

Proposal for the Teaching of Ethics Conference:

Teaching ethics on a Spanish for the professions class.

David Vásquez-Hurtado

Ph.D. in Hispanic Literature

Assistant Professor of Spanish at Fort Lewis College

Department of Modern Languages

Fort Lewis College

1000 Rim Drive

Durango, CO 81301

970-247-7513

Dvasquezhurtado@fortlewis.edu

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Keywords: Spanish, Legal, Business, Health

The Spanish for the professions class is focused in the development of a wide array of language skills useful in a variety of professional careers including business, Law, health professions, political science, sociology, and the humanities in general. The course is taught in Spanish and covers the study of a wide spectrum of professional matters through compositions, translation, exams, class discussions, oral presentations and oral exams. Those matters are mostly related to the large community of people that speak Spanish in the Americas and Europe. In class activities, the students worked in some issues related to ethics in legal, business, and health professional settings.

In developing critical thinking toward Ethics, I was mostly interested in the bilingual and multicultural context of the class topics. In a regular Spanish language class, instructors and students deal with cultural misunderstandings in a permanent negotiation of meaning and communication. A class on Professional Spanish also deals with the same challenges, but also with cultural topics that involve real life situations in which ethical decisions can affect people's life. Thus, critical thinking over Ethics is at the core of the course.

Activities, therefore, are designed with the purpose of developing Ethical awareness in multicultural contexts, since students will become mediators in the negotiation of multicultural values and meaning. That is especially sensitive when discussing, for example, Hispanic migration to the United States. This involves a dichotomy on the legality of migration and the protection of human rights, which in many situations conflict with each other. In class, we discuss the Ethical conflicts of this dichotomy. Also, in translating legal or business documents, the student must make decisions on how to respect the content of the original idea while providing the best wording in the target language to translate. Sometimes, it is necessary to sacrifice the ideal working toward the accuracy. A multicultural and bilingual approach to teaching ethics gave me the opportunity as an instructor to offer my students a wider view of ethical issues and show them the importance of them in their professional future.

During the presentation, I will show how I developed those activities on professional ethics, how they worked in class, and what was the outcome of them.