can choose one, two, or all four Pillars to incorporate. You can take one class period, one week, one unit, or one semester to work on the Pillar/s you select. This should be driven by what makes sense in your course. Find out more about each pillar at the website⁶.

Incorporate the Essential Elements (Figure 2)

While much of MMP is extremely flexible, the *approach* you use to engage students with the Pillar/s is not *as* flexible. This approach—framing your work within the Essential Elements—is the heart of MM. We characterize these elements as “essential” because without them, the work would no longer be MM, but something else. For this reason, we ask that you do your best to incorporate the five Essential Elements into instruction for each Pillar that you choose. Consider now how you might integrate the MM Essential Elements (Intellectual Inquiry, Personal Contemplation, Community Conversation, Cultural Engagement, Strategic Decision-Making) into your instruction. Sample unit and lesson plans are shared below to give you a few ideas about how this could look.

Consider how reflection will occur and be assessed

Reflection is a major part of MM. Students need time and a process by which to consider what they know and feel as well as how they are growing and changing through the MM experience. Decide how you'll capture and assess their reflections. There are many ways to do this from traditional hard-copy journals, to private online writing

spaces in Canvas, to public sharing spaces on the MM blog⁷. Examples of different reflective prompts, practices that encourage reflective thought, and a grading rubric used in MMP can be found in the Appendix.

Engage your students in the conversation

Classroom interaction is also a critical aspect of MM. It is a place where challenges and change will happen, so it is important to adequately prepare your students for this important work. Dr. Russell has made a series of informational videos explaining the different aspects of MM. Listening to these can be extremely helpful in harnessing the spirit of the MMP in your discussions⁸. Below are a few more aspects worth noting along with practical tips for integration into your course.

Setting the Stage for Discussion. The first day is a critical opportunity to lay a solid foundation on which to build a Moral Moments experience for your students. A crucial part of learning happens during the discussions, so make sure everyone knows what to expect and what is expected of them. What do students need to know before they begin an MMP discussion? What values and behaviors engender meaningful MMP interactions? To support you in this important first step, here are several tools to share and discuss with students which can help to provide the context through which productive and meaningful conversations can happen: First Day of Class Questions, The WOMPP Factor, 3 P's and a C, This and That, and Backpack Questions to Address Resistance.

First Day of Class Questions. Invite students to think for two minutes about the following questions:

- What do I know? (About the world? My peers? The Pillar/s?)
- How did I learn it?
- When did I learn it?
- Who taught me?
- Where do I see or hear what I know “happening”?

These questions can also be focused on a definition, an article, a Ted Talk, podcast, or a classroom conversation. These questions place someone in the Observer Seat. From that seat, he/she/they can watch and use critical thought processes to connect with personal experiences. Establishing “where” I am and “what” I know opens up the possibility to hear and see someone else’s “where” and “what.” These questions are designed to identify sharp edges or solid beliefs that can, if not identified, become obstacles to learning about someone else. “Why” is the focus of the whole course. Why, when front-loaded with observation, leads to “what now,” which leads to decision-making and action taking. Riff these questions to meet your needs and be aware that these questions will open up extraordinary, and challenging, places for you and your students to explore.

The WOMPP Factor. The WOMPP Factor lets you establish a social agreement that helps to foster meaningful communication. Introduce the WOMPP Factor to your students prior to class discussions.

The WOMPP Factor asks participants:

- Are you **willing** to learn something new?
- Are you **open** to a surprise?
- Are you **mindful** you are not the only person “in the room”?
- Are you **present** so you can be **possible**?

4 Ps and a C. These definitions will be useful while teaching the course, so introduce them to students and encourage them to think about how they work in their daily experiences of the world. If they can do that, they’ll start figuring out where things, ideas, and people can fall through the cracks of a culture.

- **Perspective** –viewing the world from something other than one’s habitual vantage point (Encyclopedia.com)
- **Privilege** – a special advantage, immunity, permission, right, or benefit granted to or enjoyed by an individual, class, or caste (The Free Dictionary)
- **Prejudice** – preconceived opinions “that are not based on reason or actual experience” (Oxford Dictionary)
- **Purpose** – the reason for which something exists or is done, made, used, etc. (Dictionary.com)
- **Civility** - Civility is about more than just politeness, although politeness is a necessary first step. It is about disagreeing without disrespect, seeking common ground as a starting point for dialogue about differences, listening past one’s preconceptions, and teaching others to do the same. Civility is the hard work of staying present even with those with whom we have deep-rooted and fierce disagreements. It is political in the sense that it is a necessary prerequisite for civic action. But it is political, too, in the sense that it is about negotiating interpersonal power such that everyone’s voice is heard, and nobody’s is ignored. And civility begins with us⁹.

This and That. Have students consider the very nature of their classroom contributions. Examining the nuanced differences between the word pairs in the following list can open us up to a wider and more thoughtful range of contributions. Explore what language looks like in each instance. Have students ask themselves, “How is language different when expressing an opinion, versus when making an observation?” Stop, look, and listen for examples of each during your discussions and have students evaluate and try out new options!

1. Comments and contributions
2. Opinions and observations
3. Reactions and responses
4. Curiosity and judgment
5. Statements and questions
6. Realizations and performances
7. Awakening and accomplishing

Backpack Questions to Address Resistance. Resistance is common during times of change. Help students to consider this with this reflection/discussion:

What if we thought of resistance in this way: as if we are carrying backpacks full of resistance into every situation? What if we don't even know we are carrying a backpack? Here is a set of questions that might help you "unpack" some of the weight from your backpack. It's an opportunity to question yourself in the act of thinking. Be aware of where and when you meet some interior resistance to an idea or question.

1. How do you understand that resistance? Is it a feeling? A memory? A voice from the past or present? An event that pops up?
2. What exactly does this resistance "do" to your thought process in the present moment? If you become aware of your own resistance to a question or an idea or a new thought, you might have stumbled onto an obstacle that keeps you from being open to something new.
3. If you find yourself resisting a question, just stop, take a breath, and figure out where your mind went. Once you figure that out, just say "oh," and move on to the next question. Those "ohs" are worth thinking about later on in your reflection assignments.

What's my role as a faculty member in the discussion? Opening up a place where students feel safe to share reactions and responses creates a place where communities can address fears and concerns as a whole. Remember, there is no thought shared that does not open the possibility of conversation. Your primary job is mediation, which requires a balanced presence and a set of knowable questions around which students can form their contributions. They can form their contributions around. Early on, for example, you may have to coach how to turn comments into contributions, and that is where your skills of communication will come into play. If the discussion becomes heated or hard, asking the students to turn comments into questions is a great option. Once some key questions are created, go around the circle and have each student ask a question about the question to tease it out.

What if they ask for my opinion? Your story and your point of view is not a necessary part of this experience. Still, they may ask your opinion. Thank them for asking but don't feel you need to contribute to their conversation. That can be a challenge, but it's the great work. You are helping them move into "adult-ing" by giving them the chance to create a community and build it through communication and the actions required to maintain social agreements (WOMPP). Remind them of those agreements frequently and offer them the opportunity to change the agreements whenever they want. Everyone has to agree to the change though, and they have to work it out through mediation, which they will learn by observing how you teach the class. You are not the answer book, they are, and they will write it if given the chance.

How do I end a class discussion? Round-robin questions work well for ending a class. Example: What do you remember about today's discussion? Students can answer in 1 word, 5 words, 1 sentence. Or you can invite students to complete the following statements:

- I didn't know I...
- I thought...
- I never thought...
- I was surprised when...
- What if I...
- I believe...

What if things get heated or stray in a direction that does not seem helpful? If it's not being heard, talk about listening. Have the students return to the basic questions of the course:

- What do I know?
- How did I learn it?
- When did I learn it?
- Who taught me?
- Where do I see or hear what I know "happening"?

Answers to these questions create solid ground for them to stand on, and your job is to get them there so they can look around and see they are not in it alone. They might differ in their experiences, but they are not in it alone and they have formed a community defined by specific agreements (WOMPP). If they can't find their way inside the questions above, ask them to ask each other the question THEY have about an article, talk, or conversation. No answers, just questions. What you want is a class actively asking questions. And if this is how they end the day, ask them to return to the next class with 3 questions for their peers about whatever was or wasn't discussed. Start the next class there. You want them arriving with questions they want to ask each other. Once that happens, you become the silent observer. You are the solid foundation on which they rest their experience of questioning.

What if no one is talking?

1. Stop, take a pause and a breath.
2. Ask the group to name and claim and define the obstacles to answering (time, confusion, language, embarrassment, shyness whatever they are).

3. Ask the group to come up with strategies to work WITH each, not in opposition, but in collaboration. That's the difference between claiming and ignoring or opposing.
4. Choose a strategy and identify the necessary skill sets inside the strategy (skill sets can be writing something down to say, making a decision and asking someone to speak it for you, asking someone to help you accomplish the task, anything works as long as the students are working; working might be a skill too, and what does "working" look like? Brene Brown suggests we have people "paint" what "working" looks like). Apply the skills to one/all of the questions above.

The following questions can also work to create conversations:

- What surprised you in a reading/article/encounter/TT or podcast?
- Who inspired you?
- When were your beliefs challenged?
- Where were you confused?
- What new insights did you acquire by reading/watching/encountering/listening?
- Where did you see, read, and/or hear them, and when did you think them?
- And "Why?" is a follow up to each of the previous questions.

How do I get more students to engage in the conversation? Ask students to answer each question in one sentence, then 5 words, then 1 word. The reverse works well too. This strategy helps narrow the focus of the speaker. It also helps control those speakers who have a lot to say and levels the conversation playing field.

What are the Engagements and Encounters?

Engagements and Encounters are the activities that take students out of the classroom to further their understanding of the Pillar they are exploring. They constitute the Community Conversations and Cultural Engagements aspects of the Essential Elements (Figure 2).

Engagements. As students participate in Engagements, they are asked to observe what they see happening around them. They look for signs, symbols, words, actions, and deeds that illustrate the beliefs of the people whom they are observing. It could be a poster or a banner or something visible, a tee shirt even, and it can be what people are talking about and how they are behaving. Students document everything they see and hear and observe concerning how the Pillar they are exploring is playing out in these gatherings or websites.

Encounters. Students meet in small groups or with individuals to ask what the Pillar they are studying means to them. They ask them what they “do” to illustrate what the word means.

Strategic Choices for Change

When you finish exploring each Pillar, ask students to take what they are learning in MM and make a difference outside the classroom. This fulfills one of the Essential Elements of the MMP, Strategic Decision-Making. Encourage students to become AWAKE and AWARE of issues around them.

Become INTENTIONAL in your thoughts, words, and deeds when talking about and even working on these issues on a local, national and global stage. The act of INTENTION makes anything possible. Choose one of the issues you have noticed and look at it in terms of your own life and circle. Document your observations about the rules, practices, actions, and possible beliefs at the core of these issues. But always remember, there are human beings inside those rules and beliefs, so be WILLING to see and learn something new, be OPEN to a surprise, be MINDFULL that you are not the only person “in the room,” be PRESENT in moments of discovery, and be the POSSIBILITY of change. What is the change that you can make?

Next Steps

So there you have the core components of the MMP: the Pillars, Essential Elements, reflections, classroom discussions, Engagements & Encounters, and choosing some strategic choices for change. What follows are some sample lesson/unit plans that show several ways to integrate these MMP components.

Sample Lesson and Unit Plans

A Sample Unit Plan. How can you pull together the various MMP components into instruction? How does MM flow? Here's one example, centered around the Ethics Pillar, followed by more resources:

Suppose you are teaching an engineering (or nursing, or education, or...) course which has an ethics component. You'd like to use MMP to work through that portion of the course, so you choose Ethics as your Pillar. You decide that you'll take two weeks of the course to cover that topic. What are your course goals for this section of the course and how can MM help your students achieve them? Here are some sample objectives:

Goal 1: Students will be able to think critically and apply ethical reasoning to contemporary engineering problems

Goal 2: Students will become aware of and value the role of ethical behavior as an important characteristic of professional practice

A typical MMP flow *can* look something like this:

1. Self-Assessment (about the Pillar) & Reflection #1: *What do you think/believe now and why?*
2. Class Discussion
3. Reflection #2: Reading response (Definitions and Articles): *What can I learn (about this Pillar)?*
4. Class Discussion
5. Reflection #3: Multi-media response (Podcasts and TED Talks): *What more can I learn?*
6. Class Discussion
7. Reflection #4: Engagements and Encounters outside the classroom: *What can I learn from others?*
8. Class Discussion
9. Self-Assessment: *What have I learned? Who have I become? What can I do? How can I use this?*

Let's look at each part of this plan in greater detail. How might this look for our engineering course? Keep in mind that this is just a guideline. You might want fewer discussions or more reflection. The general idea is to give students a starting point for how they currently understand the Pillar you are studying. Then add new information and experiences in and out of the classroom and let them reflect on their ideas, those of others, and how these may change over time. Classroom discussions give them opportunities to practice critical thinking but also important listening skills that allow us all to learn from one another. Finally, they pull it all together to examine changes in their own thinking and awareness and consider ways in which their learning can be applied in their future or current lives. Here is a more detailed version of this example.

1. Self-assess & reflect: In this example, you could ask your students to reflect and write about what they already know or think about ethics in their personal lives, and where they think these beliefs come from. If you know of an ethical self-test for your discipline, you could assign it as a starting point for reflection. Questions like these can start their thinking as well:

- What do I know? (About the world? My peers? This Pillar?)
- How did I learn it?
- When did I learn it?
- Who taught me?
- Where do I see or hear what I know "happening"?

2. Students bring their thoughts to class for an initial discussion (details on how to support and manage MMP discussions can be found in the previous section of the User Guide).

3. Gain new knowledge & reflect: Now it's time to assign resources (text, video, podcasts, websites) to fuel the intellectual inquiry. Resources for all the Pillars (podcasts, TedTalks, articles, websites, standards, etc.) can be found at the website⁶ Feel free to enhance this list as needed/appropriate for your course.

After engaging with the content, students reflect on what they've learned and construct a meaningful response that integrates the new with the known. Reflection prompts should help students identify new ideas and changes in their thinking. What new insights have they discovered? What evidence can they share from class resources and experience to support their thinking? How do they interpret current issues while integrating new information, and how can they apply new insights into their personal lives or to improve the community or situation? A reflection rubric can be found in the Appendix which can help you to design and evaluate these reflections.

4. Students return to the classroom for another round of discussion. It is in these various discussions where students will be faced with people with vastly different opinions and worldviews. An important part of MMP is to help students learn how to listen and learn from others.

5. & 6. Steps 3 & 4 can be repeated depending on how complex or detailed you need their intellectual inquiry to go. The idea is to introduce something new, and have students reflect on it and integrate it into their own thinking.

7. Now it's time to take the learning outside of the classroom with Community Conversations and Cultural Engagements. This gives students a chance to move out into the real world (even if only virtually) and connect what they've been learning to real people and real examples.

Engagements. Go to any place where you can observe people interacting. While there, look for signs, symbols, words, actions, and deeds that illustrate the beliefs of the people who work there or are attending the event. It could be a poster or a banner or something visible—a tee shirt even—and it can be what people are talking about and how they are behaving. Document everything you see and hear and observe concerning how the word “ethics” is playing out in these gatherings or websites. If all you have to go on is what people are doing and saying, then let those choices, individual and collective, help you uncover the beliefs that the words and actions and deeds in front of you illustrate. This is not about judgment, this is about learning and discerning, and to learn and discern, you must observe and consider. Consider means “to think carefully about (something), typically before making a decision.” Decision-making is a process...so get that process working consciously!

Encounters. Talk with a practicing engineer or an engineering student who is further along in the program than you and ask them what the word “ethics” means to them, and then ask them what they “do” to illustrate what the word means. You are truly in the land of research here. Don't engage in a conversation, just ask the question and listen and write. Ask for permission to write down what they say, of course...

Reflection #4 – Ask students to describe the experiences they had in the Engagements and Encounters they completed. How did what they observed relate to what they are learning? Perhaps use the reflection prompts (in the Appendix) to begin a general reflection on what's changing in terms of their own understanding: I didn't know..., I thought..., I never thought I..., I was surprised by..., What if I...?, etc.

8. Class Discussion: Bring the learning back to the classroom one last time so students can hear each other's experiences and changing viewpoints. This is also a good place to do some strategic thinking about real world issues. How can they take what they have learned and apply it to their world?

9. Self-Assessment: Students get the chance to look all the way back to Step 1 and compare any changes: New thoughts? New ideas? New responses? This can also be a moment to let students imagine the future and themselves in it with their new understanding. Faced with a challenging ethical situation, how might they decide to act? Why?

Reflections and self-assessments can take the form of journals, discussion posts, videos, or podcasts. The goal is for students to have a chance to stop, learn about a Pillar, reflect on their experiences and their learning, listen to others, apply what they are learning to decision-making, and integrate these into a new whole! See examples of student video reflections at the MMP website¹⁰.

Now you can take this example and morph it for any of the other Pillars. You just shift the focus of intellectual inquiry and tailor the content, reflections, encounters and engagements, and discussions to suit your needs, and you have another MMP experience! See more examples at the website⁶.

See examples of lesson plans that illustrate the integration of the Essential Elements into individual lessons as well as a blank design template to help you design your own lesson plans. sample lesson plans that can serve as examples for integrating the Essential Elements across any of the Pillars ¹¹.

Connecting with the Community

As you work through your MMP integrations, join the growing group of faculty members who are already participating in the MMP, and share what you are doing with the community of practitioners! This is an extremely supportive group of people, so please do share activities, triumphs, and challenges at the website! Check out the blog for updates on what's new and to share your MMP story⁷!

Other ways to share include attending a summer institute or faculty info sessions held several times per year. You can also participate in ongoing MMP research by emailing moralmoments@psu.edu.

More Resources

We have lots of resources to further help you to integrate MM content, including:

- Appendix with sample syllabus language, a course integration template, reflection rubric, and sample reflection prompts
- FAQ section in the User Guide with answers to common questions
- Faculty resources section of the MMP website¹²
- Canvas Resources – if you are interested in a downloadable copy of a Canvas-based course, email the team at moralmoments@psu.edu.

Appendix

Sample Syllabus Language

Here are two sample descriptions that can be inserted into course syllabi:

Sample 1: Special Aspects of this Course. This course includes some aspects of the Moral Moments Project¹, a Teaching & Learning with Technology (TLT) Faculty Fellows project created by Dr. Susan Russell, Associate Professor of Theater Arts at Penn State and 2014-2105 Penn State Laureate.

The goal of the Moral Moments Project is to create a personal and collective space for critical thinking, contemplation, and decision-making. This space will help you discover your own personal beliefs and your own

abilities to define, analyze, and apply information in ways that align with those beliefs. This space will also open up the possibility that your beliefs are not the only beliefs “in the room,” creating opportunities for meaningful conversations about difference.

The Moral Moments Project is intended to help you figure out who you are, while at the same time, lead you to realize that everything you do and say also affects everyone around you. In this process to build a classroom environment in which understanding and respect for differences can peacefully co-exist alongside your own growing self-awareness, the four pillars of Morals (your beliefs about how to act in the world), Ethics (how your actions align with your beliefs), Actions (making decisions based on your beliefs), and Faith (what you believe IN) are explored. Videos, readings, personal reflections, observations, and conversations will be used to develop your self-awareness and community connections (within and outside the classroom).

During the exploration of any of the pillars, there are five common elements that you can look for:

- Intellectual Inquiry (What can be learned about the pillar?)
- Personal Contemplation (What does it mean in my life?)
- Community Conversation (What does it mean to others?)
- Cultural Engagement (What can I learn from and share with those who have other viewpoints?)
- Strategic Decision-Making (What practical steps can I take to integrate and bring to life what I’ve learned?)

Because we are trying to understand the broader implications of the Moral Moments Project, you may be asked to consider participating in research. If research is taking place, you will be given the opportunity to learn about the specifics of the research, ask questions, and decide whether you’d like to participate or not. The activities assigned are required as part of the course. However, participating *in the research* (which usually means sharing your experiences or thoughts anonymously) is always voluntary and will be explained more fully at the time of providing your consent to participate in the research. If you have any questions about this, you can ask your instructor for details. To find out more information about the Moral Moments Project, take a look at the project website¹ and blog⁷ to see student videos and their stories.

Sample 2 (if you decided to focus on only one Pillar): **Ethics Pillar.** "To See or not to See, that is the question..." from, "The Human Condition," by Everybody, All the Time, Everywhere, written a really long time ago.

Bringing peace to our planet, which is the goal of the Moral Moments Project, begins with committing your individual participation in discovering what you believe, how those beliefs are "acted out," and who or what you depend on when things are good and when things are bad. We will be exploring the **Ethics** pillar of Moral Moments in this course - becoming aware of your practices.

During the exploration of any of the pillars, there are five common elements that you can look for:

- Intellectual Inquiry (What can be learned about the pillar?)
- Personal Contemplation (What does it mean in my life?)
- Community Conversation (What does it mean to others?)
- Cultural Engagement (What can I learn from and share with those who have other viewpoints)
- Strategic Decision-Making (What practical steps can I take to integrate and bring to life what I’ve learned?)

The Ethics Module begins with asking you some questions about a single word - ethics. These questions lead to some academic discussions, podcasts, and videos that illustrate how the word “ethics” is “playing out” in your culture. Finally, and most importantly, you will chronicle your journey of discovery through reflections and personal engagements with your peers and with diverse campus and local communities.

The MMP is about discovering who you are so when a decision has to be made you know exactly who is making it and why. The Moral Moments Project begins with AWAKENING to the idea that everything you think, say, and do affects everyone else. That's how important you are to the world, and "importance" comes with great responsibility. So, what are you thinking right now? For real...what are you thinking? Read more about Moral Moments at Penn State¹

Ethics Module Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this module, you will be able to:

1. Recognize the many ways ethics are practiced in our global culture
2. Analyze media and information as "stories" about beliefs and practices
3. Tell a story about who you are that includes awareness of the ethics of others

Because we are trying to understand the broader implications of the Moral Moments Project, you may be asked to consider participating in research. If research is taking place, you will be given the opportunity to learn about the specifics of the research, ask questions, and decide whether you'd like to participate or not. The activities assigned are required as part of the course. However, participating *in the research* (which usually means sharing your experiences or thoughts anonymously) is always voluntary and will be explained more fully at the time of providing your consent to participate in the research. If you have any questions about this, you can ask your instructor for details. To find out more information about the Moral Moments Project, take a look at the project website¹ and blog⁷ to see student videos and their stories.

Generic Integration Template

The following general template can be used for planning and development at the lesson, unit, course, or program level to help you think through the integration process.

- What is the lesson (unit, course, program, etc.) topic for MMP integration?
- What do you hope students can do by the end of the integration (learning outcomes)?
- Within your integration, where is the logical place to include a MMP element? What makes sense within your discipline, course, lesson?
- What can this integration look like? What will you have students do? In the activity, remember to try to account for the 5 elements:
 - Intellectual Investigation (What can be learned about the pillar?)
 - Personal Contemplation (What does it mean in my life?)
 - Community Conversation (What does it mean to others?)
 - Cultural Engagement (What can I learn from and share with those who have other viewpoints?)
 - Strategic Decision-Making (What practical steps can I take to integrate and bring to life what I've learned?)
- What aspects of this integration will be assessed? How?

Sample Reflection Prompts

Reflection Prompts for Self-Assessment. You can use these prompts as you ask students to consider their beginning, middle, or ending reference points to any Pillar. What did they start out thinking? What changes did they notice over time? What have they learned about their own stance towards, and actions around, Morals, Ethics, Actions, and Faith?

As you begin the process:

I think...I say...I believe... I do... I choose...

This reflection prompt asks about what you were thinking in your first encounter with the Pillar you are exploring. Before you become mindful that there are other people in the room, become mindful of your

own presence. Your presence “plays out” in your thoughts, words, actions, and deeds, and this is the playing field where people make decisions about who you are. People are always watching each other, listening to what is said, and observing behaviors and actions. If you are willing to learn something new about yourself, that is the definition of being open in the present moment, and once you open up to the present moment, you get to know yourself a little better.

In the middle:

I never thought...I didn't know I...I was surprised by...

As you are learning more about your Pillar and yourself, can you articulate some new perspectives or a different way an old idea is being understood? Remember, this is not about agreeing or disagreeing, it's about listening and witnessing other peoples' experiences. Work to bring someone else's thoughts into focus in this reflection. Difference might be a key to figuring out something for yourself...

What's new...What new questions arise...What more do you want to know...

Write about any new information and new ideas that the definitions, articles, and discussions offered you. If you ask yourself to see something new in every document, video, podcast, article, and encounter, you will be taking the action necessary to open yourself up to the possibility that someone else might have part of an answer to the questions that swirl around you 24/7. If you don't have any questions swirling around, see if you can give that thought some thought. It might be that you are not as aware of the world around you as you think you are, and if that is the case, just stop what you are thinking and start looking around you and listening to your peers. Not to worry. Building connections to the people around you, is a great place to start this journey, so take some time and listen.

At the end

I believe...I value...I used to think; Now I think (Ritchart, Church, & Morrison, 2011)

As you finish up your work with any Pillar, go back to review your earlier reflections. How did you think about things initially and what has changed? Do you find any surprises at all? If not, write about that, too. In one sentence, tell yourself what you value, AND leave yourself a song or a poem or a video as a reminder!

You are observing yourself here...so give yourself some time to ponder. Perspective, privilege, prejudice, and purpose are personal and collective. Make sure you know where you stand, and if you don't like the view, you are always free to take a step in another direction. Your personal views are pretty easy to change; all you have to do is decide to see something or someone from a different perspective, like theirs.

Reflection Prompts after Encounters or Engagements.

I thought...I never thought...I was surprised when...I see a pattern...

What are some new perspectives that come into focus through your interviews and observations? If you do not locate a “new-ness,” work to see or hear a different way to re-articulate an old idea. This is not about agreeing or disagreeing with someone or some idea, this is about hearing what people are saying. Communication requires working to bring someone else's thoughts into focus. Agreement or disagreement happens once you understand someone else's point of view, and once that happens, you can see where the two of you differ. Difference is not always disagreement. Sometimes difference is the most valuable player on the communication team.

Look for a surprise in your own thinking and make a note in your journal. You are observing yourself here as well...so give yourself some time to ponder. Perspective, privilege, prejudice, and purpose are personal and collective. Make sure you know where you stand, and if you don't like the view, you are always free to take a step in another direction. Your personal views are pretty easy to change; all you have to do is decide to see something or someone from a different perspective, like theirs.

Start pulling some strings through what you are learning so far and see if you can locate a trend or two. Surprise is the core of investigation, and rarely does a surprise not result in a thought about possibilities...

This is learning about how terms and ideas become something visible...how do these "actions" you have observed illustrate morals, ethics, faith? Be specific. Look deeply into what you've been learning and what you observe. Uncover how the actions you see illustrate a set of beliefs and practices. Once you isolate some clear examples, locate some actions in your own life that illustrate your beliefs and thoughts and rules. This is self-awareness in action.

Reflection Prompts to Stir Strategic Decision Making

What if I... If I think, say, and believe... then should I do, choose, act...

Let this reflection include some thoughts and maybe even some deeds that keep you AWAKE and AWARE of your beliefs and the practices that already or potentially show your beliefs in action. What you are learning is the foundation of your own Penn State Obelisk, and now you are adding the stones of INTENTION and MINDFULNESS and BELIEFS and VALUES and ETHICS to your structure. The higher you build it, the more you will show the world who you are.

As you put this learning and discovery about yourself together, turn your mind to small everyday ACTIONS that you can do that demonstrate who you are.

String pulling, please...time to take what you are learning and experiencing and witnessing and create a thought or twenty about yourself and your decision making and your agency in your communities and cultures. Not too soon to start circling some plans of action....

For real...what if you took a plunge into an issue. What if you made a decision to change something for the better. What if you decided to actively contribute to the efforts on our campus to make people safer, or help people feel more included, or more financially secure? What if you committed to be of service right now? Start with "what if I..." and just let the words happen.

I am...I know...I want...I dream

After all of this personal and cultural inquiry, who is the person you are creating? What do you know about yourself now? What is the container that holds you? Make some statements about yourself. And make some decisions that can become actions. What do you want to do in the world? What do you want to change or maintain or affect or support? How do you want to shape your life and the lives around you?

Processes that Set the Stage for Reflective Thought

Before reflection or discussion, give students strategies that allow them to stop and listen to their own thoughts and experiences. The goal here is to help students integrate new learning and become aware of changes in thinking or understanding as well as to develop deeper insights about themselves and their learning. There are many examples of reflective prompts and general questions already included in the User Guide above, including the WOMPP Factor,

4 P's and a C, This and That, and First Day Questions. Here are a few additional ideas to set the stage for reflective and critical thinking:

- Teach students mindful breathing as a starting practice¹³
- QICS: Describe a Question, Insight, Connection, and Surprise from your discussion, content, engagement, encounter, etc.
- Situated Contemplation – Students return in their minds to an impactful experience, and while remembering it (as if a movie were playing), recall as many details as possible about the environment, people, the conversation, their own thoughts, and emotions. As they experience this remembering, they sit quietly, looking for insights to arise.
- Critical Incident (Brookfield, 1995; Tripp, 1993; Woods, 1993) – This is like Situated Contemplation, but uses a series of more focused questions to lead to insight:
 - Remember an impactful event
 - At the moment of the event, when did you feel most engaged/most distanced from what was happening?
 - What action, thought, or occurrence was most helpful/ affirming or puzzling/confusing?
 - What surprised you the most? (your/other reaction, what happened, other)
 - What could/would you do differently the next time?
- Sketch it! This can be incorporated before or after a period of reflection to engender new insights. Ask participants to sketch or describe an image that represents what they have been thinking about. After they finish the sketch, tell them to STOP... BEHOLD... PONDER...ASK for any new insights that arose from the exercise. You could have students then share their sketches as in a museum gallery. Students walk around the room to view other students' drawings. Finish with a debrief conversation.
- Powerful Questions
 - Style A (Flanagan, 2017)
 - What do you want?
(What are you interested in now?)
 - What are you doing to achieve it?
(What are you doing to experience more of it?)
 - How is that working?
 - What is your plan?
 - Style B: Door Openers Versus Window Slammers
 - What questions would you like to be asked that let you be known or understood the way you'd like to be?
 - What's the difference between being known and being exposed?
- Lectio (Barbezat & Bush, 2014)
 - Reading. Read a passage (or watch a video or listen to a podcast, etc.) slowly and carefully.
 - Consider. Have a conversation with yourself about what you've read.
 - Reading. Read (watch or listen to) the same passage again slowly and carefully.
 - Contemplation. Think deeply upon one aspect of the content that stands out.
 - Meditation. Rest your mind.
 - Reflect. What insights present themselves?
 - Remember. Choose a way to capture the insights for later.
 - This can be a longer reflection, or simply a series of summaries: What is most important in 10 words, 5,3,1)?
- Build a *Cajita* (Pulido, 2002) – *Cajitas* are the boxes that some migrating people from Mexico, Central, and South America carry with them as they move. They are filled with important mementos and memories of home. In this exercise, people gather important ideas and artifacts from their learning journey and construct a *Cajita* to place them in. There are no guidelines to size or form. Participants choose what the *Cajita* looks like and what goes into it. A sharing happens that honors and respects the journey.
- Deep Listening (Hahn d'Errico, 2018) This is a paired exercise that teaches students to actively and deeply listen to others. It follows this path:

- After getting into pairs, partners are assigned letters A or B
- Round 1: Partner A speaks for 2 minutes about their question, experience, insight (whatever the focus is) without interruption. Partner B listens silently and attentively
- At the end of 2 minutes, Partner B can ask clarifying questions for 2 minutes to which Partner A can respond. Partner B should NOT shift the conversation to share their own experience or change topic. The focus should remain on what Partner A has said.
- Switch and repeat for Partner B (2 minutes talking, 2 minutes clarification).
- Both partners sit in silence for 1 minute to bring the time to a close.
- Partners thank each other and the session is over.
- This exercise can then be debriefed in the larger group.
- Setting Intentions – Students receive a small stone or other object that can be carried in their pockets throughout the day. Students have quiet time to consider a word or short phrase that represents an important insight or short-term, attainable goal they came to through their learning. The object remains with them each day as a reminder of the goal/idea, until they are ready for a new goal or idea.

Reflection Scoring Rubric

Reflection Scoring				
Criteria	Ratings			Pts
Main Idea	5.0 pts Destination Identifies--within the first one or two sentences--3 new pieces of information or insight.	3.0 pts Exploration Identifies--within the first one or two sentences--2 new pieces of information or insight.	1.0 pts Discovery Identifies--within the first one or two sentences--1 new piece of information or insight.	5.0 pts
Evidence	5.0 pts Destination Provides appropriate evidence for all insights shared in the main idea.	3.0 pts Exploration Provides appropriate evidence for one/some, but not all insights shared in the main idea.	1.0 pts Discovery Provides no evidence to support any of the insights identified in the main idea.	5.0 pts

Reflection Scoring				
Criteria	Ratings			Pts
Analysis	5.0 pts Destination Extensively integrates relevant ideas and concepts from resources (Ted Talks, podcasts, etc.) and experiences into observations and insights.	3.0 pts Exploration Somewhat integrates relevant ideas and concepts from resources (Ted Talks, podcasts, etc.) and experiences into observations and insights.	1.0 pts Discovery Does not integrate relevant ideas and concepts from resources (Ted Talks, podcasts etc.) and experiences into observations and insights.	5.0 pts
Self and Community	5.0 pts Destination Articulates thoughtful and extensive application of new learning to personal life and/or to the community.	3.0 pts Exploration Begins to articulate strategies and ideas about applying new learning and experiences to personal life and community.	1.0 pts Discovery Demonstrates minimal mention of how new learning might be applied to personal life or to the community.	5.0 pts
Total Points: 20.0				

FAQs

Where can I find suggested syllabus content, objectives, and a sample lesson plan for this course?

Examples of text to include in your syllabus and objectives can be found in the Appendix of this document. A sample lesson plan and sample questions for the first day of class can be found above in the User Guide.

What are course spaces?

Moral Moments experiences are as much about negotiating private, communal and public space as they are about creating personal and collective peace. Determine what these spaces will look like in your course and communicate the expectations of each space with your students. Examples are listed below.

- The Journal – A place where you react, respond, and reflect on your personal journey
- Classroom Community – A place where our class discusses our collective journey
- Class Blog/Website – A place where we reach out to our peers, our communities, and our planet with what we have learned from our collective and personal journeys.

Where can I find materials used for learning activities and/or assessments?

The MMP User Guide and MMP website¹ are the best places to find these resources.

What if a student isn't buying into the program?

If buying in for a personal and community conversation about racism, violence, poverty, community building, and peace is an obstacle for a student, I welcome the student to explore the following questions in his/her/their reflection writing space:

- What has "surprised" you about the course? The classroom community? The readings/viewings/conversations?
- Is what "surprises" you new information? Old information?
- What is challenging about what "surprises" you?
- What, if anything, do you want to know about what "surprises" you?
- If you don't want to know anything more about something new or old, ask yourself why.

After the student has explored the questions in a personal reflection space, I would, without identifying the student who used them in personal reflection, offer these questions in class for community exploration. In a community setting, the students can observe everyone grappling with obstacles and everyone going through a process of grappling. These questions are also useful as "check-ins" throughout the course. Bottom line: buying in is part of the social agreement the course requires, so if a student can't agree to a social agreement, maybe the course isn't for him/her/them. If this is the case, the teacher can help the student contact his/her/their advisor for assistance.

What if a students' views are disturbing?

Case study: One of my students had some pretty rough self-reflections (he came across as sexist, racist, and misogynistic). His writing was excellent, but his views were concerning. What do we do in these situations?

The course is designed to help a student discover what they think and explore how they got there, so if the student's views are "representative" of the challenges we face in a global culture, I suggest you take all of the students through the following questions to lead his/her/their reflections. These questions can be front-loaded to each section or each assignment and can be part of side coaching on individual reflections. The focus can be changed to address the content to be explored:

- What do you know about race? Gender? Sexual Orientation?
- When did you learn what you know?
- Who taught you what you know?
- Where do you see what you know "playing out" in your life?
- Why do you think you were taught what you know?

As always, the teacher's first obligation is to the safety of the students, so if the views expressed are of a dangerous nature, the teacher should follow guidelines for reporting unsafe conditions for the community. A teacher cannot fix racism, sexism, and misogyny, but a teacher can ask citizens of a culture why it exists.

How can I support students who may be struggling?

As always, an instructor must offer to help the student navigate counseling services if needed, however, as teachers we know the action of thinking can be an obstacle. As teachers, we know each student carries the burden of personal expectations, and sometimes having a conversation with all of the students about what is expected can be useful. All this course expects of a student is to think about thinking, and in that process, perhaps make a decision or two about

who he/she/they wants to be. This course is designed to offer a clear path to uncovering and exploring the action of critical thinking, so telling students that they are "works in process" sometimes helps. In a product driven culture, a process can be scary because it takes a while. Have an open conversation about "time." This course is designed to be a "Pause Button" in a very fast culture, so tell the students they have all the time they need to take the course, and that time frame might be 15 weeks or 15 years.

Do I need permission to reproduce or use the MMP materials?

Instructors are encouraged to use the materials here and modify them as needed. Just remember, it takes all 5 elements to make a Moral Moments experience!

References

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¹ <https://moralmoments.psu.edu>

² <https://moralmoments.psu.edu/student/pillars/#morals>

³ <https://moralmoments.psu.edu/student/pillars/#ethics>

⁴ <https://moralmoments.psu.edu/student/pillars/#action>

⁵ <https://moralmoments.psu.edu/student/pillars/#faith>

⁶ <https://moralmoments.psu.edu/student/pillars/>

⁷ <https://moralmoments.psu.edu/blog/>

⁸ <https://moralmoments.psu.edu/faculty/navigating-the-elements/>

⁹ <https://www.instituteforcivility.org/who-we-are/what-is-civility/>

¹⁰ <https://moralmoments.psu.edu/student/stories/>

¹¹ <https://moralmoments.psu.edu/faculty/resources/>

¹² <https://moralmoments.psu.edu/faculty/>

¹³ https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/mindful_breathing