Ethical Issues In Virtual Education

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Introduction
Ethics, also known as moral philosophy, is a branch of philosophy that involves systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong behavior.
History of Ethics

- Mesopotamian Epic of Gilgamesh
- Homer's Iliad
- The Icelandic Eddas
- The Sumerian Farmer's Almanac
- The Egyptian Instruction of Amenemope
Ethics in Ancient Days
Components/Qualities

- Honesty
- Integrity
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Confidentiality
- Objectivity
- Respectfulness
- Obedience to the Law
Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless, and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful.”

- Samuel Johnson
“A lack of transparency results in distrust and a deep sense of insecurity.”

-Dalai Lama
• When a man points a finger at someone else, he should remember that four of his fingers are pointing at himself.”

— Louis Nizer
“In intelligence work, there are limits to the amount of information one can share. Confidentiality is essential.” - Gijs de Vries
“I speak to everyone in the same way, whether he is the garbage man or the president of the university.”

- Albert Einstein
Ethics in E-Learning

- Ethical Issues for e-Learners
- Ethical Issues for e-Teachers
- Ethical Issues arising within the context of e-Learning in general
Ethical Issue for Learners

- Inappropriate assistance on examinations
- Misuse of sources on papers and projects
- Writing assistance and other inappropriate tutoring
- Misrepresentation in the collection and reporting of data
- Improper use of academic resources
- Disrespecting the work of others
Ethics in E-Learning

- Lack of protection for human subjects in research
- Breaches of computer ethics
- Lack of adherence to copyright and copy-protection
Taking one’s own responsibility in learning

(This is typically a Thai problem – as Thai learners are not mature enough.)

- Self discipline
- Independence

Self motivation

- Ability to set goals and pursue means to achieve the goals
Ethical Issues Concerning E-Learning Itself

• Criticism → E-Learning can’t substitute for face-to-face learning
  • This is true, but e-learning is better than no learning;
  • Face-to-face learning can be detrimental if conducted badly
  • E-Learning can be better if conducted well.

• E-Learning and learning outcomes
  • How can e-learning realize learning outcomes and be contribute to Qualification Framework?
Ethical Issues Concerning E-Learning Itself

- Privacy
- Intellectual Property and Copyrights
- Network Security
- ‘Netiquettes’
  - Digital divide
    - Who benefits from the digital content?
- Theses for sale
Looking into the Future

• E-Learning will become more prevalent. Robot teacher
• Implanted computer chip in the brain Enhanced humans – Transhuman
  • Enhanced cognitive abilities which results in more effective learning
  • Ethical issue – what about those who are not enhanced?
• Automated teaching
Can e-learning help educate more ethical population?

Learning does not take place only in the classroom – this is trivially true in the case of e-learning, but the content of e-learning and e-activities does not have to be entirely academic.

Integration of online and offline activities – study trip, getting together, charity work.
Can e-learning help educate more ethical population?
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Objection

• But we don’t need to have the same goals of education as Dreyfus or Kierkegaard.

• We can have real commitment through the Net, even become deeply religious. Dreyfus misunderstands the nature of the Net – The fact that there is a lot of info on the Net does not mean that one has always to shop around.

• But that won’t happen automatically.
Can social, cultural and academic values be successfully transmitted in computer-mediated education?

Are computer-mediated educational settings conducive to academic freedom or do they threaten to undermine it?

Does a reliance on computer networks in higher education foster equality and equity for students and does it promote diversity, or does it disadvantage certain social classes and force conformity? ... What kinds of unethical behaviour by students and staff are made possible in computer-mediated education, and what can be done against it?"
Equity and diversity in online education

- Access to online education: education for all?
Cultural impacts
Students and staff—teaching and learning online

Identity, confidentiality and anonymity

Surveillance

Privacy
• The control of others’ access to information about you.

Confidentiality
• Only the research investigators know identity of participants.

Anonymity
• Identity of participants not known to researcher(s).