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Looking at future and seeking alternatives: An exploratory case study on the uses of Team-Based Learning in journalistic ethics pedagogy in the United States

Mohammad Delwar Hossain, University of South Alabama and Julie M. Estis, University of South Alabama

Abstract

This study examines the impact of Team-Based Learning in teaching journalistic ethics with a focus on the United States. TBL is a paradigm shift from course concepts conveyed by the instructor to the application of course concepts by students. This instructional strategy has revolutionized pedagogy in different fields by achieving high levels of cohesiveness in small groups in a classroom setting. The current project will extend the existing knowledge on the role of TBL in journalistic ethics pedagogy. This is a mixed-method study using both TeamUSA Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) pre/post-course surveys and in-depth interviews to conduct the study. The findings show TBL helped journalistic ethics students in collaboration and critical thinking. Both collaboration and critical thinking are important methods journalism students use to deal with daily issues related to media. Hence, the findings of the study will help improve the pedagogical approach of journalistic ethics in the future.

Introduction

Several studies have found alternative pedagogical approaches (e.g., Team-Based Learning, cooperative, cumulative and problem-based learning) in mass communication classes engage students (Han & Newell, 2014), improve academic performance (Tsay & Brady, 2010), enable students to produce context-dependent answers (Kilpert & Shay, 2013) and help first-year journalism students (Wright, 2012).

Han and Newell (2014) examined the role of Team-Based Learning (TBL) in a mass communication theory class and found this pedagogical method better engages students in the class. Particularly, TBL improved group knowledge over individual knowledge. The author acknowledged this method "enhances their (students') ability to perform critical and creative evaluations of the role and influence of mass media in the society."

Tsay and Brady (2010) found involvement in cooperative learning is a strong predictor of students' academic performance. TBL is a unique and distinctive form of instruction. This method is a specific small group-based instructional method and can produce a wide variety of positive educational outcomes (Michaelsen, 2004). TBL fosters an engaging learning environment to enable students to acquire knowledge by creatively solving issues related to respective disciplines. TBL encourages student participation and promotes active learning (Offenbeek, 2001). Even though this pedagogical approach applies to all disciplines, students in hands-on skills courses and a career-oriented curriculum could acquire knowledge by dealing with real-world situations in the TBL classes.

Scholars (e.g., Wright, 2012) conducted studies on the efficacy of team/group based pedagogical approaches for increasing student engagement and thus achieving a better learning experience. Wright (2012) found that students would have a "deep learning" because of Group Project-Based Learning pedagogical approach. Even though there have not been pedagogical studies on journalistic ethics, group discussion, and TBL may have been used in journalistic ethics teaching. It has been a common teaching activity. Like the other scholars, the findings of this study show the TBL helped journalistic ethics students with collaboration and critical thinking. In this respect, this study offers insights into the pedagogical benefits of this approach,

particularly from the student perspective. Thus, the current project extends the existing knowledge on the role of TBL in journalistic ethics pedagogy.

Literature review

Journalistic ethics

Careers in journalism and communication (e.g., reporting, public relations) require dealing with ethical issues daily. Moreover, in an age of growing media distrust, teaching ethics has become a greater pedagogical requirement for communication education than at any other time in history. Ethics refers to what one 'should' do; it has been a great challenge for journalists to agree on what 'should' entails and what ethical means in the media.

Studies (e.g. Veenstra et al. 2014) found media cover incidents based on the ideological standpoint of respective media organizations and their people. In this respect, media professionals make ethical decisions based on consensus rather than ideological standpoints. Thus, it is essential to know how to deal with ethical dilemmas in a group setting accommodating different perspectives rather than individual ideological views to the news in a newsroom setting. In real-life settings, journalists and public relations practitioners also have to work in teams.

Usually, students learn mostly theoretical aspects in a traditional journalistic ethics class. Instructors often use examples to clarify theoretical points, but with this method, students can't discuss possible solutions for any ethical dilemma in a group setting. The main purpose of journalistic ethics pedagogy is to prepare students as considerate and ethical media practitioners to solve ethical issues related to media in a group environment. According to Hanson (2002), news directors are now demanding students join the workforce with better critical thinking and problem-solving skills, meaning students need to be better prepared for what they could face in real-world scenarios. As "intellectual flexibility, creativity and intrepidity" (Bowers, 2016) are necessary components for media ethics pedagogy in the future, the TBL could be a revolutionary approach to teach journalistic ethics.

Teaching media ethics

Even though the Hutchins Commission (1947) emphasized a socially responsible press, there were few formal pedagogical approaches to media ethics instruction in the early days of media education in the U.S. The debate and discussion over pedagogical approaches related to media ethics have evolved with the development of professional journalism. However, interest in media ethics pedagogy has been growing with the development and improvement of courses related to media ethics since socio-political upheavals in the 1960s and 1970s in the United States (Lambeth et al., 2004). The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (2018) requires all accreditation-seeking institutions to "demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness, and diversity." Christians (1978) in his seminal study found journalism scholars disagreed on the formal educational process of teaching media ethics and making journalism students aware of ethical concerns in their profession. Referring to a survey conducted during that time, Christians (1978) documented the approach to the subject by journalism schools: "About 88 percent of the schools without ethics courses believe it is pedagogically more sound to treat ethical issues as they arise in the classroom," (p.4). Cooper (1980) also noted the lack of media ethics education among journalists and argued that because of inadequate ethics training, journalists were not concerned with the consequences a story may have or the outcome of a story entirely.

Christians (1978) concluded the pedagogical style of teaching media ethics needed to improve. Other media educators and researchers also noted the necessity for media ethics instruction after Christians and Covert's (1980) study, "Teaching Ethics in Journalism Education," (Lambeth et al., 2004). Braun (1999) found students would prefer a stand-alone course in media ethics employing a variety of teaching methods. In terms of focusing on the value of media ethics, students said they would prefer a media ethics

pedagogy to "examine various cultural interpretations of media ethics" (p.171). Conway and Groshek (2008) observed the positive impact of ethics education in changing the attitudes of students of journalism. As a result, students had harsher views on the penalties for a lack of ethical journalism. The concern was raised across the board for the importance of ethical journalism.

Despite the growing consensus on teaching media ethics in schools of journalism since the 1970s, the mandatory requirement for a mass media ethics class in the journalism curricular has not been widely accepted. Therefore, scholars (e.g., Richardson, 1994; Black & Steel, 1991, Christians & Covert, 1980; Meyers, 1990) highlighted the importance of innovative teaching strategies like the Arthur Miller Socratic approach, problem-solving, role-playing, and case histories. According to a study conducted by Lambeth et al. (2004), 37.2% of the JMC units at that time required students to take an ethics class. In terms of objectives of the courses on media ethics offered by the educational institutions at that time, Lambeth et al. (2004) found "fostering moral reasoning skills ranked first, seeking moral development of students ranked second, and preparing students for professional work ranked third," (p.245). Based on a survey conducted among television news editors, Hanson (2002) found both the employers (television news producers) and employees (journalism students) agreed ethics is best learned on a real-life job.

Schwalbe and Cuillier (2013) examined content areas, teaching styles, and effective teaching methods of media ethics courses and found discussions, team-oriented exercises, case studies, and readings were the most used pedagogical methods. However, case studies were more prevalent in teaching ethics. In this respect, TBL could provide a good setting to teach media ethics classes using case studies as students can discuss and argue about a particular case in a group setting, simulating a real newsroom scenario. Scholars (e.g. Ruminski and Hanks, 1995) found that even though three-quarters of journalism schools offer critical thinking-oriented media ethics curricula, they do not follow a "systematic or well-defined way" (p.238). According to the authors, even though traditional methods of ethics education are still relevant, elements such as visual and kinesthetic exercises, and personally relevant and motivational activities should be integrated into the ethics curricula.

Theoretical Framework: TBL

TBL is a dynamic learning-centered approach that can introduce a pedological approach urged by Ruminski and Hanks (1995). Michaelsen originated the idea of TBL in the late 1970s. In this learning approach, instructors ask, "What do I want my students to learn?" instead of the more traditional question of "What am I going to teach" (Knight, 2004). The foundation of the TBL is based on a democratic learning process, which means students along with their instructor take responsibility for their exposure to the course content. Chickering and Ehrmann (1996) emphasized the impact of active learning, noting, "students understand better, remember longer, and develop higher-order learning when they actively engage in a learning activity." Scholars (e.g., Merrill, 2002) also stressed learning could be more effective when students solve real-world problems. In that respect, scholars (Bean, 1996; Phillips & Soltis, 2004; Bonwell & Eison, 1991) observed students could achieve higher-order learning in a more collaborative environment. In terms of defining TBL, scholars (e.g., Flink, 2004, Michaelsen et al., 2004a) focused on the power of small groups and making learners more engaged in the learning process. According to Fink (2004), "TBL is a particular instructional strategy that is designed to a) support the development of high-performance learning teams and, b) provide opportunities for these teams to engage in significant learning tasks." In this definition, Fink (2004) has emphasized two key ideas in the definition:

- TBL is a particular instructional strategy;
- TBL revolves around the development of teams.

This idea of TBL is founded on the notion of the "power of small groups." According to the founders of this concept, students take responsibility in the learning process. Michaelsen et al. (2004b) observed, "TBL is a unique and powerful way of using small groups." Flink (2004) also highlighted the importance of small groups in TBL, noting, "TBL" is a special approach to the use of small groups that take both teachings and learning to a whole new level of educational significance," (p.4). Anwar et al. (2012) found the group performance improved over individual performance. Roebuck (1998) found students would spend 80% of their time working within a group setting if a TBL class is conducted correctly. Thomas (2012) found 86.4% of students enjoyed group activities. Roebuck (2014) said both students and teachers benefit from group learning and instructors become a "facilitator and manager of learning rather than the spoon feeder of information," (p.5).

For a TBL class, the design of the course depends on a three-phase sequence: preparation, application, and assessment. In the preparation step, students complete their reading assignments. In the application step, students utilize the content for the particular subject/topic in the application step. The instructor in the assessment step completes grading. Several principles are required for the TBL class including forming the group correctly and making students engaged and accountable for group activities. The success of TBL relies heavily on the process of team formation. While both teams and groups consist of two or more people (four to six are ideal), team members are required to show a higher level of commitment and need to have a higher level of trust among members than does a group. In a TBL class, it is expected students understand the content of the course, can use the content to solve real-life problems and will develop their ability and skills to work in a team, resulting in improvement of their critical thinking skills (Flink 2004, p.23). According to Roebuck (1998), the TBL classes include six steps of instructional activity sequence: individual study, Individual Readiness Assurance Test (IRAT), Team Readiness Assurance Test (TRAT), preparation of written appeals, instructors comments, and application-oriented activities, projects, and exams.

Scholars (Michaelson, 2004; Fink, 2004; Roebuck, 1998) highlighted the benefits of TBL in classes across curriculums. One of the major benefits of this learning method is helping students apply concepts instead of simply learning those objectives Students are, in essence, thinking holistically rather than responding by rote. Fink (2004) points out some of the drawbacks of traditional learning techniques in the new media age. Students want a new type of learning experience rather than just "information dumping." Fink notes human interaction and problem-solving are the two most important qualities employers want in new hires. Moreover, instructors want to create an active and interesting learning environment. In a traditional class setting, it is not always possible to engage students and ensure more human interaction. In this respect, TBL could be a game-changer by providing a new learning strategy.

According to Fink (2004), TBL brings four kinds of transformation:

- Transforming small groups into teams
- Transforming techniques into strategy
- Transforming the quality of student learning
- Transforming the joy of teaching

According to Michaelsen (2004), TBL is effective for several reasons such as "motivating attendance, handling discipline problems, and engaging members." (p. 48). For Fink (2004) two conditions must be met for using TBL in class: The course must contain a significant body of information and ideas (i.e., the content) the students need to understand; and students must be prepared to solve problems, answer questions and resolve issues, etc.; In this respect, TBL could be a good teaching instructional strategy for a media ethics class. Anwar et al. (2012) found the TBL is more beneficial for academically "at-risk students" than their non-risk counterparts. They also found attendance was higher in the TBL classes compared with regular classroom sessions. Roebuck (1998) found attendance, participation, and preparation increased in the classroom using TBL. He also found students became empowered by their own learning experience and could, therefore, recognize the value of hands-on activities during application rather than just listening to lectures in a traditional lecture-based class. Through solving problems in teams, students could improve their interpersonal skills. In a TBL setting, even the most efficient member of a team would be able to achieve a project alone that teams can achieve (Watson, Michaelsen, & Sharp, 1991). Varol (2012) found the TBL could be an effective way to improve the communication skills of students.

After examining the effects of the TBL in a mass communication theory class, Han and Newell (2014) found as the TBL approach required student-led discussion, group discussion, and term papers from each team, the instructor acted as the manager of the learning process. Students had an increased interest in the learning process. In terms of applicability of TBL for mass communication classes, Han and Newell (2014) argued J&MC programs have a career-based curriculum and most of the classes are hands-on skills-based courses. Particularly, TBL would be a good pedagogical approach for mass communication classes because, "teamwork is the chief mode of operation in the mass communication industry, particularly in advertising, public relations and healthcare communication," (Han & Newell, p 190.). Kilpert and Shay (2013) also echoed Han and Newell, noting a journalism program itself is an example of a vocation driven curriculum.

Despite its advantages, TBL has some drawbacks. As the main component of TBL is forming the teams, the effectiveness of TBL depends mainly on the cohesiveness in the teams. In this respect, the role of the instructor is important because the instructor ensures small groups are acting as powerful teams. Timmerman and Morris (2015) found exercises are important in the TBL classes because the instructors need to reconfigure the entire course with uniquely suitable exercises. Tsay and Brady (2010) agreed students' academic

performance depends on their active participation in a TBL class.

Using TBL in a communication ethics and social responsibility course

This current exploratory study has been designed to examine what impact, if any, the TBL would have on teaching a course on communication ethics and social responsibility. The course was a 400-level undergraduate class titled Communication Ethics and Social Responsibility. This is one of the courses in the core curriculum for all majors and is offered every semester at a mid-sized university in the Southeastern United States. Major objectives of the course include teaching primary ethical theories common to ethics in communication and applying ethical theories in given sets of circumstances. Following the TBL guidelines, the instructor divided the class into 12 modules. Students were assigned reading material for each module. At the first meeting of each twice-weekly class in which a new module was introduced, the instructor assessed student preparedness through the Individual Readiness Assessment Test (iRAT) and Team Readiness Assessment Test (tRAT).

Students used the theories related to communication ethics by working on a case study during the second and sometimes third meeting of the module. In this way, students engaged in a series of activities during the semester.

TBL requires classes to be divided into distinct teams, so the instructor assigned 4-5 students to each group based on concentrations in communication, assuring that each team comprised multiple concentrations found in the department. Then, the members of each group worked together for the rest of the semester. The instructor introduced the TBL pedagogy in the first-class followed by practicing iRAT and tRAT on the course syllabus. As the TBL pedagogy requires students to complete the assigned readings before the class meeting, the course instructor assigned readings for each week. Then, students were required to take both an iRAT and a tRAT. In this way, the instructor was able to assess student comprehension of the concepts assigned for that particular week. Each iRAT and tRAT consisted of 20 multiple-choice questions, each worth four points. (Appendix A). First, each student took the iRAT individually. For the iRAT, students uncertain of the correct answer had the option to divide the scores among four options for the answer. For example, one student could assign one point for each of the four options on the answer sheet. Then, students took the tRAT as groups. The instructor used the Immediate Feedback Assessment Technique (IF-AT) to conduct the tRAT. The IF-AT form provided a "scratch and get the point" option. (Attachment A). A team would get the full four points if the team could get the right answer (a star) in one scratch. Students were required to discuss the questions and options for answers with their team members based on their reading of assigned topics and their iRAT answers taken before the tRAT. After conducting iRATs and tRATs, students were asked in the second weekly class to work on a case study related to an ethical issue faced by media. (Case Study Attachment). Importantly, questions relating to the case studies were sequenced so that the students experienced a progression of complexity. For example, the first step for the students was to learn how to identify an ethical dilemma. Consequently, the first exercise was to identify an ethical dilemma in a case study and to explain why it was a dilemma. The next step was to understand loyalties. After reading an assignment on identifying and applying loyalties in ethical decision making, then the students read a case study and then identified the ethical dilemma and then stated their loyalties, and applied them to the case. This progression continued throughout the semester until students examined a case study and applied all the concepts they had studied.

During the case study exercise, students worked with their teams. Students had to study the case and provided their options to address the dilemma mentioned in the case. First, the teams spent around 20-30 minutes to discuss the case and brainstorm their ideas. Second, they were given 4-5 minutes to present their arguments regarding the case to the class. Third, the whole class provided feedback after each presentation.

Student Profile

The class was taught in Spring 2018 with 35 students enrolled for the course. Among the students, 51 percent were female and 49 percent were male. Of the total students, 51 percent were seniors, 46 percent were juniors, and 3 percent were sophomores with 94 percent majoring in communication and the rest majoring in English or Economics/Finance. In terms of ethnic background, 43 percent were Caucasians, 40 percent

were African American, 6 percent were Hispanics, 3 percent were Asians, 3 percent mentioned their races as unknown, and 5 percent mentioned two or more races.

Research Questions

RQ1: To what extent will TBL enables students to work in a collaborative environment to deal with ethical issues in the media?

RQ2: To what extent will TBL enables students to think critically about issues related to journalistic ethics?

Method

This is a mixed-method study and data were collected based on a survey and in-depth interviews in a media ethics class at a mid-sized Southeastern university in the United States. We have used the TeamUSA Quality Enhancement Program (QEP) pre/post-course survey. A Graduate Assistant (GA) majoring in communication conducted the in-depth interviews following several steps. The GA was trained and briefed about the purpose of the study. An email invitation was sent to the students in CA 445 (Communication Ethics and Social Responsibility). Only several students responded to the email expressing their willingness to participate in the study. Some students preferred to answer the interview questions via email. So, the GA sent the set of questions to the students. The questions of the in-depth interviews included: "How does learning in a group setting increase your understanding of the course material?" "How does learning in a group setting increase your ability to think critically about media ethics issues in a real-life setting?" "In what way is solving problems in a group setting an effective way to practice the course material?" "In what way is it necessary to collaborate with team members to be successful?"

Measurement

Collaboration (before) was measured by averaging six statements on a five-point scale (Strongly disagree 1, strongly agree 5). Statements included: "I ask questions or contribute to course discussion in other ways" "I explain course material to other students." Collaboration (after) was measured by averaging six statements on a five-point scale (Strongly disagree 1, strongly agree 5). Statements included: "I ask other students to help me understand course materials" "I work with other students on course projects or assignments"

Critical thinking (before) was measured by averaging 10 statements on a five-point scale (strongly disagree 1, strongly agree 5). Statements included: "I connect my learning to societal problems or issues" "I evaluate a point of view, decision, or information source." "I can solve real-world problems." Critical thinking (after) was measured by averaging 10 statements on a five-point scale (Strongly disagree 1, strongly agree 5). Statements included: "I examine the strengths and weaknesses of my views on topics and issues." "I analyze an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts."

Results

We conducted a paired sample t-test to measure the differences in *collaboration* before and after taking the course. We found no statistically significant difference in the scores for Before (Mean(M)=3.60, Standard Deviation (SD)=5.71) and After (M=3.64, SD=4.20) taking the course; t= -0.168.

Even though the results showed no statistical significance, we found some practical significance. For example, the mean score for the Collaboration Average slightly increased from Before (3.60) to After (3.64) taking the class. We also found the mean scores for three out of six statements on the scale increased from Before to After taking the class. For example, the mean score for "I ask other students to help me understand course materials" increased by .43 points (from 3.57 to 4.00). The mean score for "I explain course material to other students" increased by 0.29 points (from 3.71 to 4.00).

	M	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Valid N	
I ask questions or contribute to course discussion in other ways	Before	3.86	1.23	0.40	0.70	14
	After	3.71	1.00			14
I ask other students to help me understand course materials	Before	3.57	1.34	-1.15	0.27	14
	After	4.00	.79			14
I explain course material to other students	Before	3.71	1.14	-1.44	0.17	14
	After	4.00	.73			14
I prepare for exams by discussing or working through course materials with other students	Before	2.86	1.51	-0.354	0.73	14
	After	3.00	1.30			14
I work with other students on course projects or assignments	Before	4.00	1.24	0.694	0.50	14
	After	3.71	1.00			14
I give course presentations in groups (not just PowerPoint presentations)	Before	3.77	1.30	0.433	0.67	13
	After	3.62	1.04			13
Collaboration Average	Before	3.60	5.71	-0.168	0.87	13
	After	3.64	4.20			13

Table 1: Collaboration

Lastly, the mean score for "I prepare for exams by discussing or working through course materials with other students" also rose slightly (from 2.86 to 3.00).

In the open-ended qualitative responses, students also mentioned the effectiveness of Team-Based Learning for collaboration and cooperation. For example, in response to "what was the most beneficial aspect of the Team-Based Learning," one student mentioned: *"Hearing everybody. Different opinions and perspectives and all coming to one agreement."* Another student referred to the applicability of the Team-Based Learning classes for preparing them for the real world and mentioned: *"I learn a lot more. I always work better with the team. I don't like how a lot of our classes are not team-based learning. In the working world, you work with other people."*

One student mentioned how the TBL provided a platform for networking and said: *"Making friends who can help in and out of class."* The responses from in-depth interviews showed that students highlighted the benefits of TBL for their learning.

One student mentioned *It is easier solving problems in a group setting. You can brainstorm and come up with different approaches to solving the problem."* Another student referred to the benefit of TBL for solving media related real-life problem and said the benefit is *"having more solutions helps create the best possible answer to the problem."*

With the same perspective, another student said, "*I have been in several groups during my time at South. I've learned so much about the different roles members in a group have. I've also learned how to handle conflict in group settings which have prepared me for a real-life setting."*

		M	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Valid N
I connect my learning to societal problems or issues	Before	3.36	1.65	-2.07	0.06	14
	After	4.14	0.77			14
I examine the strengths and weaknesses of my views on topics and issues	Before	3.71	1.27	-1.16	0.27	14
	After	4.07	0.83			14
I imagine how an issue looks from another's perspective to better understand someone else's views	Before	4.21	1.12		0.84	14
	After	4.29	0.83			14
I connect ideas from courses to my prior experiences and knowledge	Before	4.00	1.18	-.23	0.82	14
	After	4.07	0.73			14
I apply facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations	Before	4.14	1.10	0.64	0.53	14
	After	3.93	0.73			14
I analyze an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts	Before	4.00	1.18	-0.68	0.51	14
	After	4.21	0.70			14
I evaluate a point of view, decision, or information source	Before	4.07	1.21	0.00	1.00	14
	After	4.07	0.73			14
I form new ideas or understandings from various pieces of information	Before	4.21	1.21	0.41	0.67	14
	After	4.07	0.73			14
I think critically and analytically	Before	4.00	1.18	-0.68	0.51	14
	After	4.21	0.80			14
I can solve real-world problems	Before	4.29	1.20	-.49	0.64	14
	After	4.43	0.76			14
Critical Thinking Average	Before	4.00	10.78	-.55	0.60	14
	After	4.15	6.50			14

Table 2: Critical Thinking

We also conducted a paired sample t-test to measure the differences in *critical thinking* before and after taking the course. We found no statistically significant difference in the scores for Before (M=4.00, SD=10.78) and After (M=4.15, SD=6.50) taking the course; t= -.55. However, we found slight practical significance for critical thinking as the mean score increased by .15. Even though the results showed no statistical significance, we also found some practical significance for different questions on this scale. The results showed the mean scores for seven out of 10 statements on the scale increased from Before to After taking the class. For example, the mean score for "I connect my learning to societal problems or issues" increased by more than three-quarters of a point (from 3.36 to 4.14). The mean score for "I examine the strengths and weaknesses of my views on topics and issues" increased by .36 points (from 3.71 to 4.07). The mean score for "I think critically and analytically" increased by .21 points (from 4.00 to 4.21). The

mean score for "I apply facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations" increased by .21 points; "I analyze an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts" increased by .21 points, "I form new ideas or understandings from various pieces of information" increased by .14 points, and the mean score for "I analyze an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts" also increased by 0.21 points (from 4.00 to 4.21).

In the qualitative open-ended responses, we also found students mentioned the impact of Team-Based Learning in their critical thinking. For example, in responding "What was the most beneficial aspect of Team-Based Learning, one student said, *"Learning different methods of solving problems from other perspectives.* Referring to the benefit of Team-Based Learning for critical thinking, one student identified, *"getting to see things from another perspective."* In the in-depth interviews, students also acknowledged the usefulness of Team-Based Learning for developing their critical thinking. For example, one student said, "*Learning about media ethics can be complex at times. Talking about these issues with my group allowed me to better understand an otherwise complex and difficult subject."* In that respect, another student said, *"when you're in a group you have other brains to help develop your thoughts."* Students also mentioned how working in a group setting for any media ethics-related case allowed them to brainstorm and share ideas and to benefit from this process. In this respect, a student mentioned, "*Solving problems in a group setting allows group members to brainstorm and come up with new ideas that can aid in the process of learning the material."* Another student echoed the same viewpoint,: *"When you're in a group you have other brains to help develop your thoughts."*

Discussion and conclusion

The objective of this current study was to examine the impact of Team-Based Learning in two important components of a media ethics class: collaboration and critical thinking. While reported increases in collaboration and critical thinking did not have statistical significance, we found the practical results were significant.

Our first Research Question (RQ) was to what extent Team-Based Learning enabled students to work in a collaborative environment to deal with ethical issues in the media. We found no statistically significant difference in the scores before and after taking the course. For example, the mean score for the Collaboration average slightly increased from Before (3.60) to After (3.64) taking the class. We also found the mean scores for three out of six statements on the scale increased from Before to After taking the class. For example, the mean score for "I ask other students to help me understand course materials" increased by .43 points (from 3.57 to 4.00). However, we did not find any difference in mean scores for the three statements. For example, the mean score for 'I ask questions or contribute to course discussion in other ways' decreased (from 3.86 to 3.71). There might be some reasons for this negative mean score. For example, students might achieve a better comprehension of their role in a team at the end of the semester. Hence, students thought that statement opposed team cohesiveness.

Our second Research Question (RQ) was to what extent Team-Based Learning enabled students to think critically about issues related to media ethics. Even though the results showed no statistical significance on critical thinking questions, we also found some practical significance for different questions of this scale. The results showed the mean scores for seven out of 10 statements on the scale increased from Before to After taking the class. For example, the mean score for "I connect my learning to societal problems or issues" increased by more than three-quarters of a point (from 3.36 to 4.14). However, we didn't find any difference in mean scores for the three statements. For example, the mean score for 'I apply facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations decreased (from 4.14 to 3.93). Perhaps, students have a better understanding of the notion of facts, theories, or methods of ethics at the end of the semester. In this sense, students cautiously responded to this statement after taking the class.

Though the sample size is limited and the study is based on a case in the United States, it provides several insights on the effectiveness of Team-Based Learning in media ethics. First, as the initial study on the impact of Team-Based Learning in media ethics, the findings of the study will help assess the overall effectiveness of Team-Based Learning for teaching media ethics. Scholars (e.g. Richardson, 1994; Meyers, 1990) highlighted the importance of finding innovative teaching styles and pedagogical approaches for media ethics. In this respect, the current study will open up avenues for adopting Team-Based Learning in teaching media ethics. Second, media ethicists (e.g., Phillips & Soltis, 2004; Bonwell & Eison, 1991) pointed out

the importance of collaboration and critical thinking for journalism students. This current study will help to understand the usefulness of Team-Based Learning in enhancing collaboration and critical thinking among journalism students. Third, as we measured collaboration and critical thinking, future researchers will be able to use these measures for other studies related to journalism and communication. Based on these initial findings and the robust qualitative data we obtained, future studies with increased sample size should be conducted to further explore the effectiveness of Team-Based Learning in media ethics courses. Additional research examining the benefits of Team-Based Learning across a variety of learning contexts is warranted. For example, studies investigating the use of Team-Based Learning in larger courses and other countries will provide opportunities for broader generalization.

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Appendix 1: Example of iRAT tRAT

Appendix 2: Example of

Appendix 3: Example of Case Study from the text book (Black, J.,& Roberts, C. (2011). *Doing ethics in media: Theories and practical applications*. NY: Routledge)

CASE 4.1 **Journalism: Publish or Not: Changing Stages, Changing Sides?**

You are an editor with Freedonia Media International (FMI), your nation's largest wire service with 1,000 domestic clients. Freedonia has long been at war with a smaller nation thousands of miles away, and FMI has long had reporters and photographers embedded with Freedonia military units to document the action for the 1,000 newspapers that are your clients.

A week ago, an FMI photographer was on a routine mission with the Freedonia military, for a magazine-length story about difficulties encountered by such units. The unit was hit by an ambush, and your photographer captured photos of an enlisted man receiving first aid by fellow soldiers minutes after being hit by a rifle shot. The photos show a slight hint of blood, but you've seen worse watching PG-rated war movies.

The soldier died on an operating room table a few hours after the photo was taken. You followed military protocol, which forbids publishing photos until the next of kin are notified. Moreover, you made sure an editor showed a photo to the family before releasing it to your clients.

The family says it does not want you to publish the photo, and both military public affairs personnel and high-ranking Freedonia Department of Defense officials have called you to ask that you respect the family's wishes.

➤ You feel pulled by both sides. You appreciate the point of view of the military and the family—your father was an officer for ten years, although you never served. But you also feel the need to tell the story.

Questions to Answer

1. For each stop along Kohlberg's list of moral development stages (Table 4.1), describe the competing interests, your decision if you acted at that stage, and the justification.
2. Now consider the same case study, this time using Gilligan's "ethics of care" orientation (Table 4.2) to defend decisions both to publish the photo and not to publish the photo.
3. At what point do the Kohlberg and Gilligan developmental approaches intersect?
4. Which approach felt more comfortable to you?
5. Imagine that you were the editor of the hometown newspaper of the soldier who died: How might this affect your decision?