Business Ethics Across the Curriculum From the Inside Out: A Student-Driven Approach

Judith Kish Ruud, Shippensburg University
William N. Ruud , Shippensburg University

Abstract: *This paper discusses a real-life experiential assignment designed to develop skills of moral awareness, stakeholder understanding, and ethical analysis in undergraduates taking a dedicated business and society course.*

INTRODUCTION

After receiving a taxpayer bailout American International Group Inc. gave executives bonuses (Boel, 2009) and employees attended a luxury resort (Byrnes, 2008). In addition to ethics questions this raises (Boel, 2009), it may also raise questions about whether educators can teach business ethics (Carroll, 2003; Duska, 1991; Piper, Gentile, & Parks, 1993), and students can learn business ethics (Geary & Sims, 1994).

Guided by history people may ask colleges to offer more business ethics courses (Sims & Felton, 2006). AACSB International-The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, the accrediting agency for collegiate schools, earlier urged business schools to prioritize and strengthen the business ethics teaching curriculum (AACSB, 2004). Regardless of efforts made responding to AACSB, some believe colleges should do more (Smith, 2008; Swanson, 2005).

Business educators, who fulfill a critical need, disagree about the best curriculum design (Sims, 2002; Lowry, 2003). They continue debating which pedagogy to use (Duska, 1991; Sims & Felton, 2006) and whether to teach business ethics in dedicated courses or across the curriculum (Geary & Sims, 1994; Gentile, 2008; Piper et al., 1993 p. 24; Warren, 2007, p. 685). Discussions also involve whether to use "raw" or traditional case studies, or neither (Elias, n.d.) and what qualifications are best for teaching business ethics (Felton & Sims, 2005).

However, educators suggest several learning objectives, teaching methods, and activities to help students make better ethical decisions. We briefly review that research as background for how our assignment includes those and then discuss our assignment and results from its use in an undergraduate business and society course.

As we discuss later, many experiential activities effectively teach business ethics. One methodology Wilhelm (2008) designed is for use in any foundation business course by professors having no specialized ethics training who want to help students develop moral awareness. Our assignment differs from those in several respects. For example, we designed it to use in dedicated business ethics courses and actively engage students in business ethics analysis by having them choose issues to analyze and interact with stakeholders. Students evaluate issues from their common campus culture and discuss those in class with peers, gaining experience discussing ethics with peers and dealing with peer influence, similar to what happens when discussing work ethics issues with coworkers. The issues are unstructured, not developed

cases, allowing students to experience how such issues may arise at work and learn that any business issue involves an ethical component. Accordingly, this assignment might be particularly beneficial with undergraduates who may lack business experience. By systematically and cumulatively building on principles generally taught in business ethics this assignment causes students to regularly review material which reinforces learning.

RESEARCH REVIEW

Learning Objectives of Teaching Business Ethics
Because learning objectives influence the teaching techniques, we first review some suggested learning objectives. Suggested objectives for a business and society (business ethics) course include helping students recognize the ethical issues involved in business decisions and analyze those using a framework (Sims, R.R., 2002; Sims & Felton, 2006; Wilhelm, 2008). Additional objectives include helping students: (a) appreciate potential benefits and harms resulting from a business ethics decision, (b) understand their bias, moral values and philosophy, (c) appreciate the complexity of making ethical decisions, and (d) critically think about business ethics issues (AACSB, 2004; Sims, R. R., 2002; Sims & Felton, 2006; Vega, 1992). Those using the stakeholder approach for teaching business ethics add identifying stakeholders, stakeholder values and role in analyzing business ethics issues (Carroll & Buckholz, 2006).

A Method and Some Activities for Teaching Business Ethics
Research suggests the following teaching method and activities for helping students learn the objectives of a business ethics course. Hunt & Laverie (2004, p. 3) and Sims (2002) propose that experiential learning is the best method for teaching business ethics. Experiential learning engages students in solving real problems involving real people and situations (Ferrell, O.C., Fraedrich, & Ferrell, L., 2007; Hunt & Laverie, 2004; Sims & Felton, 2006). Because people learning experientially retain more information than those learning through lecture, some recommend organizations use experiential techniques to teach employee ethics programs (Ferrell, O.C. et al. 2008, p. 226). Thus, by learning experientially, students will retain more information and learn a training method to use as managers in future ethics programs.

During class professors teach students business ethics principles necessary for analyzing issues. However, because students learn by doing, the real learning occurs when they apply such principles to real situations, making the material meaningful and learning more enjoyable (Nielsen, 1996).

Case Studies. An effective experiential activity for teaching business ethics is the traditional case study (Dooley, 2008). Yet, some criticize this for being too well structured with issues that are too well defined, unlike how real problems arise at work (Jonassen, 2003, p. 4). Others say case studies emphasize argumentative and persuasion skills that might impede resolving and analyzing real problems (Krohn, 1982).

Yale University School of Management (Yale) advocates using its new "raw case" (Yale, 2008). Yale compares the traditional and "raw" case studies, describing the traditional as a short case presented in a nice package with a single business issue, viewpoint, and right answer. Yale describes the "raw" case as involving many problems and many answers, presented in a messy package requiring that students wade through multiple reports online to obtain necessary information for case analysis. Yale describes the "raw" case method as more realistically representing how managers receive and resolve business issues in the real world (Yale, 2008).

Given the proven effectiveness of traditional case studies, educators might consider using them along with other effective experiential activities. AACSB seems to encourage this by suggesting business

management "… [Think]   more deeply and creatively on how to advance the awareness, reasoning skills, and core principles [to guide students.]" (AACSB, 2004, p. 9). Educators continue meeting this challenge by creating a wide-range of experiential techniques (Sims, R.R. 2002; Smith, 2008). Next we review some of those.

Experiential Activities. A popular experiential activity for helping students learn business ethics is one challenging them to reflect on actual workplace ethics issues and discuss how they resolved those using their value system, organizational role, and information consulted (Laditka & Houck, 2006). This effective technique requires that students have work experience.

In other experiential activities students develop mini-case studies involving business ethics issues (Bailey, 2008); assume decision-making roles to identify and resolve ethical issues in a given scenario (Frey & Cruz-Cruz 2007; Sawyer, Tomlinson, & Maples, 2001); review plays or literature to learn business ethics principles (Garaventa, 1998); or read parables (Koehn, 2005).

Enhancing Experiential Learning
The challenge is structuring experiential activities to maximize a student's opportunity to learn business ethics. This is particularly important where there is limited course time available for teaching business ethics. The following reviews some techniques for meeting this challenge.

Students learn more if they engage in relevant activities (Geary & Sims, 1994; Weber, 2006, p. 65) and they more actively participate if they believe that no one expects them to have *the* [italics added] right answer (Sims & Felton, 2006, p. 304). This suggests allowing students to select among suggested experiential activities or topics and emphasizing that any analysis involves several possible answers.

To enhance learning, some suggest moving students through a learning hierarchy (Hunt & Laverie, 2004). This might be as simple as a professor conversationally asking a student to further analyze a business ethics situation using different moral principles causing the student to reflect on the situation and the student's moral philosophy (Garaventa, 1998; Geary & Sims, 1994; Hunt & Laverie, 2004 p.6; Sims, 2002). Geary & Sims (1994) state that if students trust the classroom environment, this "debriefing" may help them "express deeply held views" (p.11) that help them understand their moral philosophy and its role in how they make ethical decisions.

Some suggest that because students like sharing their views and exchanging ideas, classroom discussions are the best method of teaching business ethics (Carroll, 2008; Sims & Felton, 2006). Like "debriefings," with proper planning these discussions can help students understand their reasoning and moral philosophy (Duska, 1991). These and group presentations (Geary & Sims, 1994; Weber, 2006) help students become more comfortable discussing business ethics, understand different moral philosophies, and the effect of peer influence on ethical decision making (Ferrell, O.C., et al., 2008); critical skills for making good business ethics decisions (Sims and Felton, 2006; Weber, 2007). These work best in class environments where participants respect each other (Hunt & Laverie, 2004, p. 5; Sims, R.R., 2002; Sims & Felton, 2006; Vega, 2003). Some suggest scheduling class presentations later in the semester, giving the professor time to create this environment (Laditka & Huock, 2006).

To help students manage ethics better, some suggest giving students more practical information and experience analyzing business ethics issues (McNamara, 2008). Providing students frameworks that they then use to analyze business ethics decisions, gives them a decision-making process and practical experience (Pelton & True, 2004; Wilhelm, 2008). Most frameworks for analyzing business ethics decisions seem to follow case analysis, i.e. identify the issue and relevant facts, and analyze the issue

using ethics principles and tests, select a defensible conclusion (Carroll & Buckholtz, 2006, p. 241; McNamara, 2008; Trevino, 2007). Frameworks using the stakeholder orientation include stakeholder identification issues (Carroll & Buckholtz, 2006; McNamara, 2008). Wilhelm (2008) recommends that after students read about business ethics, professors introduce a framework and work with students to apply them to some sample cases in class before students use the frameworks for their case analysis. Wilhelm (2008) also suggests the professor grade the student's business ethics analysis.

Developing Moral Awareness
To ethically evaluate a business issue students must perceive the ethical dimension involved; therefore, an initial business ethics course objective is helping students see the ethical issues in every business decision, i.e. to develop moral awareness (Geva, 2006, p. 140; Lowry, 2003; Sims & Felton, 2006, p. 299; VanSandt, Shepard, & Zappe, 2006, p. 409)

Developing moral awareness helps students appreciate the benefit and harm resulting from alternative courses of action and make better ethical decisions (VanSandt et al., 2006). To facilitate ethical decision making, some suggest activities helping students to recognize that all [emphasis added] business issues involve ethical decisions that benefit and/or harm various stakeholders (Gentile, 2008; Piper et al., 1993; Sims & Felton, 2006, p. 299). Piper et al. discuss how critical it is to develop moral awareness by stating "…the ability to recognize and articulate the ethical scope of every managerial decision needs to be cultivated as a skill integral to responsible and professional managerial practice…." (p.55). Piper et al. illustrate this when describing a young man who "advised his classmates that they should do business during the week and 'wait to save the whales on the weekend.'" (p.55). In response, Piper et al. state "…that this young man is not yet aware of how many business decisions made daily affect the whales or what they symbolize." (p. 55).

Because failure to develop moral awareness can have serious consequences, the importance of helping students develop this skill is critical. In this respect, while some describe the failure to see an ethical issue in business situations as a form of "'ethical disability, a lack of skill in seeing ethical issues,…'" it does not eliminate individual responsibility that may warrant "'severe sanctions.'" (Cochett, 1991, p. 53 quoting a report of a federal investigation into an executive's role in a failed savings and loan matter).

Because using moral language helps trigger moral thinking (Lowry, 2003; Trevino, 2007, p. 123), educators might design experiential activities framing issues using positive moral language like "right" or "integrity" (Lowry, 2003, p. 11), "honesty" or "fairness " (Trevino, 2007, p. 123), or using negative moral language like "lying" or "cheating" (Trevino, 2007, p. 123).

Triggering moral thinking also helps students understand their own moral philosophy, which is important because ethics issues frequently arise when a person's own moral philosophy and values conflict with those of the organization employing the person (Carrol & Buckholz, 2006; Ferrell, O.C. et al., 2007). Experiential assignments that help students recognize their moral philosophy may also help them recognize their bias and, therefore, make more objective and better ethical business decisions (Duska, 1991; Sims & Felton, 2006). Asking students to identify their values in addressing business ethics situations might help students recognize their values (Felton & Sims, 2005, p. 380), as do exercises requiring that they write about their analysis of business ethics situations (Sims & Felton, 2006; piper et. al, 1993, p. 59).

Business Across the Curriculum and Moral Awareness. Some believe the best way for students to learn business ethics and develop moral awareness is by teaching business ethics "across the curriculum" (Gentile, 2008; Sims, R. L., 2000). In fact, Gentile (2008) states that business ethics "… becomes

marginalized if ethics issues are not also integrated into core courses." (p. 40). This may happen because teaching in a dedicated course may cause students to view ethics as separate decision to make after making the *other* [emphasis added] business decision involving finance or marketing etc. (Felton & Sims, 2005; Piper, et. al., 1993, p. 55; Sims & Felton, 2006, p. 249).

There are several ways to teach business ethics across the curriculum (Kryder, 2003; Sims, R.L., 2000) and several hurdles, including budget issues and faculty acceptance (Sims, R.L., 2000, p. 441). These and other hurdles may contribute to teaching business ethics in dedicated courses. However, educators in dedicated courses can include activities that infuse some of the benefits from teaching ethics across the curriculum in a dedicated course (Wilhelm, 2008).

Some believe that the stakeholder approach to teaching business ethics fosters moral thinking (Carrol & Buckholz, 2006). AACSB identifies the stakeholder orientation as the appropriate framework for teaching business ethics (AACSB, 2004; Ferrell, O.C. et al., 2008, p. 225).

Ethical issues involved in business decisions often become visible through the concerns of stakeholders (Ferrell, O.C., et al., 2008, p. 82). Because organizations depend on their stakeholders' support to survive, when making business ethics decisions organizations must be able to identify the primary stakeholders critical to their survival, those stakeholder values, and the differences and similarities among them (Carroll & Buckholtz, 2006; Ferrell, O.C., et al., 2008, p. 32; Weber, 2007, p. 64). Because stakeholders can help expose ethics issues, discussing a situation or decision with them before taking action might help identify such issues and alternative actions (Carroll & Buckholtz, 2006; Ferrell, O.C., et al., 2008). Experiential activities might involve students in "field exercises" that include such stakeholder interaction (Sims & Felton, 2006).

While developing moral awareness, students should also learn that because a situation involves an ethical issue, it does not mean the situation is necessarily unethical, rather it means that before making a decision the student should carefully consider and analyze the situation (Ferrell, O.C., et al., 2008, p 60).   Our current dynamic business environment, fueled by rapid globalization of business and technology changes, will likely cause the arrival of unique business ethics issues that may not easily lend themselves to analysis or resolution under current ethical guidelines (Garventa, 1998, p. 536). This makes it vital that business ethics courses help students understand the underpinnings or reasoning supporting ethical principles to use in business ethics analysis (Piper et al., 1993). This will also help students develop other cognitive skills leading to greater proficiency and greater performance (Bailey et al., 2005). These skills are particularly important since students as future decisions makers may have the responsibility to recognize unique ethical issues and may not be able to rely on others to help (Butterfield, K.D., Trevino, L.K. & Weaver, G. study, as cited in Geva, 2006).

STUDENT PROJECT

Overview
We designed this experiential assignment incorporating the above research suggestions and gave it to undergraduates, primarily seniors, taking a dedicated business and society course. As discussed in detail below, this assignment actively engaged students in resolving business ethics issues and interacting with stakeholders, the latter giving them actual experience with the stakeholder role in making such decisions. It helped them see how any and all business decisions involve ethics issues and learn about using frameworks and moral philosophies to evaluate such decisions. It also gave them experience dealing with the pressure of peer influence when making ethics decisions in a in a shared culture. The assignment was worth 25% of the grade.

For several reasons, including the limited teaching time for this one-semester course, we hoped that integrating these techniques into this comprehensive assignment would enhance students' opportunity to learn business ethics objectives. This was particularly important because these students are primarily exposed to business ethics fundamentals in this one dedicated course. Our primary goals were to help students: (a) develop moral awareness by realizing that all business decisions involve an ethical decision; (b) recognize their bias and moral philosophy in making business ethics decisions; (c) identify primary stakeholders, their values and their role in making such decisions; (d) understand the complexity of making such decisions; and (e) critically think about business ethics decision. We did not design this to test a particular hypothesis. We both participated and, for clarity, we refer to the one of us who teaches the course as "the Professor."

The first week of class the Professor asked students to reach out across the University and identify a University business activity that they found interesting. The Professor explained that students would later identify one business decision the University would make in operating that activity and one ethical issue embedded therein. We structured classes so students could discuss their projects with classmates throughout the semester, therefore by having students' select broad topics and then focus on business and ethical decisions within those to analyze we hoped to help them recognize that *all* business issues involve ethical decisions.

To provide a relevant experience and integrate some benefits of ethics across the curriculum into this dedicated course, students selected an issue they found interesting outside of the class, but related to campus. Because students share this campus culture, we hoped this might expose them to the pressure of peer influence when discussing projects with classmates, similar to the pressure of peer influence they might find when later discussing ethical issues with coworkers. Students identified their issue by the second week of class, choosing a variety of activities including campus recycling, tuition costs, and campus substance abuse.

Students identified one business decision the University would make in managing their activity and an ethical component embedded therein. The ethical component could be an ethical issue or dilemma, or involve evaluating a current practice against alternatives that might create a more ethical University culture (collectively referred to as the "ethical issue") (Geva, 2006, p. 139). Because the focus was analyzing the ethical issue, that issue had to be narrow enough for analysis in the limited course time and based on limited information, but broad enough to permit more than a cursory analysis. Students could analyze the issue as a student-participant or University employee and assume the front page of the newspaper would report their decision and analysis.

Business Ethics Analysis and Written Paper
 The first week of class Professor worked with students to draft an outline students could use to structure their analysis, using various frameworks provided by their textbook and others including McManara (2008), and Trevino (2007). Each week's class discussions and textbook chapter provided the fundamental principles students needed for the part of the issue they were analyzing that week, in the order outlined below. This allowed for detailed and in depth discussions for each component of the analysis. Also, we structured the analysis to occur incrementally over time such that each weekly discussion and analysis built directly on the material earlier discussed. This engaged students in regularly reviewing material in a cumulative manner, reinforcing learning.

Throughout the semester Professor also engaged students in applying these fundamentals and a similar outline to analyze ethical case dilemmas from the textbook. These addressed a myriad of business ethics issues involving, the environment, conflicts of interest, sexual harassment, whistle-blowing, insider

trading, and white collar crime. Using a similar methodology, students also wrote a business ethics analysis of five current events they selected during the semester. These experiences reinforced the assignment's learning objectives and let us structure our assignment to engage students in focusing and analyzing one component of their business ethics issue weekly and engage in deeper analysis, reflection, peer interaction, and critical thinking regarding that component.

Students analyzed their issue and wrote a paper describing that by mid-semester. Students submitted papers mid-semester and began class presentations. To incorporate benefits of group work and allow students to experience peer influence, Professor encouraged students to talk to classmates when identifying their issue and alternatives and thinking about their analysis. Each independently did their research, talked to stakeholders, and presented their project.

After describing their business decision using nonmoral terms, i.e. generate revenue, increase enrollment, students identified one ethical issue embedded in their business decision and framed it using positive or negative moral terms. Because the situation was unstructured students had to independently research and identify key known and unknown facts, identify sources of known facts, and discuss key assumptions based on unknown facts. This was to help them see that business decisions involve an ethical component, are often made without all available facts, and are often unstructured. It also integrated some benefits of ethics across the curriculum.

We asked students to briefly consider how they would resolve the ethical issue and reflect on that to identify their bias and moral philosophy based on class discussions and textbook information about these matters. Students were to discuss this and the steps taken to overcome their bias and provide an objective analysis. This introduced students to these concepts and their influence on the student's ethical decision making.

Students were then to identify five groups of primary stakeholders and their desired outcomes and then draft one question they wanted to ask stakeholders about their ethical issue. The assignment involved field work because students identified one stakeholder in each group to whom they would ask this question. Professor and students discussed information students would first give to stakeholders about the class, assignment, purpose of stakeholder's input, and privacy information. If after discussing this the stakeholders agreed to proceed, the student would ask the question. Students were to summarize stakeholder responses in their paper, noting similarities and differences among the responses and discussing if this information helped them in their analysis i.e. identify the ethical issue or alternatives. Talking to stakeholders actively engaged students in this assignment. We thought limiting issues to the University campus would involve stakeholders students might know, like parents, classmates, alumni, and faculty, a familiarity we hoped would help students realize that their decisions impacted real people. We anticipated stakeholders would disagree, helping students appreciate the complexity of making ethical decisions. Involving other faculty and staff helped integrate business ethics across the curriculum into this course.

Using their research and the stakeholder responses, students were to identify and analyze several realistic solutions for the ethical issue using five of the nine moral philosophies and five other ethics principles from the text. Students were to select and discuss an alternative they thought was most ethical and discuss their analysis including any benefits and harm involved. This was to help students think critically, use an ethics screen to make such decisions, and, again, help students understand the complexity of making such decisions.

Classroom Discussion
Weekly class discussions focused on one textbook chapter involving principles related to that week's analysis. The textbook was organized in the same manner as the analysis.

To foster the learning objectives and help students learn how to apply the principles in analyzing their issue the Professor selected a similar issue to analyze weekly with the class. The Professor introduced this the first week of class discussing the University's interest in textbook prices and saying: "A book representative offered to buy my textbooks. I received them as complimentary copies for review. I told him I had not yet reviewed them and he said he would return later in the semester. Should I sell the books?" After several minutes of discussion, the Professor asked students to consider the business and ethical issues involved for future discussion. Class discussion counted toward class participation.

The Professor discussed that each Friday class would work together to analyze one step of this issue until finished. Professor encouraged students to simultaneously analyze that same component of their issue and bring a draft to class for discussion. Students could submit drafts to the Professor for feedback at any time. The Professor posted a draft analysis weekly on backboard for students to review and discuss outside of class. The Professor emphasized that, as with their issue, there was no "correct answer," and that students should be respectful of other's opinions.

Student Presentations
Mid-semester, after all papers were submitted, each student gave a 10-minute discussion of their project. They were to briefly discuss the facts, but focus on the other learning objectives, particularly the analysis using various philosophies. Each presentation was followed by a five-minute class discussion when the class would ask questions and make comments. After each student presented, the Professor conversationally asked the student to analyze the issue using another ethical principle. The Professor encouraged students to discuss the reasons for their position and emphasized that they would be graded in part by a thoughtful analysis, and that there was no "right answer." At the end of each class, all students summarized the major ethical issues, impact of stakeholder interaction, and principles primarily used. This was to help students review the material discussed, discuss moral philosophies, gain experience discussing business ethics in a group setting, and engage in critical thinking.

REVIEW OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Evaluations
Like Laditka & Houke (2006) and others, we used three methods to analyze the learning objectives, including qualitative measures of students written papers, written questionnaires and class observations of student presentations and discussions. We entered data from several evaluations of the written measures on spreadsheets, then compared and finalized them and discuss them below.

We analyzed the content of the 65 student written project papers using a grading rubric outlining the learning objectives that we gave to students to use in writing their papers and making their class presentation. Headings students were required to use in their papers helped us identify the learning objectives. Out of 65 student papers submitted, 4 students did not do the assignment as required, instead writing a short opinion paper, and we omitted those from evaluation.

We analyzed answers from a student questionnaire distributed after all students presented. Students did not receive the questions in advance and they answered anonymously. The 60 students present when the questionnaire was distributed completed it. Students could write comments on the questionnaire.

Content of Student Paper: Following are results and common threads from 61 student papers.

Identification of business Issue: About 95 % of the students identified the business dimension of their situation. About half identified this as the University's desire for revenue. The others identified this as the University's desire to increase enrollment; promote its reputation, student education, campus safety; or protect faculty academic discretion.

Identification of ethical issue: About 96% of the students identified an ethical dimension of their issue using moral terms. About two-thirds of those students identified fairness as the ethical dimension, and the others identified the following, listed in the order of frequency: privacy, conflict of interest, welfare integrity, morality, the environment, respect, equality, or "right versus wrong." Most students analyzed the ethics of a current University business decision against alternatives that might create a more ethical University culture.

Students presented a wide range of business and ethical issues. Some examples, showing the financial and ethical issues in parenthesis, were: allow differential tuition (revenue/fairness); require physical education classes (enrollment/student health & fairness); require class attendance (education/academic discretion/fairness); campus recycling (revenue/environmental responsibility); provide Facebook training (education/privacy); and student alcohol issues (education/revenue/student health).

Identification of bias: About 62% of the students wrote about their bias, generally showing they recognized having a bias, and about half of those wrote what steps they took to overcome that and provide an objective analysis. No student wrote about their moral philosophy.

Identification of stakeholders and their values: Over 95% of the students identified five primary stakeholders, talked to stakeholders, and summarized the stakeholder opinions.

About one-third of the students who talked to stakeholders discussed similarities and differences in the stakeholder's opinions, and most noted different reasons for stakeholder's opinions.

Many said the stakeholder responses helped them develop alternatives or clarify the ethical issue. Some students became focused on the ethical issues, and said these responses reminded them a business issue was also involved.

Ethical Analysis: All students applied at least one ethical test or principle in analyzing their issue, most applied five. These and the number of students who used them, in order of frequency were: (a) relativist (55) and utilitarian (55); (b) fairness (48); (c) egoism (47); (d) legal (33) and front page of newspaper (33); (e) deontology (29); and (f) virtue ethics (19). In using the relativist philosophy, students generally referred to their classmates and other colleges.

About 65% of the students mentioned if a stakeholder might be harmed from their alternative. About 63% of the students referenced the University mission statement in analyzing their alternative.

Where stakeholders gave different opinions, a majority of the students selected and described an alternative that was a compromise. Where stakeholders had similar opinions, students seemed to select an alternative after balancing those opinions/desires with research the student had done showing the benefits and harms that could result from a particular course of action.

Evaluation of Questionnaires: Our review of the questionnaires for some learning objectives show:

Application of course concepts to a real world issue: About 95% of the students said the project helped them apply course concepts to analyze a real business ethics issue.

Complexity of making ethical decisions: About 92% of the students said the project helped them realize that resolving ethical issues is complicated.

Moral Values: About 82% of the students said the project helped them recognize they had a bias in resolving ethical decisions.

Stakeholder Interaction: About 80% of the students said talking to stakeholders helped them identify the ethical issue or alternative resolutions.

Framework: About 90% of the students said the project introduced them to frameworks for analyzing business ethics issues.

Overall Evaluation: About 92% of the students said this was a valuable learning experience.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Evaluation of written papers and Professor's observation support that students were able to: (a) identify the ethical issue in a business decision; (b) identify primary stakeholders, their values and role in making ethical decisions; (c) understand making ethical decisions is complicated; (d) identify having a bias; (e) recognize ethical decisions involve benefits and harm; (f) use the mission statement in making ethical decisions; and (g) critically think about making these decisions. We believe the evaluations support that students gained experience applying ethics principles in making such decisions. Although the questionnaires show students thought the assignment helped them identify their moral philosophy and bias, their papers do not support this, but their class presentations indicate the assignment helped them with these objectives, as discussed below. Facts discussed below may have also impacted this learning objective.

We suggest caution interpreting these results because variables may impact generalization. In particular we carefully organized the weekly instruction, course syllabus, and textbook to foster these objectives systematically throughout the semester. We evaluated student papers based on whether students met the objectives using an analysis based on available facts, not writing style, depth of analysis, or decision reached; provided the decision was realistic.

The evaluations support that students easily met the objectives relating to stakeholders and identifying the business issue. However, the Professor observed students struggled to identify the ethical issue when discussing the Professor's project. Therefore, the Professor had students submit drafts of their business and ethical issue for review. In those only a few students identified the ethical issue or framed it with moral terms. Accordingly, the Professor spent more time on this objective.

Most students said they enjoyed talking to stakeholders, but it made their decision difficult because stakeholders did not generally agree and no decision would please all of them. Most selected alternatives that were a compromise solution among what the stakeholders wanted. According to Felton and Sims (2005, p. 389), this shows the assignment helped students think of ethics in broader terms than right and wrong, but rather as a "trade-off." Many said that knowing the stakeholders made the decision more difficult than in traditional textbook cases. Students who talked to their parents as stakeholders often selected alternatives supporting the parents' input over that of other stakeholders, generally defending this by stating the parent discussed information they had not considered that supported their independent research. Most students said that talking to stakeholders helped them identify the ethical issue or develop alternatives. Several stakeholders said they liked the student interest and, although conversations took time, this assignment seemed to benefit both parties.

In- class presentations most students could identify having a bias and discuss their moral philosophy relative to the analysis. For example, one student said he realized he made decisions based on his best interests and another said she realized she tried to always make a decision that benefited the most people. Most said that to overcome their bias and provide an objective analysis, they focused on the stakeholder responses or analyzed the issue in the role of an employee. In papers where the answer seemed to reflect the student's bias, the student wrote the stakeholder question in a biased manner or such that it did not address the ethical issue.

Students said they did not discuss their moral philosophy and its impact on the analysis in the paper because they were simultaneously doing that in another course paper and didn't think they should duplicate it in this paper. In this respect, students were simultaneously playing an on-line simulation game designed to help identify their moral philosophy, which they used to write an analysis of several ethical dilemmas, perhaps explaining the confusion. While student discussions and answers to the questionnaire indicate the assignment helped them recognize their moral philosophy and bias, the absence of written discussion in the papers does not confirm this. Although one's moral philosophy develops over time, and may vary based on situations (Sims & Felton, 2006; Trevino & Nelson, 2007), it is critical that students understand their moral philosophy and bias in making ethical business decisions so that they make objective and otherwise better ethical decisions. Writing about these also helps foster critical thinking. Therefore, we recommend having more class discussions about these issues, clearly including both in the instructions and grading rubric, and extending the paper length with a requirement that students write about the role of these in their analysis. While students generally referenced the University mission statement to support their decision, more written discussion would have been helpful.

Class questions after the first few presentations were limited to requesting clarification on a particular point. To foster critical thinking, expose students to peer influence, different philosophies, and alternative solutions, the Professor encouraged speakers to ask classmates for alternative solutions to discuss. Discussions became livelier and generally classmates proposed several solutions. Several students said this discussion made them reconsider their solutions. The discussions were an opportunity to discuss peer influence and importance of talking with others when making ethical decisions.

Class attendance averaged over 85%. The Professor wrote some student comments on daily lecture notes. One student said she enjoyed class because "we get to talk, you don't lecture." Another said that business decisions were much "easier before we had to think about ethics," and some roommates said they started asking each other "is that ethical" every time they made a decision. This supports the assignment's effectiveness considering Sims & Felton (2005, p. 385) said that business ethics is effective when students discuss the material outside of class.

Student feedback suggests having a longer page limit, using fewer principles in the analysis, and requiring students to submit drafts of each phase of the analysis weekly for feedback. We agree with these, particularly extending the page limit for the reason previously discussed.

We also suggest: (a) allocate points for drafts towards the final grade so students take these seriously; (b) require revisions so students succeed with one step before proceeding to the next; (c) invite University employee-stakeholders to class for discussion and have students to talk to others independently; (d) spend more time discussing bias and moral philosophy; and (e) develop better measurements for learning objectives. Students who narrowly drafted the stakeholder question to address their issue wrote a more objective and critical analysis than did others. Accordingly, we would require that students work with Professor on these questions in advance.

Most students said they enjoyed this project and it helped them with the learning objectives. While most issues didn't involve the complexity of ethical dilemmas, the project introduced students to the idea that all business issues involve ethical issues and to the fundamentals and complexity of making ethical decisions similar to decisions they might initially experience in their careers. Most students said that unlike traditional case analysis they learned more with this project because they selected a topic of interest, talked to stakeholders, and were actively involved. Most said this project was more realistic and fun than traditional case analysis.

Because the Professor's textbook example illustrates the type of class discussions involved, we briefly review it here.   We used one major example to allow time for a more detailed and thoughtful student discussions and to allow time for discussions of student's issues and analysis. In the example, students identified the business issues involved and then described the ethical issues, including fairness and conflict of interest. After identifying primary stakeholders they suggested asking stakeholders whether Professor should sell complimentary copies of textbooks. When Professor discussed the stakeholder responses with students, students discussed how the responses identified ethical issues and that stakeholders disagreed on the resolution, noting this was as pointed out in the textbook, which facilitated class discussions on those topics. Student vigorously debated alternatives and related issues, including selling the books and keeping the money (unfair to students) or donating the money to student groups (unfair to non participating students), or donating the books to the library (unfair to the publisher and author), keeping the books (impractical), or returning books to the publisher (unfair if others sold their books).   Students analyzed these using the same philosophies used in their issue analysis, and considered other state laws on point and reasons underlying those, journal articles, University policies, common practice etc. Most students, including those initially saying Professor owned and could sell the books, concluded it would be unfair to most stakeholders if Professor profited from the book sale. They disagreed on what Professor should do with the books, prompting discussions about bias, moral philosophy, and justifications. This issue was partly selected because the student's University and state law had not directly addressed this issue and others vary in how they address it, lending it to robust analysis. As earlier discussed, weekly the class analyzed other ethical dilemmas, and students wrote an analysis of several current business ethics issues, allowing us to use this one robust example. If other examples are not part of the coursework, the professor should use more examples in class.

The evaluations suggest that this assignment's activities, its format, and the objectives students using it achieve, make it an effective experiential pedagogy for teaching business ethics in a dedicated business ethics course. We need pedagogies like this because they actively engage students in that proven method of learning by doing. Rather than being passive recipients who read or who are lectured to about how *all* business issues involve ethics issues, how peers influence ethical decision making at work, how stakeholders are critical to ethical decision making, or how ethical decisions arise in untidy packages, students experience these concepts firsthand as they actively grapple with analyzing their business ethics issue. The assignment emphasizes classroom discussions, shown by research to be an effective method of teaching business ethics and a method of learning students enjoy. Because the assignment has students analyzing issues using fundamental principles often taught in foundation business ethics courses, it may be easy to incorporate this assignment into a syllabus. The assignment's cumulative structure reinforces learning and may lend itself to being an attractive substitute for a cumulative final.   Finally, because students enjoy the assignment it makes teaching and learning more fun.

REFERENCES

American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (n/k/a International Association of Management Education) (AACSB). (2004). Report of the Ethics Education task Force to AACSB-International's Board of Directors [Electronic version]. *Ethics Education In Business Schools*. Tampa, Florida .Retrieved December 28, 2008, from AACSB Web site: http://www.aacsb.edu/resource_centers/EthicsEdu/EthicsEdu-in-b-schools.pdf

Bailey, J., Sass, M., Swiercz, P., Seal, C., & Kayes, D. (2005, February). Teaching With and Through Teams: Student-Written, Instructor-Facilitated Case Writing and The Signatory Code. *Journal of Management Education*, 29 (1), 39-59.

Boel, J. (March 16, 2009). *Business ethics down the drain? Some say AIG bonus fiasco proves it*. Retrieved May 5, 2009 from KLS.com Web Site: http://www.ksl.com

Byrnes, N. (2008, October 07). Damaging Capitol Hill Hearings on AIG. *BusinessWeek*. Retrieved December 30, 2008 from BusinessWeek Web site: http://www.businessweek.com/careers/managementiq/archives/2008/10/damaging_capito.html.

Carroll, A. (2003, February 17). *Can Ethics Be Taught?* Retrieved December 14, 2008, from University of Georgia, UGA News Service Web site: www.uga.edu/columns/030217/ news12.html.

Carroll A. & Buckholz, A. (2006). *Business & Society, Ethics and Stakeholder Management* (6 Ed.). Mason, Ohio: Thomson Publishing.

Cochett, J. (1991). *The Ethics Gap.* Carlsbad, CA: Parker and Sons Publishing.

Dooley, L. (2002, August). Case Study Research and Theory Building. *Advances in Developing Human Resources* 4 (3), 335-354.

Duska, R. (1991). What's The Point of A Business Ethics Course? *Business Ethics Quarterly,* 1 (4), 335-354.

Elias, J. (n.d.). *The Raw vs. the Cooked.* Retrieved December 24, 2008, from Yale University, The Yale School of Management web site: mba.yale.edu/ news_events/ CMS/articles/ pdf/ RawvsCooked.pdf

Felton, E. & Sims, R. R. (2005, September 15). Teaching Business Ethics: Targeted Outputs. *Journal of Business Ethics,* 60(4), 377-391

Ferrell, O.C., Fraedrich J., & Ferrell, L. (2008). *Business ethics. Ethical decision making and cases*. MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Frey, W., & Cruz-Cruz, J. (2007, March 2). *Ethics and Laptops: Identifying Social Responsibility Issues in Puerto Rico*. Retrieved from the Connexions Web site: http://cnx.org/content.

Garaventa, E. (1998, July). *Drama: A Tool For Teaching Business Ethics.* Business Ethics Quarterly, 8(3), 535-545.

Geary, W., & Sims, R. R. (1994, March). Can ethics be learned? *Accounting Education,* 3(1), 3-18.

Geva, A. (2006, December). A Typology of Moral Problems in Business: A Framework for Ethical Management. *Journal of Business Ethics,* 69(2), 133-147.

Gentile, M. (2008, July/August). Voicing Values, Finding Answers. *Biz Ed*, 40-48.

Hunt, S., & Laverie, D. (2004, Fall). Experiential Learning and the Hunt-Vitell Theory of Ethics: Teaching Marketing Ethics By Integrating Theory and Practice. *Marketing Education Review*, *14*(3), 1-14.

Krohn, F. (1982, Spring). Teaching of Legal and Ethical Standards for Marketing Research. *Journal of Marketing Education*, *4*(1), 31-34.

Kryder, L. (2003). Integrating Ethics and Corporate Citizenship into the Business Communication Curriculum. *Proceedings of the 2003 Association for business Communication Annual Convention.* Copyright 2003, Association for Business Communication.

Laditka, S., & Houck, M. (2006, March 15). Student-Developed Case Studies: An Experiential Approach for Teaching Ethics in Management. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *64*(2), 157-167.

Lowry, D. (2003). An Investigation of Student Moral Awareness and Associated Factors in Two Cohorts of an Undergraduate Business Degree in a British University: Implications for Business Ethics Curriculum Design. *Journal of Business Ethics* 48, 7-19.

McNamara, C. (1997-2008*). Complete Guide to Ethics Management: An Ethics Toolkit for Managers*. Retrieved August 31, 2008 from Free Management Library.

Neilsen, R.P. (1996). *The Politics of ethics: methods for acting, learning and sometimes fighting with others in addressing ethics problems in organizational life*. New York: Oxford University Press**.**

Pelton, L., & True, S. (2004, Fall). Teaching Business Ethics: Why Gen Y? *Marketing Education Review*, *14*(3), 63-70.

Piper, T., Gentile, M., & Parks, S. (1993, January). *Can Ethics Be Taught? Perspectives, Challenges, and Approaches at Harvard Business School*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press Books.

Sawyer, A., Tomlinson, R., & Maples, A. (2000). Developing essential skills through case study scenarios. *Journal of Accounting Education* 18, 257-282.

Sims, R. L. (2000). Teaching Business Ethics: A Case Study of An Ethics Across the Curriculum Policy. *Teaching Business Ethics* 4, 437-443.

Sims & Felton, E. (2006, February). Designing and Delivering Business Ethics Teaching and Learning. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *63*(3), 297-312

Sims, Ronald R (2002). *Teaching Business Ethics for Effective learning*. Westport, Ct. Quorum Books.

Smith, C. (2008, May/June). Ethics and Social Responsibility [Essay]. *BizEd, 28-29*. Retrieved from AACSB Web Site: http://www.aacsb.edu/publications/Archives/mayjun08-toc.asp.

Swanson, D. (2005). Business ethics Education at Bay: Addressing a Crisis of Legitimacy, *Issues in Accounting Education* 20 93), 247-253.

Trevino, L., & Nelson, K. (2007). *Managing business ethics. Straight talk about how to do it right*. (4th ed.). Danvers, MA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

VanSandt, C., Shepard, J., & Zappe, S. (2006). An Examination of the relationship Between Work Climate and Moral Awareness. *Journal of Business Ethics,* 68, 409-432.

Warren B., & Rosenthal D. (2006, September). Teaching Business Ethics-Is it a Lost Cause? *International Journal of Management* 23 (3), 679-698.

Weber, J. (2007, January). Business Ethics Training: Insights from Learning Theory. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *70*(1), 61-85.

Wilhelm, William J. (2008). Integrating Instruction in Ethical Reasoning into Undergraduate Business Ethics Courses. *Journal of Business Ethics Education* 5，1-30.

Yale University, New Haven Connecticut, Yale School of Management, (n/d). *Marketplace Reports on SOM's Raw Cases*. Retrieved December 29, 2008, from the Yale School of management Web site: http://mba.yale.edu/news_events/CMS/ articles.

Teaching Note/Instructor Manual available from the Journal of Business Cases and Applications.