

A New Model to Help Students Develop Professional Ethics

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Abstract. Professional ethics education requires the development of abstract principles and values among students. The learning process requires students to confront true ethical dilemmas. This study puts forward a theoretical model for helping students develop professional ethics and reports an empirical study on evaluating student feedback in learning professional ethics. Practitioners are involved in carrying out a pre-workshop assessment, seminars, experience sharing, and a post-workshop assessment.

Unethical practices in the real estate industry are commonplace worldwide (ICAC 2003a; Long, 1998; Roulac, 2006; and Jenman, 2007), especially during poor sales periods (Miller, 1999). Fortunately, improvement in professional ethics in the real estate industry is found in recent research by Izzo (2000a), Roulac (2006), and Larsen, Coleman, and Petrick (2007). What is missing in this research is a discussion of how to help students develop professional ethics. Very often courses on professional ethics teach students the hard-and-fast rules stated in a code of ethics, and what one “ought-to” and “ought-not-to” do [as in the six principles of universal morality of Cooper (2005, pp. 33–34)]. Ethical education can become a “brain-wash” exercise or dogmatism, which is not an effective way to present learning material to students.

In fact, students do not find it difficult to make moral decisions between “ought-to” and “ought-not-to” or between right and wrong, especially when a code of ethics is available and when the consequences are well informed. The ethical dilemma that a student studying for a professional degree needs to learn is how to decide if choosing “between two positive [or two negative] values, such as between mercy and justice or between long-term goals and short-term goals” (Long, 1998, p. 15), or when “legitimate arguments can be made for several competing alternatives” (Kline, 2005, p. 13), such as the well-known Heniz’s Dilemma in Kohlberg (1969).

Thus, it is argued that ethics education is not effectively taught with simple reliance on traditional lectures or tutorials. Ethics is the recognition of a value system¹ instead of an articulation of knowledge, so it cannot be assessed by traditional examinations or assignments. Ethics is more commonly assessed by Rest’s (1986) Defining Issues Test (DIT), as used by Izzo (2000a) in his analysis of ethics in the real estate industry. It is based on the Kohlberg’s (1969) six stages of moral development theory, which is more on assessing the decision-making procedures and the justifications for a specific course of action.

Professional ethics education is further complicated by the fiduciary nature of the profession. Professions are regarded as “state-supported organizations that have been

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given the privilege of autonomous, monopoly control over the delivery of services essential for promoting certain vital social values,” (Cooper, 2004, p. 60). Codes of ethics for professional bodies almost always emphasize social values and public responsibility, besides client’s or employer’s interests (Camenisch, 1983). Conflicts between a client’s interests and public interests (and personal interests as well) are commonly faced by professionals. Furthermore, unlike non-professional disciplines, the decisions of professionals inevitably involve “uncertain, imprecise, and incomplete information,” (Roulac, 2006, p. 12). Practitioners have to make professional judgments that make the dilemma more difficult to be resolved.²

Recently, the importance of professional ethics has attracted more attention in the real estate industry. For example, Pivar and Harlan (1995) and Long (1998) provide case studies focused on real estate ethics. Roulac (1999) reports on the profound changes in ethics in the real estate industry in the United States. Jenman (2007) raises ethical concerns in real estate for Australia and New Zealand. Yiu, Lo, Tang, and Yam (2005) discuss ethics in the real estate and construction industries in Hong Kong. Unfortunately, these studies did not draw educators’ attention and there has been little reform in professional ethics education in the real estate industry. Moreover, the benefit of ethics training for real estate agents was questioned by Izzo’s (2000b) findings, although Brinkmann (2000) found an opposite and positive effect.

Worse still, students in professional real estate degree programs do not find it necessary to learn professional ethics (Roulac, 2006). Thus, the purposes of this paper are: (1) to develop a new theoretical model on professional ethics development for students in a real estate curriculum; and (2) to test empirically any improvement in student feedback after the implementation of the new model. This is probably the first attempt to study how to help students develop professional ethics in real estate and empirically investigate the students’ evaluation.

The arrangement of this paper is as follows: Section 2 defines professional ethics by reviewing relevant court cases and literature. Section 3 discusses the theoretical model of professional ethics education and Section 4 discusses the methodology of the empirical study. Section 5 presents the results of the case study and Section 6 provides a conclusion.

Professional Ethics

Professionalism is almost always misinterpreted as merely the possession of professional knowledge and skills as it is defined in the Oxford Dictionary (4th edition, 1994) “skills and qualities of a profession which requires advanced education and training.” Ethics, on the other hand, is often regarded as simply the compliance with a specific standard. ICAC (2003b) defines ethics as “a set of general moral belief, normative rules of conduct, a code, a standard or set of standards that govern what one ought to do when the well-being and rights of, or duties to oneself, others, or institutions are at stake.” Professional ethics has a very different context when compared against general business ethics. Camenish (1986) and Koehn (1994) elaborate on the grounds of professional ethics and Cooper (2004) distinguishes

professions from non-professions by four criteria: (1) esoteric knowledge, (2) serving social values, (3) self-policing, and (4) extra-strong moral commitment. Roulac (2006) derives five components of professional ethics: (1) trust, (2) fiduciary duty, (3) competence, (4) disclosure, and (5) integrity.

The standards of behavior of a profession, such as an accountant, an architect, an engineer, a doctor, a lawyer or a real estate professional (i.e., a surveyor in the U.K.), are not only governed by the legal standard, the corporate standard, and the individual moral standard, but are additionally disciplined by the law of tort (negligence) and the professional standards laid down in the rules of conduct or codes of ethics of the professional bodies, which always emphasize social values and public interests. The reason why professionals have more stringent standards of behavior is because professional work involves professional judgments and discretions and the clients, or even the society, as a whole have a general fiduciary trust on the integrity of the professions.³ Echoing Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, and Damon's (2001) idea, "if the fundamentals of good work—excellence and ethics—are in harmony, we lead a personally fulfilling and socially rewarded life. If they are not, either the individual or the community, or both, will suffer."

Thus, integrity here means more than honesty, it also includes reasonableness, objectiveness, duty of care, and due diligence. The doctrine of professionalism was laid down in the legal case of *Bolam v Friern Hospital Management Committee*,⁴ which held that a professional "need not possess the highest expert skill at the risk of being found negligent," that is a professional does not have to warrant a desired result, but "is under a duty to use reasonable care and skill."⁵ However, reasonableness is not simply equivalent to normal practice, as held in *Roberts v J. Hampson & Co.*⁶ Professional judgments and ethics are always called upon.

Professional ethics is therefore closely linked with professionalism. Andreassend (2003) even suggests that the two words are synonymous, and "it is the personal integrity that bonds ethical behaviour and professionalism into one." There have been lots of studies on ethical decision-making models. Jones (1991) and Cottone and Claus (2000) provide comprehensive literature reviews on ethical decision-making models in the management and social science disciplines, respectively. They emphasize that ethical decision-making models do not make ethical decisions. It is the values, personal characteristics, ethical training received, and years of experience that affect the decision (Tymchuk, 1981). Ethical education is, therefore, not about indoctrinating knowledge, but about allowing students to consider their own values and to freely choose goals and consequences (Stadler, 1986; and Garfat and Ricks, 1995) when confronted with ethical dilemmas. Although codes of ethics for real estate professionals are readily available in almost all developed countries,⁷ decision-making in dealing with an ethical dilemma requires much more than what the codes provide. "The attributes necessary for ethical practice include self-awareness, ability for critical thinking, willingness to take responsibility, openness to alternative choices, and ability to monitor and implement feedback subsequent to ethical actions," (Cottone and Claus, 2000, p. 281). Thus, it is the exposure to true ethical dilemmas and the experiencing of the ethical decision-making process that helps students develop their

own ethical value systems, although teaching decision theory and moral development models are conducive to their professional ethical training.

It is recognized that a competent training in ethical decision-making is a key component of professional degree programs (Handelsman, 1986). Unfortunately, previous studies on professional education in the real estate and construction industries ignored professional ethics. For example, Graaskamp (1974), Popescu (1987), Corotis and Scanlan (1989), Jester (1989), Karbhari (1989), Diaz (1993), Betts, Liow, and Pollock (1993), Black, Carn, Diaz, Rabianski (1996), Gibler, Black, and Moon (2002), Born (2003), and Manning and Epley (2006) stressed professional skills and knowledge; Galuppo and Worzala (2004) and Musil (2005) emphasized curriculum design; Laufer (1987) and Laukkanen (1999) focused on technical training; and Arditi (1984), Faulkner, Sargent, and Wearne (1989), Egbu (1999), and Fraser (2000) emphasized management. Although Ho and Ng (2003) found great discrepancies in ethical perceptions among surveyors of different backgrounds, the impact of ethical training on this perception was not studied. In fact, there are few studies on how to help students develop professional ethics, which is the aim of this paper.

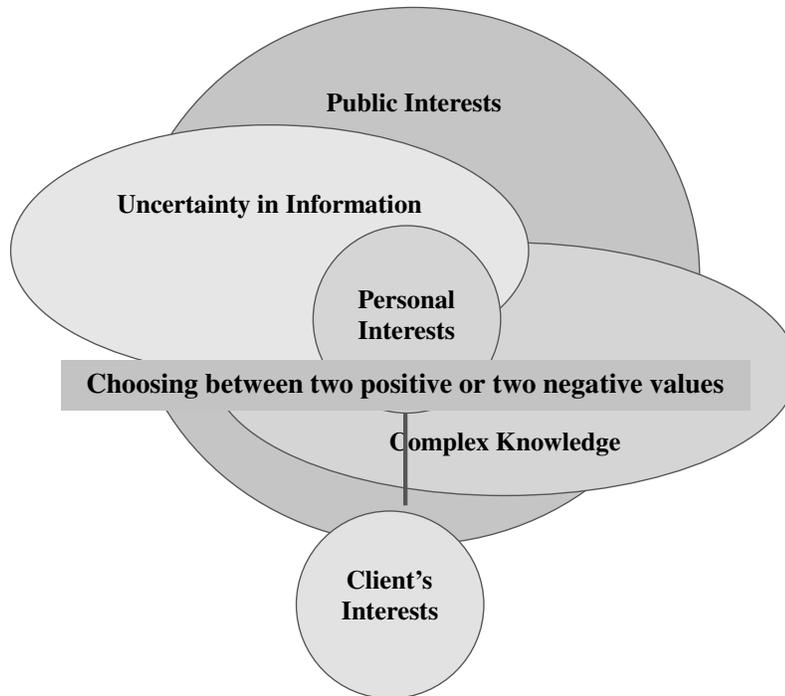
Theoretical Model

In contrast with subjects taught primarily through lecture, students in professional ethics courses cannot be assessed simply by their understanding of some specified knowledge. Students should be assessed by their justifications and by the reasonableness of their decisions and recommendations. They are required to demonstrate their exercise of due diligence and care in their decision-making process. Thus, the learning process should have students be exposed to true ethical dilemmas in a professional setting involving complex knowledge, as well as high uncertainty in information. Exhibit 1 shows the five elements involved in a true professional ethical dilemma that force the professional to choose between two positive (or two negative) values in serving the following: (1) clients' interests, (2) public interests, (3) personal interests under complexity, (4) professional knowledge, and (5) uncertainty in information.

Adoption of this model of teaching is easier said than done because students take "knowledge acquisition" for granted in attending classes, especially in Asian cultures. In traditionally taught courses, lectures are provided first to provide some required knowledge, and tutorials are then engaged for further exploration and discussions. Finally, assessments are conducted to test how well the knowledge is acquired. Feedback to the students on specific topics and answers is expected. Exhibit 2 shows a model depicting this traditional teaching and assessment mode for taught subjects.

In contrast, professional ethics development courses, if any, have commonly been delivered by project-based coursework. Exhibit 3 shows the current model of delivery. The model highlights that ethics are not assessed and professionalism is practiced by limiting inputs of knowledge from the lecturer. However, the model produces conflicts between teachers and students because students regard learning as a process of

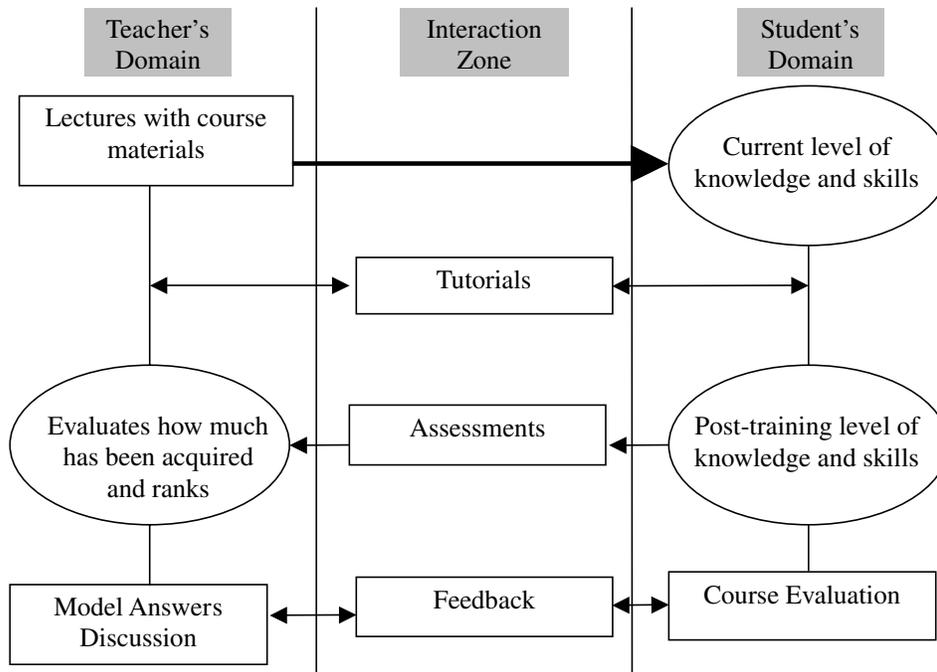
Exhibit 1
Five Elements of a True Professional Ethical Dilemma



acquiring knowledge from teachers. Students want more “teaching” and “guidance” on what is right and wrong.

Thus, a new model is proposed as shown in Exhibit 4. It still adopts a project-based real world scenario type coursework. The knowledge inputs are limited as required in a professional setting. However, the entire project is broken into smaller, but more realistic professional ethical dilemmas. Students can concentrate on small scale and more focused true dilemmas to learn how to make judgments and discretions. By means of these true ethical dilemmas, professional ethics can be assessed in the coursework. Two assessments, pre- and post-workshop assessments, are required to explicitly reveal the differences in the student’s value system and the individual’s degree of due diligence in making professional decisions before and after the program. Practitioners are invited to have interactive dialogues with students to share their values and experience. The pre-workshop assessment provides a very important reference point for students to understand their original approach in tackling professional ethical problems, their value judgments, and areas to be considered. The post-workshop assessment, on the other hand, benchmarks any improvements in dealing with professional ethical issues.

**Exhibit 2
Traditional Teaching and Learning Model for a Subject**



Note: Boxes refer to activities, arrows point to the receivers, and bubbles refer to the states at the zone; sequence from top to bottom.

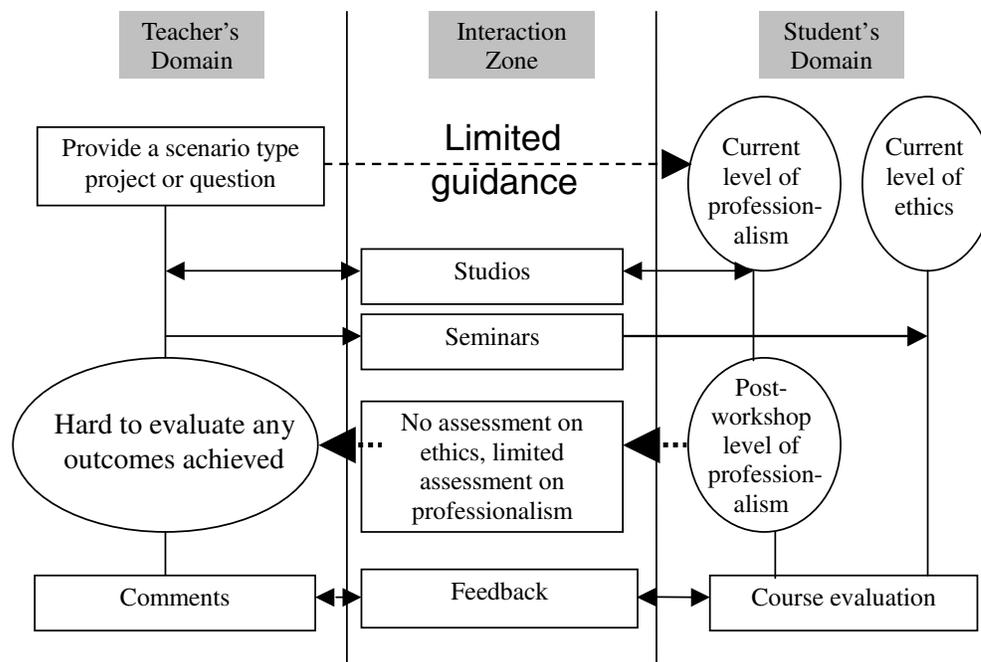
Empirical Methodology

This paper is one of the first empirical attempts to explore how professional ethics can be effectively learned by students in a professional education program. Other previous attempts focused primarily on non-professional ethical training (DeHaan and Hanford, 1997) or practitioners' ethical standards (Izzo, 2000a; and Roulac, 2006). In this regard, an advisory panel was created with members from various professional disciplines in the real estate and construction industries, a council member from the professional institution, and an adviser from the Advisory Services Centre of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) in Hong Kong. This study contends that professional ethics reflect value systems that can only be learned by confronting students with true decision dilemmas, such as conflict of interests between clients and the general public, in a professional setting. The student value standards and ethical decision-making processes are modeled and compared to the standards and processes generated with feedback from members of the advisory panel.

The sample includes 39 university students in the second year of a full-time BSc (Hons) in Surveying (i.e., real estate and construction) degree program. Data were collected from 2004 to 2005 from the results of the Course Evaluation Questionnaire

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Exhibit 3
Current Model for a Professionalism Training Course

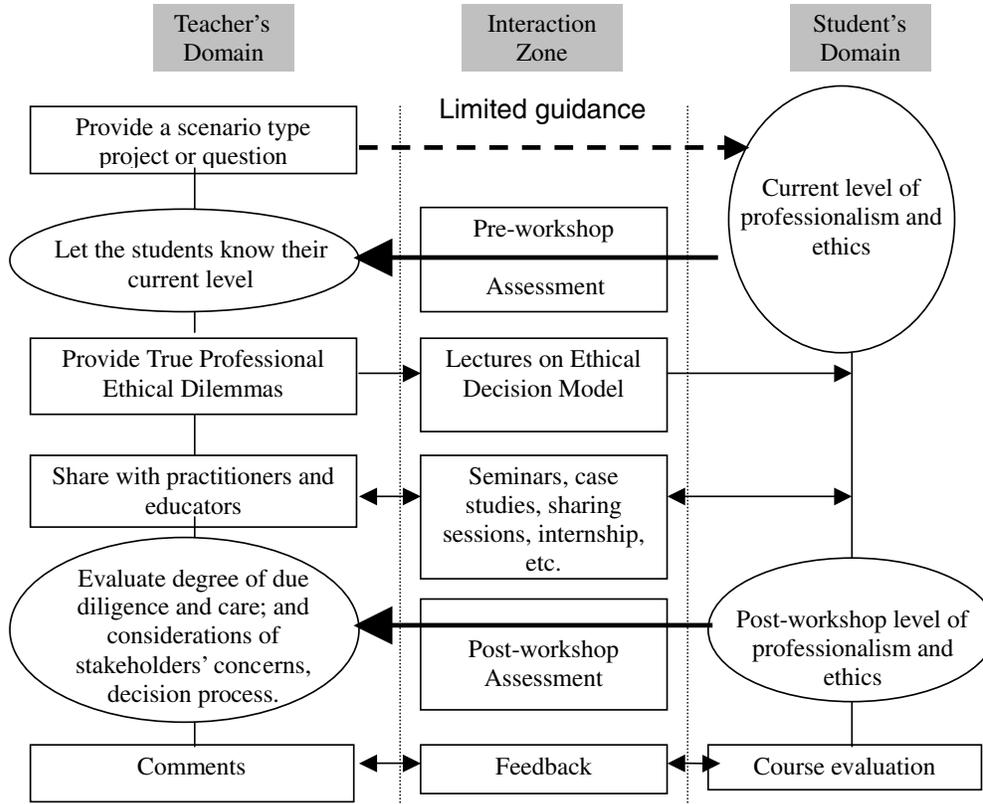


Note: Boxes refer to activities, arrows point to the receivers, and bubbles refer to the states at the zone; sequence from top to bottom.

(CEQ), which is routinely conducted at the end of each semester by a central administrative office. Students make their responses voluntarily and in-person. There are 19 females and 20 males of about 20 years of age registered for the course. All students are Chinese-Hong Kong. The students possess the fundamental professional knowledge acquired in their previous three semesters. In the fourth semester, students are required to undergo a 14-week one-hour per week professional training module entitled Professional Studies II along with their other subjects. The performance and student feedback for this class are studied.

Before carrying out the study, two controlled experiments were conducted on the same group of students to test whether professional ethics can be taught by lectures or learned by tutorials. Student interest was also measured. The first experiment was a seminar on professional ethics held in 2004. Guest speakers from the ICAC with specialized materials on the real estate and construction industries were invited to deliver a talk on professional ethics to the students. Students, including the subject class, were invited to attend. Attendance, however, was not mandatory. There was only one attendee! The number of speakers was more than the number in the audience. Subsequently, students gave feedback that they were not interested in this topic as they regarded it as irrelevant because (1) it was not assessed (i.e., it did not affect

**Exhibit 4
A Proposed Model for a Professional Ethics Development Course**



Note: Boxes refer to activities, arrows point to the receivers, and bubbles refer to the states at the zone; sequence from top to bottom.

their academic results) and (2) it was too early in their course of study for them to consider a “bribe” before graduation. As Roulac (2006) said, “they [students] do not know what they do not know.”

The second experimental control was conducted by using coursework in the third semester of the students’ course of study. The students were subjected to scenarios in class requiring professional judgments. The scenario was put in a practical project setting with little guidance (i.e., the current teaching model). The students were well briefed on the objective of the assignment, which was professionalism in decision making. After the assignment, feedback was obtained by the routine CEQ. As revealed from the questionnaire, students expressed their opinion that they could not learn professionalism through discussions among themselves in tutorials. Interestingly, most of the students posited that learning could only be achieved by having lectures and sufficient guidance. The students also scored this subject the lowest in their course evaluation feedback. The feedback indicates that the students do not appreciate that

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a lack of guidance can pave the road for them to learn professionalism and professional ethics.

In testing the proposed new model, coursework based on a real world project was assigned to the subject class in the fourth semester. The students, divided into six groups, had to address the client brief in the capacity of professional surveyors. The project involved building a new retail shop. The brief asked the students to carry out several related tasks, including design, cost estimation, valuation, and preparation of tendering documents for the works. A floor plan was provided and a site visit was carried out. Unlike the previous controlled tests, the students were guided with professional knowledge and skills, lecture-like seminars on technicalities were also provided. However, two explicit true ethical dilemmas were provided by the members of the advisory panel during the first two class sessions, with little guidance provided. Concurrently, a pre-workshop and a post-workshop assessment were administered by the panel to evaluate the performance improvement from using this new teaching model. Assessors' evaluation and students' evaluation were conducted to give a full picture of the performance.

True Professional Ethical Dilemmas

The following famous Heinz's dilemma used in Kohlberg's (1971, p. 156) research provides a good example of a true ethical dilemma requiring a choice between two negative values.

"In Europe, a woman was near death from a very bad disease, a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her. ...The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could get together only about half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying, and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said, "No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money from it." So Heinz got desperate and broke into the man's store to steal the drug for his wife. Should the husband have done that? Why or why not?"

Yet, it lacks a professional setting that involves complex knowledge and high uncertainty in information. Long (1998, pp. 16–17) provides an interesting but commonly encountered professional ethical dilemma for real estate agents:

"A real estate agent is called to meet an owner of a home ...The owner of the home shows the property to the agent. When asked why he wants to sell, the owner looks embarrassed and states, 'This property belonged to my cousin. About six months ago, he murdered his family in this home and then committed suicide. I inherited this property through the probate court's decision, ...' While other similar properties in the area have been selling for \$120,000 ...What should the agent do when buyers ask why the seller is offering the property? Should the agent disclose the problem?"

The uncertainty in the market value of the property and the requirement of disclosure make the ethical decision more difficult in balancing the client's interests and the buyer's interests. These dilemmas provide students with examples for discussion during the seminars and tutorials.

Then, two dilemmas were formulated by the advisory panel: one was on receiving a commission, and the other was about information disclosure as detailed as follows:

You are representing a development company inviting tenderers to bid for the project. [Students are provided with further details on the project.] Your good friend is the valuer working for one of the tenderers bidding for the project that you are handling. He/she asks you the amount of the lowest bid, how would you answer?

During the sharing and discussion sessions, this dilemma was further developed under different settings of time and institutional issues. For example, does it matter (1) whether it is asked before or after the bidder has signed the contract; and (2) whether the company is a private or a public organization? A private company normally negotiates with bidders on price after receiving bids, thus disclosing the lowest bid to another bidder would make the negotiation unfair, but a public organization is not allowed to negotiate with bidders, in general. Furthermore, a public organization would normally publish the winning bid's amount after signing the contract, but a private one would not. It is believed that disclosing the winner's bid helps improve transparency and public accountability. These professional details make the ethical decision more complicated and the discussion more interesting.

This type of professional ethical dilemma narrows down the real world into a very precise and manageable scale so a student can focus on the ethical decision-making process. In the pre-workshop assessment, students' answers varied substantially, which reflects that they have very different value judgments on the consequences of disclosing information. Subsequently, they attended seminars and studios arranged by the course advisors to learn an integrated ethical decision-making model (similar to Long, 1998, pp. 16–20), which emphasizes the decision-making process and a principled approach (Cooper, 2004). In the post-workshop assessment, most of the students responded to the dilemmas by checking the possible consequences of the act, such as whether it is allowed by statutes or by the professional codes of ethics. Since the outcomes are not clearly defined in these exercises, most of the students then analyzed the effects of such an act on themselves and other stakeholders in a logical manner. The students discussed and expressed their different moral and value standards on fairness and made reference to the principles delineated in the statutes and the codes of ethics. The assessors also guided them to explore and consider other ideas not recognized by the students, such as seeking the client's consent before disclosing information. There was no "right" or "wrong" answer in the assessment, but through this learning process, the students learned how to exercise due diligence and formulate their own value judgments on professional ethical dilemmas.

Results, Analysis, and Discussions

At the end of the fourth semester, another CEQ was conducted as usual. But the results were very promising. There were 19 respondents (i.e., the response rate was about 49%). Exhibit 5 shows a sample of the course evaluation form. There are eight questions for students to score from 1 to 4, representing from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Besides the CEQ, semi-structured interviews with the students were also conducted to investigate their feedback.

Students were found to be more interested in professional ethical issues. Students' performance and feedback were much more satisfactory when compared to teaching ethics through the traditional lecture method. For example, the seminar on professional ethics delivered by the ICAC at the third week of the 14-week course attracted almost the whole class, even though attendance was not mandatory. In their submissions, exploration and critical thinking efforts were reflected. Various stakeholders' concerns were thoroughly considered. Guidelines and codes were referred to. In the pre-workshop assessment, none of the six groups of students considered other stakeholders' concerns; typical answers were "ought-to" or "ought-not-to," based on their pre-conceived moral standards and knowledge. In the post-workshop assessment, on the contrary, some groups listed the specific requirements set out in the codes of ethics of the profession and in the statutes, the different concerns of stakeholders, and the justifications for their choices. More detailed information about the practice was

Exhibit 5
Sample of the Course Evaluation Questionnaire

Score: 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Agree 4. Strongly Agree	Subject Code
Q1. The subject is well managed.	
Q2. I was adequately briefed on the subject aims and organisation, the outline of topics, the assessment schedule and requirements, etc.	
Q3. The lectures were helpful, interesting and clear.	
Q4. The lectures/tutorials covered the contents indicated in the syllabus.	
Q5. The coursework assisted my learning of the subject.	
Q6. Feedback has been sufficient to help me improve my understanding and performance.	
Q7. There have been sufficient guidelines on what I should read.	
Q8. The workload for this subject has been reasonable.	
TOTAL S	

What changes would you recommend to any particular subjects? _____

What aspects of the learning experience did you like most? _____

What aspects of the learning experience did you like least? _____

How do you think the learning experiences can be enhanced? _____

also collected and analyzed before making the professional judgments, when compared with the pre-workshop assessment.

Practitioners' feedback on students' performance was also very positive. For example, they remarked that students developed their own value systems by exploring different stakeholders' concerns. Students showed their efforts in exercising due diligence and exploring the questions from the first principle. The post-workshop results show the improvement in the students' efforts and understanding in comparison with the pre-workshop assessments.

Students' feedback is also very encouraging. Here are some of their comments:

"We experience real life situation through the conversations with the practitioners."

"I like this subject because I have little chance to be exposed to professionalism and ethical issues in other lectures."

"By providing some dilemma cases, we can have a clearer picture of how the real situation is going on, which helps us have a better understanding of those abstracted ideas of professional ethics."

Students are found to be more convinced when practitioners are involved in the process, as they have real life experience in dealing with professional ethical dilemmas. Their experience sharing session was very much treasured by the students. A comparison of the students' scores of satisfaction in the course evaluation shows vividly the great improvement in the professional ethics course's evaluation by this method. Exhibit 6 shows both a longitudinal and a cross-sectional comparison. Longitudinally, the average score of this subject (course code: D) improved from 2.79 to 3.10 (maximum score is 4) as shown in Panel A of Exhibit 6. Cross-sectionally, this subject has been ranked the first among the six subjects chosen by the subject class (sample size = 19), as shown in Panel B of Exhibit 6. Individually, the average scores of the eight questions ranged from 2.89 (Q8) to 3.21 (Q5), as shown in Panel C of Exhibit 6. Q8 asks whether the workload is reasonable, whereas Q5 asks whether the coursework assisted learning of the subject. The lower score of Q8 was expected as the project involves a much higher workload than other subjects. But the high score of Q5 reflected the students' appreciation of the new teaching model.

Yet, as always there is room for improvement. For example, the variance of the scores in Q5 was large, which reflected big differences in opinion among students. Furthermore, students did not refer to previous court cases in making their decisions and are ignorant of other moral decision-making models. These can be further areas to be explored in future studies.

Conclusion

Professional ethics cannot be indoctrinated, but can be learned through experiential learning. Merely telling students what one "ought-to" or "ought-not-to" does not

Exhibit 6
Scores of the Student Evaluation

Panel A: Longitudinal Comparison

Subject Code	02/03 Sem. 1	02/03 Sem. 2	03/04 Sem. 2	04/05 Sem. 2
D	2.55	2.96	2.79	3.10

Panel B: Cross Sectional Comparison in 2004/2005 Semester 2

Subject Code	A	B	C	D	E	F
Average Score	2.90	2.72	3.04	3.10	3.08	2.46
Rank	4 th	5 th	3 rd	1 st	2 nd	6 th

Panel C: Score of Individual Question for Subject D

Question	Average	Std Dev
Q1	3.16	0.37
Q2	3.00	0.59
Q3	3.15	0.38
Q4	3.16	0.37
Q5	3.21	0.71
Q6	3.11	0.46
Q7	3.11	0.66
Q8	2.89	0.46
Total	3.10	0.10

help them develop professional ethics. In order to learn about ethics, students need to be exposed to true ethical dilemmas in a professional setting. This helps them learn how to make professional ethical decisions. This paper develops a theoretical model and empirically investigates the students' evaluation of the learning process in a professional ethics course. The five elements of professional ethical dilemma were incorporated to help students develop their professionalism and value system. The empirical results clearly indicated the advantages of the model, including an explicit ethical dilemma to focus their considerations and judgments; pre- and post-workshop assessments to measure their ethical development; and interactive exchanges with practitioners to explore different value systems, along with their merits and shortcomings. Admittedly, the study is limited in sample size and the empirical test can only be regarded as a case study. Further investigation with better controlled tests need to be carried out.

This paper is a first attempt at showing how professional ethics education can be effectively taught. Lack of the incorporation of this type of instruction and learning process in the real estate and construction industries has not only affected the individual professional's ethical behavior, but also may have contributed to uncertainty regarding the ethical standards of these industries. Hopefully, this study will trigger

educators' interest in helping students develop professional ethics and will be a catalyst for more studies. The model does not limit its application to the real estate and construction industries, but can also be applied to other professional disciplines.

Endnotes

1. Ethics is defined by Long (1998, pp. 10–12) as “a system of moral behaviour based on our principles, which in turn are founded on worthwhile values”; or is defined by De George (1999, p. 12) as “the systematic use of reason to interpret experience to determine values worthwhile in life and rules to govern conduct.”
2. For example, utilitarianism suggests resolving ethical dilemma by choosing the greatest amount of happiness for everyone (Cooper, 2004). Such principle requires certainty in costs and benefits assessments.
3. Koehn (1994) contended that “professionals’ genuinely good orientation (expressed as a pledge to promote a particular good), coupled with their obligation not to substitute their priorities for those of their clients, grounds their authority in the eyes of potential and actual clients by making practice trustworthy.”
4. [1957] 1 W. LR. 582.
5. Greaves & Co. (Contractors) v Baynham Meikle & Partners [1975] 1 WLR 1095.
6. [1990] 1 WLR 94.
7. Including the latest Code of Ethics by the National Association of Realtors® in the U.S., and the RICS’s new principles-based Rules of Conduct for surveyors in the U.K.

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