



The Art  
of Ethics  
in Youth  
Work

# EVALUATION

Youth Work Ethics Curricula for Formal Education

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 **VICTORIA  
UNIVERSITY**  
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

**NYCA** National  
Youth  
Card  
Association



Institut za društvena istraživanja u Zagrebu  
Institute for Social Research in Zagreb

**FINNISH YOUTH RESEARCH SOCIETY**  
**FINNISH YOUTH RESEARCH NETWORK**



## INTRODUCTION

Youth Work in Ethics is a formal curriculum made within the project The Art of Ethics in Youth Work. The curricula was tested in the course '*Odgoj i obrazovanje za civilno društvo*' (Education and Training for Civil Society) with pedagogy students. The curricula was tested within sixteen hours of class (4 hours on 3.11.2022., 4 hours on 10.11.2022., 4 hours on 17.12.2022. and 4 hours on 24.12.2022.) in a single module, that was estimated to be appropriate for 1 ECTS point. The final course will implement the findings of the evaluation. The evaluation was made immediately after the testing was done on twelve pedagogy students that participated. The course Youth Work Ethics will be implemented as an MA level elective course in University of Rijeka in 2023. The course has 3 ECTS points. It will be organized as having 10 lectures, 10 practice hours and 10 seminar hours. The will course aim to familiarize students with the dominant (western) moral theories, as well as with the relevant national and international moral codes and guidelines related to youth work. Additionally, the course will aim to enable students to conduct a moral evaluation of various youth work practices and to make them capable of evaluating various measures and public policies that affect the well-being of youth. The prerequisite for enrollment in the course will be that the student has to be enrolled in a teaching track of an MA study programme.

The evaluation was implemented using a short questionnaire with different levels of inquiry.

## MODULE

The first part of the questionnaire asked students about the module. Students were asked 'What was your interest for topics covered within this module before you participated in this course testing?' with possible answers being 1) Great, 2) Moderate, and 3) Little. All of the students selected the middle option, expressing that their initial interest in the topic was moderate. Students were also asked how much time per week did they dedicate to preparing for the class, with possible answers being 1) Up to half an hour, 2) 1 to 3 hours and 3) more than 3 hours. All of them responded that they prepared up to half an hour on a weekly basis. Whether or not the lecturer held classes regularly was determined, with options being 1) Yes, 2) No, and 3) I cannot estimate. All of the respondents said that the classes were held on a regular basis. The students were also asked to judge whether the module fitted the assigned 1 ECTS point. Most of the students, 83% or 10 of them, estimated that 1 ECTS point is roughly corresponding to the amount of work needed to participate in the module. Two of them, however, thought that the amount of work is less than 1 ECTS point.

## LECTURER

The next block of questions related to the lecturer of the module. The first question was 'The lecturer clearly and in detail instructed the students in the plan and outcomes of the work'. All the possible answers within this block ranged from 1 (Not at all accurate) to 5 (completely accurate). As seen in Table 1., all of the students agreed that the lecturer was clear and detailed in his instructions for the plan and outcomes of the module; that he presented the material clearly and in a way that was understandable; that he connected the material with their other knowledge; that he encouraged active participation; showed enthusiasm; treated his students in a respectful manner; and was available for communication.

Table 1.

The Lecturer...	Mean
clearly and in detail instructed the students in the plan and outcomes of the work	5
presented the material in a clear and understandable manner	5
pointed out the connection between the content of the module and other courses or to the practical application of the content.	5
encouraged active participation in the module (participation in debates, question-raising, autonomy in work and critical thinking)	5
was motivated during the module and showed enthusiasm in his work	5
treated the students with respect	5
was regularly available for communication	5

## CONTENT AND METHODS

Students were also asked about content of the module and the methods used. Possible answers again ranged from 1 (Not at all accurate) to 5 (completely accurate). The first question was that the content presented was relevant and contemporary, and the mean or the average value here was 4.7, meaning that all but 3 students who opted for the option 4, estimated that the content was completely relevant and up to date. Next, the average answer to whether the content will help in their future work was 4.9, meaning that only 1 student put 4 as their answer. The same is true for questions about whether the methods in the module contributed to the development of the student's youth work skills, as well as that the students understand how the knowledge gained in the module connects to the practice of the work. Lastly, the average score for the question of whether students learned from their classmates (and not just the lecturer), was 4.8, meaning that 2 of the students selected the option 4.

Table 2.

	Mean
the content presented in the module is relevant and contemporary	4.7
the content of the module will help me in my future professional youth work	4.9
methods used in the module have contributed to the development of my professional skills related to youth work	4.9
while attending classes in the module, I learned from other students, as well as from the lecturer	4.8
I understand how the theoretical knowledge acquired during the module can be applied in practice	4.9

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The next section of the questionnaire was organized as a series of open-ended questions, giving the students the option to express their opinions fully.

*What parts of the module were most useful to you? Why?*

In this part, students generally expressed that they were very happy with guest lecturers in the module mostly because they thought that they gave them different perspectives and real-life examples of ethical dilemmas that happen in different workplaces. What they also liked in the module was group work that was being done during lectures, as well as the examples that the lecturer gave that were meant to make theoretical knowledge more understandable. Students enjoyed debates as well.

*“The best parts of the module were workshops and guest lectures. Since there is not enough room for workshops in other courses, this has been a good application of the lessons learned to everyday situations. Also, the guest lectures were excellent because we heard real-life applications that we as future pedagogues will encounter.”*

*What parts of the module were useless to you? What parts should be excluded from future performances?*

*“Everything was useful. Nothing should be excluded. Excellent ratio of theory and application to assignments.”*

In this open question, students mostly agreed that everything covered in the scopes of the module was useful and that nothing should be left out in the future course.

*Are there parts of the module that were not clear to you, or that you feel need to be further processed?*

Here, all the students agreed that nothing remained unclear, and one student expressed a wish to include a pedagogue as a guest lecturer.

*“No, the teacher regularly asked if there was a need for additional explanations and if we had any questions so nothing remained unclear.”*

*What practical knowledge do you think would be useful to gain regarding the ethics of youth work that was not covered during this module?*

*“I have no suggestions because I think the content is very well organized and that all the information is covered.”*

Regarding knowledge that was not a part of the module, and that respondents think would be useful for their future work, what was highlighted was competencies for advisory work and what the law says to some ethical dilemmas covered. Most students felt like the knowledge gained during the module was sufficient.

*What methods do you think it would be good to use on the module that were not used (or not used enough)?*

When asked about the methods that were not used, or that were not used enough, students mostly said that they were pleased with what was being done already. Some had suggestions like more use of debate as a format, since it strengthens cooperation with other students, going into institutions where youth work is being done (although the respondent in question also said that they suppose this was not done because of the scope of the testing) and incorporating an analysis of events close to young people, movies or TV shows.

*"I think that group work, real-life examples and similar activities were brilliantly incorporated into classes, so I don't think there's any need to change the approach."*

*Do you have any other comments regarding the youth work ethics module? Recommendations regarding place and time of execution, content, methods, techniques, tools, etc.?*

*"All I have for this module are words of praise. I like that the emphasis is on the practical part, i.e. workshops, where we meet with real issues from practice, discuss and share opinions together. I think there should be as many of these courses / modules as possible."*

In the last open-ended question, students repeated some of their already mentioned remarks, such as going to an institution where youth workers work. Furthermore, they again commended group work, orientation to practice and debates. Respondents said that they enjoyed the methods used. Students also mentioned that the module could be more oriented to pedagogues, which seems like a normal comment, because the module was tested during a course with pedagogy students, and the planned course is to be an elective one. Respondents also took this opportunity to commend the lecturer for a job well done and expressed a wish for the module to become a full course.

## CONCLUSION

Students expressed a moderate interest in the topic before taking this module. They also estimated that they needed up to half an hour of weekly preparation for the course, and that that with the class itself equals to roughly around 1 ECTS point. All of the students completely agreed that the lecturer was clear and detailed in his instructions for the plan and outcomes of the module. The students agree that he presented the material clearly and in a way that was understandable and that he connected the material with their other knowledge. The lecturer was thought to encourage active participation, showed enthusiasm and treated his students in a respectful manner. Students were happy with the lecturer's availability for communication. Most of the respondents agreed that the content of the module was relevant and contemporary, as well as helpful for their future work. They thought accurate that the methods used developed their skills and that the theoretical knowledge they gained can be applied in practice. They also agreed that they learned from each other as well. Respondents found guest lecturers, workshops, debates and practical examples as most useful. In the open-ended part of the questionnaire, they praised the methods used (debate, guest lectures, workshops). Students were overall very satisfied with the test module, and expressed hope to see it as a full course on the university.