

# Embodying Ethics in Dance Teaching Practice

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# Criticisms of Teaching Practice

- Geeves [1993] described traditional, authoritarian, dance teaching as 'teaching by terror'
- Lack of understanding of the negative impact of unethical teaching methods  
Botham 2001, 2003; Buckroyd, 2000; Geeves, 2000; Robson, 2002; Radell 2003

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# Justifying how we teach

- We need to be able to justify how we behave as teachers
- Can we justify behaviour such as: bullying or humiliating students and persistent negative feedback as being desirable methods for teaching people to dance?

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## Good Intentions

- Having 'good intentions' cannot justify unethical teaching practices, for example
  - to toughen up a student for a career in dance
  - because dancers have been taught unethically in the past [and survived]
  - because it is worth it when they become a professional dancer

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## It Makes Sense:

- to consider what might be acceptable to the dance profession and also the outside world
- to educate teachers about dance teaching ethics
- to embody ethics in dance teaching practice

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## Rule-based Ethical Theories

- Utilitarianism
  - maximising happiness for the greatest number
  - judges the goodness or badness of an action according to the consequences
- Deontology
  - from Greek 'deon' meaning 'duty'
  - the right thing must be done regardless of the consequences

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## Virtue-based Ethical Theories

- Concerned with human good or flourishing
  - A virtuous person has the wisdom and will to be able to choose the right thing to do at the right time and for the right reason [practical wisdom]
  - The continuous striving or quest to try to become as virtuous or as good as possible

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## Principle Based Ethics

- Respect for Autonomy
- Beneficence [doing good]
- Nonmaleficence [avoiding harm]
- Justice [fairness and equity]

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## Codes of Ethics

- Usefulness
  - Provide a framework for teachers
  - Can be embodied within practice
- Limitations
  - Not everyone follows the rules or codes
  - Shelf codes/tokenism

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## Ethical Practice

- Person centred - not body centred
- Values the person/dancer for what they are and not just what they can do
- Encourages the involvement of the dancer in the learning process
- Builds confidence enabling the dancer to take responsibility
- Encourages individual growth & development

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## Ethics in Practice

- An example might be - Seeking permission in order to make physical corrections/use touch
  - essential/gratuitous touch – what is essential?
  - awareness of impact of method used
  - in research, participants free to withdraw at any time without reason
  - respect for autonomy

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## Embodying Ethics in Dance Teaching Practice

- Ethical underpinning informs teaching as it is taking place
- Helps us to consider the direct & indirect implications of teaching
- Influences choices and decisions
- Helps us to support and enhance the flourishing of each individual
- Encourages reflective practice

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**Thank you**

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