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## Is e-learning a panacea for the current challenges of business ethics teaching?

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### Abstract

The scope of the paper is to investigate whether e-learning is a good alternative to achieve business ethics teaching goals in the challenging context of disembedded economies. To achieve this goal, I used various interdisciplinary methods and approaches, content analysis of the relevant literature, and a case study. Firstly, I focus on the current challenges of business ethics teaching. Then, based on my experience of teaching business ethics in various forms, I distinguish the methods applied within them and evaluate them, taking as criteria the cognitive, applicative, and reflective goals of teaching business ethics. Models and theories of educational psychology provide a framework to distinguish some elements that are responsible for the learning success of the student in terms of the defined teaching goal. Empirical results show that although e-learning scored best when it comes to achieving three differentiated goals of business ethics teaching, it is followed closely by seminars. This leads to the conclusion that perhaps a hybrid form, containing e-learning and seminars, would be the optimal way to achieve the goals.

**Keywords:** education, business ethics, e-learning

**JEL Classification:** A13

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## 1. Introduction

Business ethics and e-learning are two relatively new phenomena of our global world. Both can be considered the outcome of current trends and challenges that create a particular context that imposes expectations on both how teaching is conducted and the content of business education. While the IT revolution made e-learning possible, the consequences of globalization, which resulted in disembedding the economic system (Polanyi, 1977) from the social and environmental systems, made the existence of business ethics indispensable.

Although the literature about e-learning and business ethics is vast, these topics are usually analyzed separately, and their intersection is not often discussed. ‘The number of online courses in business schools is growing dramatically, but little has been published about teaching business ethics courses online’ (Collins et al., 2014, p. 513). In this sense, my paper fills this gap.

The scope of the paper is to investigate whether business ethics is a good alternative for other two-course delivery forms (lecture and seminar) to achieve business ethics goals in the challenging changing context of (socially) disembedded economies. The main thesis of the paper is that contemporary goals in business ethics teaching, considering the actual context of student’s life (work and study, virtual life) and other trends (IT and its consequences for teaching), can be achieved better with such forms of course delivery as e-learning.

The method applied to verify the thesis is based on theoretical models, the empirical results of current pedagogical research and fundamental theories of educational psychology, content analysis of current publications in business ethics and e-learning, and my own experience of teaching in diverse forms (lectures, seminars, and e-learning) in various countries. Based on this methodology, I will draw conclusions about the effects of possible methods of teaching in three course-delivery forms (standard lectures, seminars, and e-learning) in the face of the challenges of the rapidly changing world, which affects tertiary education.

## 2. Current challenges for business ethics teaching

In order to meet its goals, business ethics teaching must consider the changes in the educational environment as these changes affect the expectations of students regarding how courses are delivered. It must also consider the requirements of the organizational context of teaching.

We must first look at the IT revolution, which was accompanied by the social media explosion. The vast use of smartphones by about 2/3 of the world’s population (5.1 billion, *Digital Report 2019*) allows most of the world to participate in virtual life (57% of people were connected to the internet in 2018) for a significant amount of time (in Europe, 0.72 billion people use it 6.5 hours per day, *Digital Report 2019*). No wonder, then, that such a virtually united world created a space

for social media expansion (3.4 billion people), which additionally has had an impact on communication styles. In the virtual world, short, attention-grabbing posts and flashy, captivating multimedia messages are often a unique way to be noticed, to get ‘likes,’ to count, and to have an impact. The dominance of such short forms of communication makes it difficult for many students to focus on other, traditional media, like reading physical, paper books, and journals (without a search function). Such changes affect traditional forms as well – books and articles are becoming shorter, and their style errs towards simplicity.

Due to the development of IT, social media, and the less hierarchic structure of society, the role of teachers and lecturers has changed. They no longer transfer knowledge to students; instead, they monitor, and they coach the students when they first become acquainted with new knowledge. Moreover, students nowadays – ‘generation Y’ or ‘Gen Y students’ (Edwards & Gallagher, 2018) – are faced with greater challenges than previous students. Rather than dealing with finding information, they have to handle the flow of information and find sufficient time to process it.

These trends, such as the IT revolution, use of social media, and the new role of the lecturer as a coach, favor the popularity of e-learning so that it has become the preferred mode of course delivery, especially in management studies (Arbaugh et al., 2010). Moreover, it has become *a new paradigm of modern education*, with a growth rate of 35.6% (Sun et al., 2008, p. 1183).

The further trend refers to the knowledge revolution, which creates particular requirements regarding how teaching is done, i.e., a more holistic approach that gives credit to intersections. The knowledge revolution is displayed in a multitude of forms: the growing number of publications, studies, subjects, and the growing interdisciplinarity (i.e., discovering intersections between many subjects and initiating interdisciplinary research topics). This trend imposes new challenges on universities, teachers, and students. The growing intersections between economics and business ethics call for solutions when it comes to teaching. Students need to know how to evaluate various economic situations from an ethical point of view and how to find a way out of the dilemmas that they may encounter during their life.

Moreover, confronted with a rising number of subjects and topics as part of their curriculum, students are likely to marginalize the meaning of business ethics, unable to see how they intersect with other subjects. To avoid such marginalization of business ethics, universities may consider a wider and more holistic pedagogical vision that does not reduce ethical reflection to a few isolated courses. It should gradually permeate all courses in a business school (Frémeaux et al., 2018, p. 241).

Last but not least, the current situation in the face of Covid-19 has forced many universities to switch to online teaching. Even if the situation improves, the risk of further epidemics is still present. So, university lecturers must be able to realize which strengths and weaknesses online teaching has and how they should react to the constantly changing situation, by offering hybrid forms of teaching, for instance.

### **3. Insights from educational psychology: cognitive, applicative, and reflective goals and the teaching process**

Social trends impose on business ethics new challenges in terms of their goals and how they are achieved. Some inspirations from educational psychology may help us to achieve these goals, starting by dividing them into cognitive, applicative, and reflexive goals.

These three aspects of the goals enhance the importance of holistic teaching. It is not constrained to transferring knowledge of basic theories and concepts, but it focuses on their application (García-Rosell, 2019), enhancing competencies and moral imagination (Retolaza & San-Jose, 2017), and students' attitudes. The latter means enforcing reflection processes, for instance, in the sense of students integrating societal values with their own values (Harris & Sandhu, 2017), and developing moral sensitivity, spirituality, and empathy (Baker, 2017).

Cognitive goals focus on understanding concepts, theories, and facts concerning the social (norms, values) and environmental embedding of economic systems (limited natural resources, environmental effects of economic activity). As not all social tendencies are ethically acceptable (unfairness, inequalities, social exclusion), students have to understand why it is so and how to deal with such tendencies. However, the knowledge gained in business ethics teaching is not enough; students have to know how to apply it in real-life contexts. Moreover, overload with texts can limit time necessary for processing the crucial content of the course profoundly, and learning how to apply it so that students may achieve crucial competences (Goldstein & Ford, 2002). Research suggests that training and course designers should limit courses to approximately four to seven key topics, like general and institutional compliance, decision-making strategies, stakeholders, and ethical dilemma characteristics, which are particularly important to influence ethical behavior and decision-making (Medeiros et al., 2017). Still, we must allow students to see the personal relevance of such goals (comparing their own goals to those of other students) and make them part of their social identity (as citizens or future company leaders). Otherwise, these concepts will remain external to the student, with no personal relevance, and no transformative process may occur (reflexive goals).

Therefore, when teaching sustainability and social inclusion, we have to distinguish their cognitive, applicative, and reflective components. Taking as an example corporate social responsibility (CSR), whose goal is to drive change in organizations towards sustainability while still protecting the interests of stakeholders, teaching should (1) acquaint students with the CSR approach (cognitive level), (2) teach them how to apply it, i.e., how to integrate this perspective into the strategic vision of entities to effectively manage the social and ethical issues associated with its activity (Herghiligiu et al., 2016, p. 526) (application level), and (3) make them experience whether the values and attitudes of CSR are in accordance with their individual goals (reflective/transformative goals).

Distinguishing various goals is helpful in designing not only the content of the course but also the teaching methods. This refers not only to methods of knowledge transfer but also those methods which teach how to apply this knowledge and which inspire reflection.

Furthermore, in evaluating the teaching methods, we must consider to what extent they enhance the performance and motivation of students (Klieme et al., 2006; Klieme et al., 2009). If we focus only on evaluating the final exam, we can't control anymore the way how students reached this effect. Therefore, thinking of evaluation methods, we should also evaluate the steps toward the goal (final exam) – for instance by evaluating responses of students on forum, their team-work engagement etc. The focus only on the final grade cannot really measure performance in the sense of achieving all three aspects of the goals, because it measures mainly cognitive goals, leaving behind competences and attitudes.

I consider valuable those methods that allow students to perform better and enhance their motivation, which, in turn, impacts performance. However, controlling these teaching processes requires students to attend. Knowing that students tend to look for shortcuts to get a result (minimizing cost and maximizing outcome), there is a risk that students will only learn for the exam, not to get long-lasting cognitive, applicative, and reflective effects.

Summarizing, as the goals of teaching business ethics are not the same as the goals of students, who may only focus on the final exam when validating the use of three course-delivery methods, I will focus on the process of teaching, rather than final exam effects.

Therefore, the methods may be considered valuable, as they allow for the control of attendance and the active linking of prior knowledge. They also encourage in-depth processing, give students time to develop their knowledge, and they make it impossible to learn the concepts only superficially for the final exam. Moreover, the methods stimulate the sense of social inclusion (which may be hindered by hearing, visual, or character problems, or because the person is a foreigner), stimulate commitment (active participation), and favor the effort of the student.

#### **4. Case study**

When teaching business ethics, we can often choose between the following forms of course delivery: lectures, seminars, or e-learning. These forms create a broad context for the diverse methods applied in teaching. The fitness of each method depends on the particular context (the form of course delivery). Therefore, it is worth starting with their description.

## 4.1. Three forms of course delivery

### Lecture

The lecture is a form of course delivery conducted in Poland separately for day students (Monday-Friday) and weekend students (conducted every second weekend) and in Germany – only on weekdays, where frontal lectures dominate. My experience in teaching in this form refers to four semesters in Germany. As standard, there are about 50 or more students, but the attendance rate varies from 30 to 70%, and there is no way to control it as attendance is not obligatory. Since many students work, they have to prioritize and choose particular lectures that they will attend. The ultimate choice may depend on personal interests or the quality of the lecture, but often, it is a result of a cost and profit calculation: is the content of the lecture helpful in passing the final exam or not?

As the preferred form of the final exam is a quiz (due to the large number of students), students are more likely to attend the lecture if it focuses on final exam-related content. By contrast, lectures that focus on reflexive exercises may not seem to be exam-relevant. Thus, they are not likely to be attended, and time ‘saved’ can be used to accumulate knowledge that is important to pass the exam. Moreover, the choice of methods that inspire self-reflection is limited due to the great number of students and where lectures are delivered – usually, a lecture-hall, which favors the front-lecture style. Therefore, the biggest problem of this form of course delivery is probably the content-orientation and the lack of possibilities to integrate applicative and reflexive components of teaching. To some extent, this could be overcome by reducing the number of students and by making attendance obligatory. Otherwise, the risk is that students learn the content only to pass the final exam just before the deadline, and, thus, without any longer-lasting effects.

### Seminar

The seminar is a very popular teaching form in Germany, although it is still missing in public tertiary education in Poland. My experience refers to seven years of teaching in such a form in Germany. Many students who have to work during the week choose it in order to finish a course. Students have to attend during two full weekends, usually separated by 4–5 weeks. It is possible to control students’ attendance and, due to the introduction of the *maximum one day off* rule, maintain it at a level of 75–100%. The teacher may vary between frontal teaching, group work (discussion, debate, game, repetition questions), individual work, and quizzes, which allows for repetition. Quizzes may be conducted using the smartphone application Kahoot, which usually evokes an exciting competition, and students enjoy it. Additionally, one can also use short YouTube videos (illustrating content, explaining a problem in-depth, or showing an experiment or case in an engaging manner), or other media, like PowerPoint presentations.

The written results of student's work can be shown using a projector, or at a desk, where students may, as a group, write their responses directly with chalk. The group (of usually 30 students) may be divided into four or five groups. At the end of each block of lectures, five revision questions will be given, meaning one question for each group to work out. However, due to their character (insecurity, introversion) or, in the case of foreign students, German language competence, many students are unsure and unwilling to participate. Some students consider such participation in a discussion a challenge and a cost, which is perhaps not worth undertaking, as the attendance cannot be rated (only the final exam counts).

### **E-learning**

My experience with this last form of teaching has lasted for three years, and it refers to classes conducted in Poland in English, attended by students from India, France, Belgium, Germany, Russia, and Poland. This means that most of the students are not native speakers (apart from the students from India, as Indian English is an official language), and they speak English with different accents and represent diverse levels of English. All courses are divided into ten modules, and each module is available online for students every two weeks. Consequently, students have time to read, watch, and listen to the content, and to accomplish various assignments. Some of them, like a quiz at the end of each module, are cognition oriented. Others, like participating in an online forum, are applicative and reflexive. For instance, students might watch and analyze debates or work on a case study. They are asked to ground their answer in their particular culture, work, or life experience, and show the personal relevance of the topic (in relation to their own values and norms). Thus, they get the opportunity to reflect on their own norms and values, those that refer to others, and these that are discussed in the particular case. This makes it impossible for students to find answers to the questions on the internet.

Furthermore, it makes it possible for weekend and day-students to interact, while in other class-delivery forms, they are separated. Students share their experiences very openly, and their answers are read by others, which may be gathered from many references and comments to other students' experiences shared on the forum. They seem to be interested in the opinions of other students and the cultural particularities they refer to. They are motivated to attend regularly by scores that depend on the quality of the answer (the profit-cost relationship is better than in seminars), and a deadline of 2 weeks, which is, as a rule, sufficient. Another task, which unites cognitive, applicative, and reflective aspects, is a presentation, which must be delivered in the form of a video (where the student is visible, which allows for authentication). It must be based on one of the topics discussed in the course with their own examples.

The final grade is a result of all these individual elements: quizzes, forum assignments, and presentations delivered in the form of a video. The students are motivated to participate regularly to gain a sufficient number of scores, which can be traced in the assignment folder. This form of teaching is very challenging for

the teacher, who has to invest a great deal of time preparing all the material required (e.g., texts, videos, presentations, references to actual cases, journal papers, and discussions) in advance, evaluate the students' progress during the term, and also coach them.

#### 4.2. Methods applied, their social status, and specific challenges in various course delivery forms

In the experience-based case study described below, I apply various methods, which encompass: (1) Lecture + multimedia, (2) Text-reading (description of concepts, fictive stories, research on webpages), (3) Repetition questions, (4) A case study, (5) Discussion/debate (performed) and an alternative debate (watched), (6) Quizzes. All these methods have a different character in each course-delivery form. Moreover, they have a different social status (solitary work – SW, or group work – GW), which may have a positive impact on motivational and performative aspects and emotions, because the presence of other students – and confronting them – may enforce motivation and allow the students to learn other points of view (e.g., empathy and cognition). Of course, the presence of others may have negative effects, leading to free-rider behavior or group-thinking.

Table 1. Basic dimension of good lessons and its effect

Method	Lecture [L]	Seminar [S]	E-learning [E]
Lecture + multimedia	SW in group context		SW
Text-reading	SW		
Repetition – Questions	[SW]	GW	SW + GW
Case study	[SW]	GW	SW + GW
Discussion/debate (performed for L & S, watched for E)	[-]	GW	SW + GW
Quiz	[-]	SW + GW (like Kahoot)	SW

[ ]: refers to the low response on such a method on the students' part

-: lack of this method in the particular course delivery form.

SW – solitary work, GW – group work.

Source: own compilation

#### Lecture with a multimedia presentation

**Lectures:** The 90-minute lecture in German with a multimedia presentation is the main method used in this course-delivery form. The main challenge here is the problem of attention and the potential difficulty for students with hearing or sight problems. Moreover, in classes with foreign students, for whom German is not their mother tongue, not understanding some words may limit their understanding. After the lecture, there is a short break, and then students usually attend other lectures immediately; thus, the elaboration phase is missing. This form of delivery shows its limits when it comes to motivation, due to the length (90 minutes), the students' understanding (acoustics and visibility depend on the

students' position in the lecture hall and their ability to hear and see (limited by students with disabilities)), little place for autonomy (students have to participate in the lecture even if they are tired or worried), and lack of interaction. Furthermore, it limits the learning process, in the sense of overloading the working memory with irrelevant content (teacher) or by distractions (visual or audio, a large number of students, or, e.g., tiredness or smartphone usage) (see: Cognitive Load Theory (Paas et al., 2003)).

**Seminars:** Seminars may overcome the difficulties associated with lectures discussed above. Seminars last for seven academic hours in one day (with three breaks), the number of students is smaller, and the teacher may vary the methods in order to maintain students' focus (e.g., discussions or group work). As the classroom is smaller, students with hearing and visual problems experience fewer limitations. Nevertheless, non-native students may find it difficult to follow the content for such a long time, with the additional load for their working memory. In this form of delivery, it is also easier to control smartphone use, as students sit much closer to the teacher. The positive side of this form of delivery is that the teacher may see the level of engagement, attention, and signs of lack of comprehension. In a small classroom, students are more likely to ask if they do not understand something, and they have much more space for interaction.

**E-learning:** E-learning offers the possibility to overcome most of the previously mentioned difficulties. For instance, it makes it possible to not overload the working memory. By letting the students decide when and how long they will deal with the lecture content, they experience more autonomy (enhancing motivation). Moreover, they can choose the optimal time for it (not when they are tired or distracted). By reducing the length of lectures supported by a presentation to 5 to 10-minute sections enhanced by subtitles or transcriptions (for hearing impaired or foreign students), it enhances understanding (and thus motivation) and makes it possible to avoid cognitive overload. The working memory may stay focused on the content, and students can listen to more difficult passages several times. This method may be combined effectively with the third method, revision questions: After each video, students can find revision questions, which makes it possible for them to develop the content. The forum is where students who encounter problems understanding may ask questions. It is possible to open short videos on YouTube,<sup>1</sup> which makes it possible to add subtitles in many languages, adjust the speed (to the student's foreign-language competence), and clarify information directly in the comments below.

### **Text-reading (description of concepts, fictive stories, research on webpages)**

Text-reading, as a method, refers to all reading activities that students are supposed to do during the lecture. It may refer to the obligatory literature or current research, and it allows students to deepen and extend their knowledge of the topics

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<sup>1</sup> Here are some examples of my Business Ethics videos made in 2020: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpi7KoLn7PxolhvXXwA-0ufvQuOisgU3s>, one from an American university: <https://youtu.be/OcqxEjmGT00>, and one from a German university: <https://youtu.be/DaKFr6N5OLs>.

learned during the lecture. However, this method depends on the context (course-delivery form).

Applying this method in the first course-delivery form (the lecture) results in the low participation of students. The final exam in the form of a quiz at the end of the term makes students interested only in exam-relevant matters. So, even if they read selected textbooks, they do it in a facts-oriented matter, less critically, and are more likely to omit reflective or applicative issues unless they are particularly interested in the matter.

The text-reading method is not really at the fore in a seminar. Again, this is because, even if the final exam consists not only of a quiz but also open questions, if students do read the suggested texts, it is more content-oriented reading. There is still no possibility to control whether they have read the texts or not, nor to make the text-reading pay off, as only the final-exam counts.

**E-learning** may be helpful in overcoming this difficulty, as, in many respects, it makes reading various sources of texts imperative in order to answer questions later in the forum revision. These text-reading activities refer to text passages written by the teacher (describing the most important concepts or theories) or by other authors (quotes from famous philosophers or journal papers), fictive stories, or there may be links to important research online. Thus, the variety and number of texts is very rich, and they are used to deepen the students' understanding. Additionally, knowing that they are supposed to read a certain number of texts to get high enough scores, students probably choose those text which they find most interesting. They can then refer to the paper they have read when writing on the forum with other students, so the other students find a summary of the texts did not choose (students are asked to refer to texts that have not been already chosen). In order to stimulate critical reading competences, I give the students additional scores for writing a short review of a journal paper that focuses on the main arguments, methodology, and critical reflection.

### **Repetition questions**

Repetition questions are one of important methods that enforce students' learning processes. It is commonplace in educational psychology for the learning process to start with an active, focused elaboration of the topic and an attempt to adapt it to new situations and to link it to prior knowledge. Only in such a way is the content memorized for a long time and ready for re-use and application.

Unfortunately, such an important method cannot be actively enforced during the **lecture** as a delivery form, and it is up to the students if they use it in studying. Only some students do it, as it is very time consuming and not necessarily helpful for learning for quizzes, which are based more on recognizing some facts or relationships between them.

There is more room to apply this method during seminars, where students are supposed to answer circa 30 complex questions during the course but they may collaborate with other students. Again, there is a risk of free-riders using the re-

sources of others, or group-thinking, which limits the positive and negative outstanding responses.

In e-learning, I rank this method highly. Students working on particular modules have additional material and some questions that they can find under each video or text. They are supposed to answer some of these questions on the forum at the end of the lecture. Consequently, they have to understand and critically process the lesson connecting the content of it to the already gained knowledge. Students are supposed to read answers of their colleagues before providing their own answer as only when the answer does not contain any repetition of ideas already presented can it be valued positively. So, students have to watch a video or read a text, think about their answer, build a critical opinion, then look at all the answers given before theirs and embed their answer in this group discourse. This system motivates students to start with their elaboration of the module directly after it is published. If students wait too long, the forum will already contain most of the possible answers, and it will be very difficult to find new issues or even unanswered questions.

### **Case study**

The case study method cannot be used to its full potential during the lecture as a delivery form. There is usually not enough time to discuss real cases, and even if they were discussed, they are usually used as an example and presented by the teacher. This limits the possibility for the students to develop their own ideas about the case.

This difficulty may be overcome in a seminar. Here, students may work on one or more case studies in groups, allowing them to exchange their opinions. However, there is still a risk of free riders, who, instead of working with the group, will be distracted by their own matters (usually their smartphone). Other problems mentioned before relate to speaking skills (non-native speakers) and the student's personality.

E-learning makes it possible to achieve synergetic effects of solitary work on the case study, as it finishes with a presentation of the results on the forum, which then creates a basis for group-work. On the forum, there is a rule that students may share only answers that had not been published before, which makes them read the previously submitted answers. This makes students especially innovative in looking for additional solutions. Consequently, students learn not only how to get to their own perspective, but also about other ways of seeing the problem; in some cases, they may act as a teacher to the others.

### **Discussion/debate (performed) and alternatives (watched)**

According to the perspective of argumentative discourse (Fischer, 2002), group work can lead to the acquisition of diverse knowledge if the learning partners seek evidence and counter-evidence for the statements in the room, weight the latter in terms of positive and negative evidence, and interpret their own views accordingly

(Derry, 1999). Important forms of group work that are especially suitable for some ethical business content include discussions.

The paper by García-Rosell (2019) suggests how the discursive nature of CSR can be used to promote more reflexive practices among business students, and references to such methods can be found in the current literature. One of the important aspects of studying business ethics is to learn how to leave behind stereotypes and attitudes that exclude other people, which is a precondition for making decisions that integrate other people. Debates seem to be an efficient tool to teach students not only to better learn the topic taught but to argue, convince, and be convinced (Hendy et al., 2017).

Moreover, debates are an efficient tool to help students explore topics that affect society (Proulx, 2004) and enhance their abilities to read and write critically (Osborne, 2005). According to Hendy et al. (2017), a debate is superior to passive learning through lectures and textbooks (similar evidence is provided by Darby (2007) and Garrett (et al. 1996)). Even non-debating students could better recognize various points of view, and therefore improve their critical thinking (Hendy et al., 2017, pp. 15–16). During a debate, students are forced to pay attention to evidence and rationality. According to Hilbig and Pohl (2009), evidence-based decision-making, or making decisions based on rationality, is far superior to methods such as using intuition or heuristics. Thanks to the use of such a simple tool as debates, students acquire important managerial skills of persuasion and influence. Moreover, students who were not acquainted with ethical views could learn far more about ethical reasoning from listening to debates than from textbooks. Discussions have similar functions, and they encourage perspective-taking (for instance, in a stakeholder analysis case that shows the perspective of each stakeholder group).

Although these methods of teaching have great advantages, not all delivery forms are suitable. Lectures are not suitable because of the number of students and the amount of time it takes, which can easily go beyond the 1.5-hour frame.

Seminars are far more suitable, although, again, it may sometimes be difficult to avoid problems with a lack of motivation, free riders, and, last but not least, people's personalities, which may limit the access of some students. After a long day, students often do not have enough power to discuss new topics, not seeing the direct utility in such an activity. However, if the topic is interesting, sometimes such a form may be successful.

E-learning as a delivery form reveals other problems. It is difficult to synchronize all students at one time. Therefore, I modified this method, which may help to compensate for this lost opportunity. I give students links to watch interesting debates on YouTube, like Stanford University's ethical debates on economic issues. They must then refer to the main arguments of the debates on the forum and add their opinion.

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## Quiz

The final method is the quiz. However, in the lecture, it is very difficult to apply it because of the number of students, limited time (1.5 hours), and the lack of technical support. It is much easier to apply the quiz in seminars, especially using Kahoot. However, this app is not suitable for large auditoriums, as the visibility of questions may be limited for many, although with good technological support, it is worth trying. The teacher has to find time to prepare questions and then put them on the app. The questions are read aloud and appear on the screen, and students insert their answers on the Kahoot app on their smartphones. The results and the distribution of right and wrong answers appear on the screen, so the students receive direct feedback while remaining anonymous to the other students. Students enjoy this method, and the positive emotions and competitive spirit are really something that helps them to return to a long seminar day and focus on other, less amusing forms of delivery.

What about e-learning? Quizzes may also be conducted, using the e-learning platform function, for instance, which allows the teacher to see directly which students have completed the quiz and what scores they obtained. Students can see direct feedback, as well. The time given to accomplish such a test may be limited to avoid searching through online resources instead of using their own memory.

## 5. Comparison

The presentations of the various methods and their particularities revealed their opportunities and risks when applied in a particular delivery form. Now I will compare the methods using as the criterion the extent to which they enhance students' motivation and performance, based on the model introduced earlier. In the second step, I will focus on another aspect – the extent to which the methods are appropriate to achieve the cognitive, applicative, and reflexive goals of business ethics teaching.

The following methodology is applied. Based on my experience with the methods in the particular contexts (course delivery method) described in sections 3 and 4 of the paper, I try to assign a particular value to each method depending, on the extent to which it meets a criterion and providing in brackets an additional explanation if needed. I use a scale consisting of 4 grades: 0 – the method is not applied, and then +, ++, and +++, which refer to low, moderate, and high effect. Table 2 shows the meaning of the scale, referring to each variable.

Table 2. Methodology of measuring participation

Symbol	Participation	Possibilities to control performance	Motivation	Cognitive goals	Applicative goals	Reflective goals
+	Low participation	Small possibility to control	Low motivation	Various types of obstacles in receiving the course content, high level of cognitive overload	The course offers no or very limited ways to apply the knowledge to real content. It is only a voluntary activity	There is no or very limited time to reflect on the content
++	Moderate participation	Some possibility of control	Moderate motivation	Moderate obstacles	Students have a moderate chance to apply the content to a real case	Students have some opportunities to reflect on the content
+++	High participation	Many effective methods to control	High motivation	No obstacles in receiving course content, low cognitive overload	Students are expected to apply the knowledge in practical cases, and they are evaluated for it	Students get many possibilities to reflect on the content and have insights into the reflections of other students

Source: own compilation

Based on my experience with the various methods described in section 4, and the context of teaching (course delivery form) described in section 3 of this paper, I compare them, taking the students' involvement in the described activities, and the teacher's possibilities to control the students' performance as the criteria. The scale presented earlier in Table 2 is applied, and, if needed, it is supplemented by a short explanation which was discussed extensively in section 4.

Finally, the scores are added up within each of the course delivery forms to show which of them has the highest score. It is an attempt to visualize with numbers the descriptions presented earlier in the case study. The results of this comparison, presented in Table 3, show that e-learning offers more chances to enforce the participation in particular teaching forms, and so to control the outcomes, and greater participation in the method (15 for participation and 13 for control of performance). It is followed by seminars, with relatively high results (13 and 12, respectively). Lectures stand out with relatively low results (3 and 4, respectively).

Table 3. Participation and control of performance in different delivery forms

Method	Participation in the particular learning method			Possibilities to control performance		
	L	S	E	L	S	E
Lecture + multi- media	++ Absence varies, as presence is not obligatory.	+++ Presence is obligatory, so usually, most students attend.	++ Presence is usually high judging indirectly, i.e., by the responses to questions later.	++ The teacher can see the level of engagement, attention, signs of lack of – comprehen- sion.	+++ The teacher may control the presence, engagement, attention, signs of lack of comprehension.	+ The control over the students' performance in this method may occur only indi- rectly (tasks, questions re- sponded).
Text- reading	- Only a few or no students read texts.	+ Students read only texts which may be helpful to pass the final exam.	++ Students usually read most of the texts in order to reply to forum questions.	+ Control occurs only indirectly through the final exam.	++ Control occurs indirectly, through final exam results, and by asking questions.	+++ The control of performance occurs through the questions on the forum, which the students have to answer.
Repeti- tion – Ques- tions	+ Some students may answer voluntarily.	++ Students usually work in groups, not all equally, free riders.	+++ Most stu- dents give answers to these ques- tions on the forum (individually).	+ Control occurs only indirectly through the final exam.	++ Control occurs indirectly, through the final exam results, and by asking ques- tions.	+++ The answers to the questions are obligatory and have to be pre- sented on the forum.
Case study	-	++ Students usually work in groups, not all equally, free riders.	+++ Students solve the case indivi- dually, and it is obligatory.	-	++ Only group performance is evaluated.	+++ Individual effort is evaluated.
Discus- sion /debate (per- formed – for L, S /watche d for E)	-	++ Students have to discuss various problems in groups and present them together (free-riders).	++ Results are presented on the forum, but the debate is only watched.	-	+ The teacher may control only the group performance.	+ The teacher may control only the individual perfor- mance; it is not possible to evaluate team- work.
Quiz	-	+++ Most stu- dents take part (fun, utility).	+++ Most stu- dents take part (more scores, utility).	-	++ The teacher (using Kahoot) cannot see exactly who is missing in the game, only how many. The same concerns performance.	++ The teacher may see and evaluate the outcome individually.
	3	13	15	4	12	13

Source: own compilation

Motivation is another important precondition to learn content. The kind of motivation matters, since learning outcomes of students depend stronger on internally regulated motivation, especially when it comes to long-lasting effects. This is of importance considering the goal of teaching, i.e., the expectation that students will be able to apply the content they learn in the future. However, intrinsic motivation (if it does not already exist, otherwise there is a risk of *overjustification effect* – undermining of preexisting intrinsic motivation) starts with external motivation. External motivation relates to external regulation (rewards, punishment), introjected regulation (internalization of a goal without identifying with it), identified regulation (identification with the goal of the action but there are still conflicts with other goals), or integrated regulation (identification without any conflicting goals). By contrast, intrinsic motivation relates to actions based on stimuli within the action. The first two regulations are other-directed, and the next self-directed. Although intrinsic motivation is seen as the ultimate goal, we cannot ignore the fact that this goal is not always within the limits of possibilities. So, in teaching it is often sufficient to achieve identification or integration -level of external motivation, and not necessary internal motivation.

In order to raise motivation, the teacher may, based on *Self Determination Theory* (Deci & Ryan, 1985; 2002), *focus on students'*: 1) competence, 2) autonomy (self-determination), 3) social involvement (relatedness). The perception of competence, self-determination, and social relatedness is positively related to intrinsic learning motivation and mental health aspects (Deci & Ryan, 2002). So, for instance, if, during their studies, students experience their competence (i.e., delivering an assignment and receiving feedback), autonomy (for instance, they can choose the time, place, and sequence of learning), and social involvement (they can interact with each other) their motivation will be greater. This would be of importance in choosing the right method of teaching.

Table 4 presents a comparison of methods regarding their impact on motivation, focusing especially on three components of motivating: allowing students to experience competence, autonomy, and inclusion. When it comes to motivation, again seminars and e-learning seem better at motivating students to perform (16 and 11), whereas standard lectures offer fewer ways to motivate.

### 5.1. Goal-oriented criteria

The goals of business ethics teaching have three components, cognitive, applicative, and reflective, and the following section compares the course-delivery forms, taking these components as the criteria. Which of the course delivery methods gives students the most chances to comprehend the content delivered using the various methods? The answer are presented in Table 5. The idea is not to compare the potential of particular methods but their actual usefulness in one of the settings described in the previous section. The results show the superiority of e-learning (13 points) and seminars (11 points). The next question is whether all methods give students the possibility to apply the content in practical situations. Again, the answers are shown in Table 5. This time, seminars and e-learning are equally

superior (8 points) compared to standard lectures (3 points). Finally, Table 6 answers the question: which course-delivery method offers the most chances to reflect on the content. This time, e-learning gives the most opportunities (12 points), followed by seminars (9 points) and standard-lecture (3 points).

Table 4. Motivation in different delivery forms

Method	L	S	E
Lecture + multi-media		+	+++
	No place for autonomy because students have to listen to the lecture at the selected time and place.		Students experience more autonomy, deciding when to watch, for how long, and where.
Text-reading		+	+++
	Students read texts only if they find them exam-relevant (utility value) or if they are already interested in the topic.		Students are motivated to read in various ways: to get scores, to receive feedback, to participate in a discussion (later)
Repetition questions	+	++	++ +
	Students answer repetition questions usually when preparing for an exam.	Students can receive feedback for answering questions, and it is helpful for the final exam.	Students receive scores for answers (proportional to their quality), feedback, and they can use the answers for the final test.
Case study	0	++	++
		Students experience social support.	Students receive scores for the activity (depending on its quality), and their answer will be read by other students (significance, competence).
Discussion/debate (performed: L, S; watched: E)	0	++	++
		Students are motivated by the presence of other students, social control.	Students watch the discussion if it has a utility value for them, or they have to present the results on the forum.
Quiz	0	+++	+++
		Students experience fun, a sense of competence and inclusion, and receive feedback.	Students are motivated by immediate feedback and scores.
	3	11	16

Source: own compilation

## 6. Conclusion

As can be seen from the comparison, many aspects of e-learning as a teaching form bring various new advantages that overcome the various obstacles visible in other forms. Some of them can be solved by reducing the number of students in the lectures, for instance, changing evaluation rules, or introducing hybrid

forms (consisting of elements of a lecture, seminar, and e-learning). However, such steps demand from teachers a voluntary change in their attitudes and additional work, without reducing other working hours (physical presence), which e-learning teachers do not have. E-learning teachers, instead of participating physically in the course, use this time to provide feedback for students, encouraging them to collaborate, guiding forums, and doing research on the content of the teaching.

Table 5. Cognitive goals in different delivery forms

Method	L	S	E
Lecture + multimedia	+	++	+++
	Students with disabilities and foreign students do not have the opportunity to receive all content. As lectures last 1.5 hours, they may experience cognitive overload (many new concepts and no time for elaboration).	Students with disabilities and foreign students do not understand all content. However, there is less cognitive overload, as the lecture part is interchanged with other methods.	Students can process a multimedia content of lectures easily, and effectively since they can repeat passages which are not clear, adjust volume size, and screen of video.
Text-reading		+	+++
	Only a few students read the texts. So, the potential of the method is not really used.		Students receive many incentives to read the texts and process them (scores, auxiliary questions).
Repetition – Questions	+	++	+
	Students receive the opportunity to process and acquire the content taught. However, only a few of them use it.	Students are motivated by the feedback they receive and the opportunity to process the content, and so learn it.	Further methods, like feedback, correction, and activation of prior knowledge, are helpful to process and acquire new knowledge.
Case study	Students do not learn new concepts; the focus is on application.		
Discussion/debate (performed)		+++	+++
		Students may learn ways of arguing. There is a group thinking risk, and the suppression of different responses.	Students watch debates, so they only learn how other people argue.
Quiz	0		+++
		Students have the opportunity to repeat and learn the content.	
	3	11	13

Source: own compilation

E-learning is a method that meets the requirements of our times. What counts is not only the delivery of descriptive knowledge, i.e., ‘about’ (easily found online), but critical thinking capabilities and procedural knowledge, i.e., ‘how.’ In a fast-changing environment, people need to learn how to proceed when problems occur and to know what strategies have to be developed and where to find the appropriate knowledge. Additionally, they need the ability to discuss solutions

with other people and find the optimum solution together, especially when it comes to complex ethical problems. Students nowadays attend lectures less and less because they often work at the same time, and they do not have so much real contact with other students due to individualized study programs. E-learning, which introduces group work and brings interaction, is a good tool to re-activate the interaction between students. It gives the opportunity to integrate various students' work experience with the cases analyzed during the course, which may raise their interest and personal relevance. Moreover, it gives students who are hearing or sight impaired more chances to take part in lessons.. Online classes also provide faculty with opportunities to interact with students who are otherwise unable to attend on-campus F2F (face-to-face) classes (perhaps because they live abroad), and who may have very different perspectives of justice, fairness, and the consequences of actions compared to local students (Arbaugh et al., 2010).

Table 6. Applicative goals

Method	L	S	E
Lecture + multi-media			+
	The method is not applicable. However, students receive some examples of its use.		
Text-reading			-
	This method is also not meant for the application of the new knowledge.		
Repetition – Questions	+	++	+++
	Students receive some questions in which they are asked to present their own experiences and apply the new knowledge. However, not all participate in it.		Students have to embed their answers in experience-based contexts and apply the new knowledge to well-known situations.
Case study	0		+++
	Students learn how to apply the new knowledge by working at the case study.		
Discussion/debate (performed, watched)	0	++	+
	Students learn how to argue during the debate.		Students only observe debates.
Quiz		Quiz is not meant for application.	
	3	8	8

Source: own compilation

Other studies report that the learning outcomes of online business courses are similar to, or slightly better than, F2F courses (Arbaugh et al., 2010). Online courses offer a chance for greater enrollment and to reach older students, and their *results are comparable if not better than those of classroom students* (Scarabotolo, 2019). The success of an online course compared to F2F teaching is determined by almost daily contact with students. The frequent online interaction with content and peers aids students' knowledge retention (Halpern & Hakel, 2003). A topic may be spread out over a week or even two weeks, which allows more time for students to reflect on and edit their discussion comments. Students who do not get anything from seminars may benefit from online courses, e.g., introverted students. Unsurprisingly, studies have proved that the rate of students'

involvement in online course discussions is greater (Arbaugh et al., 2010). Another study, conducted on 10,000 participants, proved that hybrid courses were found to be most effective (Todd et al., 2017), suggesting that ethics courses are best delivered using a blend of formats and content areas.

Table 7. Reflective goals

Method	L	S	E
Lecture + multimedia	+		
	The only possibility students have for reflection is by learning from a model (by e-learning via videos), or personal examples.		
Text-reading	-	++	
	Students are not likely to apply this method.	Students may reflect on the content and experience a transformation of attitudes, thanks to the questions on the forum.	
Repetition Questions		+	+++
		It is difficult for students to speak in public about their own experiences and values; only some do so.	Personalized questions asking about their attitudes, which forces them to think about their own values (it works).
Case study	+	++	+++
	Only the teacher's perspective	It tends to be group reflection, so there is a risk of seeing only one common vision; other opinions are suppressed.	Personalized questions possible (How you would do it? What do you think about that) New perspectives welcomed (scores).
Discussion/debate (performed, watched)	-	+++	
		Debates both watched and participated in require students to analyze the content and form own opinion. Due to interaction with other students they get the opportunity to re-think own solutions and.	
Quiz		Not applicable.	
	3	9	12

Source: own compilation

However, such a form of teaching has its limitations. Although many studies focus on technological problems, there are other limits, including pedagogical and didactic integration, as well as the changing role of teachers (Astleitner, 2000). Other problems may be: *difficulty in evaluating students' work, having a sense of speaking into a vacuum due to the absence of immediate student feedback, being burdened by the heavy demands of time and money, and encountering a lack of student participation in online forums* (Hew & Cheung, 2014). A further barrier could be teachers' epistemological convictions, which must change in e-learning. Without change, the potential of e-learning is unlikely to be used convincingly. Especially in the practice of virtual university teaching, it can often be observed that traditional teaching-learning models are transferred largely unchanged to e-learning (Astleitner, 2000).

The success of introducing e-learning, as well as students' satisfaction, may be dependent on cultural aspects (Chan, 2019). Chan's findings indicate that participants favor face-to-face lectures over e-learning, and they exhibited strong preferences for traditional modes of learning. The author suggests that there is still some way to go before students fully engage with online learning but, as they are rooted in the Confucian heritage culture, this can also be used to encourage students to engage with this mode of learning as a process of transformation.

Although the current analysis demonstrates the superiority of e-learning as a delivery form, it is not possible to make generalizations based on the case study results. It would be necessary to create a network of teachers engaged in e-learning who are also involved in other teaching forms and to create common instruments of comparison. Moreover, the discussed limitations need further consideration.

In conclusion, e-learning as a delivery method is not a panacea for all possible student learning deficits, their attitudes, and the challenges of our time. In fact, it may be considered good medicine for the current challenges of a global, virtualized world and the deficits of more traditional delivery forms, deepened by standardization procedures (equal quiz questions and evaluation rules). These deficits lead to the growing superficiality of the content taught and expectations, on the one hand, and to missing reflective and applicative elements of teaching business ethics, on the other. This research should encourage a discussion about the goals of teaching business ethics, and the position of applicative and reflective goals in them. It shows, above all, that in order to achieve the goals of business ethics teaching, it is not only the results that should be evaluated but also the steps towards reaching the final results. This idea should provoke a discussion with an almost philosophical tone: does the end justify the means? Should we evaluate only the results or how these effects are reached as well?

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