Military personnel encounter moral dilemmas during deployments and in their work environment at home. Moral dilemmas are situations in which two mutually exclusive actions exist, embodying conflicting values. Dealing with moral dilemmas requires moral competence. There is a growing awareness of the need to address the ethical dimension of working in the armed forces. However, experience with and knowledge about how to train moral competence in educational settings within the armed forces is limited. This dissertation provides insight into theoretical and practical aspects of fostering moral competence by means of a train-the-trainer course on military ethics.

The studies in this dissertation examine specific theoretical foundations of ethics education and training. These include: virtue ethics, focusing on the development of personal values and identity; the Socratic attitude, enabling a person to enter in a dialogue; the notion of ‘living learning’, focusing on reflection on experiences in practice; and the Foucauldian concept of ‘art of living’, fostering awareness of power-relations and freedom practices. Subsequently, challenges in the train-the-trainer course are identified, such as military culture, lack of moral sensitivity and a ‘paradox of safety’. Also, practical suggestions aimed at meeting these challenges are discussed. Finally, effects of the training are investigated, showing that and how the train-the-trainer course contributes to the development of moral competence in the armed forces.