

Experiences Teaching Ethics

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Outline

- Background / development
- Course structure
- Experiences
- Conclusions

Background

- Developed under a grant from the National Council of Examiners for Engineers and Surveyors
- Fill a need for survey-specific ethics education needed by state licensing boards and others

Background

- Developed by Steve Frank, NMSU
- Dr. Knud Hermansen, University of Maine
- Dr. Danny Scoccia, NMSU (Philosophy)

Background

- Introduced in January 1999
- Initially taught at both NMSU and UMaine
- Reviewed by NCEES and several state licensing board members as well as by a select review panel

Course Structure

- A basic manual that is available in either hardcopy or electronic format
- A supplemental manual of Case Studies
- A series of 9 homework problems
- A final examination
- Available over the Internet
- Available by videotape/DVD

Course Structure

- Course manual
 - Introduction
 - Discussion of professionalism
 - Discussion of ethics & professional ethics
 - Discussion of ethical canons or tenets
 - Discussion of practical solving of ethics

Course Structure

- Case Studies manual
 - 20 case studies from selected ethical situations involving licensed land surveyors
 - Exploration of issues and possible solutions
 - Discussion of acceptable and best solutions

Course Structure

- Homework problems
 - An example homework and answer provides
 - Each assignment gives a scenario involving different ethical aspects related to surveying
 - Constitutes 60% of final course grade

Course Structure

- Final examination
 - Multiple-choice
 - ½ on background, ½ on ethical situations
 - One hour to complete
 - Taken by email, fax or mail (with proctor)
 - 40% of final course grade

Course Structure

- Available over the Internet
 - All material is in electronic form
 - Posted on a secure site (WebCT)
 - Homework is emailed to instructor either individually or in batches
 - Student arranges for final exam (initially given over the Internet but now only by fax)

Course Structure

- Available by videotape/DVD
 - 15 hours of videotaped lecture/discussion
 - Added cost of \$100 US for video/DVD
 - All course materials provided in hardcopy format and mailed to the student
 - Students may use another's material if they sign up for Internet option

Experiences

- Course also taught on-campus in a classroom
- Expanded course materials including other professional aspects of surveying (e.g. contracts, testifying in court, etc.)
- Given to other US surveying programs

Experiences

- Distance course originally taught for one university credit
- High demand for asynchronous services
- Small part of NMSU distance education program which is NOT asynchronous

Experiences

- Students from across the US
- Primarily licensed land surveyors
 - Fulfilling continuing education requirements
 - Fulfilling board disciplinary requirements

Experiences

- 120 students enrolled by January 2007
- Average 10-15 students at any one time
- 16 students failed to complete the course
- 75 Internet / 63 videotape

Experiences

- Almost ½ the students from 2 states
 - Kentucky
 - North Carolina
- Average completion grade 84.1%
 - High grade 95.9%
 - Low grade 41.7 %

Experiences

- No grade disparity noted between those taking the Internet vs videotape
- Grade spread appears normal (e.g. comparable to in-class grading)
- Videotape students twice as likely not to complete the course

Experiences

- Time to Complete Course
 - 8% by one month
 - 26% by two months
 - 45% by three months
 - 80% by six months
- 3% took longer than one year!

Experiences

- Time to Complete Course
 - Fastest completion – 10 days
 - Slowest completion – 521 days
 - Average completion time – 125 days

Experiences

- Feedback from students generally favorable
- Many students felt that they had gained significant knowledge
- Some older students had problems

Conclusions

- The ethics course works well for both distance and on-campus students
- The distance ethics course appears to satisfy state licensing board needs
- Continued course development ongoing

Thank you!

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