

Final Project – Case 11: Parental Controls

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Question

When, if ever, is it morally permissible to ban a book from a school or public library?

Reframing Technique – Premortem Analysis

The Structured Analytical Technique known as Premortem Analysis is a Reframing technique that is generally used before the finalization of an analysis or decision to assess how a certain judgement or decision could go horribly (Schulte, 2023). This technique is also used to reduce the risk of surprise or potential consequence after the final analysis is completed (Schulte, 2023). The process used to perform the technique starts talking in a group and setting up a future scenario where our decision to ban a book has been made and something has gone wrong causing a negative outcome, what is it? The next step in the process is to ask the group to create a list for each of them to identify negative outcomes or consequences of the book ban proposed in the analysis question (Schulte, 2023). After that, we wrote our ideas on a white board in a round-robin fashion and asked questions about the ideas along with what the best course of action is to avoid these consequences or negative outcomes (Schulte, 2023). There were several additional benefits from using this technique such as it helped identify potential consequences of a book ban, it provides an extensive moral evaluation of the implications of the decision, and it promotes a more in-depth consideration of the decision's impact. When we were discussing the technique and possible side effects, I learned considerably more about why the decision could be negative. This included ideas such as limiting diverse perspectives and ideas to the public, negatively impacts critical thinking ability, suppresses freedom of expression and censorship, and finally, most banned books are related to marginalized communities such as LGBTQ+.

Furthermore, this raises an ethical question as well about restricting certain information and knowledge.

Diagnostic Technique – Argument Mapping

Argument Mapping is a Diagnostic Technique that aims to test the resolve of a singular hypothesis by using logical reasoning (Schulte, 2023). This is done by separating the hypothesis and evidence to communicate the reasoning behind the initial conclusion. To perform this technique, it starts with identifying the main arguments by both sides, in this case, supporters and critics of book bans (Schulte, 2023). Then, an argument map is created which provides a visual representation between both sides of the argument. Finally, look at the argument map and analyze each argument along with the reasoning, evidence, and potential issues with each one. Argument Mapping is useful because it provides an overview of different perspectives and arguments about a topic in both a positive and negative light (Schulte, 2023). This can help identify inconsistencies in the reasoning behind certain arguments. This in turn helps develop a more structured evaluation of each argument. This case and technique allowed me to explore more options and insight related to book bans. These included items of concern such as, how book bans can limit freedom of expression and censorship, the role that schools play in shaping a student's views, discussing how certain books may negatively impact vulnerable students as well as their safety, and especially the emphasis on parental control over their child's education.

Explorative Technique – Simple Brainstorming

Simple Brainstorming is an Explorative Technique that involves an individual process used to generate new ideas and concepts (Schulte, 2023). This allows an individual or group to have more ideas and perspectives than before, thus broadening the overall perspective on the topic (Schulte, 2023). To perform this technique, it starts with an individual generating a list of ideas, factors, and considerations related to the topic, in this case, the morality considered with book bans in a school or public library. It should then be encouraged to let ideas flow in a diverse thinking environment to prevent judgement from forming. Finally, these new perspectives should be looked at and analyzed including potential consequences as well as the ethical relations to the decision (Schulte, 2023). The benefits of using this technique allow for new creative thinking to explore ideas from different angles, allows to explore a wide range of viewpoints to expand perspective, and to have a better comprehensive analysis of the topic question (Schulte, 2023). Using this technique allowed me to learn more about the case such as the role of education and its boundaries, the potential risks with certain books as well as ways to talk about them without banning them, as well as individual rights and freedoms.

Foresight Technique – Simple Scenarios

Simple Scenarios is a Foresight Technique that uses a brainstorming progression to generate a list of new scenarios by manipulating the strengths of key drivers (Schulte, 2023). This technique starts with imagining and describing different future scenarios related to whether to ban books, or to not ban books (Schulte, 2023). Then, these scenarios should be assessed such as potential consequences and impacts of each scenario with either a plus or minus based on if it

has a positive impact, or a negative impact (Schulte, 2023). Finally, consider the moral implications as well as if banning books has more pluses or minuses and in turn, if it has a positive impact or negative impact overall (Schulte, 2023). Simple Scenarios provides certain benefits such as helping anticipate long-term effects and ethical implications of book bans. An additional benefit includes an in-depth evaluation of the moral action of the decision. This technique allowed me to learn more about the case including the moral and ethical implications. This case made me think of the long-term effects towards students on diversity and inclusivity regarding the LGBTQ+ as well as racial minorities. Furthermore, this technique allowed me to learn about the trade-offs between respecting parental rights and promoting a societal norm.

Summary

Using these four Structured Analytical Techniques, my conclusion is that in most cases books should not be banned. This could vary case to case though and is not a definite conclusion. However, books should not be banned simply for portraying the LGBTQ+ or racial minorities. The SATs allowed me to further investigate and analyze this question in various ways. Premortem Analysis allowed me to imagine the future scenario of a book ban and the negative consequences of it. Argument Mapping allowed me to look at both sides of the book ban and look at the arguments for both sides providing a more even opinion. Simple Brainstorming encouraged looking at different perspectives such as the student's intellectual growth and critical thinking skills. Finally, Simple Scenarios looks at the potential consequences and trade-offs related to each decision as well as the moral and ethical debate on the book ban. These techniques provided me with a much more in-depth approach to the question along with more ideas and perspectives.

References

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