

## "Interactive" Poster Session at 2013 IMTE Biennial Colloquium

### Ethical Problem-Solving in Music Education: Preparation and Practice Joelle L. Lien, University of Utah

#### Abstract

As with professionals in other disciplines, ethical behavior is expected of music educators. In addition to our responsibilities to teach musical skills, concepts, and context, music educators also have an obligation to protect the welfare of children, serve as trustworthy stewards of public property, and generally behave responsibly and professionally within the context of the school and community. Unfortunately, too many music educators engage, knowingly or unknowingly, in unethical conduct.

One reason for this could be that music educators are simply unprepared for the kinds of difficult situations they will encounter in their work, and they have only limited experience in ethical thinking and problem-solving related to music education practice. Discussions of ethics within the context of pre-service teacher education programs are extremely limited. For in-service music educators, issues of ethics and professionalism are too often confronted only when crises develop. At both the pre-service and in-service levels, professional development can and should include dialogue about issues of ethics and ethical decision-making.

Discussion with colleagues during the poster session, as well as subsequent conversations prompted by my poster, focused on "best practices" in ethics instruction for pre-service and in-service music educators, based on research in music education ethics and from research in ethics pedagogy in related disciplines. We discussed learning activities that we have used successfully with pre-service music education students, graduate-level music education students, and in-service music educators. Issues related to maintaining professional relationships with (and appropriate distance from) students, use of technology and social networking, copyright matters, collegiality, diversity, and stewardship of school property were also discussed by visitors to my "interactive" poster.

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## **ETHICS IN MUSIC TEACHING AND RESEARCH: A GRADUATE LEVEL MUSIC EDUCATION COURSE**

I have developed a graduate level course at the University of Utah that may serve as a model for professional development in ethics for in-service music educators. I chose the content for “Ethics in Music Teaching and Research” from results of my own research in which I asked practicing music educators at all grade levels to share critical incidents of ethical issues that they or their colleagues have recently faced within the context of their day-to-day work. The topics represented in the course come directly from the categories of ethical dilemmas shared by in-service music educators in my research study. Therefore, participation in the “Ethics in Music Teaching and Research” course at the University of Utah allows graduate students, who are also in-service music educators, to explore topics and questions that are likely to apply directly to their current teaching assignments.

Each week students prepare assignments related to that week’s topic, including written responses to readings from textbooks and selected articles, formal presentations on a given topic, or written cases and case responses. Topics for last spring’s twelve-week course included the following:

1. Ethical Premises and Principles
2. Formal Ethics Overview (i.e., virtue ethics, natural law ethics, utilitarianism, divine command theory, Kantian ethics, feminist ethics)
3. Professional Codes of Ethics
4. Curriculum: Music Literature and Materials
5. Curriculum: Teaching Methods and Procedures
6. Law, Policy, Rules (and other governing forces)
7. Copyright
8. Equity and Equality
9. Professional Relationships with Students, Colleagues, and Others
10. Conflicts of Interest: Financial and Otherwise
11. Ethical Treatment of Human Research Subjects
12. Student-Chosen Topics
  - Gender and Race in Instrumental Music Literature
  - Ethics of Seating Practices in Performing Ensembles
  - Grading and Evaluation in Bands and Orchestras
  - Meeting the Needs of English Language Learners
  - "High-stakes" Performances and Students with Special Needs
  - Recruitment and Retention of Students from Diverse Populations
  - Ethical Relationships with Music Merchants
  - Ethical Issues Related to Booster Organizations
  - How Not to Lose your Job on Facebook
  - Music Festivals and Contests, and Adjudication in General