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COMMENTARY

Teaching I-O psychology: Interwoven ethics and integrated examples

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I unequivocally agree with Kath et al.'s (2021) argument that as Industrial and Organizational (I-O) psychologists, we must strategically utilize our research and experience in the field within our classrooms in order to enhance student learning; it would be a sorry waste not to. Our field is built upon motivation, learning, and leadership theories. As such, our students deserve to glean the benefits of this work towards their goals of learning effective skills and useful content relevant to their future careers. Therefore, I'm heartened by the objective of this focal article. Where I believe Kath et al.'s arguments are lacking is the absence of arguably the bedrock of I-O psychology, namely ethics. Although training and development, diversity and inclusion, groups and teams, and leadership are indeed core concepts within I-O psychology, ethical principles *must* be included as a fifth concept on which to focus student learning. As with the core concepts they discuss, our teaching of ethics-related content should be rooted in the consistent discussion and practice of ethics throughout the semester (Lefkowitz, 2003).

I humbly offer a second contribution to the discussion of teaching I-O psychology in this commentary by providing a concrete example of how I've aimed to effectively embed many of the core concepts the authors identify into an undergraduate I-O psychology course. Project-based and just-in-time learning can be extremely effective routes (or perhaps the most effective) for honing these skills or learning the core concepts in I-O psychology due to the empowering nature and level of transfer of learning they can create. Kath et al. mentioned this several times. It may be helpful to our readership however, to see an example of how I've accomplished this with two different nonprofit organizations over 5 years.

First, let's go back to the ethics piece. The inclusion of the APA's ethical principles in a meaningful way should be the crux of an I-O psychology course, as with any psychology course. These principles are foundational in communicating the values we believe are essential to our work, and as such, students should be familiar and comfortable with implementing them. Furthermore, students should be exposed to opportunities to actively engage with these ethical principles *throughout* the semester (not once or twice) by examining them with respect to ethical cases (Lowman, 2006) and ethically relevant current events, discussing them as related to situations they've experienced at work, and evaluating and acknowledging the "gray areas" of managing ethical dilemmas. Ethics is a key arena in which to practice what we preach. To do this in my I-O psychology undergraduate course, starting the first week, we spend a few class periods discussing the alignment between the APA's five general ethical principles, (a) beneficence and nonmaleficence, (b) fidelity and responsibility, (c) integrity, (d) justice, and (e) respect for people's rights and dignity, and Foster et al.'s (2016) work that calls for I-O psychology to take action steps towards aiding in the United Nation's sustainable development goals. Then, throughout the semester during class time in pairs or groups of three, students read a brief ethical case for each course topic in Lowman's (2006) book and determine which of the APA's ethical principles were violated.

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We discuss the case and similar ones in the news for at least 10 minutes afterwards, all while I connect it to the content for that day (e.g., selection systems, job analysis, training). The goal is for students to comprehend how every topic we discuss throughout the course has ethical considerations to contemplate.

Second, I hope to be helpful to educators who may want to implement experiential learning, service learning, or project-based structures in their I-O psychology courses by offering a concrete example of how I've embedded the core concepts the authors identify within my teaching. In Week 2 of the semester, students complete a brief assignment where they look up information about the nonprofit organization we are partnering with at the time. For the past 4 years, we've partnered with the Manchester Police Athletic League (MPAL) (https://www.manchesterpoliceathleticleague.org), which is an afterschool program connecting cops and kids that is based mostly on athletics such as boxing, wrestling, and martial arts. They also provide a juvenile court diversion program, homework help, and cooking classes. The population served at this organization consists of kids from the culturally diverse refugee resettlement city of Manchester, NH. We have also partnered with National Able Network (https://www.nationalable.org/) in the past. This initial short assignment is structured such that students review the organization's website and social media pages for pictures, descriptions, and the offerings they provide the local community. Students find their mission statement and information about the history of that organization through this process as well.[1] During the third week of the course, students visit the nonprofit organization with me to get a tour and meet with the director for some valuable informal time to ask questions and see the programs running. The initial assignment allows students to have enough information to ask the director specific questions. During the students' on-site visit to the organization, the director also tells us the ideal topics they want to tackle for our student projects (these are discussed with me prior to this meeting for clarification and to narrow them down to four or five overall). For a few minutes during the next class period, students write down their rank-ordered list of project topics by their interest level. From these, I assign students to project teams in which they work together throughout the rest of the semester looking up the most relevant I-O psychology-related research that has been conducted on that topic in order to create a set of best practices, guides, and activities to implement the strategies into that particular organization. The teams create their own contract (team charter) as well.

As the project evolves throughout the semester, I scaffold the project steps and offer written feedback at three different stages while also providing informal verbal feedback during four class workdays when they are in their teams. Students also complete two peer evaluations in which they evaluate their team members in a structured way at both midterm and after the completion of the final project. At the end of the semester, students run an activity on site with the children in the afterschool program related to their team project topic, provide a written report of the research and best practices they found, and present their work formally to the director of the organization. Our past team project topics have included themes around cross-cultural awareness and competence, conflict management, leadership development, effective communication, and the value of gender diversity.

Students in my course have found the partnerships with nonprofit organizations to be quite useful with respect to allowing them to meaningfully contribute to their community with the content they learned in class, and they also report that this structure helped them learn the class content better in the first place. Given the nature of the nonprofit organizations we've worked with and the structure of the project, I've strived to help students learn valuable skills related to all the core concepts mentioned by Kath et al. (2021) as well as the essential nature of ethical considerations in I-O psychology. Although this is not easily done in a short time frame of course, with the collaboration of these two nonprofit organizations, I've been able to shape and refine this

[1]The author will provide this assignment along with other descriptions of project step directions. Email j.oliveira@snhu.edu if interested.

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project-based course to be more beneficial to both students and the organizations across 5 years. I hope this example helps other educators with goals that are similar to those of Kath et al. to invest in using our I-O psychology expertise to create a course that aligns to the goals of our field and the needs of our students. I also strongly believe that we need to continue supporting and motivating other I-O psychology educators to do their best to attempt to practice what we preach in our classrooms so that we can continue to inspire our students to use these I-O psychology concepts, best practices, and skills in their own careers.

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