Evaluating Teacher Beliefs and Attitudes in High School Education

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Evaluating Teacher Beliefs and Attitudes in High School Education

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Abstract
Teachers are powerful agents of socialization to the students whom they instruct. Extensive research has been done on the impact of certain teaching styles, methods, and educational perspectives. However, lacking in many of these studies is the investigation of the relationship between a teacher’s educational beliefs and his or her personal beliefs, behaviors, and his or her ethical leanings. An evaluation of this relationship was undertaken through the use of survey research conducted in the Montgomery County Public School System of Ohio with full-time high school instructors. Schools from Montgomery County Public Schools were selected using simple random sampling techniques. This survey ascertains how a teacher views the classroom setting and students, basic demographic information, educational background of the instructor, and behavioral questions that approximate ethical tendencies. Frequency analysis of responses indicates high occurrences of a feminist care ethic and of a deontological ethic in teacher perceptions. Analysis also reveals that respondents view their job as an educator is to be a facilitator to actively engaged students who possess a strong work ethic.

Discoveries
- Survey responses reveal educators surveyed think that the majority of the students they teach have the potential to be academically successful.
- A third of respondents think 81% to 90% of their students can be academically successful, while another third think 91% to 100% of their students can be academically successful.
- Microsoft word will haunt your nightmares
- Statistical validity and reliability of the survey is difficult to ascertain
- I love my major
- Mixed methods is code for I’m grappling with validity and don’t know what I’m doing
- Primary level research means there is not time for secondary
- Limitations of small sample, difficulty proving validity
- Necessity for further research
- Surveys are over used, much like antibiotics and hashtags

Ethical Theories

Deontological
- Act in itself, means and ends

Utilitarian
- Maximize pleasure, minimize pain

Feminist Care
- Circumstantial, individual assessment

What Would an Ethicist Say?

Ethical Tendencies

- Fem, Dec, Util 20%
- Fem and Dec 63%
- Dec, Util 4%

What Would an Ethicist Say?

Deontological
- Act in itself, means and ends

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Ethics in Education

Fig. 1. Students viewed as exactly the same by an instructor with a deontological ethical view.

Fig. 2. Grouping of students into similar groups by an instructor with a utilitarian view.

Fig. 3. Individualistic approach to each student by an instructor with a care ethic view.