Foundations preconference case study

Kohlberg: Heinz Dilemma

A woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging ten times what the drug cost him to produce. He paid $200 for the radium and charged $2,000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about $1,000, which is half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said, "No, I discovered the drug and I need to make money from it." So Heinz got desperate and broke into the man's store to steal the drug for his wife. Should Heinz have broken into the store to steal the drug for his wife? Why or why not?
Vera Konn Fused is a sophomore at your institution. She graduated high school about in the middle of her class, 85 out of 175. While her grades were not the best in math and science, she was very active in extracurricular activities. She was in drama, a cheerleader and played softball. She was co-captain of softball and cheerleading and liked being a leader in those sports. She played Peter in “Peter Pan” and had so much fun doing that that she really considered acting school. Vera also had a part time job working for her mother at the insurance company that her family owns.

In her first semester, Vera let her shyness get the best of her and while her grades were ok, she didn’t do much else. At the urging of her Mom and her guidance counselor, she chose Business Administration as a major. She thought it was a good idea too. Her mom wanted her to run the business when she got out and she would need the knowledge to do so. Besides, she said to you, you can do anything with a business degree.

Her best grades were in Finite Math, Business Computer Applications and Principles of Marketing, which she got two A’s and a B respectively. Even though her grades were good, she really considered not coming back because she was bored. She found accounting very tough.

In the second semester, she played more intramurals and met more people. She liked college much more but her grades did slip a bit. She actually failed Managerial Accounting. She loved the intramurals and actually performed in a community theater production. She really liked the people in the play and realized that she missed that atmosphere a lot.

Over the summer, she and her family talked about what she needed to do. She promised her family that she would look into her major and that she was really doing the right thing. She also made a goal of trying out for softball and auditioning for a play.

When she got back to campus, she talked with her advisor and she took the Choices tests. She came out to be an SAE. Some of the jobs seemed to fit but not all of them. Now she is not sure if she should stay as a business major or look into other possibilities.

She is concerned with the job prospects of any career she may go into as well. This adds to her stress as college is very expensive. Her mother has called and set up an appointment for the three of you to meet.
Dorece

Dorece is a 21-year-old African American woman who is a student at a major urban university on the East Coast. She was referred to career counseling by her academic adviser because she had not yet declared a major despite accumulating enough credits to be considered a junior. Dorece presents herself as quite self-assured yet seems unnerved by the prospect of making a decision. She comes to counseling each week with a different idea of what she might choose, which she states with considerable enthusiasm. However; she does not complete the tasks assigned by her counselor, such as investigating the requirements of the major or what the job might entail, nor does her enthusiasm carry into the following week.

Dorece is the youngest child of four and grew up in an upper-middle-class home in suburban Washington D.C. Her father is an advertising manager for a radio station, and her mother is a government attorney. Dorece attended an exclusive all-girls’ private high school, where she excelled in all her courses and graduated with a 3.8 grade point average. She enjoyed choir, French club, and the sailing club. Her older siblings have successfully completed graduate or professional degrees and are working in the Washington, D.C., area.

When she entered college, Dorece was encouraged by her parents to not choose a major too hastily but, rather, to explore various opportunities before she settled on the “right choice.” She initially enrolled in standard freshman year courses and did well in all of them. She particularly enjoyed her English classes and found that she appreciated the challenge of creative writing. Despite this, however, she did not declare English as a major because her father expressed concern about what he could “do” with a degree in English. After rejecting English as a major, she experienced similar concerns with other majors and soon found herself ruling out most of the possibilities. She has considered becoming a broadcast journalist, because many have told her that she her good looks and presentation style would serve her well in that field. She has considered nursing, because she enjoys caring for others and has considered teaching for the same reason. Her sisters, however, were horrified when she mentioned these possibilities, claiming that she would disgrace the family if she entered such a gender-stereotypic occupation. She continued to search for the “right choice” for a major.

Dorece is in a very serious relationship with an African American man who is attending graduate school at the same university. He is completing his doctorate in political science and has some aspirations to a political career; if that is not possible, he would like an academic career. He and Dorece have discussed her lack of decision making; he thinks she should become an English major. He also has expressed concern that it may be detrimental to his future political career if she were to enter broadcast journalism.

Hi! My name is Jenna, and I’m 17 years old. I’m starting my senior year of high school and starting to think about what I want to do about a career. Right now, all I feel is confused about what I want to do with my life. You see, all my life I’ve been the “brain” of the school. I’ve never thought that I was much smarter than anyone else. I just work harder and get lucky with my studies. However, because I do pretty well in all my classes, people expect me to do something important like be a surgeon or a great writer or something. However, no one seems to have any advice on which career I should pursue.

My parents are pretty supportive. They tell me I can do whatever I want to pursue my dreams. This feels good, but it doesn’t help me make any decisions. My dad’s a lawyer and my mom’s a nurse, so these are pretty much the only two careers I know much about. Some of the things that I’ve mentioned to them, like law school or environmental science, they don’t seem to think are very good ideas. My mom says that being a lawyer would be really stressful and hard to balance with having kids. Because I want to be able to “do it all,” I’d like to try to find a career that allows me to be flexible with family.

My dad doesn’t think that science is my strong point; he’d rather see me become a professor in something like history. I like history, but science seems like it might be more practical to me. Science classes always make me a little leery anyway. I mean, I always do really well in them, but my teachers don’t seem to say much to me about pursuing careers that relate to the classes. I find the material difficult, too, but actually I like that. It’s kind of challenging. Sometimes, I think science is a bad idea because it’s so cold—it doesn’t really have to do with helping people. I think it would be good for me to do something that tries to help people.

Then sometimes I think that I just feel like an outsider in science: classes—all of my science teachers have been male and my classes seem filled with guys (which I don’t always mind!). I asked my physics teacher about engineering, and he told me I’d probably prefer something more creative. I guess he’s probably right. Sometimes, I wonder whether or not I’m really smart enough to do a science career. If I were really good at science, wouldn’t my teachers tell me? Like I said before, I’m not always sure that I’m the genius everyone thinks I am. At times, I wonder if I have been fooling everyone. My friends seem to think I should major in something like English or history. I love to read and do well in classes like that. I’m not sure what I’d do with a degree like that, though. Sometimes, it seems like an easy way out.

Another thing that I worry about with some of the careers I’m looking at is how long I’ll have to be school. I mean, say I go to law school—that’s another 3 years on top of college! What if I’m in a relationship by then? Will my boyfriend be willing to take a backseat to my career? The way I see it, guys say they’re open minded, but few are willing to let the woman in the relationship be smarter or make more money. Will I be ruining my chances of ever getting married if I pursue something like law or medicine?

I’m applying to colleges now, and I feel as if I have to make a decision soon about what I want to do. The possibilities seem endless to me in some ways. I mean, I know I could do just about anything I put my mind to. On the other hand, I can’t think of anything I know I absolutely want to do. And that’s really scary.