DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 332 973 SP 033 075

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TITLE Teacher Reasoning and Moral Judgement in the Context of Student Discipline Situations.
PUB DATE Apr 91
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Chicago, IL, April 3-7, 1991).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Classroom Techniques; *Discipline; Foreign Countries; High Schools; Inservice Teacher Education; *Moral Development; *Moral Values; *Secondary School Teachers; *Student Behavior; Student Responsibility; Student Rights; Teacher Role; *Value Judgment
IDENTIFIERS Australia (Western Australia); Moral Judgment Task (Piaget)

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to investigate the moral development of teachers, their reasoning about student discipline incidents, and whether a teacher's own moral development might affect desired student outcomes. An inservice course on student discipline entitled "Managing Student Behavior: A Whole School Approach to Discipline" (MSB) was offered at two secondary schools in Perth, Australia. The course, based on the premise that students are to take responsibility for their own behavior, focused on the enhancement of teacher strategies and skills necessary for the development of students' rights and responsibilities. Such techniques as student participation in the formulation of rules, and sanctions connected with violations were stressed. The 27 subjects of the study were interviewed, before and after attending the MSB class, about 4 hypothetical school discipline incidents. It was determined that teachers' moral judgment was related to various aspects of discipline and, therefore, that more attention needs to be paid to the development of teachers' moral judgment during education courses. The educational program could include the presentation and discussion of theories of moral development, challenging teachers to address the moral issues inherent in the teaching/learning environment. (LL)

TEACHER REASONING AND MORAL JUDGEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF STUDENT DISCIPLINE SITUATIONS

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Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting
Chicago, April 3-7 1991

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates 24 secondary teachers' reasoning about specific hypothetical discipline incidents in moral and social-conventional domains, in relation to the teachers' individual moral judgement levels (as assessed by the Defining Issues Test). Teachers were interviewed before and after attending an inservice programme introducing a whole school approach to discipline. The teachers in the high principled group (DIT-%P score over 46) responded to the incidents with more perspective coordination, and provided more information in the form of domain appropriate rationales, than teachers in the low moral judgement group (DIT-%P score below 38). The differences were greatest for the social-conventional violations. An unexpected finding was that the relationship between reasoning about the teacher's role and moral judgement was much stronger for female teachers than for male teachers suggesting that women make greater use of their moral understandings in school relationship issues than do men. The importance of teachers' individual moral judgement levels in explaining variations in teachers' reasoning about the teacher's role in school discipline situations and teachers' interpretations of educational methods are discussed.

Most studies concerning moral development and education concentrate on the moral development of students and programmes to facilitate development. Very few consider the role of the teacher or whether the teacher's own moral development may affect the desired student outcomes. The present paper reports the results of a study investigating the moral development of a group of secondary school teachers and their reasoning about student discipline incidents. The effect on their moral judgement of their involvement in an inservice programme to change school disciplinary practices is also addressed.

Cognitive developmentalists depict moral reasoning as the logical processes through which an individual construes and evaluates moral conflicts -- usually referred to as moral judgement (Piaget, 1932; Kohlberg 1984; Colby & Kohlberg, 1987; Rest, 1979, 1986). One way of understanding the developmental progression of moral thought is in terms of the relationship between the self and society's moral rules and expectations (Colby & Kohlberg, 1987). An individual's perspective develops from one in which rules and social expectations are external to the self, to one in which the self is identified with or has internalised the rules or expectations of others (especially those of authorities). Some, but not all, adults progress to the perspective in which the self is differentiated from the rules and expectations of others and the individual is able to define moral values in terms of "self-chosen principles". There is increasing reciprocity and cooperation as more points of view are taken into account and a more encompassing and integrated perspective on society is attained.

It seems quite reasonable to suggest that school discipline involves moral concerns and thus be a vehicle for the moral development of students. Rest (1983) describes the concern of morality as "how people determine rights and responsibilities in their social interactions, how people arrange the terms of cooperation and the promotion of their mutual welfare" (p 616). This description could readily encompass the determination, justification and enforcement of school rules by teachers, administrators and students.

It is often assumed that preservice programmes for teachers produce agreement between teachers in how they conceptualise certain issues. Teachers, however, often vary in the way they respond to student discipline incidents. Do teachers also vary in their understanding of the issues involved in student discipline incidents and is their own moral development the basis of their understanding? Research interest in the basis of teachers' understanding of their practice is quite recent (e.g. Johnston, 1985, 1989; Johnston & Lubomudrov, 1987; Taylor, 1990) although a growing body of research reveals a relationship between teachers' thought processes and teachers' actions and their observable effects (reviewed in Clark & Peterson, 1986). Johnston's recent studies of elementary teachers' understanding of aspects of educational methods found that teachers do conceptualise issues differently and that these different ways of understanding corresponded to the teachers' moral judgement levels. These different ways of understanding related to the concept of "on-task" (Johnston, 1985), individualised instruction (Johnston, 1989) and classroom rules and roles (Johnston and Lubomudrov, 1987).

Johnston & Lubomudrov's (1987) case study of eight female elementary teachers (with moral reasoning scores at the extremes of a larger group) identified two different approaches to discipline and ways of understanding the teacher's role which were related to the teachers' moral reasoning levels. The teachers with lower moral reasoning thought rules primarily served to maintain a stable social order; came from authorities and were given to students; and appeared inseparable from the authorities who enforced the rules. The teachers with higher moral reasoning, however, viewed rules as necessary to ensure the rights of individual students as well as the group; spoke of ways to set up rules to promote student understanding and responsibility; encouraged students to discuss the value of having a rule, to suggest options, and to consider various consequences of breaking the rule; focused on reasons underlying the rules in discussions with students; and distinguished between the rules and the teacher.

Apart from Johnston's work most of the research linking discipline and moral judgement concerns parents and not teachers (Holstein, 1969; Parikh, 1980; Buck, Walsh & Rothman,1981; Dickinson & Gabriel, 1982; Powers, and Speicher-Dubin, in Powers, 1988). The findings are similar for the two groups. Specifically, parents of higher moral reasoning levels had children with higher moral reasoning, allocated more time for discussion, encouraged more child participation in the discussion, and encouraged children to express their feelings as well as their views . Higher level mothers were more supportive of other family members and more able to tolerate situations where sharing of differences was required. An Australian study (Dickinson & Gabriel, 1982) found parents of children with higher moral

reasoning levels used a communication style that encouraged interchange of views and critical thinking. Although a direct relationship between styles and parental moral reasoning is not reported, the higher moral reasoning students also had higher moral reasoning parents.

The other main area of research which informed this study deals with responses to moral and social-conventional discipline incidents. In any school there are many different types of rules: of these, some are concerned with moral issues, like fighting and stealing; and others are concerned with procedures for maintaining social order, like school uniform, seating arrangements in classrooms and addressing teachers. Turiel and Nucci (eg Turiel, 1983; Nucci & Nucci, 1982) claim that a distinction must be made between moral and social-conventional domains as they constitute separate conceptual systems and are constructed from different aspects of an individual's interactions. In the school context, children are known to distinguish between actions and rules that are arbitrary (social-conventional) and those that are prescriptive (moral), and the content of their responses to violations of social-conventional and moral rules reflects these distinctions (e.g. Nucci & Turiel, 1978; Nucci & Nucci, 1982). Students' evaluation of teachers' responses to incidents also reflect these domain distinctions (Nucci, 1984). Johnston and Lubomudrov's study, however, concentrated on rules in general and did not address teachers' comparative understanding of specific incidents or distinctions between moral and social-conventional rules.

THE STUDY

Background

The present study revolved around the introduction to two high schools (Perth, Australia) of an inservice course on student discipline, *Managing Student Behaviour: AWhole School Approach to Discipline* (MSB). MSB is progressively being introduced into Western Australian secondary schools by the WA Ministry of Education. It is based on the "fundamental premise that the way in which the organisation of the school and the teachers function will affect the behaviour of students" (Dowding, 1988, p.18). By enabling teachers to work together to develop more effective strategies and procedures for student management, the programme aims to change students' behaviour while "maintaining positive relationships with them". This is principally achieved by encouraging students to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Although the title of the programme infers an emphasis on management, a number of the inservice sessions concentrated on enhancing teacher strategies and skills necessary for developing students' responsibility for their own actions such as: including students in the formulation of rules; developing sanctions directly connected with the violation (similar to Piaget's sanctions by reciprocity, Piaget, 1932); and developing teacher skills in listening and communication.

In Lawrence's (1985) article espousing the MSB programme, he asks all teachers to address the question "Am I presenting myself to the students as a purveyor of knowledge or as a person interested primarily in people?" Implicit in his statement "unless the teacher is genuinely interested in the welfare of his or her students, the approach will not come easily" (p.8), is the notion that teachers do differ in their understanding of the teacher's role.

Objectives

Building on the findings of Johnston and Lubomudrov, the present study used the cognitive-developmental approach as the framework to further understand teachers' conceptualisations of their role in student discipline situations. There were four main objectives.

1. To determine the variation in moral judgement levels of a representative group of Australian secondary school teachers.
2. To determine if variations in moral judgement corresponded to different ways of conceptualising specific school rules or the teacher's role in specific discipline situations.
3. To determine if teachers' responses to student violations of moral and social-conventional rules follow the same distinctions found for students.
4. To investigate changes in teachers' moral judgement, conceptualisation of rules and the teacher's role after attending a course concerned with the management of student behaviour in schools.

Method

Twenty-seven teachers (14 females and 13 males) from two suburban secondary schools were interviewed before and after they attended the MSB inservice course. The teachers were selected by the schools as representative of the teacher population with respect to age, gender, teaching experience and subject area.

At both contact times teachers completed the Defining Issues Test or DIT (Rest, 1979) and were interviewed about four hypothetical school discipline incidents. Two concerned moral issues (fighting in the playground, defaming a fellow student) and two concerned social-conventional issues (wearing a school uniform, calling a teacher by a nickname). The interview schedule, adapted from Nucci and Nucci (1982) and Weston and Turiel (1980), was concerned with such issues as each teacher's justifications for particular rules, the acceptability of the students' behaviour in another context, and the response a teacher would make to the students' actions. This style of interviewing involves probes to find the reasoning behind the answers given.

The interviews were coded for Type of Reasoning used to justify particular rules (moral or social-conventional), Context Relativity of the students' actions (acceptable under certain context conditions or never acceptable), the degree of Perspective Coordination evident (a structural component indicating the degree to which a teacher intended to coordinate the points of view of the teacher and student(s) involved), the specific Content of the teacher response (eg command, take to an authority, make a statement about a rule or disorder the action causing, discuss the intrinsically hurtful or unfair nature of the action, request student(s) consider the perspective of others, ignore action) and the overall Approach to Discipline evident in each teacher's responses (teacher's role having a controlling function or facilitative function). The Cohen's Kappas for inter-judge agreement ranged from 0.64 to 0.84. A scale of Domain Appropriateness was constructed from the Content coding using Nucci's (1984) definitions of domain appropriateness (eg statements of rules or disorder are domain appropriate for social-conventional incidents but domain inappropriate for moral incidents, perspective-taking requests and evaluations of action as unfair or hurtful are domain appropriate for moral incidents but domain inappropriate for social-conventional incidents, and commands are domain undifferentiated). A latent trait analysis was carried out on the data from the DIT, Perspective Cooordination scale and Domain Appropriateness scale to determine if the scales conformed to the polychotomous version of the Rasch simple logistic model (Andrich, 1985). The results confirmed each to be a consistent scale and confirmed the validity of adding each set of scores across stories (with the exception of Perspective Coordination scores for the fighting incident which the analysis showed operated in the opposite direction).

For the analyses concerning differences between teachers of differing moral judgement, teachers were grouped according to their scores on the DIT. The DIT-%P score provides an index of the degree to which an individual makes moral judgements based on general principles rather than reliance on particulars. Two extreme groups of nine teachers with relatively stable DIT-%P scores ("high" principled group with DIT-%P above 46 and "low" principled group with DIT-%P below 38) were selected from the 24 teachers with full DIT data. Repeated measures analysis of variance 2 (moral group) x 4 (story) were performed on the Perspective Coordination and Domain Appropriateness data to determine the effects of moral group and story on the teacher responses, followed by Newman-Keuls tests to determine the location of story differences. The full sample was used for all non-developmental analyses. Chi-squared tests (using McNemar's variation for non-independent observations) were used to compare teacher evaluations of variables such as Acceptability and Type of Reasoning.

Results and Discussion

Moral judgement level. The DIT-%P mean score for the group of 39.5 was lower than expected and closer to the published mean for adults in general (40.0) than the published means of other graduate groups (eg 46.4 for staff nurses). The standard deviation of 19.55 and range of 73.4 show the teachers in the sample varied considerably in their moral judgement. Marginally significant negative correlations of DIT-%P with age ($r=-.37$, $p<.1$) and length of time at the present school ($r=-.39$, $p<.1$) were found but not with the other teacher characteristics recorded (ie gender, teaching experience, parental status, subject area). This suggests that exposure to the same school environment for a long period of time may have a regressive effect on teacher moral judgement.

Perspective Coordination. There was a trend for teachers in the high principled group (DIT-%P score over 46) to respond to the student incidents with more perspective coordination, than teachers in the low principled group (DIT-%P score below 38). Surprisingly, the differences in perspective coordination reached significance for the social-conventional ($F[1,16]=6.8$ $p<.025$, for the nickname incident; $F[1,16]=3.7$ $p<.08$, for the uniform incident) but not for the moral incidents ($F[1,16]=.95$ ns, for the fighting incident; $F[1,16]=.44$ ns, for the defaming incident). Figure 1 shows the interaction effects of moral group and story. It is possible that teachers of all moral levels consider discussion of at least one perspective with students is the appropriate response to violations of moral rules. Teachers with more complex moral conceptualisations may be more willing to consider and coordinate viewpoints in social-conventional situations whereas others see the situations only from their own or the school's point of view.

Insert Figure 1 about here

The high group showed a high level of perspective coordination for three of the four incidents. The incident that produced a different result for the high principled group was the fighting one. What was different about this? Many teachers referred to the fighting incident as a serious matter and not one that should be dealt with by "ordinary" teachers. "It's the deputy principal's role to deal with fighting" was a common response. It was also implied by many teachers that they felt ill-equipped to deal with serious matters. For many of the teachers, discussion with students "on a casual basis" was perceived as part of the "teacher's" role, but "counselling" students in serious matters (especially if parents needed to be involved) was perceived as someone else's role. Both schools encouraged teachers to take students involved in incidents like fighting to the deputy for resolution and the majority of teachers were happy to relinquish responsibility to someone else in this instance.

The low group were more inclined to want to talk to the students themselves before taking them to the deputy. But for this group the degree of perspective coordination evident in the fighting incident was not very different from that for the uniform and defaming stories. It was the nickname story that invoked less perspective coordination and the greatest difference between the moral groups. This incident was the only one that included the teacher as a protagonist in the action and the only one presented in the classroom situation. It could be that teachers with less developed moral conceptualisations are less able to separate themselves from the incident and look at the other perspectives when it involves "themselves" and/or occurs in "their" classroom. The findings of Weiss (1982) that older adolescents with less adequate moral understanding showed lower reasoning in the moral dilemmas with the self as protagonist, supports this interpretation. Other studies have found personal dilemmas to be solved at a lower conceptual level by some individuals, but not reported the moral judgement level of the individuals (Walker, de Vries & Trevethan, 1987; Hunter & Pratt, 1988).

The approach to the nickname incident was quite different between moral groups. Teachers in the low group tended to look at the negative attributes of nicknames and saw a student referring to a teacher by a nickname, as a threat to the teacher's authority in the form of lack of respect. The high group, on the other hand, tended to look at nicknames as a "warm thing" in the context in which they are coined, and focused more on the students' understanding of nicknames and their reasons for using nicknames.

The lack of ability of the low group to differentiate between the teacher and the rules was also evident in several responses:

(Fighting incident, low group) It may be acceptable in a school where there aren't any teachers out on duty.

(Uniform incident, low group) Acceptable if appropriate attire for that particular activity wasn't enforced by the staff.

Approach to Discipline. There was also a marginally significant difference ($X^2(1)=3.74$, $p=.052$) in overall approach to discipline between high and low groups. The high group viewed the teacher's role as having a facilitative function whereas the low group viewed it as having a controlling function, a number of teachers in the low group stating that they saw the teacher's role in discipline as "policing" the school rules. These differences correspond to the two different approaches to discipline found in Johnston and Lubomudrov's case study of eight

female elementary school teachers. What is clear from the present study and from the research reviewed, some teachers (and parents) understand their own power or authority to be the focus of their interactions with their students (or children) while others do not (cf. Piaget's heteronomous and autonomous social relations). An observation also made by Johnston and Lubomudrov (1987) and Buck et al. (1981) was that the low principled teachers and parents tended to be more confident of their methods, that they were fulfilling their role correctly. The high principled teachers were less confident in that they were aware of the difficulty of their task of balancing the rights of all concerned.

Insert Table 1 about here

Content of Responses. Although the content of teachers' responses to the students' actions closely resembled the responses observed by Nucci and Turiel (see Table 1), the high moral reasoning group tended to provide more information in the form of domain appropriate rationales but the differences did not reach significance. Even within responses designated as domain appropriate there were differences between the moral groups. The responses of the low group tended to focus on rules and authority, whereas the high group focused on providing students with explanations of rules or assisting students to view the situation from a different perspective (see Table 2). Nucci's (1984) study of students' evaluations of teachers responses found that secondary students differentiated between domain appropriate responses to violations of social-conventional rules. They rated explanations of rules significantly higher than reminders about the existence of specific rules which were rated significantly higher than commands. Considering Nucci's conclusion, that a teacher's responses to student violations are an important component in students' evaluation of a teacher as a social educator, students would be more likely to value teachers in the high moral group as social educators.

Insert Table 2 about here

The "ignore" response has tended to be overlooked in past research. The notion of whether the teacher should respond at all was a consideration for a number of teachers. The reasons teachers gave for ignoring incidents reveal the complexity of what, on the surface, appears to be a simple response. There were three main reasons. Firstly, an incident would be ignored if it was regarded as relatively unimportant and not causing any problems. Secondly, an incident although important, would be ignored if it was seen as the students' personal business and the students were sufficiently responsible to sort it out. And thirdly, even an important incident would be ignored if it was commonplace and considered impossible to control. The reasons varied with moral group and incident.

For example, in the uniform story, all teachers in the low group considered the action needed to be addressed while three of the high principled teachers wanted to ignore the action if it wasn't causing a disturbance. In responding to the defaming story, many teachers considered ignoring the student's action. Only one of the high group decided in the end to ignore it on the grounds that responding was intruding into the student group. The other eight decided to discuss the problem if they had a good relationship with the students concerned. Of the low group, three decided to ignore the action because it was none of their business or because teachers couldn't hope to control such a commonly occurring action.

From the examples discussed it is clear that the content of a teacher's response provides some evidence of that teacher's approach to discipline. It is necessary, however, to consider the underlying rationale in order to gain a fuller insight into teachers' understanding of their role. The cognitive-developmental approach and methodology, in emphasizing structure above content, provides a sound foundation for research on teacher reasoning. When considering the impact of teachers' responses on students, however, the content of teachers' responses or their actual behaviour assumes greater importance. A crucial issue may be how and in what circumstances *structure* influences the *content* of teachers' reasoning and how these factors influence teacher behaviour within specific social contexts.

Insert Table 3 about here

Regarding the domain distinctions, teachers attended to most of the domain distinctions of violations suggested by the work of Turiel and Nucci (see Table 3). Teachers considered the moral violations (fighting and defaming) to be unacceptable actions in any context and the uniform violation to be dependent on the context, but were ambivalent about the nickname violation. The type of reasoning teachers used to justify rules for these actions also followed the same pattern. In this respect the defaming story contained moral actions and teachers' justifications centred around the intrinsic wrongness of the actions. The justifications for the uniform story were quite different and were qualified with comments like, "in this school", "in this particular situation", and "because sport is a group activity". There was no intrinsic wrongness in the students' action; it was the situation or the presence of a school rule that made the action "wrong". It was not entirely clear cut for the fighting and nickname stories.

For the fighting story, the reliability coder initially had difficulty separating justifications addressing social order or organisation into moral or social-conventional groups although most justifications contained reference to the inherent wrongness of physically hurting another. In some situations, like the uniform or defaming stories, the distinction is relatively clear but in situations, like the fighting story, which involve the intrinsically wrong action of hurting another and the societal law of maintaining social order by preventing assault the distinction becomes less clear and harder to interpret. Perhaps in some instances, like rules concerning fighting, teachers need to more clearly distinguish between the moral aspects of the act and the necessity of rules in schools to maintain social order. Most teachers focused on social-conventional aspects of the nickname story but some focused on moral aspects, such as teachers (and students) having the right not to be called by a name they didn't like or thought offensive, or the feelings of hurt caused by such an action. While most research points to teachers often ignoring moral incidents, in this story some teachers actually highlighted the moral issues. It may be that casting the teacher as a protagonist alters the focus. This is in contrast to the defaming story in which some teachers mentioned that had the action taken place in the classroom they could have focused on the "not supposed to be talking" aspect instead of the content of the conversation; in other words, on a convention and not on the moral. The result for the nickname incident shows that not all student violations fall clearly into one domain or the other and in some school situations social-conventional and moral issues merge.

Gender Differences. Although there was no difference between males and females in levels of moral judgement, there were differences in the strength of the relationship between perspective coordination and moral judgement. For female teachers there was a consistent relationship over time ($r=+.51$, $p<.08$), whereas, the relationship for male teachers was more random (low and negative at time 1, low and positive at time 2).

The difference between males and females may partly explain why the strength of the relationship was less than expected from the theory and parental studies. It was obvious from studying the data that the relationship was quite strong for some teachers but not for others. In this particular group of teachers, the relationship was much stronger for the female teachers than the male teachers. In studying the relationship between moral judgement level and action, Thoma (Thoma, Rest & Barnett, 1986) developed the "utilizer dimension" to distinguish between people who make use of their moral understandings and those who do not. The proposition that women, in particular, utilize their moral understandings to interpret and resolve school discipline incidents is strengthened by the results of previous research. Many of the parental studies found a stronger relationship between communication style and moral judgement level for mothers and Johnston and Lubomudrov's study only included female teachers.

Does this mean that women are more likely to consider discipline involves consideration of moral issues than men? Certainly, in the present study several of the men made comments such as "you're making that into a moral issue, I don't want to get into that" and another was surprised that there may be any connection between the types of dilemmas in the DIT and school discipline incidents. Much has been made of possible differences in the moral understandings of males and females (the "caring" versus "justice" orientation suggested by Gilligan, 1977, 1979; and Noddings, 1984). Perhaps there is not so much a difference in

orientation but a difference in consideration of the relevance of moral issues in particular contexts. In personal moral dilemmas women discuss different types of problems than men, women focusing more on relationship issues (Hunter & Pratt, 1988). Just as different social experiences of life differentially affect the moral judgement development of men and women (Walker, 1986; Boldizar, Wilson & Deemer, 1989), different aspects of life may result in differential use of moral concepts. It may be that some teachers, and males more than females, focus on the institutional expectations inherent in school discipline incidents and suppress the moral issues involved. Another possibility is that men, more than women, may consciously consider some moral problems (in this case, school discipline related problems) from a lower conceptual base (cf. J. Lawrence's (1979) seminarians).

After the Inservice Course. Table 4 shows the moral judgement levels of the teachers with initial DIT -%P scores below 46 (n=15) increased significantly over the period of the inservice course ($t=-2.5$, $df=14$, $p<.025$), but not the total group ($t=-.82$, $df=23$, $p>.1$), suggesting that the course provided conditions for the moral growth of some teachers with DIT scores in the lower range of the scale.

Insert Table 4 about here

Teachers' understanding of the teacher's role, however, were remarkably stable with no significant changes in perspective coordination (see Figure 2) or content of responses. Perspective coordination did decrease slightly for the fighting incident (across all teachers) and uniform incident (for the high moral group), the incidents most teachers perceived to be more directly concerned with specific school rules. These changes paralleled what some teachers considered to be tightening of school procedures for violations of these rules. There were slight increases in the perspective coordination evident for the low moral group in the defaming and nickname incidents (which were perceived to be not directly concerned with specific school rules), suggesting that some of these teachers may have benefitted from the communication skills component of the inservice. Johnston and Lubomudrov found that over the period of a two year Master's course, changes in teachers' understandings paralleled changes in their moral judgement. There was some evidence for this in the present study for teachers at one of the schools but the three months time period may have been too short for substantial changes to be observed.

Insert Figure 2 about here

The content of the inservice course could partly explain why only small changes were observed in the present study. The inservice course did not deal specifically with particular discipline incidents or the separation of incidents into particular domains (ie moral or social-conventional). In some respects the domain were less clear cut after the inservice. The inservice did not specifically deal with moral issues per se, but did look at relationships. It would be possible to say that the focus of the inservice was different from that of the present study. But the teachers who attended the inservice didn't all perceive the focus in the same way. Some of the teachers thought the inservice focused on the management of discipline, in the form of consistent school rules, time out rooms, etc. Others, however, focused on the "human" side of discipline, especially the usefulness of school rules, communicating with students and changing what didn't work.

In the present study, the majority of teachers interpreted the inservice course as reinforcing or clarifying their own concepts of discipline. These interpretations tended to be in terms corresponding to the teachers' moral judgement levels. Teachers who saw the inservice course as reinforcing the notion that by making school policy more explicit and teachers enforcing rules consistently, students would know where they stood and behave accordingly tended to have lower DIT scores. Teachers who saw the inservice course as reinforcing the notion that by involving students in the process and explaining the purpose of rules, students would act in the interests of the school community tended to have higher DIT scores. A minority of the teachers thought the inservice course presented a different approach to discipline from their own or that held previously. Some of those with low DIT-%P scores initially,

considered the inservice presented the importance of teachers and students being involved in the decision-making process. One considered the inservice course had made her think about the following issues:

Students need to be treated fairly and the whole situation surrounding the infringement of a rule needs to be looked at from all sides before action is taken. Students want and need rules and are generally prepared to enforce them. If they do not enforce them (en masse) then the rules need to be revised.

Some of the teachers in the high moral reasoning group, however, considered the inservice stressed tightening of regulations and school procedures. One commented that the inservice course did not consider the perspective of students and emphasised "top-down" control.

In effect, most teachers considered the aim of the MSB to involve increasing students' responsibility for their own actions, but perceived this could happen in different ways.

IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE AND POLICY

Johnston and Lubomudrov's research, concerning teachers' general notions of rules and the teachers' role, found moral judgement to be a consistent and pervasive factor in the teachers' understandings. The present study found that in specific discipline incidents other variables, such as the domain of the incident and the school's procedures and expectations, also play a part and need to be considered to gain a more complete picture, and that the importance of each variable may differ between individuals. The moral judgement of teachers, however, was found to be related to various aspects of the teachers' conceptualisations of discipline: the degree of perspective coordination evident in teachers' responses to social-conventional discipline incidents, the content of teachers' responses, the overall approach to discipline, teachers' confidence in their own methods and the teachers' interpretation of the inservice course. For most of the variables investigated, however, there was considerable variation between teachers. These findings have implications for practice and policy in the schools, and for teacher education at both preservice and inservice levels.

Effect on Students

A teacher's moral judgement may impinge on the student-teacher interaction in several ways. There may be specific influences through the teacher's individual responses to rules and student incidents, and general influences through the teacher's approach to the teaching role and through the teacher's use of moral concepts in everyday decision-making. These general influences contribute to the moral atmosphere of the school. The large range in moral judgement means that some teachers have less developed moral understandings than some of their students (average DIT-%P score is 21.9 for junior high school students, 31.8 for senior high school). As the DIT reveals which perspective(s) on society would form the basis of an individual's evaluation of a social problem, some students in a high school would have more adequate perspectives on social issues than some of their teachers. Consequently this difference would restrict the teacher-student interactions possible. In this situation, where students could make worthwhile contributions to discussions and participate in joint decision-making, teachers with less developed concepts would be less likely to tolerate discussion in which different views could be expressed, and be more controlling in their approach. What would be the effect on students? One outcome could be that these students would not value these particular teachers as social educators, and perhaps even as educators in a more general sense.

If the aim of education is the development of students' autonomy, both in intellectual and social domains, then the controlling approach associated with lower moral judgement levels would not be conducive to student development. This concurs with Piaget's (1932) contention, expanded by Kamii (1985), that heteronomous social relations inhibit development towards autonomy and autonomous social relations enhance development. A facilitative approach, displayed in Kohlberg's Just or "democratic" schools (Power, 1988) and Maul's (1980) intensive education, have resulted in significant increases in students' moral development. Common to these educational concepts are greater opportunities for student independence and group decision-making, while building respect for the views of others and the group as a whole. It is possible that in similar programmes where little or no growth occurred the programme conductor's own conceptualisations were out of step with the

programme aims. Australian schools that actively have involved students in decision-making have observed development of student responsibility and improved student behaviour.

Implications for teacher education

The findings also suggest that the moral judgement level of student teachers would influence their interpretations of teaching methods presented in teacher education courses. And it follows that the moral judgement level of course facilitators may affect how the educational method is presented and explained.

Although moral concerns were not specifically addressed in the MSB inservice, some teachers perceived the focus to be about relationships within the school and, in particular, balancing the rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community. Others, however, considered the inservice was all about school procedures. Some of these differences appeared to be related to moral judgement levels.

Any consideration of the mutual welfare of all participants in a school must entail some discussion of moral concerns. Many people shy away from anything concerned with the "moral" or even "values" in educational contexts. The finding that the relationship was weaker for some of the teachers, particularly the male teachers, has implications for teacher education. If socialization practices, particularly of young males, concentrate less on moral concerns and more on institutional roles so that some adults learn to discount the overall moral implications, then this imbalance may need to be remedied in preservice courses. It may be necessary to highlight the moral aspects of the teacher's role or at least present it as a topic for discussion. Inservice courses could also highlight these concerns. Discussion of discipline matters amongst teachers may be particularly important, and was highlighted as one of the benefits of the MSB inservice course (although the moral aspects were not made explicit).

Perhaps, Rest's (1986) comment concerning the ethical sensitivity of student dentists (Bebeau, Rest & Yamoor, 1985) is particualarly true of teachers and teacher education. He says "without intending to do so, present professional schooling tends to overemphasize the technical so as to blind the professional to the moral" (p.23).

The important issue is that many teacher differences in conceptualisation are related to moral judgement. And, in turn, this relates to the growing body of research linking teacher practice to teacher thinking. Nicholls (1989) reports a number of studies that have unsuccessfully tried to change teacher behaviour and explains the results in terms of lack of change in teacher thinking. Johnston's studies of teachers in a two year Master's programme shows that change in understanding and performance of education methods paralleled developmental change. It seems logical, then, that to change the way teachers carry out their role in classrooms, it is necessary to change the way they think about their role. If basic understandings, such as moral judgement, do form the basis of thinking about educational methods, then a good place to start is with moral judgement.

<u>*What can be done about the moral judgement of teachers?*</u> DIT scores have been related to a number of other variables. DIT scores increase with age through to young adulthood, after which little increase occurs. For adults DIT scores correlate with formal education, role-taking opportunities and participation in joint decision-making. Rest and Deemer (1986) describe people who develop in moral judgement as "love to learn,...seek new challenges,..make plans and set goals,.. take responsibility for themselves and their environs" (p. 42-57). They also report that moral judgement development appears to be fostered by the overall level of social stimulation and social support.

The results of the present study suggest some possible avenues for the moral development of teachers. The length of time teachers stay at a school may be relevant. The study revealed lower DIT scores for teachers who were older and/or had been at the same school for long periods of time. Findings relating moral judgement and age are not conclusive, with some cross-sectional and longitudinal studies showing decreases with age but others finding no differences. The direction of causality, however, is not clear: Does the same school for a long period have a regressive effect on moral judgement (prisons have been found to have this effect), or, Do teachers with lower moral judgement levels prefer to stay in the same school? Whichever the direction, it may be worthwhile to encourage teachers to change schools regularly.

The participation of teachers in joint decision-making may also assist in the development of teacher moral judgement levels. From informal discussions with teachers in the present

study, it seems likely that the second stage of the MSB programme, which involves teachers in the development of the school's discipline policy, may be a source of group and individual development.

More attention needs to be paid to the development of teachers' moral judgement during teacher education courses. Firstly, the moral atmosphere of the educational institution must be conducive to moral growth, with opportunities for independence and group decision-making. Secondly, the educational programme could include the presentation and discussion of theories of moral development, challenging teachers to address the moral issues inherent in the teaching/learning environment, and using discipline issues as the theme for dilemma discussions.

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TABLE 1
Percentage Response Categories for Story Incidents

Response Category	Story			
	Fighting	Uniform	Defaming	Nickname
Take to authority	48.1	0	0	7.4
Command or Agression	3.7	14.8	7.4	22.2
Disorder or Deviation	0	29.6	3.7	33.3
Rule statement	0	29.6	0	14.8
Perspective Request	0	0	22.2	7.4
Intrinsic features of the act	0	0	37.0	0
Problem solving	18.5	0	3.7	3.7
Motives	25.9	0	0	3.7
Ignore	0	18.5	18.5	3.7
Other	3.7	7.4	7.4	3.7

TABLE 2
Frequency of Responses for Focus of Response

Story	Focus			
	Rule/Authority		Explanation/Perspective	
	HP	LP	HP	LP
Uniform	1/9	7/9	5/9	2/9
Defaming	0/9	2/9	8/9 (4/9)*	4/9 (1/9)*
Nickname	1/9	5/9	5/9	2/9

*Perspective only in brackets

TABLE 3
Percentages of Teacher Responses for Type of Reasoning and Evaluations of Acceptability of Actions

Story	Domain of Justification		
	Moral	Social-conventional	Other
Fighting	81.5	3.7	14.8
Uniform	0	92.6	7.4
Defaming	85.2	0	14.8
Nickname	29.6	59.3	11.1
	Question: Is the action acceptable in another school?		
	No	Yes	Sometimes
Fighting	88.9	0	11.1
Uniform	18.5	3.7	77.8
Defaming	81.5	3.7	14.8
Nickname	48.1	7.4	44.4

TABLE 4
DIT-%P Scores of Teachers in the Study

Mean	SD	n	
36.5	19.5	24	All teachers at time 1
39.0	17.4	24	All teachers at time 2
57.1	10.6	9	High principled group (T1)
50.0	19.4	9	High principled group (T2)
21.1	11.2	9	Low principled group (T1)
24.4	11.4	15	All Low principled teachers (T1)
32.4	12.4	15	All Low principled teachers (T2)

FIGURE 1

Interaction Effects
Perspective Coordination Mean Scores
Moral Group and Stories

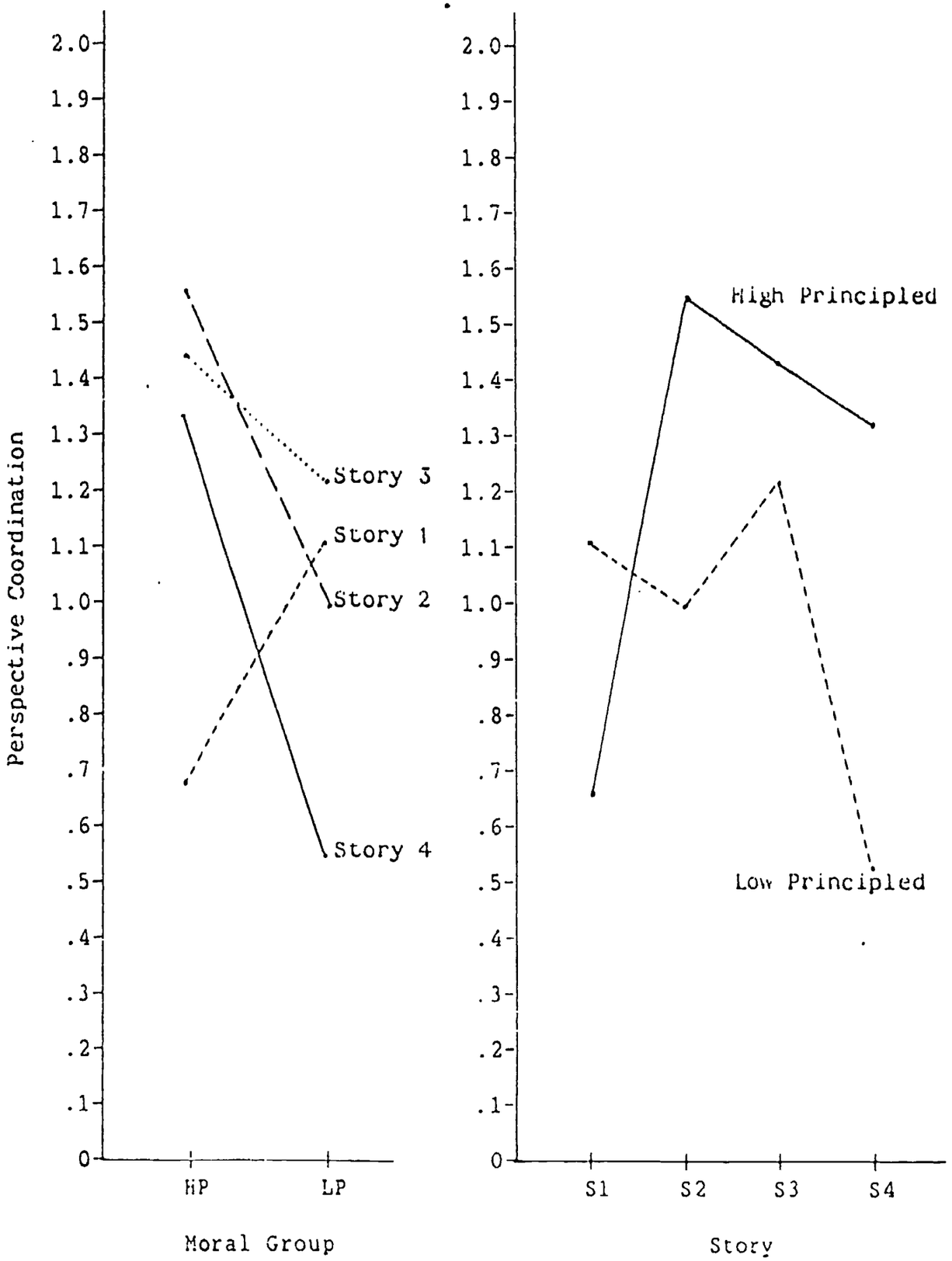

FIGURE 2

Interaction Effects
Perspective Coordination Mean Scores
Time and Story
High Principled Group