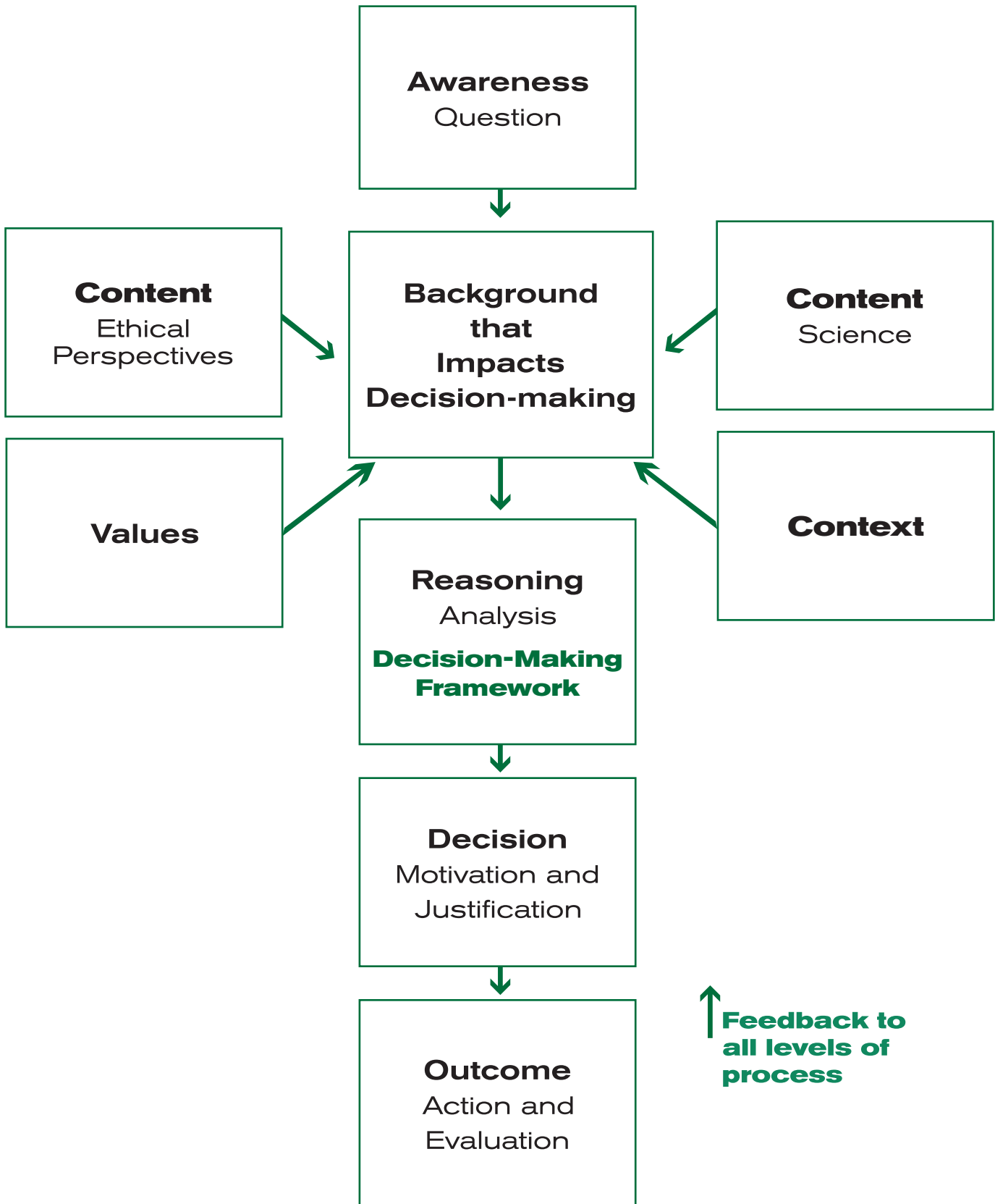


The Process of Ethical Inquiry



The Process of Ethical Inquiry Flow Chart provides a visual representation of the steps involved in analyzing and responding to an ethical issue related to science. The following components are part of the sequence diagrammed:

1. Awareness: Questioning

SENSITIVITY: Being able to recognize the issues and frame the question. Moral analysis begins when there is confusion about competing alternatives for action, when values of stakeholders conflict, and when none of the alternatives are entirely satisfactory for resolving the dilemma.

2. Background: Ethical Perspectives and Values

Many elements influence the background that goes into decision-making. These include:

Science Content – presented in classroom and/or researched by students.

Ethical Content - presented in classroom (discussion of perspectives and theories) and/or researched by students.

The Ethics Background Summary for students presented in this section provides background information on ethical content.

Context - the cultural, legal, social, historical context

Values - the values brought by the students themselves, based on family values, religious values, cultural values, etc. Because values differ for each student, each student will bring their own perspectives and ideas into the process.

3. Reasoning: Using Frameworks and Critical Thinking Tools

JUDGMENT: The student makes a judgment about what course of action is morally right (or fair, or just, or good), thus prescribing a potential course of action regarding what ought to be done.

The student analyzes the situation and takes a logical and critical approach to reasoning through the problem.

Decision-Making Frameworks are useful in helping to structure student thinking about a problem.

4. Decision: Motivation and Justification

MOTIVATION: Personal Responsibility/Commitment
The student makes the decision to do what is morally right.

5. Action and Evaluation

CHARACTER: Perseverance / Implementation

The student implements the moral course of action decided upon and evaluates the outcome. The cycle may be repeated.

Based in part on materials modified from Dr. Kelly Fryer-Edwards, University of Washington Department of Medical History and Ethics, and from the Four Component Model of Morality (Rest 1984).