

Ethics Matters

An Outcomes Centered Ethics Course for Pre-Service Teachers Using Case Histories

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## Abstract

It is necessary for inexperienced teachers to become more critically aware of moral/ethical issues they may encounter in their careers, and the extended consequences of such issues, as well as their particular responsibility to learning, to students, to the profession, and to the institution for which they work. This study explores the effectiveness of using the analysis of pertinent case histories to help pre-service teachers develop increased awareness and higher judgmental skills with respect to moral/ethical issues relating to the profession. The results of this study were obtained through questionnaires, student written responses, and interviews with the students, and field notes done during observations. Findings reveal the effectiveness of using case histories in teaching ethics with the purpose of increasing awareness of ethical issues and enhancing judgmental skills. The use of a color rubric was found to facilitate student awareness of the extended effects of a particular situation, the need for a formalized manual of case histories for use in Ethics classes was identified.

*Keywords:* moral/ethical judgment; case histories; color rubric

## Introduction

Nearly thirty years of experience as a teacher, Principal of Secondary School, and Director of a school have led me to the realization that many teachers, and particularly inexperienced teachers, are not equipped to deal effectively with the moral and ethical implications of some of the situations that they may encounter in the practice of their profession. Yost (1997) refers to Goodlad's (1990,1994) concern that teacher education programs do not provide pre-service teachers with the knowledge and judgmental skills that will allow them to critically judge moral/ethical situations concerning students, schools and community. Tibbits and Torney-Puerta (1999) refer to the need for adequate teacher preparation at the pre-service level, "It is essential to pay attention to the needs of teachers. Any citizenship education program which is to be successful in the long run will motivate "teachers as learners" and will give them valuable professional development tools. To this end, well designed training experiences are essential, and those organized at the pre-service level are especially important." (p. 2)

The Institución Universitaria Colombo Americana is dedicated to the formation of bilingual teachers. Part of this mission is to help students develop clear moral/ethical standards and judgment proper to the profession. It is therefore the duty of the faculty of the institution to try to provide future teachers with a high level of moral/ethical judgment with which to assume their responsibility as role models and affront a variety of circumstances in which their convictions will be tested. Although at their future jobs they will most likely be provided with school policies, community handbooks, and teacher's handbooks, most young teachers are easily confused when faced with real life situations. ÚNICA is determined to provide its students with the moral/ethical awareness and criteria that a healthy society requires.

This research project will explore the effectiveness of the methodology of using real life case histories for this purpose. The theories of moral development of Piaget (1965), Kohlberg (1971), and Rest (1984, 1999) were considered. The main objective of this investigation, that is, to determine if moral/ethical judgment can be enhanced through the study of case histories, was based upon those outlined by David Ozar (2001), with reference to four areas identified by James Rest (1984), in an article titled “Outcomes Centered Ethics Teaching”, which appeared in *Teaching Ethics* (vol.2, pp.1-29).

The literature review will refer to research carried out on the methodology used in teaching Ethics, as corresponds to the teaching profession. Frisque and Kolb (2010) refer to Hatcher (2002), stating that codes of conduct provide professionals with a standard of what is right. Ethics training that includes discussion of professional codes helps develop skills and knowledge about professional responsibility. Frisque and Kolb (2010) also mention that Davis (1993) says that codes of conduct that govern the members of a profession are not just “common sense” but should be included in the curriculum, because they offer clarity and direction for the students. Codes of ethics for teachers used in this course are the National Education Association (NEA) Code of Conduct and The State of Connecticut Code of Ethics for Teachers, both of which provide different but well outlined standards. However, Campbell (2008) reminds us that formalized codes and official statements made by government, teachers’ associations, and accreditation organizations can be either a useful source of guidance or they can be focused only on legal and contractual obligations, and are not the “defining measure of a teacher’s ethical role (p. 366). Also Bayer and Braxton (2009) are in agreement with Wagner (1996) that Codes of Ethics should not list what the individual should or should not do but rather should draw attention to the array of moral conduct and responsibility which demonstrates the highest

standards in carrying out our roles as teachers (p.10). This leads us to believe that Codes of Ethics are useful as a basis, but certainly not exclusively the format for a well-developed Ethics course.

Pre-service teachers at ÚNICA studied a variety of real life situations chosen to help students reach higher levels of awareness of the impact that a particular action might have on learning, the well-being and reputation of the wider community, and an institution. The case histories used in this study are based upon real situations compiled by the professor for the course. The methodology used with the case histories will include a rubric created as a tool for classifying the seriousness of the cases analyzed.

As it is virtually impossible to predict the actual impact of this course on the conduct of these students in the future years of their practice, the study concentrates on the outcomes that are observable in the course. Data collection was carried out through questionnaires, interviews, written responses, and field notes made by the teacher. An analysis is made of how students broaden their capacity for moral/ethical judgment beyond a conventional basic standard by means of the study of case histories. It also defines the usefulness of a rubric to help analyze the cases.

### **General Objective**

The main goal of this study is to determine if tenth semester pre-service teachers can reach a higher level of clear, logical and careful judgment (Rest, 1984) of ethical/moral issues through the study of case histories.

### **Specific Objectives**

- a. Observe if there is an increase in awareness of ethical/moral issues and the extended implications that may evolve from them.
- b. Identify the type of case histories that are most effective when used to increase student's level of moral/ethical judgment in situations involving teachers.
- c. Evaluate the effectiveness of the use of a rubric to facilitate the classification of the seriousness of the case histories.

### **Research Questions**

#### **Main research question**

- a. How do 10th semester students at ÚNICA reach a higher level of moral/ethical judgment by analyzing case histories?

#### **Sub questions**

- a. In which ways do students learn to identify extended consequences of a particular occurrence?
- b. What kinds of case histories bring students up to the level of demonstrating moral/ethical judgment in educational situations?
- c. How effective is the use of a rubric for the classification of the case studies in terms of seriousness?

## Theoretical Framework

### Ethics

Ethics has always been a concern. Just what it is that we hope to “teach”, or better, prompt the development of, is abstract and extremely difficult to define. There is any number of documents concerning the ethical practice of almost every profession imaginable. However, the ethics involved in the teaching profession is understandably more delicate. John Dewey (1897) reminds us “that every teacher should realize the dignity of his calling; that he is a social servant set apart for the maintenance of proper social order and the securing of the right social growth.”

Aristotle (trans. 1962) pointed out that everything at which we strive to be excellent requires practice, and that this includes being virtuous. “We become just by the practice of just actions, self-controlled by exercising self-control, and courageous by performing acts of courage. Hence, it is no small matter whether one habit or another is inculcated in us from early childhood; on the contrary, it makes...all the difference” (1962, pp. 34-35), as quoted by Benninga (2003, p. 3). Benninga mentions that an Ethics program developed by the University of Minnesota has been adapted to several professional training programs, including teachers. The program is based upon the Four-Component Model of Moral Maturity (moral sensitivity, the awareness of how our actions affect other people; moral judgment, based on the theories of Piaget (1965 and Kohlberg (1971); moral motivation, having moral values be a priority over personal values; and moral character where individuals act on moral conviction). Benninga suggests the use of role-play and related strategies as well as direct teaching of criteria as methodology for the program (pp. 2-3).

Jean Piaget’s theory of child development laid the foundation for almost all theories of moral development (1932/65). These stages are explained very simply by Larry Nucci (2008) as:



the “heteronomous” stage where children obey rules and authority and do duties, where they do not consider the perspective of others, with wrong doing being followed by punishment; next children begin to develop the “autonomous” stage where they consider that rules can be applied selectively as based upon a particular goal and mutual respect. Finally, the young person begins to act from a sense of reciprocity and respect resulting from the transition from egocentrism to perspective taking, where all involved parties feel fairness. All development is the result of action, and moral development is not an exception. (pp. 2-5).

### **Moral/ethical development**

Laurence Kohlberg (1969) refines and restructures the theory of Piaget and outlines six stages for moral/ethical development. W.C. Crain (1985) outlines these stages very comprehensively in chapter seven of *Theories of Development*. Level One is called Preconventional Morality and consists of Stage One – Obedience and Punishment Orientation (young children base moral judgment on rules and the punishment resulting from bad behavior) and Stage Two - Individualism and Exchange (different individuals have different points of view and punishment should be avoided). Level Two, referred to as Conventional Morality, includes Stage Three – Good Interpersonal Relationships (people should meet the expectations of their immediate community, there should be good feelings and good motivation) and Stage Four – Maintaining the Social Order (concerns society as a whole, and one should act in accordance with social order). Level Three, called Postconventional Morality, consists of Stage Five – Social Contract and Individual Rights, “the rights and values that a society ought to uphold” and “society is best conceived as a social contract into which people freely enter to work toward the benefit of all”, based upon basic rights and democratic procedures), and Stage Six – Universal Principles (treating the interests of all parties in an impartial manner and with equal respect, the

universal principle of justice). Admittedly, Stage Six is reached by a very few such as Martin Luther King or Gandhi, as Kohlberg himself recognizes. (pp.5-12).

### **Teaching Ethics**

The document that has most influenced this study, and indeed set the outcomes for the course, is David Ozar's article entitled *Outcomes-Centered Ethics Teaching* (2001), in which he builds upon developmental psychologist James Rest's (1984) four aspects of moral life. James Rest (1984) is the force of transition leading to the objectives that an Ethics course for pre-service teachers must strive for. These are presented by David Ozar (2001) as follows:

- a. Awareness or sensitivity to what is morally/ethically at stake in a situation.
- b. Reasoning and Other Reflection Skills, leading to judgments about what ought to be done in a situation, given the data on what is morally/ethically at stake in the situation.
- c. Motivation/Conviction, that is, the person's conscious affirmation of and pattern of living habitually according to certain values/principles/ideals that lead to actions in accord with his or her moral/ethical judgments.
- d. Implementation or the practical and emotional ability to carry out the course of action that a person has judged ought to be done and is motivated to do. (p.4)

Ozar uses the terms "ethical" and "moral" interchangeably, and defines them as "a question in which we are concerned with what someone ought to do because someone's well-being or virtue or rights or duties are at issue or at stake." Ozar uses Rest's four aspects to formulate the "baseline" for the average student (young adult) entering a course and projects in "general terms" what he considers to be the ideal outcomes for an Ethics course. He states that the average student has an important awareness of personally relevant values/principles/ideals

such as honesty and integrity among others, and some social-relational ones such as cooperation, equality etc.

Throughout the course, students should develop an articulate awareness of these values, and recognize additional values needed to engage in moral/ethical reflection in not only private but also social/public situations in relationship to what is transcendent and or sympathetic to others' "needs". This can be stimulated by having students share hypothetical cases or events from their own lives, thus allowing them to demonstrate their awareness through discussion (pp.5-6). Regarding reasoning/reflective skills, Ozar states that the average student "reasons logically on simple moral/ethical issues", but is generally unable to grasp "the elements and patterned contents of the different modes of moral/ethical reflection" or "to speak in detail of their effort" to do so. Therefore, students should develop the ability to give articulate judgment, based upon "logical...clear...careful" moral reflection. "The most direct means of assessing students' reasoning/reflective skills is by means of case-based discussions and written assignments, whether the cases are hypothetical or drawn from current events or the student's own lives." He also emphasizes that students should learn several conceptual tools developed by scholars of moral/ethical reflection (p. 5-6).

As for motivation/conviction, Ozar feels that the average student does not frequently think about his/her reasons for having the values/principles/ideals that they hold, and that they are very often habitual rather than "decision and choice-based." They must then grow in these motivations/convictions by becoming more appreciative of these in others, and demonstrating them by "embodying them concretely in their lives and work" so that others see and are motivated to follow the example set, or "are repelled by the lack of values/principles/ideals that they admire"(p.7). This involves both verbal and nonverbal communication and is the most

difficult to achieve.

Finally, regarding implementation, students generally have limited experience with “situation specific challenges other than family, school and limited social or work environments”, although they are able to give solutions to practical and emotional difficulties and relate this experience to other situations they will eventually encounter. They should be made aware of their abilities and helped to become more conscious and articulate of these abilities. They should know the limits of their own skills and be able to refer to resources available for resolving a problematic situation.

Ozar suggests some teaching strategies for an undergraduate Ethics course. He advocates guided discussion rather than lecture and suggests that “the use of cases to make the issues concrete is almost always helpful and often essential” to promoting better reasoning/reflective skills. “Assessment in this area is carried out most efficiently through class discussions and written assignments about typical cases”. (p.8).

It should be part of the routine to have students discuss ethical issues and cases and offer their judgments about what ought to be done. Such an interactive environment enhances awareness. Students should also write essays in which they give an analysis of an ethical case along with a judgment, while giving reasons. It is also useful to employ a particular set of conceptual tools which the teacher has already explained, and give students the opportunity to practice with them during class discussions (p.11).

It was pointed out by Chubbuck, Burant, and Whipp (2001) that pre-service teachers bring with them moral orientation and sensibilities which provide a basis for a more profound participation in an Ethics course. These can both stimulate and challenge growth. “Vivid stories about practicing teachers provided the grist for grappling with moral concerns. And throughout

discussions among peers in teacher education classes or with other college students on campus brought the moral dimension into focus, helping pre-service teachers extend their ideas and consider wider perspectives. Our participants' fusion of thought and emotion in these interpersonal sites seemed to spark stronger engagement with the moral dimension, and along with that, the program content", (pp.109-130). This finding coincides with the theory of Ozar (2001) in which he outlines the desired outcomes of the course regarding the average student's level of awareness and reasoning/ reflective skills. Carr (1993), as quoted by Campbell (2007) explains teacher ethics in the following way; "The knowledge and understanding which should properly inform the professional consciousness of the competent teacher is...a kind of moral wisdom or judgment which is rooted in rational reflection about educational policies and practices and what is ethically, as well as instrumentally, appropriate to achieve them" (p. 604).

### **Literature Review**

Concerning the use of case histories to promote higher levels of moral/ethical judgment, many interesting studies have been carried out, and contemporary leaders in the field conclude that this is an effective way to help pre-service teachers enhance their awareness of the delicacy of many situations that they will affront in their careers. The use of real life situations to teach the skills of moral judgment is as old as time. We need only to be reminded of the methodology used by Jesus in His parables. It is simply easier for a person to relate to something that is common to their own experience. It is then no surprise that the same methodology should be equally effective when used to prepare pre-service teachers.

It is logical to presume that our students bring with them a well-established basis for moral/ethical judgment and skills to carry it out, but, given what has been outlined in the theoretical framework; there is still room for further development. Davis and Davey (2007) stress

the importance of treating students with respect during discussion for several reasons: people cannot be forced to have the same values, they do not come to an ethics course without values, they may have values they have not yet examined, and they may still need to develop reasoning skills and the confidence needed to act according to their values.

In agreement with Socrates' belief that ethics can be described as knowing what should be done, and that this knowledge can be taught, Tripathy, Chavan and Jain (2007), in their study carried out with college teachers and concerning the development of a code of ethics in the field of education, effectively used ten case histories to carry out a study in which she refers to the conclusions outlined by James Rest (1984). Tripathy mentions the fact that dramatic change can occur in terms of the basic problem-solving strategies used to deal with ethical issues by young adults in their 20s and 30s. This can be associated with the number of years of formal education, and that the use of a deliberate formal curriculum to influence awareness and reasoning or judgment concerning moral problems has been shown to be effective. The questions her students answered were based upon recognizing the issue, getting the facts, evaluating the alternative actions from various moral perspectives, making a decision, and learning from the case (p. 2). Brooke (2008) is a great advocate of the use of case histories both in the classroom and on line. She considers that the Socratic dialogue that results from the analysis of concrete situations promotes higher order thinking skills and stimulates students to think about how they might respond to a particular situation. It also is beneficial in developing the skill of step by step planning (p. 1).

The document of Fleischmann, Robbins and Wallace (2009) does not concern pre-service teachers, but rather information professionals, none the less, the findings are very relevant. It discusses the use of pedagogically structured case histories, in which students make multiple

interdependent decisions while doing role play, each with a different ethical decision. Students answer open-ended questions at the end of the semester. After discussion the teacher provided students with the results of the cases, taking into account the students conclusions. The findings support the use of developing and evaluating case histories as beneficial. In these findings, students were reported to have considered the values of others, particularly on an intercultural basis, which indicates that they had increased their level of “motivation/conviction”, as outlined by Rest (1994), with respect to the “desired level” which Ozar (2001) formulates.

Mark Carter (2010) treats several questions in his paper, *Professional Ethics in Teaching: The Training and Development Challenge*, which deals with both the challenges and limitations in the implementation of training and program development in ethics in teaching. One of these concerns is the use of case histories as an effective strategy in ethics training. He writes, “the use of case studies may go some way to providing consistency in the delivery of ethics training for beginning teachers and provide a context for professional dialogue and consideration of competing value positions. Case studies, in lieu of lived experience, and in anticipation of such experience, permit dialogue about competing perspectives, group and individual reflection and the collective and individual reconsideration of value positions”. Carter identifies three main components in ethical decision making: relationships amongst individuals, laws, rules, regulations, and codes of conduct, and values and cultural influence. He indicates that case studies promote professional dialogue about teaching and that “these cases must contain uncertainties because teaching is full of uncertainties.” He proceeds to give several examples of cases and discussion questions (pp.5- 7). He also concludes that the use of a code of conduct provides some guidance as well (p.3).

Davis and Davey (2007) evaluated a workshop entitled *Teaching Teachers Ethics: An*

*Analysis of Instructional Methods, Key Concepts and Effects on Teachers*, which was given in June of 2007 by the Miami Dade County School and the Youth Ethics Initiative to offer teachers curriculum and instructional methods for teaching Ethics. Their objectives were to help students “feel safe” in expressing their opinions, develop creative “ethical analysis”, define issues and “examine moral justification”, and use a “constructivist approach” about what could be done and should be done. They describe the consistent use of case histories, role play and other methodologies used to teach Ethics and ethical reasoning. They concluded that the use of case histories...facilitated thinking, discussing, supporting beliefs, and considering the consequences of actions. (pp. 1-4)

The afore mentioned studies coincided greatly with the methodology used in this research paper, and confirmed that it is adequate and in some ways should enhance students’ awareness, ability to reason and reflect, and the motivation to implement their moral/ethical judgment.

## **Research Design**

### **Setting**

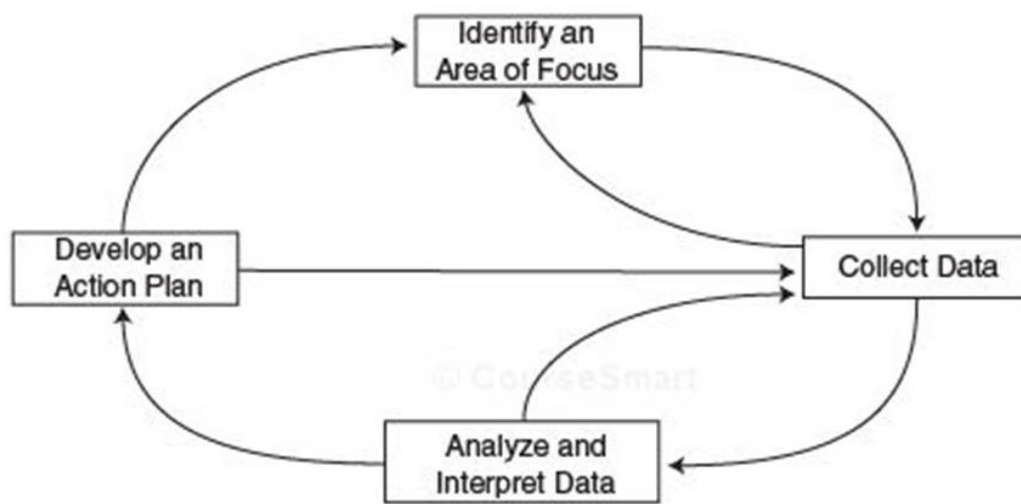
This study was carried out in a 36-hour Ethics course, requiring the students to be present, during the second semester of 2011 in the faculty of Bilingual Education in the Institución Universitaria Colombo Americana (ÚNICA), Bogotá, Colombia. This course responds to the mission of the institution which states as some of its goals: “Formar profesionales (...) de óptima calidad intelectual y ética” as well as “Conformar un equipo administrativo y pedagógico (...) con sistemas gerenciales efectivos y transparentes.”



## Population

The group, composed of eight tenth semester students between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-three and consisting of three men and five women, was required to take the course as part of the curriculum requirement. While all were doing student teaching, two had experience in private tutoring and two had experience teaching in language institutes. These pre-service teachers were involved in their first semester of student teaching in both private and public schools in the city, and arrived to class after a full day's work and a long commute.

## Research Methodology



*Figure 1.* The Dialectic Action Research Spiral (Mills, 2003, pp.18-19).

In the first phase of the project, the area of focus was identified in accordance with the principles set forth by Ozar (2001). This would be to verify if the objectives of the course were being fulfilled and if the methodology used in the course was effective. Instruments for collecting data were developed and implemented during the semester. At the end of the course, data were compared, contrasted, and interpreted, and findings were established as reliable. The

findings established a course of action to be perused in future Ethics courses, and in other applications.

### **Data Collection Techniques**

Qualitative data collection techniques were used in this project. Data collection was carried out during an 18-week semester and information was obtained through the use of the following instruments: questionnaires, essays involving written analysis of case histories, interviews with the students, and teacher observation.

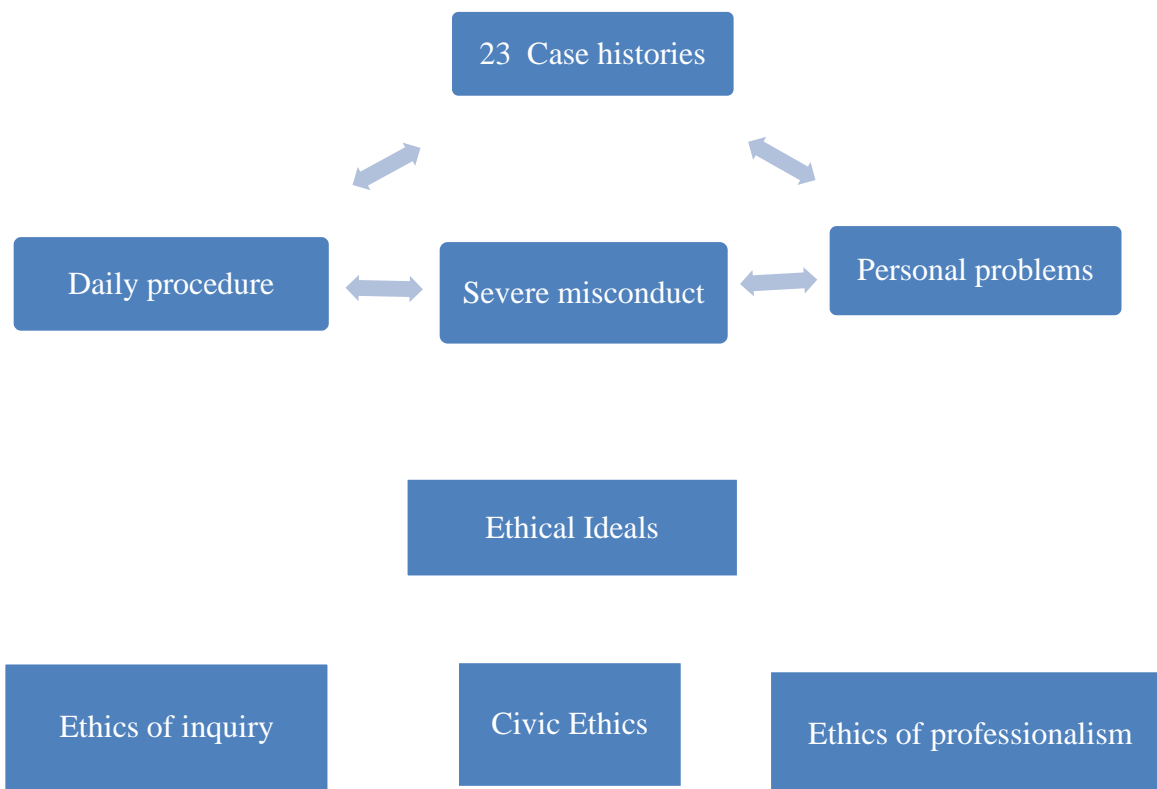
The following table displays the techniques implemented:

<b>Data Collection Techniques</b>		
<b>Technique</b>	<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Survey	Questionnaire formats Appendices A and B	The main objective was to identify students' expectations for the Ethics course according to the research questions for the study. The second survey determined if students' expectations had been fulfilled.
Document analysis	Students' written responses	The main goal was to measure by individual written responses if students were applying and reaching the objectives of the course bearing in mind the research questions. This document analysis also revealed if students were becoming aware of moral ethical issues and broadening the scope of their moral ethical judgment.
Interview	Interview format Appendix C	It gathered information through candid responses to open questions concerning the methodology used in the course and in particular the use of the color code rubric for evaluating the seriousness of the cases.
Observations	Class observation format: Field Notes Appendix D	A participant observation format was filled to record information related to students' participation and interaction when discussing and drawing conclusions based on case histories.

*Table 1, Data Collection Techniques*

## Pedagogical Intervention

The methodology used during this course consisted of the systematic study of 23 true-life situations based upon the experience of the researcher. Names and details which might lead to the identification of individuals, institutions or communities were carefully avoided. The cases varied greatly, and included situations in which pre-service teachers might find themselves during their careers. The case histories studied generally fell into three categories, which in this study are classified as cases of daily procedure, severe misconduct and personal problems. These coincide with the three sources of ethical ideals and principles recognized by the NEA, ethics of inquiry, civic ethics, and the ethic of professionalism as summarized by *School Teaching Ethics*, Education Encyclopedia (2009).



During the class, students were provided with the cases and given time to read and analyze before discussion. Usually at least two cases were discussed in each class. Students worked individually, in pairs, or in groups to analyze the cases. Students sometimes took part in role play, and acted out the situations for their classmates. Students were also given cases to read for homework, and these were discussed in the next class. Students would mention alternative courses of action that might have been taken to avoid the incidents. They determined the repercussions on the extended community, as well as the possible disciplinary consequence.

Periodically students were asked to write their reactions to a case. These were evaluated by the teacher and later discussed. Students were asked to grade themselves according to how well they identified the issues and the gravity of the case. They were also asked to suggest an adequate consequence for the offender, according to the due process used in disciplinary matters.

To help students determine the seriousness of the cases, a color rubric, developed by the researcher was used. The rubric was inspired by the NEA Code of Ethics of the Education Profession (1975) and the Connecticut Code of Professional Responsibility for Teachers (2009). This rubric is composed of five categories, blue, green, orange, yellow, and red, blue being the least serious and red being the most serious. The following criteria are outlined for each color: school rules or code of conduct; student involvement; students' well-being at risk; impact on learning; danger to the reputation of colleagues, the profession or the institution; severity of disciplinary action required. (See appendix E).

Students read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students read and analyze before discussion</li></ul>
Case analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In pairs or in groups analyze the cases</li></ul>
Course of action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name alternative course of action</li><li>• Determine the repercussions on the extended community</li><li>• Mention possible disciplinary consequence</li></ul>
Personal reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Write personal reactions to the case</li><li>• Teacher facilitates discussion</li></ul>
Evaluation of each case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evaluate their own conclusions according to the final analysis of each case.</li><li>• Suggest an adequate consequence for the offender, according to the due process used in disciplinary matters.</li><li>• Determine the seriousness of the cases according to the color rubric developed by the researcher.</li></ul>

### **Data analysis and interpretation**

Students were not required to give their names on the questionnaires used for this study, allowing them to answer openly. Pre-service teachers at ÚNICA responded to a questionnaire during the second session of the course in which they answered questions related to the objectives of the course: awareness, reasoning and reflective skills, motivation/conviction, and implementation (Ozar, 2001). There were seven questions which addressed a candid evaluation of their skills related to awareness, reasoning/reflection, motivation and implementation concerning moral/ethical issues. They also were asked to state their expectations for the course. Hopkins (2002) explains how this instrument for data collection can provide background information and understanding of issues that would not otherwise be available” (p.122). Students once again filled out a questionnaire consisting of ten questions in the final class of the semester. This time they were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the course and the methodology used. They were asked to comment if they felt that the course had provided them with a higher awareness of ethical/moral issues, and if it had enhanced their own ability to respond to such issues. The preliminary questionnaire was answered by only seven students due to the fact that one student entered the course during the third week.

Written responses, also used for exam grades, were taken at weeks two, thirteen, and eighteen. On these occasions students were given a case history to read and analyze. They were required to write their responses and justify their conclusions. The professor graded and commented on these responses and returned them to the students for discussion. On one occasion, students were asked to write a response to a case, and then they were given a written analysis provided by the professor and asked to grade themselves, comparing their observations with the teacher’s analysis. The final evaluation was also a written response to a case history.

Students classified the case according to a color rubric (blue, green yellow, orange, or red) and explained their reasons for choosing the color. The criteria for the rubric were violation of school rules, impact on learning, student involvement, risk for students, danger to the reputation of the teacher, the profession and the institution, and the consequences which might be required as a disciplinary measurement. The same color rubric was used along with the codes of Ethics mentioned before in class discussion of cases which did not include a written response.

Personal responses to the course were recorded through interviews carried out with the students in the final marking period of the course. They were asked to give an opinion of the methodology and their opinion as to whether or not the course had been useful to them. These responses were recorded by the teacher, after which they were read and approved by the students.

During classes the instructor took field notes regarding student response and involvement in the different methodology. The teacher was an observer and facilitator in this activity, and was limited to observation. The teacher's observation of class discussion offered the opportunity to evaluate the level of awareness and reasoning/reflection that was occurring with the students.

After having discussed what Ozar (2001) outlines as the levels of moral/ethical judgment for the average college student and the proposed outcomes for the course, students candidly answered the preliminary questionnaire. It is interesting to note that on the first questionnaire students were asked to state their expectations for the course. Four wanted to increase their awareness of moral/ethical situations that might arise while practicing their profession. Three wanted to gain experience in handling these situations. Two hoped to increase their awareness of the expected conduct for teachers, and two expressed the hope that they would become more secure in supporting their moral/ethical values. One student hoped to develop the ability to

control his/her feelings in order to be fair when dealing with these situations. Another person said, “I expect this to be the final touch of this career”, and yet another, “This course is very important to learn how to handle situations that for me will be new.”

In the final questionnaire, the pre-service teachers were asked if the course had fulfilled their expectations and if it had changed their perspective of the responsibility that being a teacher involved. They agreed that it had. “Now I know that our responsibility is huge”, “said one person, and another stated, “I was not aware of what being a good teacher implies.” In the final questionnaire, the pre-service teachers were asked if the course had fulfilled their expectations and if it had changed their perspective of the responsibility that being a teacher requires. “I know this is not as easy as I thought it was.” Someone else replied, “Sometimes we think of ourselves, but not in others or the students’ safety and learning.” And finally, “I think that the class has opened my eyes to see the huge responsibility we have. I learned a lot!!” One hundred percent of the students felt that the class had indeed fulfilled their expectations.

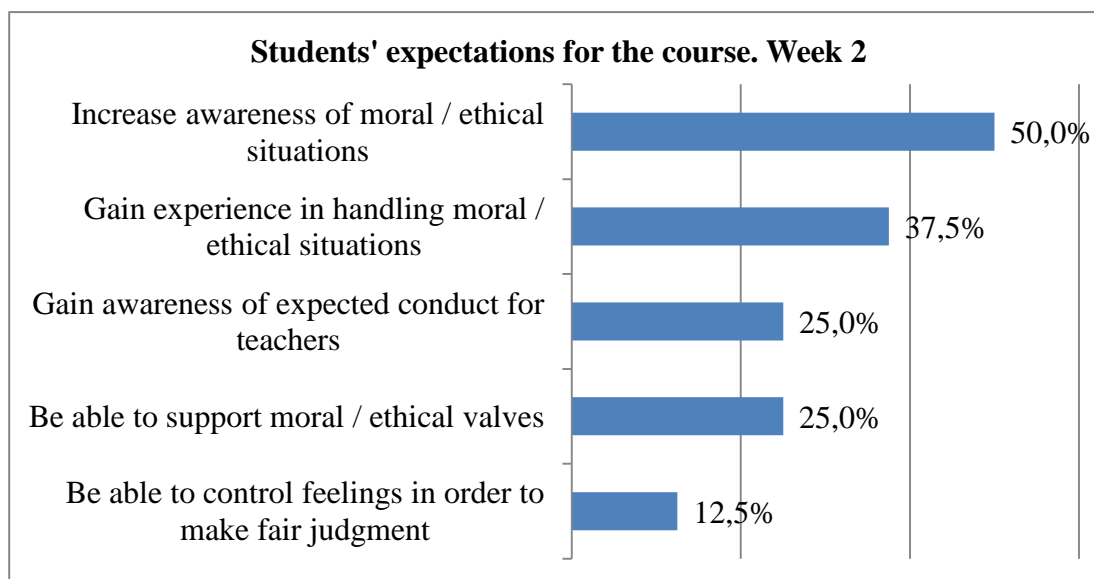


Figure 2. Students' expectations for the course. Week 2



**Main Research Question – How do 10<sup>th</sup> semester students at ÚNICA reach a higher level of moral/ethical judgment by analyzing case histories.**

The triangulation studied to evaluate this question is based upon the initial questionnaire; three written responses collected throughout the course, teacher observation recorded sporadically, interviews with the students, and the final questionnaire and evaluation of the course.

The initial questionnaire, taken by seven students at the onset of the course, revealed that only one of the pre-service teachers felt that he/she might be able to be logical, clear and careful in discussing ethical issues with others. For example, one student answered, “I have some knowledge, but I do not feel I have enough to be able to discuss these topics with another party”. None felt secure about voicing their opinion. Two expressed fear and three said that they preferred not to get involved. One response was, “Sometimes I feel scared of saying something that may become a problem.” When asked if they were able to explain their reasons for adhering to their moral/ethical values, six felt that they could if necessary and one felt that it would be difficult. When questioned if they considered themselves able to discern their limitations when directing others to seek support or advice, five responded no and only two yes.

In the final questionnaire there were now eight students present who were asked questions with reference to the Main Research Question. Their responses were unanimous. Regarding the ability to be logical, clear and careful in discussing moral/ethical issues with others, all eight students felt that they were able. “The case histories were really useful since we had to think about all of the consequences the case might bring.” Following are some other responses: “By being precise with your ideas, you should not leave room for misinterpretations of any kind.” “I think I have more wisdom.” All but one of the students felt that they were

motivated to defend and demonstrate their moral/ethical convictions. One said, “To be a good professional, I have to be able to defend my beliefs.” Another expressed the following, “The cases that we talked about in class let me know many things that I should pay attention to and put into practice in my conduct and discourse.” One person stated, “With each case we had the opportunity to analyze it, discuss it and give a possible solution. Although at the beginning it was difficult to analyze, since we did not have any experience, but later it was easy.” “The case studies help us think about future challenges. During the course I have seen different problems with different characteristics which help give me a clear idea of what I should do when confronting an ethical challenge.” “These are cases that we are going to face every day.”

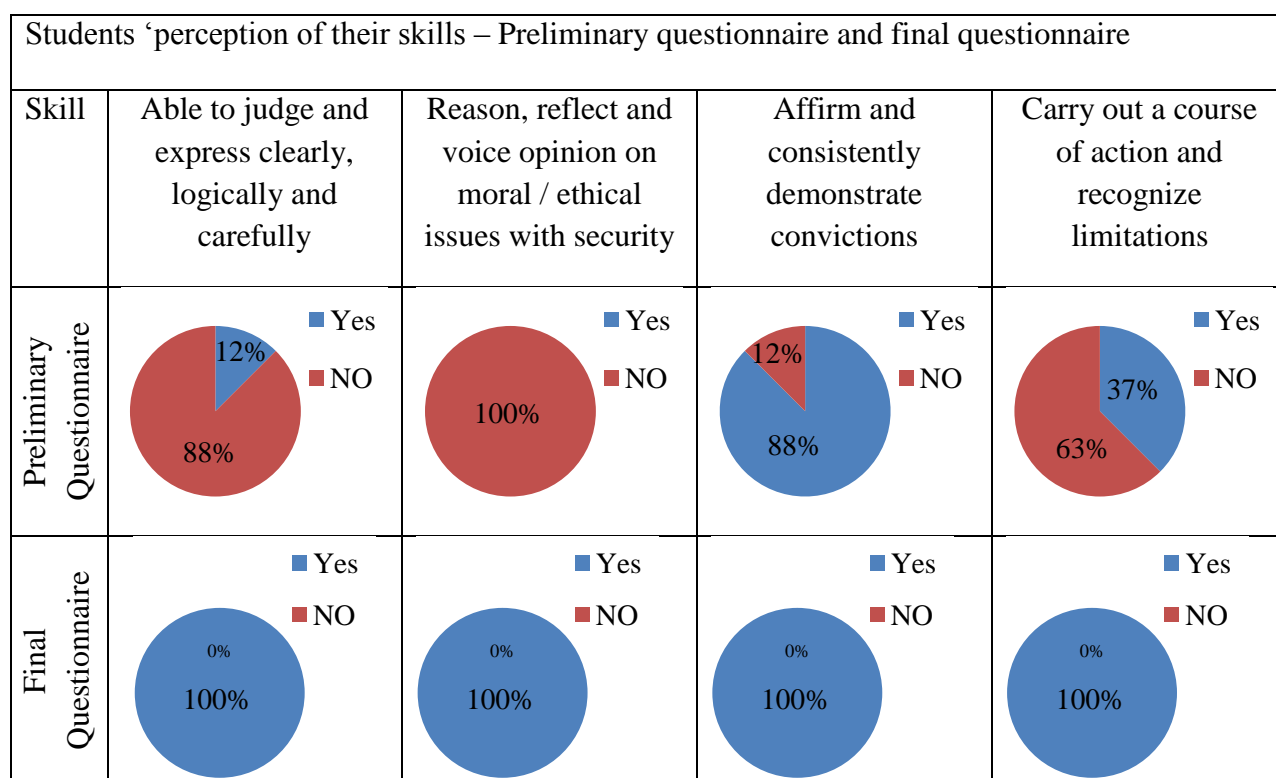


Figure 3. Students' perception of their skills – Preliminary questionnaire and final questionnaire

In class discussion during the first weeks the teacher noted that some of the students were reluctant to take a stand when discussing the cases. Others were quick to give a judgment, but

giving reasons for their opinion was not as easy for them. The teacher noted that each of the three grading periods marked an increase in logic and spontaneity in the class discussion of the cases. Even the more timid students were open and eager to give their opinion as the class progressed. When differences of opinion arose, and they did arise, all listened with attention and gave reasons for their agreement or disagreement. It is important to note that as the semester went on, students began to seek a consensus concerning the seriousness of the case and the consequences that should be applied. This is an important team work and problem solving skill which seemed to evolve throughout the course.

Three written responses done individually, one taken in each of the marking periods, revealed the following with regard to this question. The first response, carried out at the end of the first marking period, showed a wide range of results based upon the color rubric which had been provided at the beginning of the course, indicating that a unification of criteria had not been reached by the group when working individually. Although the students had been practicing during the classes using the rubric and the Connecticut Code for Teachers as well as the NEA Code, and were allowed access to these instruments to analyze the case, the results indicated heavy reliance on these instruments. None the less, there was a high degree of subjectivity and, in several cases there were contradictory statements indicating the students' lack of security in trusting their own judgment. The first case analyzed involved two teachers with personal problems. The students qualified the case in the following way: one judged the case to be blue; or not serious, three indicated yellow as the qualifier, serious, but not requiring drastic action; one felt that the case was red, and the teachers should be fired; one considered the case to be orange, serious action should be taken but the teachers should not be dismissed; two did not relate to the color rubric, but elaborated on their own criteria and either underestimated the

consequences of the case or overestimated them. Some considered all of the criteria covered by the rubric and others only considered one or two aspects. The average grade for this exercise was 4.1 over 5.0, the highest mark being 4.4 and the lowest 4.0. This indicates, as did Davis and Davy (2007), that the students bring with them an adult standard of personal judgment which is in accordance with what Ozar (2001) determined to be the average level for the typical college student. This coincides with Kohlberg's concept of Conventional Morality (1969) as outlined by Crain (1985).

At the end of the second marking period the group was given the opportunity for another written response. This time the case concerned a group of teachers whose reaction to an administrative problem resulted in severe misconduct. Admittedly the case was extremely difficult, and designed to put to test the students' judgment. The students were asked to answer the case, after which the professor collected the cases and proceeded to discuss it with the class according to the criteria of the color rubric. Following the discussion, the papers were returned to the students and they were asked to give themselves a mark according to the conclusions drawn from the discussion, and indicate what they had or had not mentioned. The instructor then reevaluated the papers and gave them a final mark. The papers indicated a marked improvement in concrete judgment. Students had been instructed to comment on the criteria of the color rubric. This time, all felt that the case was serious. Two gave the case the color red, three gave it orange and three gave it yellow. All in all, the answers exemplified maturity and thoroughness in analysis. Curiously, when giving themselves a mark, three of the students underestimated their answers, two overestimated their answers, and three gave themselves the same mark as the teacher. This seems to indicate that students were still not completely comfortable offering their own judgments, and were still within the category of Kohlberg's Conventional Morality (1969),

as mentioned by Crain (1985). Nonetheless, the results show a marked improvement.

The final written response was given in the last class of the semester. The case in question concerned daily procedure. The group as a whole showed far less confusion and much more confidence in their writing, with less dependency on the color rubric, and a high degree of objectivity, with little use of terms like “I think” etc. They considered the points of view of all of the people involved, and offered solutions. The ability to offer analysis and judgment on a given case had improved greatly. The marks ranged from 4.0 to 4.7, with the class average being 4.4. A breakdown of individual student results on the written responses can be seen in Table 4. These marks indicate that six of the students showed a marked improvement and two stayed at the same level.

Table 3. Students' responses													
<table border="1"> <tr><td>No color</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>Blue</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>Green</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>Yellow</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>Orange</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>Red</td><td>1</td></tr> </table>	No color	2	Blue	1	Green	0	Yellow	3	Orange	1	Red	1	<p>Written response # 1, week 2</p> <p>5 different responses</p>
No color	2												
Blue	1												
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Yellow	3												
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Blue	0												
Green	0												
Yellow	0												
Orange	3												
Red	5												
<p><i>Note.</i> Color rubric classifications in individual written responses showing unification of criteria throughout the course</p>													

*Table 3. Students' responses*

Results of written response #1 (week 2) and written response #3 (week 18)							
Written response # 1 week 2			Written response #3 week 18			Indicator of improvement	
Student	Score	GPA	Student	Score	GPA	Student	
8	4.3	4.1	8	4.5	4.4	8	+2
7	4.3		7	4.3		7	---
6	4.4		6	4.5		6	+1
5	4.0		5	4.0		5	---
4	4.3		4	4.7		4	+0.4
3	4.0		3	4.4		3	+0.4
2	4.0		2	4.5		2	+0.5
1	4.0		1	4.3		1	+0.3

*Table 4. Results of written response #1 (week 2) and written response #3 (week 18)*

At the beginning of the course students demonstrated insecurity and a heavy reliance on the codes and the color rubric, whereas at the end of the course, students were much more confident, logical, clear, and careful in expressing their opinions. The use of case histories as an instrument to improve moral/ethical judgment was effective, and was accepted unanimously as an excellent resource to focus on and develop higher thinking skills.

In an interview with the teacher, some of the students expressed their opinions on the use of case histories as follows:

Jessica: "I liked all the cases. I thought that some of the things that occurred in the cases could never happen, but now I realize that they can."

Viviana: "I also had an experience in my student teaching where someone told me about a problem. I knew that I probably wasn't qualified to give the advice the person needed and I recommended professional counseling, rather than try to give advice myself." This is what we talked about when we discussed the outcomes of the course, according to Ozar (2001), knowing the limits of your own capacity to judge or give advice, and how to direct the individual toward

the help they need.

Alejandro: “I liked the tricky cases because they aren’t what they seem at first, and you have to think before you decide how serious they are.”

Students responded extremely well to the study of case histories. In conclusion, it is evident that the use of real life case histories to develop a more profound moral/ethical judgment in pre-service teachers is an effective methodology and the cases used during this course should be refined and formalized into a manual for that purpose.

### **Sub questions**

**In what ways do students learn to identify extended consequences of a particular occurrence?** The preliminary questionnaire, the final questionnaire, and written responses compose the triangulation for this question.

At the onset of the course, six of the pre-service teachers felt that they could distinguish when values are in conflict in a concrete situation, and all but one person felt that they were aware of the perspectives of the multiple parties involved in a situation. All felt that they took into account the effects of moral/ethical issues on learning, on students and the extended community, and on the institution. However, this was clearly not the case but only the students’ perception.

The final questionnaire revealed contrary and very encouraging results. All of the students coincided in that they were now indeed aware of the perspectives of multiple parties, but their focus had changed considerably. One said, “I didn’t think about it before.” Another student said, “When we discuss a situation in the class, we get the point that other parties, such as students, teachers, parents and directives are affected either positively or negatively with the decisions we take.” Another mentioned, “When ethical issues are presented in cases, it is a useful



tool to establish the differences in points of view.” Yet another said, “The course showed the importance of respecting and tolerating different parties’ opinions.” Finally, “We learned more from others’ points of view.”

All of the students considered that they had learned to consider the consequences of acts, the points of view of others, and the reputation of students, fellow colleagues and the educational institutions. “After this course, I have realized that my acts can affect all of these.” One person put it this way, “sometimes we think of ourselves but not in others or the students’ safety and learning.” Also one said, “This was really useful. Sometimes we don’t think about a reputation being damaged.”

We can conclude from the responses to the questionnaire that all of the students, without exception, felt that they had benefited greatly and that their awareness of moral/ethical issues and the extended implications of these had increased, even though they had thought that they already fulfilled this at the beginning of the course. The level then of moral/ethical judgment is moving into Kohlberg’s Level Three called Post conventional Morality at Stage Five – Social Contract and Individual Rights with some indications of Stage Six – Universal Principles (1969). There is a clear progression registered in the four areas outlined by Ozar (2001) and based upon Rest (1984).

This progression is also evident in the written responses detailed in the prior research question. The consideration of repercussions of the moral/ethical issues analyzed in these responses is clear and organized while exercising careful consideration of the different parties involved.

Bearing in mind that these pre-service teachers did in fact feel that they had increased their awareness of moral/ethical issues and the extended implications that may evolve from them,

it would then be favorable to continue to strive for the desired outcomes outlined by Ozar (2001) as a basis for the objectives for future Ethics courses at ÚNICA.

**What kinds of case histories bring students up to the level of demonstrating moral/ethical judgment in educational situations?** The questionnaire filled out on the last day of class is the prime indicator in answering this question, because only then did the students have the experience with different types of cases. Teacher observation also provided criteria for evaluation, as did the individual written responses of the students.

The cases used in the course, as mentioned before, were divided into three types, cases involving daily procedure in teaching, cases involving extreme misconduct, and cases involving personal problems. All of the students found all of the cases to be useful and interesting; however, three people felt that the cases about daily procedure were the most useful because, as one person put it, “These are the cases that we are going to face every day.” Three students preferred those cases in which extreme disciplinary measurements were in order. Having said that, the students did agree that these cases were easier to identify and judge than the cases in which the moral/ethical matters were not so obvious. Two students felt that the cases concerning teachers with personal problems were most useful. As one student said, “These cases in which personal problems are involved demand higher thinking and reflection.” Another said that she had learned that, “It is better not to get involved in situations that can put your career in danger.”

Teacher observations indicate that the cases concerning the daily procedure in teaching were often harder for the students to identify the problem. Campbell (2007) quotes Hansen (1993b) with reference to daily procedure. “.... not everything that teachers do necessarily has moral significance, but any action a teacher takes can have moral import.” Campbell (2007) goes on to enumerate examples of these situations, such as the tone of the teacher’s voice, how they

display student work, organizing the work group so that all students participate, and enforcing rules consistently (p. 606). In this course, such cases involved such issues as borrowing equipment from students, responding to parental pressure, classroom management, combining personal business with school time, tutoring students, and not fulfilling duties such as lunch supervision, etc. Discussion time was often prolonged and debates would arise as to the level of guilt of the teacher in question, and what should be given as a consequence.

The cases which involved extreme misconduct, (teacher involvement with a student, spreading damaging rumors etc.) were easily identified as totally unacceptable and requiring immediate drastic consequences. Typically, the discussion time needed for the students to analyze these cases was much less than that needed for the cases where the problem was not so obvious, but the consequences dictated by the class were always extreme. It was sometimes difficult for students to understand why the teacher had been allowed to finish the term, or why he/she had not been more severely punished.

Cases where personal problems were discussed, (addictions, personal hygiene, etc.) often led to prolonged discussion, usually with the students wanting the teacher in the case fired immediately. In the first sessions of the course students were sometimes reluctant to give a candid opinion openly. As the course progressed, students were more spontaneous in their discussion.

The written responses provide an interesting indicator of the difficulty students may have encountered in analyzing the cases. The amount of writing consigned in discussing case one, which concerned a personal problem, averaged two complete pages of writing. The answers were sometimes contradictory and uncertain. The wide range of colors assigned to the case (see appendix C) testifies to this. Case two, concerning severe conduct required only one and a half

pages, and the answers were direct and conclusive. The homogenous response of the group collectively suggested that individually they did not find it difficult to identify or handle the problem. The third case, which was about daily procedure, required an average of one and a half pages for the students to analyze. The answers indicated that although they contained a high degree of critical thinking, they did not produce hesitation or indicate insecurity.

The conclusion can be drawn that the cases which should be more numerous in a collection for study should probably be those involving daily procedure and good teaching practice. This, however, does not exclude cases which illustrate extreme misconduct and or personal problems. All of the cases were valuable, as is indicated by the unanimous student response to that question on the final questionnaire.

Taking into account that there are many ways to conduct a class, a combination of methodology was used to present the cases studied. These different approaches were varied to avoid monotony. It was taken into account that the students arrived in the afternoon, after a day of student teaching, and usually a long bus ride from their schools. For that reason the professor attempted to make the class entertaining as well as instructive. As indicated before, students studied the major theories of moral development (Piaget, Kohlberg, Rest, and Ozar) at the onset of the course. This led to the consideration of the course objectives which are based upon Ozar's document (2001). Case histories were then studied in the following ways: read in class together and discussed; read in class in groups and presented and discussed; read for homework and discussed in the next class; prepared and presented in role play by groups who then led the others in discussion; prepared in pairs and presented to the class for discussion; illustrated in comic strip form by groups and presented to the class. Students were instructed to bring their color rubric and the NEA and Connecticut Codes of conduct to each class. These were used by

students to sustain their opinions in the discussion of each case.

According to the observations noted by the teacher, the students liked all of the classes but particularly enjoyed when the teacher would become an observer rather than taking the leading role in the discussion. It was noted that the students often volunteered their own experiences, and this was received very well by the rest of the class. When this occurred, the teacher would allow time for adequate attention and interaction. The response of the students would increase when students were asked to present a case taking the parts of the characters. They would assign characters and rehearse their presentation, present it, then lead a discussion with the rest of the class. The use of a comic strip presentation was also effective. Groups would be given different cases, paper and markers. They would illustrate the development of the case in drawings, within a time limit. Then they would present the sequence of drawings to the class and explain it, and lead a discussion with their classmates.

Students said that they found these methods not only productive but also relaxing after a day at work. They felt that when taking the part of the characters, they had to practice expressing themselves clearly, logically and carefully. They particularly enjoyed taking the parts of the “bad” teacher and the directives of the school. One student said, “Since we had some activities that we had to do role play, we experienced some cases where we gave opinions clearly and carefully, so as not to be a problem.” Another student said that the role play was “a lot of fun”. The classes where the students were given a case to read and discuss were well received, but there was clearly more enthusiastic participation in the more active ones.

From teacher observation and student opinion, we can conclude that more active participation in the class led to a better response from the students. Upon occasion they had a chance to laugh at each other, but their criteria for judgment were well exercised. More creative

ways of managing the class should be explored. Students should be given more opportunity to share their own experiences from school or teaching. Also, the class should be interactive to help accommodate the fatigue that ÚNICA students bring with them to an afternoon class after a full day's work and a long uncomfortable commute.

**How effective is the use of a rubric for the classification of the case studies in terms of seriousness?**

The final questionnaire offers significant information regarding the use of the color rubric. Also field notes and the student interviews verify the findings. Students were unanimous in their appreciation of the color rubric as an instrument that not only facilitates the classification of the cases but also helps to appreciate the extended consequences of a particular moral/ethical issue. The criteria of the rubric included: breaking the school rules; involvement of students in the situation and putting students in risk; impact on learning; and affecting the reputation of other persons, the profession, or the institution. These were the questions that received the most enthusiastic responses. "A lot!!!!" was the response to the question about the usefulness of the rubric. All of the pre-service teachers agreed that the color rubric was an extremely useful tool in learning to judge the moral/ethical issues in the cases. According to students, it is "a great guide with all the criteria needed to evaluate the cases presented in class." One person said, "It gave me parameters to know what color or level a case was on." Some of the comments that were written are: "It is really important to know and to follow the school's rules." "No matter the situation, the students have to be safe. I think this one is the most important. It's something I have observed many times where I am doing my practice." "Now I know when students are at risk." "We learned to pay attention to different ways of affecting learning." "This is really useful. Sometimes we don't think about a reputation being destroyed."

The teacher-researcher noted frequently that the students not only consulted the color rubric, but also referred to it in their conversations concerning cases; particularly when working in groups; it was evident that they were having fun as well. It was amusing to hear them saying that a case was white or black in order to exaggerate their opinions, or, as one student put it, “This lady is so purple!” Another comment overheard during a discussion on the result of a case was, “OK, yellow, but the kind that is sort of green.” In another group this comment was heard, “Red! And that’s because black isn’t an option.” Jessica said, “I consider that the color rubric will be a tool for the rest of my career.”

Viviana: “At the beginning of the course, when we would read a case, I saw everything as red. After a few classes I realized that some things are not what they seem at first sight, and I learned to make a balance.”

Carolina: “I liked the fact that the cases were all very different. Some cases can be red, yellow and blue at the same time. I learned to consider reasons for things.”

Ervin: “It’s like in soccer, red and yellow cards. It made a lot of sense to me.”

From these comments it is evident that this group of pre-service teachers found the color rubric a valuable asset for the course, and enjoyed using it.

It can be concluded that the color rubric is an instrument that truly facilitates the development of a more profound judgment in moral/ethical matters concerning the teaching profession. It was highly appreciated by the pre-service teachers in the course. This tool should be revised and included as a resource for future Ethics courses at ÚNICA. The following table illustrates some of the findings:

**Summary table sustaining some findings**

Research Questions	Instrument 1 Questionnaires 1 and 2	Instrument 2 Written analysis of cases	Instruments 3 Interview	Instrument 4 Field Notes	Findings
How do 10th semester students at ÚNICA reach a higher level of ethical/moral judgment by using case histories?	“The cases that we talked about in class let me know many things that I should pay attention to and put into practice in my conduct and discourse.”	The group as a whole showed far less confusion and much more confidence in the final written response. They developed objectivity, consideration of all points of view, and security in expressing opinions.	“After a few classes I realized that some things are not what they seem at first sight, and I learned to make a balance.”	One hundred percent of the students felt that the class had fulfilled their expectations.	The use of case histories as an instrument to improve moral/ethical judgment was very effective.
In which ways do students learn to identify extended consequences of a particular occurrence?	“When we discuss a situation in class, we get the point that other parties, such as students, teachers, parents, and directives are affected either positively or negatively with the decisions we take.”	“Sometimes we think of ourselves but not in others or the student’s safety and learning.”  “This is really useful. Sometimes we don’t think about a reputation being damaged.”		Class discussion revealed that all of the students took part in the analysis of the cases and became aware of the unexpected domino effect that some actions can have on a community.	The consideration of repercussions of the moral/ethical issues analyzed in these responses is clear and organized while exercising careful consideration of the different parties involved.



<p>What kinds of case histories bring students up to the level of demonstrating moral/ethical judgment in educational situations?</p>	<p>“These cases in which personal problems are involved demand higher thinking and reflection.”</p>	<p>“I liked the tricky cases because they aren’t what they seem at first, and you have to think before you decide how serious they are.”</p>		<p>Teacher observation indicated that the cases concerning the daily procedure in teaching were often harder for the students to identify the problem. However, students consistently enjoyed all of the cases.</p>	<p>Students found all types of cases to be useful and interesting. Cases involving daily procedure and good teaching practice should be more numerous in a collection. Methodology used in class should be varied and interactive, with the teacher as facilitator.</p>
<p>How effective is the use of a rubric for the classification of the case studies in terms of seriousness?</p>	<p>“I consider that the color rubric will be a tool for the rest of my career.”          “It’s like in soccer, red and yellow cards. It made sense to me.”          It is “a great guide with all the criteria needed to evaluate the cases presented.”</p>	<p>“Red, and that is because black isn’t an option.”</p>	<p>“It is really important to know and to follow school’s rules.”          “No matter the situation, the students have to be safe. I think this is the most important one.”</p>	<p>Students not only consulted the color rubric, but also referred to it in their conversation, particularly when working in groups.</p>	<p>It is evident that this group of pre-service teachers found the color rubric a valuable asset for the course, and enjoyed using it.</p>

*Table 2, Data analysis and findings*

### **Limitations in the Study**

Preliminary collection of data was affected by students' late entry. One student began the course in the second week, and therefore did not fill out the initial questionnaire. The small number of students (8) that were available to carry out the study provides a trustworthy indicator in answering the research questions, but a larger number would have been more conclusive. The small number of class hours was also a factor that might have limited the outcomes.

### **Action Plan**

Considering the conclusions drawn from each of the research questions discussed in this paper, it would be valuable for future Ethics courses for pre-service teachers at ÚNICA to put into effect several courses of action that might facilitate the institution's ideal of forming pre-service teachers with a high degree of moral/ethical judgment, who will contribute to the dignity and integrity of education in Colombia.

Case histories, as has been indicated by Benninga (2003), Ozar (2001), Chubbuck, Burant, and Whipp (2001), LeClair and Ferrel (2007), Tripathy (2007), Fleischmann, Robbins and Wallace (2009), and Davis and Davey (2007), and also demonstrated in this action research project, are undoubtedly an excellent tool for the development of higher moral/ethical judgment. The sequence to this paper will be to revise, and edit the twenty three case histories that have been written up by the professor, and collect others which will be useful for reaching the objectives outlined by Ozar (2001). These cases will be compiled into a manual for use in future Ethics classes at ÚNICA. . They will be accompanied by discussion questions and suggested activities that might be employed in the class.

This study shows that the type of cases used during this Ethics course (daily procedure,

personal problems, and severe misconduct) are all interesting and useful for pre-service teachers. Given that students' responses indicated that those cases concerning daily procedure would probably be the most frequently encountered in their careers, the number of cases involving daily procedure will be increased in the new collection.

Having confirmed that the objectives for a college course in Ethics, described by Ozar (2001), and based upon the findings of Rest (1984), are attainable and desirable for the teaching profession, these will be set as a standard for the course. The cases collected in the manual will be selected according to their potential to contribute to reaching these objectives.

The methodology used in the class proved to be adequate, especially for students who arrive to an afternoon class after a full day's work and a long commute. As Davis and Davey (2007) mentioned, it will be suggested that interactive strategies, where the teacher is more of a guide, facilitator and observer, continue to be implemented. These will include role play, individual presentations, sharing personal experiences, drawing comic book type interpretations, among others. A list of these will be included in the manual. It will also be suggested that students be asked to share their own experiences with the class.

The use of a color rubric to help students learn to consider the many facets of the consequences of a moral/ethical issue was an enormous success. It was acclaimed by the students as extremely useful in learning to consider the extended effects of these issues. This rubric will be revised and included in the manual, with instructions on how to use it.

A workshop on Teaching Ethics across the Curriculum will be offered for Professional Development to the professors of ÚNICA. This will include some theory (Ozar, 2001), the objectives of the exercise, and the analysis of several case histories based upon the color rubric, and open discussion.

It might also be interesting to explore the possibility of ÚNICA offering Ethics workshops for teachers from local schools. This could be organized in a more intensive form, to fit the needs of a particular institution.

Hopefully the article will be published.

### **Conclusions**

The need for more careful preparation of pre-service teachers in the area of moral /ethical matters and citizenship is pointed out by such authorities as Yost (1997), and Tibbits & Torney-Puerta (1999) and Goodlad (1990, 1994). ÚNICA is determined to give pre-service teachers the best possible preparation in this area, with the firm belief that these teachers will make a significant positive impact on their society.

There is considerable evidence that the findings of this research project coincide with the theories of moral/ethical development cited in the theoretical framework. The progression from Kohlberg's Conventional Morality to Post-conventional Morality (1969), as explained by Crain (1985), and translated into specific objectives for an Ethics course by Ozar (2001), closely following the stages of moral development outlined by Rest (1994), has been illustrated in the findings of this study. Tripathy (2007) also recognized the positive impact of a formal curriculum to influence student awareness, reasoning, and judgment.

As was found in this study, and pointed out by Davis and Davey (2007), students come to the course with considerable ethical conviction which must be respected and cultivated. The use of case histories and real life situations along with guided discussion is recognized by Ozar (2001) as being valuable. It also meets with the approval of Chubbuch, Burant and Whipp (2001), Fleischmann, Robbins, and Wallace (2009), as well as Carter (2010). Davis and Davey

(2007) confirm the value of using real life situations in the form of case histories as an effective methodology for an Ethics course.

We can conclude that the collection of twenty-three cases inspired by 30 years of teaching experience and compiled and written by the author are of considerable value as instruments for stimulating the growth of ethical/moral judgment in pre-service teachers. All of the cases studied proved to be of interest to the students, who indicated that all were useful, but that those involving daily procedure were more likely to be encountered in their practice.

Of particular interest is the use of a color rubric to help pre-service teachers relate to the impact of a moral/ethical issue regarding keeping in accordance with the rules of an institution, impact on learning, student involvement, students at risk or in danger, the reputation of people, the profession and the institution, and adequate consequences. The enthusiastic acceptance of this original document merits its continued use.

The objectives as cited by Ozar (2001) are adequate and observable. The use of case histories is undoubtedly an effective base for any Ethics course, and the color rubric has proven to be of enormous value. All of these will be included in the up-coming Ethics courses at ÚNICA.

All in all, this project was challenging but satisfying, and hopefully will prove useful to pre-service teachers at ÚNICA throughout their careers, and to the instructors who will manage the course in the future. The next challenge will be to carry out the action plan outlined above, and evaluate its effectiveness.

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## Appendices

## Appendix A

## Preliminary questionnaire concerning the ethics course

Semester 2, August 17, 2011

Please answer the following questions. It is not necessary to give your name.

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Male or female \_\_\_\_\_ Marital status \_\_\_\_\_

Children (if so give ages) \_\_\_\_\_

When will you graduate from ÚNICA? \_\_\_\_\_

Years (or months) teaching experience \_\_\_\_\_

Present occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following questions choosing Yes or No and give a brief candid explanation of your answer

1. Are you able to distinguish when values are in conflict in a concrete moral/ethical situation?  
YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

2. Are you usually aware of the perspectives of multiple parties in a given moral/ethical situation? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

3. Are you secure in voicing your judgments about situations of an ethical nature? YES \_\_\_\_\_  
NO \_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you feel qualified and at ease to be logical, clear and careful in discussing moral/ethical issues with involved parties? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. Can you explain your reasons for adhering to your moral/ethical values? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_
  
6. Do you feel that you are able to discern and direct the interested parties when other resources are needed to properly process a moral/ethical issue? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_
  
7. Do you take into account the extended effects of a moral/ethical issues in terms of damage to learning, people, community, and the profession? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Please write what your expectations for this course might be:

Thank you for your valuable participation in answering these questions.

Mary Anne Mc Danel de García, ÚNICA

## Appendix B

## Questionnaire and evaluation of the ethics course

Semester 2, November 30, 2011

This questionnaire has as its purpose the students' evaluation of the course, and the gathering of feedback related to the objectives outlined at the beginning of the semester, as well as the methodology used to conduct the classes. Please give a candid answer to the following questions. Thank you

1. Do you feel that what you have learned in this course will be useful for you when confronting ethical challenges in your career? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Did you find the use of case histories to be an effective way to promote your personal awareness and reasoning and reflective skills regarding moral ethical issues? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Please indicate which types of cases were more useful for you and explain why
  - A. Cases involving normal daily procedure?
  
  - B. Cases involving extreme misconduct?
  
  - C. Cases involving personal problems of the people involved?
  
4. Having completed the course, do you feel more able to demonstrate your own values in your discourse and or your conduct? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

5. Has the course helped you to be more aware of the perspectives of multiple parties in a given situation? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_
6. Has the course been valuable in helping you in the following ways?
- a. Increase your motivation to defend and demonstrate your beliefs. YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_  
Comment,
- b. Consider the consequences of your acts as a teaching professional. YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_  
Comment,
- c. Consider the points of view of others. YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ Comment,
- d. Consider the reputation of students, colleagues, the profession, the institution. YES \_\_\_\_\_  
NO \_\_\_\_\_ Comment,
7. If, in the future, you must take a stand, giving your opinion, on a given situation, do you feel better prepared to do so in the accordance with the guidelines below?
- a. Logically with clear reasoning and explanation, YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ Comment,
- b. Clearly, so as to not allow for misinterpretation, YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ Comment,

- c. Carefully, so as not to offend, YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ Comment,
8. Was the color rubric helpful for you in evaluating the cases discussed? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_  
Why?
9. Did the use of color rubric increase your awareness of the different criteria?
- a. The violation of school rules. YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ Comment,
- b. The involvement of students and possible risk. YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ Comment,
- c. The impact on learning. YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ Comment,
- d. Putting the reputation of others, the profession or the institution in jeopardy. Comment
10. Has the course changed your perception of the responsibility that being a teacher requires? If so, please explain

Thank you for your valuable participation in answering these questions.

Mary Anne Mc Danel de García, ÚNICA



## Appendix C

### Interview

1. Did you find the Color Code as a tool when analyzing the cases?
2. Which type of cases did you find more useful for your particular experiences?
3. Are you more able to take into account the perspectives of multiple parties than you were at the beginning of the course
4. Do you feel more qualified to discuss more ethical issues with involved parties?
5. Do you feel more able to direct someone who is seeking advice to other resources rather than giving your own opinion concerning ethical issues?
6. Do you feel that the course has increased your capacity for moral ethical judgment involving teachers?

Appendix D

Field Notes

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Class time: \_\_\_\_\_

Students present: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of case history:

Methodology used:

Students' reaction:

Teacher evaluation:

## Appendix E

## COLOR RUBRIC FOR ANALYZING CASE HISTORIES CONCERNING TEACHING ETHICS

Six criteria are considered in this rubric: Violation of Code of Ethics or school rules (community handbook); student involvement; well being of students at risk; negative impact on learning; risk of damage to the good name of the profession or the institution; the management of the situation. These criteria are listed according to the seriousness of the incidents and described under each classification represented by a color. The colors are Blue (being the least serious); Green; Yellow; Orange; and Red (being the most serious). When these criteria are considered, the result may be a combination of the colors. After considering all of the criteria, as a whole, one color can be determined to be representative of the case.

## BLUE:

- There is a violation of the Code of Ethics and/or school rules.
- There is no student involvement.
- There is no risk to the well being of students.
- There is no negative impact on learning.
- There is minimal risk of damage to the good name of the profession and/or the good name of the institution.
- The situation can be easily managed but the offender should be made aware of his/her infraction.

## GREEN:

- There is a violation of the Code of Ethics and/or school rules.
- There may be some student involvement.
- There is possible risk to the well being of students.
- There may be some negative impact on learning.
- There is considerable risk of damage to the good name of the profession and/or the good name of the institution.
- The situation can be managed without major difficulty but may require a formal consequence.

## YELLOW:

- There is a considerable violation of the Code of Ethics and/or school rules.
- There is student involvement.
- There is some risk to the well being of students.
- There is a negative impact on learning.

- There is a high risk of damage to the good name of the profession and/or the good name of the institution.
- The situation requires prompt careful management and formal consequences.

ORANGE:

- There is a serious violation of the Code of Ethics and/or school rules.
- Students are directly involved.
- The well being of the students is at considerable risk.
- There is considerable negative impact on learning.
- The good name of the profession and/or the institution is in jeopardy.
- The situation requires prompt, cautious discreet management and significant formal consequences.

RED:

- There is severe violation of the Code of Ethics and/or school rules.
- Students are directly involved.
- The well-being of the students is at high risk.
- There is an important negative impact on learning.
- The good name of the profession and/or the institution is in great jeopardy.
- The situation requires prompt, cautious, discreet management and extreme formal consequences.