Seamless Integration of Ethics

Jeri Mullins Beggs

Teaching & Learning Symposium

January 11, 2006

Ethics Education in Business

- Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) requires ethical coverage, but doesn't mandate when, how, or how much is enough.

- Most schools rely upon a stand-alone course and/or integration throughout the curriculum.

- Most ethics education researchers believe that we are not doing enough.

Problem

- Traditional ethics education alerts the student of the topic being covered and the student may become "extremely ethical" for that time period.

- On the job, ethical dilemmas do not come labeled as such.

- Ethics may be best learned when the student does not know it is being taught.

Potential Solution

- **Seamless Integration of Ethics**
  - No mention in syllabus under calendar or schedule. However, it is in my objectives.
  - Ethical issues/dilemmas are integrated into exercises, cases, etc.
  - Students learn
    - To recognize ethical dilemmas without prompts
    - By making bad decisions and suffering the consequences.

Example - Simulation

- Students are asked to pick the most attractive target market to sell an alcoholic beverage from a list of 3 potential target markets.

- It is questionable whether it would be ethical to market an alcoholic beverage to one of the three markets.

- Students who choose that market are faced with a team member that thinks it's unethical and a boss who says to use masked branding to hide the name of the company.

- If the students continue with the plans to market the product, the next phase includes bad publicity.

- STUDENTS LEARN THAT BAD DECISIONS HAVE PENALTIES!

Research Method

- 3 classes
  - 2 Consumer Behavior classes
    - 1 taught with traditional method (1 ½ days of ethics)
    - 1 taught with seamless integration
  - 1 Integrated Marketing Communication class
    - Minimal ethics coverage – control group
- Both classes had similar coverage of ethics examples throughout the semester and approximately the same amount of time spent on ethics in total.

Measures

- **Pre- and Post-test**
  - Defining Issues Test (DIT-2)
  - Survey with scales for self-efficacy, ethical concern, and ethical training importance.
- **Course activities**
  - List top 3 issues for this case.
  - Group activity labeled "Ethics exercise" vs. "Group-decision making exercise".

Preliminary Results
Reporting means only

- Defining Issues Test

	Pre-test	Post-test
Traditional	27.45	29.21
Seamless	21.86	29.20
Control	37.12	32.41

Preliminary Results
Reporting means only

- Ethical Self-Efficacy

	Pre-test	Post-test
Traditional	4.10	4.28
Seamless	4.08	4.28
Control	4.50	4.29

Preliminary Results
Reporting means only

- **Ethical Concern**

	Pre-test	Post-test
Traditional	4.25	4.28
Seamless	4.37	4.64
Control	4.67	4.29

Preliminary Results
Reporting means only

- Importance of Ethics Training

	Pre-test	Post-test
Traditional	4.26	4.63
Seamless	4.31	4.44
Control	4.13	4.43

Conclusion

- It is not clear at this point if the technique improved students' scores on these measures.

- Possible solution is to incorporate both techniques in to the classroom.

Questions????