



California Science Center
CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR
2000 PROJECT SUMMARY

Your Name (List all student names if multiple authors.) Vanessa M. Danziger	Science Fair Use Only
Project Title (Limit: 120 characters. Those beyond 120 will be ignored. See pg. 9) WHAT WOULD YOU DO?: Are There Differences in Ethical Reasoning between Girls and Boys?	J1706
	Division J Junior (6-8) J Senior (9-12)
Preferred Category (See page 5 for descriptions.) 17 - Social Sciences (Junior Division Only)	
Abstract (Include Objective, Methods, Results, Conclusion. See samples on page 14.) Use no attachments. Only text inside these boxes will be used for category assignment or given to your judges. Objective: My project analyzes whether girls and boys differ in the reasons that they give for choosing an action in response to an ethical problem. Materials and Methods: I obtained agreement from 22 sixth grade students (11 girls and 11 boys) to complete a questionnaire. On it they selected a reason for choosing a response to each of ten realistic ethical problems. I developed these ten problems and the three alternative reasons for choice of action, based on: (1) a caring orientation; (2) a justice orientation; and (3) a self-orientation. Each student completed the questionnaire and was given a candy bar as "payment" for participation. The questionnaire data were decoded and then analyzed, and graphs were created using a computer with the Excel program. Results: I hypothesized that the girls would tend to choose reasons that are based on caring about other people and that the boys would tend to choose reasons that are more based on what is in their self-interest. On six of the ten ethical problems, the largest number of girls selected the "caring" response , followed by two problems with self-oriented responses being most frequent and two with justice-based responses. However, the boys selected the "justice" response most frequently on seven of the ten problems; self-oriented answers were most common twice and caring answers only once. Actually, self-oriented answers were the most common last (worst) choice of both girls and boys on the majority of the problems. Conclusions: In my experiment, there were definite differences between the girls and boys on the reasons given for taking an action on an ethical dilemma. As my background research suggested, girls are especially oriented to considering how their actions affect other people ("caring"). The boys often based their first choices on following rules ("justice") and they were not really much more self-oriented than the girls.	
Summary Statement (In one sentence, state what your project is about.) My study determines that there is a difference between (a sample of sixth grade) girls and boys on the reasons that they give for their actions in difficult ethical situations.	
Help Received in Doing Project (e.g. Mother helped type report; Neighbor helped wire board; Used lab equipment at university X under the supervision of Dr. Y; Participant in NSF Young Scholars Program) See Display Regulation #8 on page 4. My parents helped me find research sources and brainstormed with me on questions. My classmates were subjects in the study.	