Philosophers grapple with bioethical issues

At the end of Term 2, ten students from Year 10 attended an Ethical Exploration Day with students from other schools around Sydney. The event gave some of our budding philosophers the chance to put theory into action, discussing real-life philosophical problems with like-minded thinkers.

The day began with guest speaker Dr Hojjat Soofi, who spoke on Bioethics. Dr Soofi illustrated a range of situations medical practitioners face that call the rights and responsibilities of patients and doctors into balance.

The talk provided the framework for discussions during Session 2, where students were divided into small groups to talk through some of the issues presented. During the small group discussions, students delved into fast-paced bioethical scenarios, where they had to create ethical priorities with other students.

Anjali Popuri and Kristy Thapa

In the final session of the day, students used skills and foundations built during the first two sessions for a final, whole-group simulation. The scenario was complex and based on a real-world bioethical dilemma, and the girls enjoyed making decisions in the 'choose-your-own-adventure' style simulation.

Two of the students who attended, Angelin Chen and Diya Maninathan, shared about their experiences of the day:

"Attending the Ethical Exploration Day was a very enlightening experience, as we were able to meet with numerous like-minded students and engage in complex ethical discussions.

"Personally, I found the group discussions highly insightful, as we were able to debate our moral viewpoints with others and discuss scenarios relevant to modern-day society. It also allowed us to share our individual opinions easily in a small group setting, and collaborate with peers to come to a group consensus about our ethical priorities.

Overall, the day was extremely valuable, and I would love to participate again next year." – Angelin Chen

"I found the Ethical Exploration Day to be quite unique in its content delivery, particularly in the sense that we were able to participate in interactive simulations and make our own decisions.

I enjoyed the last session in which we discussed a hypothetical covid-esque disease outbreak, as hearing the different arguments being presented across the cohort was extremely insightful and provided the opportunity to understand a multitude of perspectives.

I found the excursion's debate-like format to be engaging and entertaining, allowing us to really engage with the experience in its entirety. Overall, I would love to attend again in future years, and highly recommend this experience to anyone considering." – Diya Maninathan

Altogether, as students and staff we were given a holistic coverage of the many aspects of bioethics, with hypothetical situations which extended our understanding of their practical applications.

The day was particularly enjoyable in that we got to engage in complex discussions with like-minded individuals on globally relevant topics, allowing us opportunities to exercise our ethical judgement and see the consequences firsthand. Discussions surrounding the theoretical deconstruction of societal ethical norms were extremely enlightening, encouraging us to build up moral codes on a situational basis.

Overall, the Ethical Exploration Day allowed us a deeper understanding of bioethics, with interactive discussions giving us a unique chance to put our judgement to the test. Thank you to Ms Stella He for accompanying us on the day.

Small group discussions during the day

Ms Priscilla Curran
Dean of Lateral Learning