

REPORT

INTEGRATING ETHICS INTO CONTINUING EDUCATION

A WORKING CONFERENCE

April 3-4, 1992, Chicago

Funded by the National Science Foundation

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Representatives of twelve professional societies or trade associations, including the AAAS and most of the major engineering societies, attended the conference. (See attached list of participants.) Representatives of two other organizations--Pam Suett (the American Society of Civil Engineers) and Ron Sears (American Public Works Association)--did not attend because of last minute complications and the unavailability of a suitable replacement. The conference had three parts (see attached agenda).

I.

The first part (Friday afternoon) described the NSF-funded program to integrate ethics into technical courses at IIT. The program was first described in a general way, including evidence of success (e.g. student and faculty evaluations). The most important lessons to be learned were: 1) that careful planning and testing were needed; 2) faculty need to be given a framework that allows them to understand how teaching their profession's ethics is continuous with their ordinary teaching; and 3) that faculty beginning to integrate ethics will probably need someone to consult with now and then (a "hot-line" on the model of those software companies provide for customers having trouble using new software).

This general description was then followed by a detailed description of certain elements of IIT's summer workshop, so that those participating in the working conference had a good idea of what instruction, handouts, and encouragement might be necessary to get technically trained peoples to feel comfortable introducing ethics into a technical course. (See the two attached outlines for details.)

II.

The second part of the program (Saturday morning) was intended to show how IIT faculty had in fact integrated ethics into technical courses (and to give some idea as well of the practical difficulties encountered). Five IIT faculty reported what they had done. (There would have been six if Marvin Camras had not had to cancel at the last minute.) The handouts (attached) should provide a good sense of the richness of the these presentations. The courses described ranged from a first-year computer course with several hundred students to a small masters-level course in public administration. Four of the five reports were success stories. The fifth--Louise Hewitt's--was primarily about failure. While her efforts to integrate ethics into her own classes had been as successful as the others, her efforts as coordinator of a multisection course (Project HAWK) to get other faculty to do

something about ethics had not been. Her failures suggest some difficulties coordinators of continuing education programs might face trying to get faculty without proper training to do anything to integrate ethics into technical courses.

III.

The third part of the program (Saturday afternoon) had two parts. The first consisted of brief presentations by Joe Wujek (IEEE), Joe Bilello (AIA), Bob Scarfo (ASLA), Georganne MacNab (NIEE), and Alex Fowler (AAAS) of materials or activities their organizations had developed or found that might be helpful for those trying to integrate ethics into continuing education (ideas for an "ethics survival kit"). (Some of the materials are attached.)

The remainder of the program (about two hours) consisted of a free-wheeling discussion of five questions the organizer had put. The questions and answers follow:

1) Can we integrate ethics into continuing education? With very little discussion it was agreed that the faculty reports that morning demonstrated that such integration was possible. At least some of the methods used at IIT could be adapted to continuing education courses (and perhaps some others, more suitable to continuing education, might be developed). There was, however, also unsolicited agreement that such integration would not be easy.

2) Should we try to integrate ethics into continuing education? Here again there was little disagreement. Of course, we should. The same rationale justifying giving future professionals some knowledge of the ethics of their professions applied as well to "retrofitting" professionals graduated too early to benefit from such training while in school. In addition, there was some feeling that people with practical experience might be in a better position to appreciate and use what they learned about ethics.

There followed some discussion of trying as well to offer free-standing ethics programs, whether as continuing education or as part of ordinary professional meetings. Some participants recounted their experiences with programs using the "e-word" (and suggested substituting "professional practice", "quality", or some other rough synonym in descriptions of what such a course would contain). The consensus seemed to be that, while free-standing ethics programs were worthwhile and should continue, they would probably never reach a very large proportion of those professionals who take continuing education programs (unless state licensing boards mandated them). Integrating ethics into ordinary continuing education programs seems the only way to reach very large numbers of professionals, especially those who (for one reason or another) don't think of themselves as in need of ethics training.

3) How should we go about integrating ethics into continuing education? The first step seems to be rewriting the standard forms inviting proposals for a course (the

"RFP") to include the question, "How will you integrate ethics into this course?" But this first step would probably not produce much change unless potential proposers were provided some guidance concerning what would be appropriate. The minimum guidance would be some written examples of what might constitute "integrating ethics into [a] course". But, given the experience at IIT, especially Hewitt's stories of failure, it seems that the professional societies would probably have to offer workshops similar to the one IIT's faculty took. This might be done--at least initially--in conjunction with annual meetings. How willing will the governing boards be to undertake such substantial changes in the way continuing education is carried out?

There were some other ideas (consistent with this first) for helping to assure that potential continuing education instructors would know how to integrate ethics. These attempted to change the general level of knowledge of ethics in the profession. One suggestion was making discussion of ethics issues a routine feature in the professional society's newsletters and magazines (something several of the professional societies have already begun to do). The architects suggested discussions in the workplace concerning issues in part ethical. Many architectural firms have "education coordinators" who routinely bring outside speakers in for a once-a-week sack lunch. Here the line between preparing the ground for integrating ethics into continuing education and actually integrating ethics all but disappeared.

4) What problems stand in the way of integrating ethics into continuing education? Apart from the scarcity of potential instructors now willing to integrate ethics (discussed above), there were two other problems cited. One was the lack of suitable materials. Shouldn't each professional society develop an inventory of existing materials a potential instructor could use either to prepare himself or to look for ideas of what to do in class? Both IEEE and the NIEE have done some of this. Another problem is giving those taking a continuing education course something they didn't bargain for. While IIT students generally appreciated the inclusion of ethics in their technical courses, wouldn't people out in the world, more jealous of their time, respond: "I signed up for a course in X; so, why are we talking about ethics?" Clearly, the ethics will have to be integral to the course, not something tacked on. The instructor will have to be able to demonstrate the importance of dealing with ethics in that context. Or could this problem be avoided simply by avoiding the "e-word"?

5) How do we solve such problems? Preparing the instructor to answer such challenges seems the obvious solution to that problem. But conference participants had several other (partial) solutions to suggest. Among them were: a) trying to get insurance companies to offer rate reductions for companies whose employees had received certified training in ethics; and b) making ethics training a requirement for continued licensing.

This discussion ended with general agreement that everyone had heard enough to get started. There was, however, some sentiment that it would be good to meet again--preferably in Washington or New York--in a year or so to hear what others had done in

the meantime, to report in turn and to discuss common problems, both those already identified and the new ones bound to emerge as experience deepens. There was also some sentiment that more professional societies--and more different kinds--be represented.

Participant evaluations of the conference (attached) were quite favorable (B+/A-range).

**INTEGRATING ETHICS INTO CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS
A WORKING CONFERENCE**

April 3-4, 1992
Burnham 4, 7th Floor
Palmer House, Chicago

Made possible by a grant from the
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Agenda

Friday, April 3

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1:00 - 1:15 pm | Welcome from Vivian Weil, CSEP Director
Introduction of participants |
| 1:15 - 2:00 pm | IIT's Approach to Integrating Ethics into
Technical Programs: The Big Picture--M. Davis |
| 2:00 - 2:45 pm | Questions |
| 2:45 - 3:00 pm | Break |
| 3:00 - 4:00 pm | Classroom Strategies, Big and Small--M. Davis |
| 4:00 - 5:00 pm | Questions and Discussion |

Saturday, April 4

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 9:00 - 9:15 am | Plan for Morning: Faculty Reports
(15 minutes of questions with each report) |
| 9:15 - 9:45 am | Charles Bauer, Computer Science |
| 9:45 - 10:15 am | Paco Ruiz, Mechanical Engineering |
| 10:15 - 10:45 am | Marvin Camras, Electrical Engineering |
| 10:45 - 11:15 am | Steve Hawk, Information Systems |
| 11:15 - 11:45 am | David Beam, Public Administration |
| 11:45 - 12:15 am | Louise Hewitt, Computer Science (& HAWK) |
| 12:15 - 1:00 pm | Lunch, informal discussion |
| 1:00 - 1:30 pm | Joe Wujek, IEEE Ethics Slide Show |
| 1:30 - 5:00 pm | Brainstorming Session organized around five
questions: 1) Can we integrate ethics into
continuing education? 2) Should we?
3) How? 4) Problems? 5) Solutions? |

INTEGRATING ETHICS INTO TECHNICAL COURSES: CLASSROOM STRATEGIES

3 April 1992
 Burnham 4, Palmer House
 3:00-3:30 pm & 4:00-4:30 pm

Overall strategy of workshop: present professional ethics as continuous with ordinary professional knowledge (not as a mystery or as part of philosophy, religion, or ordinary common sense).

- I. Definitions (most on first day--with warning that if, on reflection, any seems wrong, it probably is--purpose is to clarify what we already know about professional ethics, not to provide new information).
 - A. Morality--those standards of conduct everyone (that is, all rational persons) wants everyone else to follow even if their following them would mean he had to do the same.
 1. Morality is "universal" (applying to everyone), but not necessarily "absolute" (that is, applying without exception). e.g. "Don't kill [except in self-defense. etc.]"
 2. Morality is also connected with our "feelings" (what we want), but not necessarily simply a matter of "feelings" (since those who must want morality must be "rational persons" and the feeling must be the same for everyone).
 - B. Law--those standards of conduct applying to members of a certain group whether or not every member wants every other to follow them (and whether or not the standards are morally permissible).
 1. This is wide sense of "law", including custom and other positive social rules, as well as rules governments make and enforce.
 2. Morality must win assent to affect conduct, but law may do so by external pressures (whether punishment, cash incentives, or the praise or blame others give).
 - C. Ethics--those morally permissible standards of conduct every member of a group wants all other members to follow even if their following them would mean he had to do the same.

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1. Ethics is just a "special morality" (that is, standards of conduct those subject to them want in force--like morality--but applying only to members of a group, not to all rational persons).
 2. Ethics is relative in a sense (different groups having different standards), but not relative in a way inconsistent with the universality of morality (the standards of a group can be a kind of ethics only if the standards are morally permissible).
 3. Professional ethics is, then, just the ethics of a particular kind of group, a profession (and, like the special standards of any other group, must be learned from the group).
 4. The ethics of a group can be morally binding on its members, when they are, because of the principle of fairness ("Don't cheat"). That is, they are morally binding when:
 - a) the standards are morally permissible,
 - b) membership in the group is more or less voluntary (that is, if you don't want to achieve such-and-such a contingent purpose, you needn't join the group),
 - c) satisfying the group's standards is in itself burdensome, and
 - d) obtaining the benefits the group provides is contingent (at least in part) on most members of the group conducting themselves according to the group's standards.
- D. Profession--a number of individuals trying to make a living by providing others with a service according to a common morally-permissible standard beyond what law, market, and morality require.
1. High salary, high status, state licensing are only contingently related to being a member of a profession.
 2. Learning, organization, and control of entry are probably necessary; learning, to provide a useful service beyond what the market requires; organization, to assure coordination of individuals; and control of entry, to keep the profession a voluntary association.

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3. Special morally permissible standard of conduct--a code of ethics--is what makes a particular profession that profession. Particular "technical" standards of practice are best thought of as part of the code of ethics (or, at least, as part of what the code of ethics requires of someone claiming to practice that profession).

-----questions (up to half hour)-----

- II. How to teach ethics (again, no surprises): basically, use same rational methods as for technical problems.
 - A. Similarities between ethics codes and other professional standards:
 1. Same purpose as other standards, namely
 - a. Standardize profession's work
 - b. Protect public, serve client, etc.
 2. Similar development
 - a. Began with common sense
 - b. Modified based on experience of profession
 - c. Never final (since experience continues)
 3. Needs practical context to make sense
 - a. Each profession is defined by a certain sort of judgment, not merely by the knowledge such judgment presupposes (e.g. you are not an engineer because you know what engineers know but because you can--and generally do--show the good judgment characteristic of engineers).
 - b. Judgment can only be exercised in a context. (Indeed, a large part of what makes a professional's judgment useful is its ability to appreciate certain features of certain contexts.)

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- B. How to identify ethics problems in what you teach
1. Read your profession's code of ethics--what issues?
 2. Draw on your practical experience--what bothered you?
 3. Ask practitioners what comes up in their work?
 4. Collect newspaper stories, novels, short stories, and the like that deal with your profession--what comes up there?
 5. Look through texts on your profession's ethics.
 6. Think about writing a report on research, design work, or evaluation of the material you are teaching: what problems arise in reporting technical results?
 7. Ask: how could the activity in which such technical judgment would be relevant harm someone or embarrass members of my profession?

C. Format for discussion in class

1. State problem (e.g. "There's something about this decision that makes me uncomfortable" or "Do I have a conflict of interest?")
2. Check facts (many problems disappear upon closer examination of situation, while other change radically).
3. Identify relevant factors--e.g. persons involved, laws, professional code, other practical constraints (e.g. under \$200).
4. Develop list of options (be imaginative, try to avoid "dilemma")
5. Test options, using such tests as the following:

Harm test--does this option do less harm than any alternative?

Publicity test--would I want my choice of this option published in the newspaper?

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Defensibility test--could I defend my choice of this option before a Congressional committee or committee of my peers?

Reversibility test--would I still think choice of this option good if I were one of those adversely affected by it?

Colleague test--what do my colleagues say when I describe my problem and suggest this option as my solution?

Professional test--has my professional organization taken a position on this option?

6. Make a tentative choice based on steps 1-5.
7. Review steps 1-6, that is, asking once more (or until you are satisfied):

Does your choice solve original problem?

Does it take into account all relevant facts, including those that came to light in the course of your deliberations?

Have you give due weight to all relevant factors?

Have you overlooked any options?

Have you done enough testing?

Did you choose on the basis of reasons developed?

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IIT'S APPROACH TO INTEGRATING ETHICS INTO TECHNICAL PROGRAMS
THE BIG PICTURE

3 April 1992, 1:15-2:00 pm
4 Burnham Room, Palmer House
Chicago, IL

Plan of Session

- 1) IIT's experiment (45 minutes)
- 2) questions (45 minutes)
- 3) classroom techniques and underlying strategy as presented to faculty in IIT's workshop (about 60 minutes)
- 4) questions (about 60 minutes)

I. Introduction

A. Problems we set out to solve

1. No room
2. Discomfort (not my field)
3. Lack of student interest

B. Our solution: the NSF-sponsored project

1. Summer workshop for about 15 IIT faculty--one/year for 3 years (with different faculty)
2. Backup--files, purchase of books, consultations, continuing seminar
3. Working conference for continuing educators--3-4 April 1992
4. Interdisciplinary component (1 pilot)--next year
5. External workshop for faculty of other institutions

II. The Workshop, 30 hrs in class over 7 days

Day One (3 hrs): INTRODUCTION

Define key terms (prudence, morality, law, ethics, etc.)--do some of this later today

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case discussion (typical business ethics case)
 method (what to look for, how to argue)
 preview of issues in professions

Day Two (3 hrs): MORAL THEORY (enough to see not needed)

- a) utilitarianism (effects)
- b) kantianism (distribution of effects)
- c) social justice (Rawls), virtue theories (MacIntyre), pluralism (Gert), relativism, and moral minimums (common core)

Day Three (3 hrs): PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

definition
 reexamination of the case discussed earlier as professional ethics case
 ethics as context of professional work (how to identify issues)
 how to do ethics in classroom (case study method, vignettes, exam question, student-led discussions, written case study, etc.)

Day Four (3 hrs): MORAL AND COGNITIVE ISSUES

empirical literature (what works? what doesn't? e.g. importance of discussion)
 moral issues (indoctrination, false impressions, giving one's own view)
 what teaching can do (increase awareness, provide information, improve judgment, enhance will-power) and how it can do it (in classroom, by departmental coordination of classroom, and by institution-wide activities).
 Strategies for gradual introduction

Day Five (3 hrs): PEDAGOGY

IIT's experience with teaching ethics (ROTC, science and society courses, philosophy courses, etc.)
 identifying ethical issues in typical assignments (faculty had to bring typical text with them)
 IIT resources (CSEP library)

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Day Six (6 hrs for each half group): TRY OUT

Faculty presentations of what they hope to do in class (plus discussion and critique)

Day Seven (6 hrs for each half group): TRY OUT

Problem set, exam question, or the like assignment for grading

III. The Fall--what happened?

- A. Examples of what faculty actually did?
Tomorrow morning
- B. Backup: importance?
 - 1. Important--consultations
 - 2. Not so important (library and continuing seminar)
- C. Evaluations
 - 1. students--overwhelmingly favorable (2/3's or more in each class on student evaluation form);
 - a. many seem to appreciate the ethics because it brings abstract courses closer to practice;
 - b. many of negatives claimed to have known what was taught on ethics but approved of teaching others nonetheless;
 - c. other negatives would have preferred a required course; very few who could be classed as "turned off"
 - 2. Faculty--most intend to do more on ethics than they did in fall; none intends to do less; some expressed surprise at the student reaction

IV. Side Effects

- A. Ethics Across the Curriculum was featured in a number of IIT publications--administration has embraced it as something to attract students. (At a reception last week, IIT's president pulled me aside to ask how applications were going for this summer's workshop.)
- B. Engineering faculty have begun to think there is more room in the curriculum than they thought. Asking students to choose among engineering options naturally leads to asking them to justify their choices, making it easier to build in some discussion and writing.
- C. Some faculty have also commented that ethics across the curriculum is a way to make the first two years of engineering curriculum "more relevant" and so more attractive to students. Ethics helps put analytic problems in context.
- D. Ethics Across the Curriculum has become model for campus-wide initiatives in quality, creativity, and leadership. "Leadership" in this context means mostly ability to write clearly and ability to speak forcefully either in a formal presentation or extemporaneously. "Creativity" in this context means being able to come up with new approaches to a problem or reformulate problem in ways making it easier to solve or improving the resulting solution.

V. Remaining problems

- A. One faculty (in Marketing) has asked for "ethics survival kits" into which a faculty member might reach if an ethics question unexpectedly came up. We have not figured out how to provide that--although we have helped him develop a few overheads. The idea is, in principle, still a good one.
- B. Coordination of faculty within department and between departments still remains rare. Departments have, for example, yet to take account of the fact that, thanks to a first

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year computer course most incoming students take, most second year students next year will have some sense of what professional ethics is and will probably have a copy of their profession's code in hand. Faculty I taught last year may have to advance somewhat what they will be teaching about ethics next year.

C. We still lack any rigorous way to tell how much long term effect ethics across the curriculum will have.

VI. Overall evaluation--careful planning paid off. We thought through problems in detail; tested out early ideas and materials before workshop; did a lot of listening.

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ITEMS OMITTED

Faculty Handout

IEEE Handout

AIA Handout

ASLA Handout

AAAS Handout

Participant Evaluation