

11-1-2009

# Perceptions of Education, Engineering, and Nursing Faculty Members Regarding Their Role in Helping Students Develop Professional Behavior

Sandra Nadelson  
*Boise State University*

Louis Nadelson  
*Boise State University*

Richard Osguthorpe  
*Boise State University*

## Perceptions of Education, Engineering, and Nursing Faculty Members Regarding their Role in Helping Students Develop Professional Behavior

Sandra Nadelson, Boise State University

Louis Nadelson, Boise State University

Richard Osguthorpe, Boise State University<sup>1</sup>

---

### Abstract

In conducting this study, we used qualitative and quantitative research techniques to determine faculty members' perceptions of (a) their role in teaching professional behavior, (b) the professional behaviors that are most important for students to develop, and (c) the methods used to help education, engineering, and nursing students develop professional behavior. Differences were identified between the three groups of faculty members. Overall, results indicated the majority of educators believed they had a role in teaching students professional behavior. However, most faculty members did not acknowledge specific coursework or methods employed to help students develop professional behavior, suggesting instead they tried to help students develop professional behavior by acting as role models. Implications for these and other findings are reported in this article.

---

University faculty members expect their students to develop both the knowledge and abilities of the profession, as well as the "professional" behaviors and dispositions necessary for success in the work force (Cruess, Cruess, & Steinert; 2008). However, while the role of faculty members in helping students to acquire relevant knowledge and abilities is evident in required coursework and internship experiences, it is not always clear how (or whether) university faculty members assist students in developing appropriate professional behaviors (Hall & Berardino, 2006). In order to understand better the issues related to the education of such behavior, this article examines education, engineering, and nursing faculty members' perceptions of (a) their role in teaching professional behavior, (b) the professional behaviors that are most important for students to develop, and (c) the methods they use to help students develop professional behavior.

These issues are nested in a university culture and context, where strong support of student professional development is hindered by a lack of meaningful approaches to promote such growth. There have been numerous calls for more explicit instruction related to values-based professional behavior (Mentowski & Associates, 2000), and students, faculty members, and staff overwhelmingly agree that more emphasis should be placed on developing professional

---

<sup>1</sup>Sandra Nadelson is an associate professor in the College of Health Science at Boise State University. Her areas of research interests include developing student caring and professional behavior as well as fostering residential learning communities. Louis Nadelson is an assistant professor in the College of Education at Boise State University. His scholarly interests include STEM education, inservice and preservice teacher professional development, program evaluation, and multidisciplinary research. Richard D. Osguthorpe is an assistant professor in the College of Education at Boise State University. His scholarly interests include the moral work of teaching, the use of practical argument in teacher development, and the pedagogy of educational foundations.

---

behavior in students (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2008). Additionally, institutions of higher education have been transitioning from curricular outcomes that are primarily technical/rational-based to outcomes that are based on dynamic, complex perceived experiences that are now commonly encountered by professionals (Lester, 1995). And this curricular shift has necessitated corresponding adjustments to instructional approaches for teaching pre-professionals, including an emphasis on instilling values-based professional behavior in students in order to prepare them better for the work force (Lester, 1995). However, a complete transition to these types of curricular outcomes and a substantive emphasis on the development of professional behaviors in students have yet to be realized fully in many institutions of higher education.

This apparent lack of attention to the professional behavior of students might be the result of disagreement between academic administrators, educators, and student affairs personnel regarding *who* should take responsibility to instill students with core professional values and *how* professional behavior can or should be taught to students (Phelps, 2006; Cruess & Cruess, 2006). Or, it might be that making improvements to educational processes in this domain tend to be a complex and arduous task (Harper & Quaye, 2009). Regardless, concerted and collaborative efforts are needed to institute this type of curricular change (Lester, 1995; 1999), and these efforts depend largely on the assumptions and beliefs that faculty members (who teach in these professional programs) hold related to their role in such work. Thus as a preliminary step in implementing curricular changes aimed at helping students develop professional behaviors, this article examines faculty perceptions of their role in such work—specifically their assumptions regarding who should have such a responsibility and how such work should be carried out in classrooms.

### **Theoretical Framework**

**P**rofessional behavior is a thorny concept that is difficult to define and assess (Arnold, 2002; Rike & Sharp, 2008) due to the many facets and synonyms of professional behavior across professional disciplines (Cruess, Cruess, & Steinert, 2008). For the purpose of this article, we characterize professional behavior as the attitudes, values, and beliefs demonstrated through both verbal and non-verbal behaviors as one interacts with other people (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE], 2008). Such behaviors include being honest, ethical, caring, responsible, and supportive of learning and development. In addition, professional behaviors involve aspects of being competent, committed, confident, altruistic, trustworthy, self-regulatory, responsible to society and a profession, and able to work as a team member (Cruess et al., 2008).

Given the ill-formed nature of the construct itself, teaching students to act in a professional manner is perhaps even more complex (Cruess & Cruess, 2006; Yost, 1997). Presumably, this type of education includes much more than a lecture on or review of the ethical standards of professional organizations, such as NCATE or National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE). The development of professional behavior in students includes attending to many aspects of learning including attitudes, beliefs, and values (Fink, 2003a). According to Fink (2003a) educators need to foster three overarching values as they develop personally and professionally. These key issues include the enrichment of students' philosophy of life, the ability to contribute to the community, and preparation for the working world and their personal lives. This enhancement can be done by providing significant learning opportunities that assist students in developing the skills and knowledge needed to be successful. In addition, significant learning opportunities support students' development of the attitudes needed in order to work effectively in the professional field.

---

Fink (2003a) asserts that preparing students for professional life is multifaceted and includes teaching information and ideas. However, education needs to involve going beyond teaching course content in a lecture format. Students need to be able to apply knowledge, learn how to learn, develop caring behaviors and attitudes, and integrate knowledge. In addition, professional education includes many areas of instruction with one being the “human dimension.” In facilitating this instruction, educators need to work with students to foster leadership skills, build character, promote student self-authorship, enhance multicultural understanding, improve teamwork skills, enhance citizenship skills, improve service to others, and increase environmental ethics. Creation of significant learning experiences for students also promotes growth in these areas.

Fink (2003a) suggests that faculty members need to work collaboratively with other educators and administrators in the creation of significant learning experiences and thus the promotion of student development. Academic peers provide emotional support and expertise while administrators make resources available, provide encouragement, and bestow recognition on faculty members for incorporating significant learning activities into coursework. Plus administrators are instrumental in policy development that supports faculty members in creating meaningful student experiences. As a guide for data analysis in this article, Fink’s work provides a foundational understanding for how educators and administrators influence significant learning experiences and how they play an integral part in the growth of student professionalism.

### **Review of Literature**

**M**any qualitative and quantitative studies have been conducted in the area of professional behavior, including teacher dispositions (Arnold, 2002; Villegas, 2007). Numerous projects have focused on college students in terms of how to measure their professional behavior and how they make choices to act professionally, indicating that many variables affect student professional behavior (Cruess & Cress, 2006). For example, students’ age, gender, and level of moral development have been shown to affect students’ actions (Bennett, 2005; Cummings, Dyas, Massux, & Kochman, 2001). In addition, individual cognition and environmental factors have been found to influence students’ decisions (Pulvers & Dierkhoof, 1999). Few investigations have examined faculty members and their role in the development of student professionalism (Flint, Clegg, & MacDonald, 2006).

One ongoing controversy has been whether faculty members can make a difference in their students’ behavior. Dean and Beggs (2006) conducted research on beliefs of business professors. They found the majority of business faculty members believed that they had little or no influence on the way that students behaved in the work place. On the other hand, studies have also shown that students’ behavior is not necessarily immutable (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2005) and that in many areas of professional and ethical behavior, such as academic cheating, educators have had an influence on students’ behaviors (Bennett, 2005; McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2001). Furthermore, research findings have indicated that faculty members and administrators can influence student actions given certain contextual factors related to administrative support. For example, a study performed by Simon et al. (2003) found an association between faculty members’ beliefs, perceptions of administrators, and student behavior. In this study, educators were surveyed about a variety of beliefs including administrator support. The survey results suggested that administrative support along with certain policies and procedures played a part in faculty members’ perceptions of student honesty and in faculty members’ reactions to various student behaviors.

Whether or not faculty members can help students develop professional behaviors, there is a prevalent perception in the literature that faculty act as exemplars of professional behavior.

---

Numerous studies suggest students have acquired appropriate professional behaviors via role modeling by faculty members. For example, Yost (1997) interviewed and reported how recently graduated teacher education students developed professional behaviors. The graduates shared how they learned ways to act professionally from the actions of their teachers and from educators in the schools where they interned. They frequently reported viewing faculty members in their intern schools as role models. The graduates recognized the impact that teachers had on classroom climates and shared instances of unprofessional interactions as well as displays of empathy and caring. Similarly, in their review of nursing research literature, Gillespie and McFetridge (2006) also found faculty members' role modeling to influence the development of graduates. In addition to faculty members who were competent and knowledgeable about the technical content of nursing, a curriculum that emphasized caring was found to be essential to the development of professional behavior of students.

In summary, research has shown that faculty members might influence students' behaviors and are viewed by students as role models for how professionals conduct themselves. However, few studies have reported how faculty members perceive their role in helping students to develop professional behaviors. This study is aimed at bridging this gap in the literature and providing a baseline assessment of how faculty members conceive their responsibilities in this aspect of their teaching practice. Before data collection began, we predicted that there would be a wide range of responses by faculty members regarding their roles in helping students develop professional behavior. We also anticipated that the majority of faculty members would report that they were influenced by administration and peers in their attendant responsibilities related to the development of professional behaviors in students. Finally, we predicted that faculty members' perceived involvement in developing student professional behavior would vary with respect to personal characteristics and area of teaching.

The questions guiding our research project were the following:

1. *Is there a relationship between faculty members' perceptions of their role in developing professional behavior in students and faculty members' age, gender, years of experience, academic rank, and academic discipline?*
2. *Do faculty members believe they attend to the development of professional behavior in students?*
3. *Do faculty members perceive that peers and administrators influence their beliefs regarding the development of professional behavior in students?*
4. *What professional behaviors do faculty members consider crucial for students to acquire?*

### **Methodology**

#### *Participants*

We submitted e-mail requests for participation in our study to the faculty members in our college of education, college of engineering, and nursing department. We had 34 College of Education participants, 24 College of Engineering participants, and 25 Department of Nursing participants reply and complete all of our surveys. The demographics and response rate by college/department are provided in Table 1.

---

Table 1  
Demographics and Online Survey Response Rate of Our Study Participants

<b>Demographic</b>	<b>Department of Nursing</b>	<b>College of Engineering</b>	<b>College of Education</b>
Number of Participants	25	24	34
Gender (Female/Male)	21 / 4	13 / 11	19 / 15
Average Age	53.60	43.33	44.41
Average Years Teaching Post Secondary Teaching Responsibility (Undergrad/Grad/Mix)	12.20	8.44	8.83
Full Time / Part Time	24 / 1	21 / 3	32 / 2
Response rate	40/44	28/61	15/100

#### *Procedure and Measures*

For our multidisciplinary investigation, we utilized mixed methods but relied primarily on quantitative data collection and reporting. In conducting this research, we recruited faculty members from a college of education, a college of engineering, and a nursing department within a large, public, metropolitan university. With appropriate support from administrators, we invited participation through an e-mail sent to all faculty members in each targeted college/department. The e-mailed invitation to participate provided faculty members with a description of our research and the address to our data collection web page. This web page contained three web based links. The first link was to our consent form, which provided additional information about our research to the responding faculty members. It also included a request for them to consent to participate—allowing us to use their data. The second link was to a Zoomerang-based brief demographic survey. The third link also directed the participants to a Zoomerang-based survey that we designed to assess faculty members' perceptions of their role in developing professional behaviors in students. Once the faculty members had completed the survey they were redirected to a thank you page again providing them with our contact information.

Based on a review of the extant literature and with particular attention to the work of Fink (2003a), we developed the items for our perceptions of professional behavior instruction survey. Our twenty question survey of faculty members' perceptions of their role in developing professional behavior in students contained eighteen forward and reversed phrased five point Likert scale items and two open response items to assess participants' perceptions regarding students' professional behaviors, support from university peers and administration, and their role in teaching professional behavior. Our Likert scale items asked participants to respond on a scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree* to statements such as *Students are receptive to learning about professional behavior*. Our two open-ended items asked participants to respond to *What is your perceived role in teaching professional behavior?* and *Which professional behaviors are most crucial for students to learn before leaving higher education?* Following the

development of our survey based on the student professional behavior literature, we began to confirm the validity of our instrument by contacting several national experts with research agendas in the areas of student behavior with requests to review our instrument and provide us with feedback. We revised the survey according to feedback we received, which increased the instrument's clarity and research goal applicability. Once we made the modifications, we again contacted three experts in the field of student professional behavior to verify the construct and content validity of our instrument. Their feedback indicated that we had achieved acceptable levels of validity with our instrument. After establishing the validity of our instrument, we applied for and were granted authorization to conduct our research by the university institutional review board.

Once our data collection was complete, we downloaded the data from Zoomerang into Excel. The quantitative data were imported into SPSS, and the qualitative responses into InVivo. Within SPSS, we conditioned and coded the responses and calculated a composite score of the participants' perceptions in preparation for further analysis. Our qualitative data did not require additional treatment and were ready for coding upon importing it into MS Excel.

### Results

We began our analysis by determining the reliability of our instrument. A Cronbach's alpha reliability calculation was performed and revealed to be .90, indicating a high level of instrument reliability. We also calculated the reliability for our three subscales. We calculated a Cronbach's alpha of .77 for the faculty member perceptions of their teaching professional behavior subscale, a Cronbach's alpha of .83 for faculty members' perceptions of administrative and peer support for teaching professional behavior, and Cronbach's alpha of .70 for faculty members' perceptions of student professional behaviors. Our analysis indicated that our instrument and corresponding subscales had moderate to high levels of reliability.

Our first research question asked: *Is there a relationship between faculty members' perceptions of their role in developing professional behavior in students and faculty members' age, gender, years of experience, academic rank, and academic discipline?* To answer this question, we conducted an ANOVA using gender, academic responsibility, academic discipline, and contract type as factors and the composite score for perception of professional behavior instruction as the dependent variable. This score was calculated by adding the degree of agreement faculty had with statements about their perceptions of their role in helping students develop professional behaviors. Examples of statements included, "It is my responsibility to inform students when they act in an unprofessional manner" and "Students seek my advice about professional behavior."

Our ANOVA analysis revealed a significant difference for full or part time employment,  $F(1, 81) = 14.98, p < .01$ , with full time faculty members responding with significantly higher scores, indicating the full time faculty felt they taught professional behavior much more than part time teachers. This finding was surprising due in part because the number of part time participants was quite small ( $N = 6$ ), and a large difference was evident between the two groups—enough to produce a significant variation between part time and full time faculty. Further study is needed to support or refute this finding.

Our analysis also revealed a significant difference for discipline of instruction  $F(2, 80) = 4.41, p < .05$ , with our post-hoc analysis revealing nursing faculty members responding with significantly higher levels of agreement than engineering faculty members ( $p < .05$ ). Thus, the nursing faculty perceived their role in helping students to develop professional behaviors to be much greater than did engineering faculty members. Put another way, nursing faculty indicated higher levels of commitment to developing professional behaviors in students when compared to

---

engineering faculty members. As for other variables, our analysis revealed no difference for academic responsibility or gender. From this analysis, we concluded that there was no relationship between these two variables and faculty members' perceptions of their role in developing professional behavior in students.

We concluded our quantitative analyses of our first research question by conducting a correlation analysis using years of post secondary instruction, age, and the composite score of faculty members' perceptions of their role in helping students to develop professional behaviors as variables. Our results revealed no correlation between faculty members' perceptions of their role and age or years of post-secondary teaching experience. Overall, our analysis indicated that full or part time employment and discipline were indicators and possible predictors of how faculty members perceived their role in helping students to develop professional behaviors.

Our second research question asked: *Do faculty members believe they attend to the development of professional behavior in students?* To answer this question, we calculated an average composite score using the items from the teaching of professional behavior subscale. The results indicated that faculty members responded with a value representative of slightly above *agree* with respect to their perceptions of teaching students professional behavior ( $M = 4.11$ ,  $SD = .72$ ). These results suggested that faculty members believed that they did teach students professional behaviors.

We continued to address our second research question by examining participants' responses to the open ended items, one of which asked *What is your perceived role in teaching professional behavior?* These data were coded using "model," "expectations," and "teach." Our results revealed 94% of our participants responded to this item. Nearly 60% of the participants answered that it was their responsibility to model professional behavior for their students. In addition, four faculty members focused on mentoring, and an additional four faculty members described acting as a guide. Approximately 15% of the participants indicated that setting and communicating expectations were important parts of teaching students professional behavior. Representative comments written by faculty members included, "It is my responsibility to role model professional behavior, to discuss expectations with the students, to point out professional behavior of others in the clinical setting and to allow students to participate in discussions of professional behavior" and "All faculty are mentors to future and/or current educators. Our standards emphasize the development of professional educators, thus we have the responsibility to not only teach subject matter, but also professional dispositions."

Interestingly, only about a third of our participants explicitly used the term "teach" in their responses regarding their professional behavior instructional roles. Overall, it appeared that the majority of faculty members did respond in a manner that indicated some level of responsibility to teach students professional behavior, but their comments suggested that the instruction happened implicitly and not explicitly. In other words, the data suggested that faculty members assumed that modeling professional behaviors was both sufficient and effective for teaching students professional behaviors.

Our third research question asked: *Do faculty members perceive that peers and administrators influence their beliefs regarding the development of professional behavior in students?* To answer this question, a composite score was calculated from faculty members' agreement to statements regarding peers and administrators. Statements in the survey associated with this question included: "I am supported by my peers to emphasize student professional behavior" and "My chair, dean, and the provost support my efforts to develop student professional behavior." The descriptive analysis results indicated that the faculty members responded on average between *undecided* and *agree* with respect to their perceptions of peer and administrative support for teaching professional behavior ( $M = 3.56$ ,  $SD = .79$ ). These results suggested that the educators were somewhat tentative in their perceptions of peer and

---



administration support for teaching students professional behaviors and may have felt a lack of support by their superiors.

Our fourth research question asked: *What professional behaviors do faculty members consider crucial for students to acquire?* To answer this question, we examined participants' responses to the survey question that asked *Which professional behaviors are most crucial for students to learn before leaving higher education?* Using the ABET, NLN, and NCATE student professional development documents as guides, we coded responses using "communication," "ethics," "honesty," and "integrity." The results revealed that about 28% of the participants' responses emphasized communication as a crucial professional behavior. The following passage is representative of these responses, *Communication, collaborative teamwork, conflict management*. Approximately 11% of the participants included references to ethics, as represented by this passage, *An understanding of the engineering professional code of ethics*. Roughly, one third of the participants responded with "honesty" as a crucial student professional behavior. One response that included honesty also included *Respect, teamwork, good manners/decorum*. Our coding also revealed about one in six participants included *integrity* as a crucial professional behavior for students to learn. Other professional behavior terms that became apparent during data analysis included: *teamwork, conflict resolution, diversity, and modeling*. The majority of participants responded with listings of multiple professional behaviors that they deemed to be crucial for students to learn. Overall, the major themes that were found in our analysis included communication, respect for others, commitment/work ethic, and honesty.

### Discussion

We set out to determine faculty members' perceptions of their role in developing professional behaviors in students. The results indicate a differential for level of perceived commitment to developing professional behaviors in students between full and part time faculty. This difference might be the result of a small sample size for part time faculty, but it might also be due to the nature of the interactions and relationships that the responding faculty members have with their university colleagues and students. It is speculative on our part, but full time faculty might be more committed to the development of professional behavior in students due to professional responsibilities that require them to establish closer relationships with their students and colleagues (in advisory roles, for example). Some of these responsibilities include a commitment to civility and professional behaviors, as well as a heightened awareness of student development issues. Accompanying this greater awareness is a commitment to promoting the professional behavior development of students. In other words, full time faculty might have a broader sense of professional expectations, a deeper understanding of academic program requirements related to professional behavior, and a concomitant commitment to the development of such behaviors in students. These suggestions reside outside the bounds of the reported data, but they offer a potential explanation of the difference. Further exploration of the reason for these differential responses between full and part time faculty would be an excellent direction for future research.

The differential scores between groups of faculty members was perhaps the most interesting outcome. The significantly higher scoring by nursing faculty over engineering faculty was not entirely unexpected given the nursing department's emphasis on professional behaviors in its curriculum. Since the nursing program explicitly addressed the teaching of professional behavior in its standard curriculum, it might have brought a greater level of awareness and sensitivity to these issues among the nursing faculty. Also, the service orientation of nursing may have raised awareness and levels of responsibility on the part of faculty to develop professional behaviors in students.

---

However, these possible explanatory factors (attention to professional behavior in the curriculum and the service orientation of the profession) for the difference between nursing faculty and engineering faculty do not account for the relative difference between nursing faculty and education faculty. Although education faculty members' survey response scores were somewhat higher than those of engineering faculty, they were not significantly different than engineering faculty. Thus there are seemingly other factors that influence faculty members' perception of their role in developing professional behavior in students, especially given the service orientation of the education profession and the specific attention to professional behaviors and dispositions in the college of education at the reporting institution. It might be, for example, that education faculty (particularly those associated with teacher education) deem the development of professional behaviors to be a discreet part of other coursework and fieldwork (particularly during the student teaching semester), whereas nursing faculty consider such development to be a core program element that pervades every course offering. Regardless, nursing faculty scores were higher than faculty members from other disciplines, and the difference between nursing faculty and education faculty, in particular, merits further exploration.

Given the variation in faculty responses regarding their perceived role in developing professional behavior in students, it was somewhat surprising that almost all faculty reported perceiving themselves as attending to such development in their classrooms. More surprising, though, was the lack of similarity in faculty responses related to the types of behaviors and traits that faculty think are crucial for students to develop in their programs of study. The responses given by faculty to these open-ended questions indicated a hodgepodge of behaviors and character traits that did not lend themselves to any coherent grouping or categorization. From the data, it is very difficult to identify an agreed-upon group of professional behaviors that are specific to an academic discipline. This finding was somewhat unexpected in light of the omnipresent accreditation board standards on professional behavior for each respective academic discipline in the study.

Similarly, faculty members' responses relating to how they attend to the development of professional behaviors was also unforeseen. Faculty beliefs about their role in developing professional behavior in students focused on passive and implicit approaches to instruction. For example, role modeling was the overwhelmingly preferred method, and there was little mention of any explicit or direct instruction as an approach to developing professional behaviors. We had expected to receive more nuanced responses to this question that provided insight into the complexities of developing professional behavior in students, but most of the responses suggested that modeling professional behaviors for students was the extent of faculty members' attention to such development in their work with students. Thus the data indicate that faculty in all three academic disciplines believe they should have some role in developing professional behavior in students, and they believe that they attend to such development in their classrooms, but they rely almost solely on some form of role modeling to meet this purported objective. Considering the explanations of role and approach, it seems possible that faculty put forward passive and implicit approaches to developing professional behaviors because they do not attend to such development in any concrete way in their course offerings or program delivery. Furthermore, they might have rudimentary understandings of how such development occurs and how students acquire such behaviors.

Finally, it was interesting that faculty members were tentative in their perceptions of peer and administration support for developing professional behaviors in students. Because there were not qualitative questions and answers regarding support from others, we did not have a clear understanding of faculty members' beliefs in this area, but we wonder whether a less than complex understanding of the development of professional behaviors might inhibit faculty members from talking about this topic with their colleagues. Moreover, the development of

---

professional behaviors in students does not appear to be a primary focus of administrators in any of the academic disciplines in this study.

### **Suggestions for Practice**

Even though all faculty members may not have perceived themselves to be teaching professional behavior directly, it seems reasonable to assume that it was or at least should be something done by faculty members. The ability to develop students who act in a professional manner is more than just the interest and responsibility of faculty in classrooms. Developing students' professional behavior needs to be supported by administrators and student affairs personnel. This support can be accomplished in several ways. From the study results, it would seem that full time and part time faculty members need guidance in defining their role in assisting student professional behavior development. Student affairs personnel may serve as important mentors to educators on how to go beyond instruction related to disciplinary knowledge and skills and move toward the development of the entire student. By going beyond instruction, "powerful partnerships" can be developed between academic and student affairs members (American College Personnel Association & National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, 2004).

Furthermore, these partnerships can assist faculty members in promoting other activities that assist in student development. These may include service learning opportunities where students can see people acting as professionals. Student affairs personnel can also promote the development and ongoing success of faculty in residence programs and the scheduling of classes or at least office hours in the residential halls (Cabrera et al., 2002). In living learning environments, students and faculty have greater opportunities to communicate about professional behaviors and other topics that can promote student development. Thus, it would seem reasonable to suggest that collaboration between administrators, student affairs personnel, and faculty members is a necessary first step if greater emphasis is to be placed on helping students to develop professional behaviors.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

There are several limitations to this study. One was the use of survey methods that focused on faculty members' perceptions of professional behavior. Certainly, a greater depth of understanding of what it is to act professionally would have been gathered from a qualitative study where faculty members could provide more detailed answers. Such a study might also include developing insight regarding whether professional behaviors are only displayed while students are in the classroom or if they continue to be evident once students leave the campus. It is arguable that students not only be taught how to act in a value driven manner when at work or in the classroom but also in every aspect of their lives (Mentkowski, 2000), while still acknowledging that all professionals adopt a moral cant or pose—particularly teachers in classrooms (Goffman, 1959; see also Osguthorpe, 2009).

Studying how students believe they do or do not learn about professional behavior from faculty members and student affairs personnel would be valuable research to conduct. Previous research has shown that students are aware of faculty members' unprofessional behavior (Szauter et al., 2003). One wonders how actions by faculty members influence students' development of professional behaviors and how the views of students, administrators, and faculty members differ regarding what is professional behavior.

Other limitations are the small sample size and the use of participants drawn from only three areas of the same university. Future research should include a larger sample from a greater

---

number of areas of study. In addition, including faculty members from a variety of different institutions would be beneficial. Furthermore, we hope that future research would focus on developing a deeper understanding of faculty members' perceived and actual roles in professional student development. Going beyond purely descriptive research, a future interventional study could provide faculty with inservice education about improving student professional development through actively working with students. Studying faculty and student response to this educational opportunity would be worthwhile.

Finally, future research should also move beyond the role of faculty members in student professional development. Additional work should look at the influence student affairs personnel and administrators have on the development of student professional behaviors. Research might focus on finding effective programs that assist in promoting students to take on ethical values and behaviors.

### **Implications of this Study and Conclusions**

**O**ur research helps inform student affairs personnel, faculty, and administrators by providing a better understanding of faculty members' perceived roles in student professional behavior education. This information may be used to prepare faculty members to teach effectively this challenging topic to their students. We envision that through better understanding of these issues that faculty members and administrators will take more active roles in assuring that students receive the professional behavior education they need to be competent and effective professionals. We hope that with time and attention to this important issue, faculty members and others who work in higher education will have a clear understanding of their role in developing student professional behavior.

---

### References

- American College Personnel Association and National Association of Student Personnel Administrators. (2004). *Learning reconsidered: A campus-wide focus on the student experience*. Washington, DC: Authors.
- Arnold, L. (2002). Assessing professional behavior: Yesterday, today, and tomorrow. *Academic Medicine*, 77, 502-515.
- Association of American Colleges and Universities (2008). *Should colleges focus more on personal and social responsibility?*  
Retrieved July 23, 2008, from [http://www.aacu.org/core\\_commitments/documents/PSRII\\_Findings\\_April2008.pdf](http://www.aacu.org/core_commitments/documents/PSRII_Findings_April2008.pdf)
- Bennett, R. (2005). Factors associated with student plagiarism in a post-1992 university. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 30, 137-162.
- Cabrera, A., Nora, A., Crissman, J., Terenzini, P., Bernal, E., & Pascarella, E. (2002). Collaborative learning: Its impact on college students' development and diversity. *Journal of College Student Development* 43(1), 20-34.
- Cruess, R., & Cruess, S. (2006). Teaching professionalism: General principles. *Medical Teacher*, 38(4), 205-208.
- Cruess, R., Cruess, S., & Steinert, Y. (2008). *Teaching medical professionalism*. Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Cummings, R., Dyas, L., Maddux, C., & Kochman, K. (2001). Principled moral reasoning and behavior of preservice teacher education students. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38 (1), 143–158.
- Dean, K., & Beggs, J. (2006). University professors and teaching ethics: Conceptualizations and expectations. *Journal of Management Education*, 30(1), 13-44.
- Fink, L.D. (2003a). *Creating significant learning experiences: An integrated approach to designing college courses*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Fink, L.D. (2003b). *A self-directed guide to designing courses for significant learning*. Retrieved February 6, 2008, from [http://trc.virginia.edu/Workshops/2004/Fink\\_Designing\\_Courses\\_2004.pdf](http://trc.virginia.edu/Workshops/2004/Fink_Designing_Courses_2004.pdf)
- Flint, A., Clegg, S., & MacDonald, R. (2006). Exploring staff perceptions of student plagiarism, *The Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 30, 145-146.
- Gillespie, M., & McFetridge, B. (2006). Nurse education – the role of the nurse teacher. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 15, 639-644.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Doubleday.
- Hall, A., & Berardino, L. (2006). Teaching professional behaviors: Differences in perceptions of faculty, students, and employers. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 63, 407-415.
- Harper, S., & Quaye, S. (2009). *Student engagement in higher education: Theoretical perspectives and practical approaches for diverse populations*. New York: Routledge.
- Kuh, G., Kinzie, J., Schuh, & Whitt, E. (2005). *Student success in college: Creating conditions that matter*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Lester, S. (1995). Beyond knowledge and competence: Towards a framework for professional education. *Capability*, 1(3), 44-55.
- Lester, S. (1999). From map-reader to map-maker: Approaches. In D. O'Reilly, L. Cunningham & S Lester (Eds.). *Developing the capable practitioner* (pp. 45-53). London: Kogan Page.
- McCabe, D., Trevino, L., & Butterfield, K. (2001). Dishonesty in academic environments: The influence of peer reporting requirements. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 72(1), 29-45.
-

- Mentowski, M., & Associates (2000). *Learning that lasts: Integrating learning, development, and performance in college and beyond*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (2008). *Professional standards for the accreditation of teacher preparation institutions*. Washington, DC: National Council for Accreditation of Teacher.
- Osguthorpe, R. (2009). On the possible forms a relationship might take between the moral character of a teacher and the moral development of a student. *Teachers College Record*, 111(1), 1-26.
- Phelps, P. (2006). The dilemma of dispositions. *The Clearing House*, 79, 174-178.
- Pulver, K., & Diekhoff, G. (1999). The relationship between academic dishonesty and college classroom environment. *Research in Higher Education*, 40(4), 487-498.
- Rike, C. & Sharp, K. (2008). Assessing preservice teachers' disposition: A critical dimension of professional preparation. *Childhood Education*, 84(3), 150-153.
- Simon, A.S., Carr, J., McCullough, S., Morgan, S., Oleson, T., & Resse, M. (2003). The other side of academic dishonesty: The relationship between faculty skepticism, gender and strategies for managing student academic dishonesty cases. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 28(2), 193-207.
- Szauter K., Williams B., Ainsworth M.A., Callaway, M., Bulik, R., & Camp, M.G. (2003). *Med Educ Online* [serial online] 8(17). Retrieved June 22, 2009, from <http://cogprints.org/3362/1/res00067.pdf>
- Villegas, A. (2007). Dispositions in teacher education: A look at social justice. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 58, 370-380.
- Yost, D. (1997). The moral dimensions of teaching and preservice teachers: Can moral dispositions be influenced? *Journal of Teacher Education*, 48, 281-292.
-