

Moral Principles: Can College Students Identify the Principles In Moral Stories?

An Honors Thesis (Honors 499)

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Abstract

College students read four Aesop stories and were asked to identify the moral principle in the story. Stories were manipulated for difficulty and familiarity. Information available to students was manipulated by including or not including a list containing definitions of moral principles. Overall, it was found that almost half of the students could successfully identify the moral principles in the four stories. Results indicated that story familiarity helps students identify the moral principle. The list containing definitions of moral principles helped students identify the moral principle for all stories except easy familiar stories. The list of definitions did not help students identify the moral principle in the easy familiar condition. A significant interaction between story difficulty and story familiarity indicated that easy, familiar stories were considered easiest and that difficult, unfamiliar stories were considered most difficult. These and additional results are interpreted to suggest a failing in moral education today and the need for reform in moral education.

Moral Principles: Can College Students Identify the Principles in Moral Stories?

Academic dishonesty is rampant on college campuses across America. Many surveys have demonstrated that over half of American college students participate in some form of academic dishonesty (e.g., Kibler 1992; White 1993). A lack of moral development in today's students is often believed to be the most significant cause. According to William L. Kibler, "much of the research being done on why students cheat has concluded that cheating is a problem of moral development -- that many students have poorly developed value systems" (1992, p.B1). What is causing this lack of moral development? Some researchers who have investigated the problem believe that parents are not effectively teaching their children about morality (Lickona, 1991). Others have demonstrated that American society does not place enough value on morality (e.g., Kibler 1992; Nuss 1988; Haidt, Koller, & Dias 1993). The literature also indicates that the amount of moral education received in schools has decreased (e.g., Lickona 1991; Kibler 1992). Many scholars and citizens are proposing that the schools must respond to the lack of student moral development if there is to be a reduction in the occurrence of academic dishonesty, which will benefit those striving to provide students with a quality education (e.g., Lickona 1991; Kibler 1992).

Moral education must be reformed. Moral development may be improved simply by teaching students about moral principles. If students are able to comprehend moral principles they may have the necessary concepts to proceed with moral development. Applying moral principles is inherent in resolving moral problems (Little 1980). Moral dilemmas require comprehension of many moral principles (Little 1980). Although the acquisition of moral principles does not require formal education, such education enhances knowledge of moral principles. Students may not be knowledgeable about moral principles. Training students to apply moral principles improves decision making in situations that are similar in thematic content (Lockhart 1992), such as moral content.

Understanding moral principles provides a conceptual base that might enhance moral development. Knowledge provided by this base should prevent the use of inferences or guesses to fill in gaps in one's knowledge of moral principles (Leahey & Harris 1989). Inferences can be incorrect and lead to misinterpretation. Poor decisions are often based on misinterpretation. For example, a moral story could be misinterpreted because "written text does not in itself carry meaning; rather, it provides directions for....readers on how to use their own stored knowledge to retrieve and construct the meaning" (Leahey & Harris 1989, p.201). Knowledge of moral principles provides information that reduces the probability of misinterpretation. Education can provide this knowledge.

Most studies on the success of moral education have been done using young children. Disagreement exists over whether children can make significant advances in the comprehension of moral concepts (Jensen & Murray 1978). Some theorists, like Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg, believe that moral comprehension occurs in slow moving stages based on natural cognitive maturation. These theorists believe that direct educational programs will not significantly accelerate moral development because one's level of cognitive maturation may impede moral education (Jensen & Murray 1978). Other researchers, like Jensen and Larm (1970) and Schleifer and Douglas (1973), have discovered that significant results demonstrating improved moral comprehension can be quickly obtained (Jensen & Murray 1978). Even using preschool children, who according to Piaget are not cognitively mature enough to make significant gains quickly, researchers have demonstrated that moral education increases one's level of moral comprehension (Jensen & Murray 1978).

What about moral education for college students? According to Piaget, the final stage and highest level of cognitive development is formal operational thinking. Not everyone reaches this stage (Schickedanz, Schickedanz, Hansen, & Forsyth 1993). By the time one reaches college, however, exposure to moral reasoning and social interactions

are most likely to prevent advancement in moral comprehension, rather than cognitive development (Schickedanz, Schickedanz, Hansen, & Forsyth 1993). Thus, it appears that moral education should increase levels of moral comprehension in college students.

Moral education should utilize students' cognitive and affective abilities. When confronting a moral dilemma, students need knowledge of moral principles, but also need to incorporate empathy. Moral dilemmas have cognitive and affective dimensions (Tappan & Brown 1989). Empathy is associated with behavior consistent with moral principles; "Morality and empathy are paired because moral principles inherently involve fairness, caring for others, and concern for the general welfare" (Schickedanz, Schickedanz, Hansen, & Forsyth 1993). This sentiment is key to moral behavior (Haidt, Koller, & Dias 1993). Theorists provide rationale that moral motivation and behavior can be attributed to comprehension of moral principles (Asendorpf & Nunner-Winkler 1992). Other theorists demonstrate that moral motivation and behavior is attributed to recognizing appropriate emotions (Asendorpf & Nunner-Winkler 1992). Clearly, moral education should better student comprehension of moral principles and empathy.

When educating about moral principles and empathy, what methods should we use? Many people are asking for the revival of moral stories. The importance of moral education is receiving increased support from public and political realms due to dissatisfaction with current educational practices (Tappan & Brown 1989). Those supporting the use of moral stories believe that moral stories communicate both moral principles and empathy. Learning about moral principles does not provide a vehicle for learning about empathy. Incorporating moral stories into moral education curricula provides a mechanism for teaching both moral principles and empathy. According to M. B. Tappan and L. M. Brown, "this new found (that is, newly rediscovered) interest in narrative, especially on the part of social scientists, suggests a growing recognition that narrative provides a very powerful means for understanding human experience" (1989,

p.185). Understanding human experience allows the reader of a moral story to feel empathy.

In the form of a story, narrative also serves to communicate ethics and moral principles (Johnson & Goldman 1987). Religious education often includes stories in their curricula to teach children about moral rules (Johnson & Goldman 1987). Though not originally intended for children, Aesop wrote fables for the purpose of communicating moral rules (Tappan & Brown 1989). Many of these curricula require children to apply the moral rules found in the stories to their own lives and other stories (Johnson & Goldman 1987). A study by D. F. Johnson and S. R. Goldman (1987) demonstrated that children are capable of identifying rules of moral conduct in stories, indicating their usefulness in moral education curricula.

Research to investigate children's comprehension and application of moral principles raises important questions about other age groups. Do most college students understand moral principles? If not, why? Can college students be taught how to apply moral principles? To provide empirical evidence that college students understand and can be taught how to apply moral principles, a manipulation providing some students with a list containing definitions of moral principles is used. It is hypothesized that students given the list of definitions will be more successful in identifying the moral principles in the stories than students without the list. It is believed that this manipulation will demonstrate the ability to teach the application of moral principles to college students.

Would moral stories be beneficial in a curricula designed to teach college students about moral principles? This study hypothesizes that most college students do understand moral principles and that they comprehend them well enough to be able to identify the moral principle in a moral story. Moral stories were used to examine college students ability to comprehend and correctly identify moral principles.

Aesop fables were used in the study to examine identification of moral principles. The stories were manipulated for difficulty and familiarity. It is hypothesized that students will be more successful at identifying the moral principles in stories that are considered easy as opposed to those considered difficult. It is believed that manipulating difficulty will indicate students' capability to discover moral principles within texts varying in level of complexity.

It is also hypothesized that students will be more successful at identifying the moral principles in stories that are familiar to them as compared to those stories that are unfamiliar to them. If a story is familiar to a student, then the student has had previous contact with the story. This previous experience with the story provided the student with an opportunity to identify and comprehend the moral principle in the story. Because of this opportunity, students success with familiar stories is assumed to demonstrate that moral stories can be used to successfully in moral education. Thus, students should be most successful given an easy, familiar story and least successful given a difficult, unfamiliar story.

Method

Subjects

Sixty-eight subjects (35 males, 33 females) obtained from the Psychology 100 Subject Pool at Ball State University participated in the study. Students received 1 credit towards a course requirement for participating.

Design

A 2x2x2x2 factorial design based on difficulty to identify the moral of the story, familiarity with the story, presence or absence of moral definitions, and sex of subject was employed. Subjects age and GPA were also taken. Year in school was taken, but disregarded.

Procedure

The booklet of stories. Booklets containing four Aesop stories were compiled (see Appendix). Story selection was based on level of difficulty and familiarity as previously rated by faculty, advanced students in an academic dishonesty seminar, and a focus group obtained from the Psychology 100 Subject Pool at Ball State University. Story difficulty ratings were based on readability and clarity of the story's moral principle. Story familiarity ratings were based on whether or not students have had contact with the story, either in story form or in another form, such as a TV skit. Two familiar stories, one easy ("The Boy who Cried Wolf") and one difficult ("The Hare and the Tortoise"), and two unfamiliar stories, one easy ("The Ant and the Dove") and one difficult ("The Bear and the Travelers"), were included.

A list containing definitions of moral principles was compiled (see Appendix). This list consists of common and near-universal moral principles such as responsibility, honesty, and loyalty. Definitions were compiled using Random House Webster's College Dictionary (1991) and definitions previously compiled for a seminar (Integrity and Dishonesty in the Academy) taught by Dr. Patricia Keith-Spiegel at Ball State University (Spring, 1995). Half of the booklets contain the definitions on the first page. Subjects were read the instructions on the first page of the booklet and informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. After filling out preliminary information (sex, GPA, age, year in school), students read the list of definitions and/or the four stories. Each story was followed by three questions (dependent measures) described below. Upon completion, students placed the booklets upside down in a pile. Subjects were thanked and verbally debriefed.

Dependent measures. One dependent measure was employed, and two manipulation checks were employed. In the dependent measure, subjects were asked to answer the following question in one to three sentences: What is the moral principle of the story? Correct answers were predetermined, being based on moral statements at the

end of each Aesop story found in The Aesop for Children (1993), which were left out in the booklet, and the compiled list of moral definitions. Incorrect responses were scored zero and correct responses scored one. For the manipulation check dealing with story difficulty, subjects were asked to fill in the blank for the following statement: The meaning of the story is _____ to understand. Subjects chose between easy, scored one, medium, scored two, and difficult, scored three, on a three point scale. For the manipulation check dealing with story familiarity, subjects were asked to answer the following question, choosing between an answer of yes or no: Have you had contact with this tale before? An answer of no was scored a zero and an answer of yes scored a one.

Results

Age, sex, and GPA of subjects were reported by subjects. Correlation coefficients demonstrate that these data did not significantly correlate with students ability to identify moral principles. Story difficulty also did not have a significant effect on students ability to identify moral principles.

Subjects Ratings of Story Familiarity

One dependent measure dealt with subjects familiarity with the stories. An analysis of Variance (ANOVA) performed on these data yielded a significant main effect for stories manipulated for familiarity, $F(1,64) = 418.90$, $p < .001$, (see table 2).

Insert Table 2 about here

Consistent with earlier findings, this interaction serves as a manipulation check demonstrating that stories manipulated as familiar were perceived as familiar by 96% of subjects and stories manipulated as unfamiliar were perceived as unfamiliar by 85% of subjects.

Subjects Ratings of Story Difficulty

An ANOVA was performed on the data for perceived story difficulty as a dependent variable. This analysis yielded a main effect for stories manipulated for difficulty, $F(1,64) = 53.80$, $p < .001$, (see Table 3). Consistent with earlier findings, this interaction serves as a manipulation check demonstrating that stories manipulated as difficult were perceived as difficult ($M = 1.52$) and stories manipulated as easy were perceived as easy ($M = 1.14$).

Second, this analysis yielded a significant main effect for story familiarity, $F(1,64) = 35.31$, $p < .001$. This effect reflected the fact that unfamiliar stories were perceived as more difficult ($M = 1.49$) than familiar stories ($M = 1.17$).

This analysis also yielded a significant interaction between story familiarity and story difficulty, $F(1,64) = 11.47$, $p < .001$, (see Table 3). This effect reflected the fact that subjects perceived easy familiar stories as least difficult ($M = 1.07$), easy unfamiliar ($M = 1.21$) and difficult familiar ($M = 1.26$) stories as approximately equal, and difficult unfamiliar stories as most difficult ($M = 1.76$). These results can be seen in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 and Table 3 about here

Subjects Identification of Moral Principles

An ANOVA was performed on the data for identification of moral principles as a dependent variable. This analysis yielded a significant main effect for story familiarity, $F(1, 64) = 32.88$, $p < .001$, (see Table 4).

Insert Table 4 about here

This effect reflects the fact that 47.0% of subjects correctly identified the moral principle in familiar stories whereas only 15.4% of subjects correctly identified the moral principle in unfamiliar stories.

This analysis also yielded a significant main effect for the inclusion of moral principle definitions, $F(1,64) = 12.17, p < .001$, (see Table 4). Subjects who received the definitions identified the moral principles in the stories more often, 40.9% of the time, and subjects who did not receive the definitions identified the moral principles in the stories less often, 22.0% of the time.

This analysis revealed a near significant effect between inclusion of moral principle definitions, story familiarity, and story difficulty, $F(1,64) = 5.89, p < .02$, (see Table 4). Subjects in the inclusion of moral principle definitions condition identified the moral principles in the stories more often with every story except for the easy familiar story. This interaction is illustrated in Figure 1 which presents the percentages for correct moral principle identification.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Discussion

This study sought to provide empirical evidence that most college students understand moral principles and that they comprehend them well enough to be able to identify the moral principle in a moral story. This study was also designed to provide evidence about college students' capabilities to learn and apply moral principles.

It was predicted that students would be more successful in identifying the moral principles in easy stories as opposed to difficult stories. This manipulation had no significant effect, indicating that students' perception of moral principles is related to factors other than story difficulty. Because student judges were used to determine story difficulty, it may be that rather than measuring story difficulty, another factor was

measured making the difficulty manipulation invalid. Perhaps it actually measured student confidence in identifying the story's moral principle rather than story difficulty.

It was predicted that students would be more successful at identifying the moral principles in familiar moral stories as opposed to unfamiliar stories. This manipulation had a significant effect in the predicted direction. Because familiarity improves moral principle identification, it appears that repetition may enhance moral comprehension. It may also indicate that students can more readily apply moral concepts to familiar moral situations and have more difficulty applying moral concepts to unfamiliar moral situations. Perhaps success with familiar stories demonstrates that moral education has been successful in the past. Maybe it says something about the nature of the stories themselves. For example, they might be familiar because they are more memorable or because they express moral principles more eloquently or clearly than other stories, making them more popular. Familiar stories may also be more applicable to modern American culture.

It was predicted that students receiving a list of moral principles would be more successful at identifying the moral principles in moral stories than those students who did not receive the definitions. This manipulation had a significant effect in the predicted direction. This important finding indicates that students can apply moral concepts to moral situations when they have more information available to them.

The analysis also produced a near significant result for an interaction among story difficulty, story familiarity, and the list of moral principle definitions manipulation. The list of moral principle definitions improved student performance on identifying the moral principles in all situations except the easy familiar story condition. This may indicate that students perceive these stories as easy, and therefore, do not find it necessary to reexamine the story for the moral principle. When given the list of moral principle definitions, however, students were more successful on the difficult familiar story as compared to the easy familiar story. This might indicate that even those students who

associated the incorrect moral principle with the easy, familiar story were confident in their incorrect answer. It might also indicate that these stories are so familiar that students become ridged about whatever meaning they have given to the story in the past.

The present study produced some very significant effects that might be generalizable to most college students, although one caution concerning generalization is offered. The students in the study participated in the study for class credit and this study was one of the last available opportunities for this credit before the deadline. Thus, this subject sample may have contained more procrastinators or apathetic students than an average college sample.

Another problem with this study may be that the selected stories are too ambiguous in terms of the communication of the moral principle in the story. For example, "The Hare and the Tortoise's" moral principle is perseverance. Many students, however, responded with answers such as, "do not underestimate your opponent." Though this answer might infer perseverance, it is not close enough to be judged a correct response. Perhaps ambiguity promotes "cultural and social class differences" that "profoundly affect how a particular story is read and understood" (Tappan & Brown 1989, p.196). A student's cultural background or participation in an activity like athletics might influence their interpretation of moral stories. These confounding variables could prevent success on the moral identification measure.

The results of this study indicate areas for future research. Because less than half of the students could correctly identify the moral principles contained in the moral stories in each manipulation, it would be important to research the abilities of high school and middle school students to discover how well these students identify moral principles. Further research might explore a more thorough method of teaching moral principles to the experimental group that goes beyond a list of definitions.

The results of this study indicate a grave deficiency in moral principle comprehension of college students. So where does this problem of comprehension come

from? The investigation becomes very confusing when presented with the fact that "nearly all children from very early on adequately understand the intrinsic validity of moral rules" (Asendorpf & Nunner-Winkler 1992, p.1223). How can children find intrinsic validity in moral rules while college students fail to comprehend and recognize moral principles? It seems that an understanding of moral principles is necessary to comprehend their intrinsic validity. The problem of immoral student behavior does not reflect student belief in the validity of moral rules. This would indicate that, between elementary school and college, students no longer find validity in moral rules. Perhaps students find validity in moral rules, but interference causes a discrepancy between students' immoral behavior and students' belief that moral rules are valid. This change in student attitude or discrepancy in behavior could be influenced by "teachers" existing outside of school.

The media is one of the most influential "teachers" in the American environment. Those in the media have not set a good example. As Kibler (1992) stated, "The media have been filled in recent years with examples of 'cheating' in virtually every area of life, from government to business to the military to religion" (p.B1). This obviously erodes the belief that authority figures are upstanding models of moral integrity (Kibler 1992). One reason these authority figures are so influential might be that American culture is in a selfish period of a cultural cycle.

This selfish period is called a period of individual ascendancy (Nuss 1988). Cultures fluctuate between periods of community ascendancy and individual ascendancy. According to Nuss, "Community ascendancy is characterized by a future orientation, asceticism, concern for responsibility, and a duty to others. In contrast, individual ascendancy is characterized by a present orientation, hedonism, a concern for rights, and a duty to self" (1988, p.4). Moral principles often interfere with the more self centered characteristics of individual ascendancy. Moral principles would obviously be less important in these periods.

Not only is America in a period of individual ascendancy, Americans, especially college students, are in a period of "permissiveness" (Haidt, Koller, & Dias 1993, p.613) that also lessens the extent to which moral principles are applied to themselves and others. Those who take a permissive stance base moral judgments on appraisals of harm to others (Haidt, Koller, & Dias 1993). Moral principles, like benevolence, might not mean anything to someone who is permissive. Benevolence requires action based on altruistic motives. If morality is based on preventing harm to others, only action preventing harm is necessary. Thus, altruistic actions are not considered necessary. Altruistic actions may not be considered beneficial. Expending time and energy to act altruistically may not provide enough reward. Busy college students may often feel this way. Perhaps college students are the least likely to display knowledge of and concern for moral principles.

Yet another reason that college students do not understand moral concepts is because of their basis for distinguishing between moral rules and "social-conventional" (Weston & Turiel 1980, p.614) rules. College students are most likely to consider what most of the population considers moral rules as social-conventional rules. Thus, many moral principles become etiquette or optional.

Unfortunately, most children get very little moral education from their parents (Lickona 1991). This is perhaps the most damaging causes of poor moral development in college students today. So, who should pick up the slack? The schools. Thomas Lickona agrees, "the school's role as moral educator becomes even more vital at a time when millions of children get little moral teaching from their parents" (1991, p.20).

As noted earlier, an important tool in moral education is the moral story. Mark B. Tappan and Lyn M. Brown agree that "providing students with the opportunity to engage the moral stories in great works of literature is a very important component of any overall moral education program" (1989, p.194). These stories assert authority by taking a moral

stance that provides legitimacy to the stories. Thus, moral stories can provide a certain authority that strengthens moral education (Tappan & Brown 1989).

Teaching moral values in school is actually inevitable. According to Lickona, "there is no such thing as value-free education" (1991). The way faculty treat each other and their treatment of students shall ideally provide students with models of moral behavior. Discussions with moral implications take place in the class room due to student questions based on their lives, current events, or even the curricula. In fact, parents, education groups, and the government all support teaching moral principles in school (Lickona, 1991).

One of the problems in schools today, however, is that schools are not prescribing the correct cure for this lack of moral comprehension. This is made evident by the severe problem of academic dishonesty. Schools are treating academic dishonesty as a behavioral issue instead of a moral issue (Kibler 1992).

Thus, the need for moral education is clear. Not only will it be effective in preventing the academic dishonesty that is rampant on campuses today, but it will be effective in creating a society that is perhaps more community based than individual based. This will serve all humanity.

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Appendix

Your age _____

Your sex _____

Year in college _____

Your GPA _____

Please read the following definitions and short moral stories carefully and answer the questions pertaining to the preceding material.

Moral principle -- "Principles concerned with.....right conduct or the distinction between right or wrong" (Random House Webster's College Dictionary, 1991) often developing from, but not limited to, individuals, law, and/or religion (White, 1988).

Examples of moral principles

Responsibility -- dependable, accountable for one's actions

Compassion -- considerate, kind, sharing, charitable, unselfish

Benevolence -- doing good because it is the right thing to do

Honesty -- truthful, strait forward, sincere, candid

Perseverance -- putting out one's best effort, persistent, diligent

Excellence -- doing one's best, pride in one's work, purposeful, motivated

Cooperation -- being a team player, willing to compromise

Loyalty -- faithful, valuing relationships, fair, making the effort to be a friend

Respect -- not interfering with others rights, freedoms, autonomy, property, welfare

Patience -- knowing good outcomes take time, ability to delay gratification, not impulsive

Courage -- will do what is right despite adversity

The Bear and the Travelers

Two men were traveling in company through a forest, when, all at once, a huge bear crashed out of the brush near them. One of the men, thinking of his own safety, climbed into a tree. The other, unable to fight the savage beast alone, threw himself on the ground and lay still, as if he were dead. He had heard that a bear will not touch a dead body. It must have been true, for the bear snuffed at the man's head a while, and then, seeming to be satisfied that he was dead, walked away.

What is the moral principle of the story? (please answer in 1-3 sentences)

The meaning of this story is _____ to understand. (circle one)

Easy

Medium

Difficult

Have you had contact with this story or tale before? (circle one)

Yes

No

The Hare and the Tortoise

A hare was making fun of the tortoise one day for being slow. "Do you ever get anywhere?" asked the hare with a mocking laugh. "Yes," replied the tortoise, "and I get there sooner than you think. I'll run you a race and prove it." The hare was much amused at the idea of running a race with the tortoise, but for the fun of the thing he agreed. So the fox, who consented to act as judge, marked the distance and started the runners off. The hare was soon far out of sight, and to make the tortoise feel deeply how ridiculous it was for him to try a race with a hare, he lay down beside the course to take a nap until the tortoise could catch up. The tortoise meanwhile kept going slowly but steadily, and, after a time, passed the place where the hare was sleeping. But the hare slept on very peacefully; and when at last he did wake up, the tortoise was near the goal. The hare now ran his swiftest, but he could not overtake the tortoise in time.

What is the moral principle of the story? (please answer in 1-3 sentences)

The meaning of this story is _____ to understand. (circle one)

Easy

Medium

Difficult

Have you had contact with this story or tale before? (circle one)

Yes

No

The Boy who Cried Wolf

There once was a shepherd who kept his flock at a little distance from the village. Once he thought he would play a trick on the villagers and have some fun at their expense. So he ran toward the village crying, "Wolf! Wolf! Come and help! The wolves are at my lambs!" The kind villagers left their work and ran to the field to help him. But when they got there the boy laughed at them for their pains; there was no wolf there. Still another day the boy tried the same trick, and the villagers came running to help and were laughed at again. Then one day a wolf did break into the field and began killing the lambs. In great fright, the boy ran back for help. "Wolf! Wolf!" he screamed. "There is a wolf in the flock! Help!" The villagers heard him, but they thought it was another mean trick; no one paid the least attention, or went near him. And the shepherd boy lost all his sheep.

What is the moral principle of the story? (please answer in 1-3 sentences)

The meaning of this story is _____ to understand. (circle one)

Easy

Medium

Difficult

Have you had contact with this tale before? (circle one)

Yes

No

The Ant and the Dove

A dove saw an Ant fall into a brook. The ant struggled in vain to reach the bank, and in pity, the dove dropped a blade of straw close by it. Clinging to the straw like a shipwrecked sailor to a broken spar, the ant floated safely to the shore. Soon after, the ant saw a man getting ready to kill the dove with a stone. But just as he cast the stone, the ant stung him in the heel, so that the pain made him miss his aim, and the startled dove flew to safety in a distant wood.

What is the moral principle of the story? (please answer in 1-3 sentences)

The meaning of this story is _____ to understand. (circle one)

Easy

Medium

Difficult

Have you had contact with this story or tale before? (circle one)

Yes

No

Author Notes

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Table 1

Mean Ratings of Story Difficulty and Story Familiarity

	Familiar	Unfamiliar	x
Difficult	1.26	1.76	1.52
Easy	1.07	1.21	1.14
x	1.17	1.49	

Table 2
Summary of Two-Way ANOVA with Familiarity as the Dependent Variable

Source	SS	df	MS	F	P
Sex (S)	.05	1	.05	<1	
List (L)	.05	1	.05	<1	
S x L	.02	1	.02	<1	
Error	6.67	64	.10		
Familiarity (F)	44.56	1	44.56	418.9	<.001
S x F	.00	1	.00	<1	
L x F	.19	1	.19	1.78	
S x L x F	.01	1	.01	<1	
Error	6.81	64	.11		
Difficulty (D)	.12	1	.12	1.90	
S x D	.00	1	.00	<1	
L x D	.23	1	.23	3.55	
S x L x D	.02	1	.02	<1	
Error	4.12	64	.06		
F x D	.12	1	.12	1.90	
S x F x D	.00	1	.00	<1	
L x F x D	.23	1	.23	3.55	
S x L x F x D	.02	1	.02	<1	
Error	4.12	64	.06		

Table 3
Summary of Two-Way ANOVA with Difficulty as the Dependent Variable

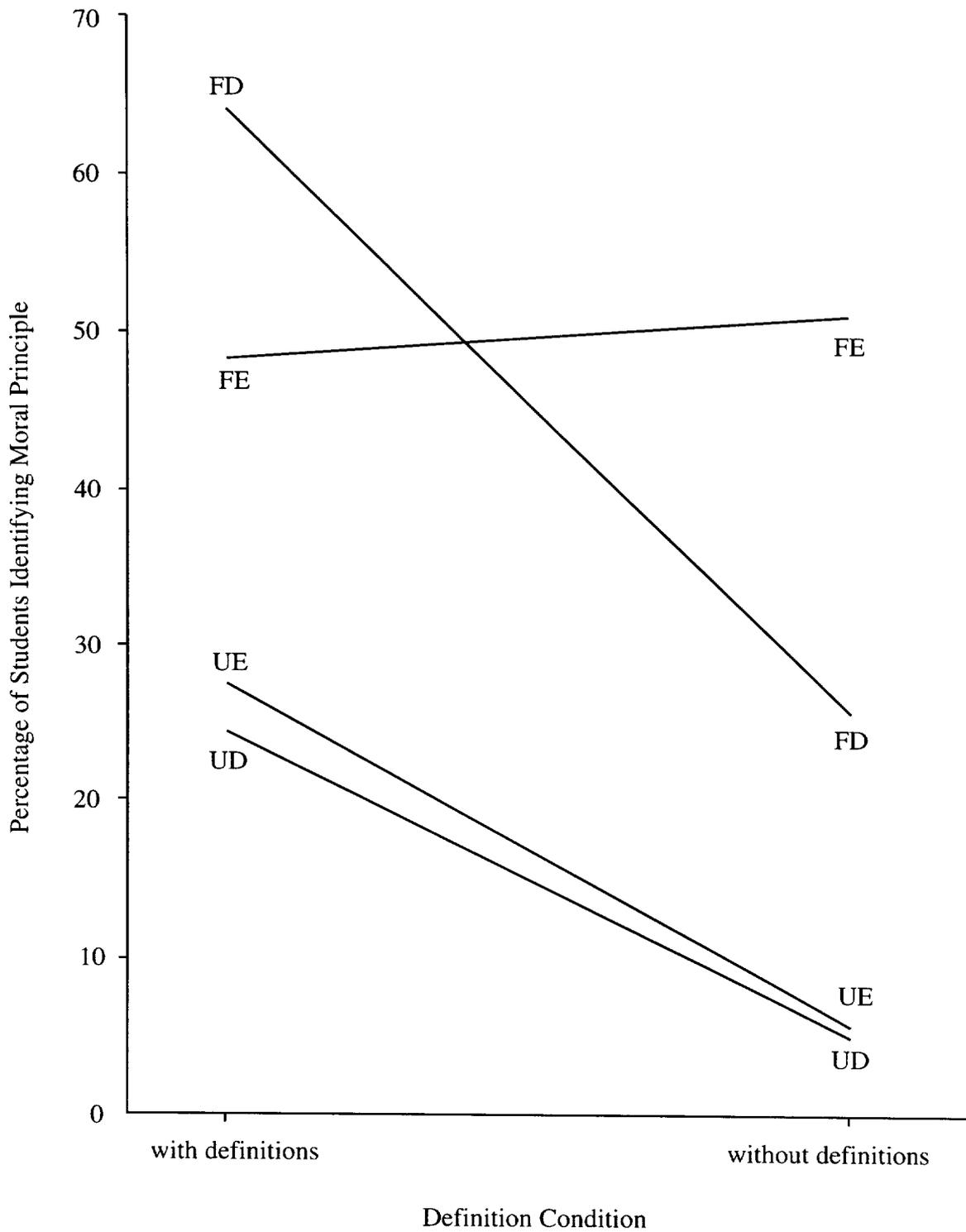
Source	SS	df	MS	F	P
Sex (S)	.20	1	.20	<1	
List (L)	.41	1	.41	1.28	
S x L	.10	1	.10	<1	
Error	20.42	64	.32		
Familiarity (F)	6.73	1	6.73	35.31	<.001
S x F	.06	1	.06	<1	
L x F	.01	1	.01	<1	
S x L x F	.19	1	.19	1.00	
Error	12.20	64	.19		
Difficulty (D)	9.40	1	9.40	53.80	<.001
S x D	.07	1	.07	<1	
L x D	1.15	1	1.15	6.54	
S x L x D	.20	1	.20	1.14	
Error	11.29	64	.18		
F x D	2.30	1	2.30	11.47	.001
S x F x D	.02	1	.02	<1	
L x F x D	.05	1	.05	<1	
S x L x F x D	.03	1	.03	<1	
Error	12.85	64	.20		

Table 4
Summary of Two-Way ANOVA with Moral Identification as the Dependent Variable

Source	SS	df	MS	F	P
Sex (S)	.07	1	.07	<1	
List (L)	2.41	1	2.41	12.17	.001
S x L	.05	1	.05	<1	
Error	12.67	64	.20		
Familiarity (F)	6.66	1	6.66	32.88	<.001
S x F	.54	1	.54	2.65	
L x F	.02	1	.02	<1	
S x L x F	.48	1	.48	2.36	
Error	12.96	64	.20		
Difficulty (D)	.08	1	.08	<1	
S x D	.00	1	.00	<1	
L x D	.63	1	.63	3.46	
S x L x D	.32	1	.32	1.76	
Error	11.72	64	.18		
F x D	.03	1	.03	<1	
S x F x D	.04	1	.04	<1	
L x F x D	.82	1	.82	5.89	.02
S x L x F x D	.00	1	.00	<1	
Error	8.86	64	.14		

Figure Caption

Figure 1. Percentage of students identifying the moral principle as a function of story difficulty, story familiarity, and moral definition manipulation.



Note U = unfamiliar story; F = familiar story; D = difficult story; E = easy story.