

Band Director Disposition: Values Viewed Through an Ethical Lens

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A band director's values are exhibited through instructional practices, repertoire choices, and decisions made in and out of rehearsal. These values relate "to the ethical and moral foundations of teaching, learning, schooling, and education" (Murrell, Dietz, Feiman-Nemser, & Schussler, 2010, p. 11). Ethics are a set of moral principles or a guiding philosophy. Three normative theories have developed in ethics: consequentialism (the outcome of an action is the only factor for ethical judgment) deontology (considering one's duty [regardless of outcome] as the basis for ethical judgment), and virtue ethics (considering one's personal traits as the basis for ethical judgment) (Regelski, 2012).

The purpose of this investigation was to elicit director's values and examine them through normative ethical theories. Three band directors were observed and interviewed regarding their beliefs concerning the purposes of band in the music education of students for this case study (Merriam, 2001). Concert programs were gathered and participants were observed during rehearsal. Interviews were transcribed and data were analyzed for pedagogic beliefs situated in ethical dispositions and the possible dynamic interactions of consequentialism, deontology and virtue ethics.

Though the investigation is still ongoing, initial analysis of ethical frameworks reveals a dynamic interaction of the three normative ethical theories. Deontology and consequentialism seemed to be primary ethical paradigms in which participants engaged, though there was evidence of virtue ethics. Directors were product driven, exhibiting aspects of consequentialism, at times doing "whatever it takes" (Macy, 2013, personal interview) to help students reach the desired outcome. Such action was usually seen as a last resort because directors felt a strong sense of duty to provide a worthwhile music education for their student. This supports a deontological view of director's values and actions. In all cases, director relied on their values to guide decision-making and student instruction.

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