

DOES THE MORAL JUDGEMENT LEVEL OF TEACHERS REALLY MATTER? Teachers' Reasoning and Moral Judgement in the Context of Student Discipline Situations

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Introduction Anyone wandering around a school playground or from classroom to classroom would observe that teachers 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 what is the basis of their understanding? Research interest in the basis of teachers' understanding of their practice is quite recent (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). It is often assumed that induction programmes for teachers produce agreement between teachers in how they conceptualise certain issues. But this may not be the case. Johnston's recent studies of elementary teachers' understanding of aspects of educational methods found different ways of understanding the concept of "on-task" (1985), individualised instruction (1989) and classroom rules and roles (Johnston and Lubomudrov, 1987). These different ways of understanding corresponded to the teachers' moral judgement levels. It seems quite reasonable to suggest that school discipline involves moral concerns considering Rest's description (in a review of research on morality) of 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" (1983, p 616). This description could readily encompass the determination, justification and enforcement of school rules by teachers, administrators and students. Johnston (1989), however, argues that teaching, itself, is a moral endeavour and that teachers' understandings of their teaching practices should be related to their moral reasoning. The present paper presents the findings of a study specifically dealing with student discipline but Johnston's findings suggest the discussion may have even wider implications. The study revolved around the Managing Student Behaviour: A Whole School Approach to Discipline (MSB) inservice course introducing the programme into two Perth secondary schools. 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?" (p.8). Implicit in his statement "unless the teacher is genuinely interested in the welfare of his or her students, the approach will not come easily", is the notion that teachers do differ in their understanding of the teacher's role. If teachers do differ in their understanding of the teacher's role, what forms the basis of these differences? Johnston's findings suggest teachers' moral reasoning is a worthwhile avenue to pursue.

Background 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; Colby & Kohlberg, 1987; Rest, 1979). The central thesis of this approach is that differences among people in the way they construe and evaluate moral problems are determined largely by their concepts of justice or fairness, that it is possible to identify and describe these basic concepts and that more adequate and complex concepts of justice develop from less adequate ones. 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. Parents' understandings of their discipline practices have been found to be related to parental moral reasoning (Holstein, 1969; Parikh, 1980; Buck, Walsh & Rothman, 1981; Dickinson & Gabriel, 1982; Powers, and Speicher-Dubin, in Powers, 1988). 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 tended to use 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. 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. 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. 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 transgressions 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 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 transgressions 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 transgressions but domain inappropriate for moral transgressions, perspective-taking requests and evaluations of action as unfair or hurtful are domain appropriate for moral transgressions but domain inappropriate for social-conventional transgressions, and commands are domain undifferentiated). A latent trait analysis was carried out on the data from the DIT, Perspective Coordination 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 transgression 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 36.5 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 19.5 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 transgressions 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 transgressions ($F[1,16] = .95$ ns, for the fighting incident; $F[1,16] = .44$ ns, for the defaming incident). Figure 1 shows the interaction effects of moral group and transgression 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 but not necessarily to violations of social-conventional rules. 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.

Calderhead (1984) warns that when specialised personnel have responsibility for dealing with specific matters of discipline, students receive fewer cues about expectations for their behaviour. He reports an American study that found the appointment of special teachers or administrators with special responsibility for school discipline actually led to an increase rather than a decrease in discipline problems. 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 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.

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. Approach to Discipline. There was also a significant difference ($\chi^2(1)=3.74, p=.052$) 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, corresponding to the two different approaches to discipline found in Johnston and Lubomudrov's case study of eight female elementary school teachers. 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. Content of Responses. Although the content of teachers' responses to the students' actions closely resembled the responses observed by Nucci and Turiel, 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. 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. Teachers attended to most of the other domain distinctions of violations suggested by the work of Turiel and Nucci. 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. The result for the nickname incident shows that not all student violations fall clearly into one domain or the other. The difficulty in coding some teachers' justifications for rules further suggests that in some school situations social-conventional and moral issues merge, or the distinction between convention and morality is not clearly expressed by some teachers. Perhaps for some rules, for instance fighting, teachers need to clearly distinguish between the moral aspects of the act and the necessity of rules in schools to maintain social order. 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 utilize their moral understandings to interpret and resolve school discipline incidents is supported by 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 a moral issue 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 understanding of the relevance of moral considerations in particular contexts. 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. After the Inservice Course. Table 1 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. Table 1 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)

Teachers' understanding of the teacher's role, however, were remarkably stable with no significant changes in perspective coordination or content of responses. Perspective coordination (see Figure 2) 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. 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 separations 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.

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 situations other variables, such as the domain of the transgression 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 there was considerable variation between teachers. This, in itself, is an important finding. These findings have implications for practice and policy in the schools, and for teacher education at both preservice and inservice levels. 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). Before contemplating the consequences of this we need to consider what is being measured by the moral judgement test? What does a person's DIT-%P score actually mean? Rest (1979) argues that it measures a conceptually distinct entity, moral judgement. A high score means that for each of the moral dilemmas presented, the person has rated and ranked higher stage-keyed items as more important considerations in resolving the particular dilemma than lower stage-keyed items. Other researchers have used the DIT as a

measure of cognitive complexity or role-taking ability. Rest and Kohlberg both argue that moral judgement is more than each of these alone, and that a certain level of cognition is necessary, but not sufficient, for the corresponding level of role-taking, which in turn is necessary but not sufficient for the corresponding level of moral judgement. The DIT, then, can be considered to be a measure of developmental maturity and in particular, reveals which perspective(s) on society would form the basis of an individual's evaluation of a social problem. 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 transgressions, 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. In schools, then, some students would have more adequate perspectives on social issues than some of their teachers and 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 the 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. 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. 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. When writing about the MSB programme, Lawrence (1985) asserted that teachers needed to consider whether they present themselves to the students as "purveyors of knowledge" or "interested primarily in people". It seems contradictory that although the humanist approach to education underpins the Whole School Approach to Discipline, the preferred name for the programme is Managing Student Behaviour. By using the management metaphor, MSB may not be channelling the inservice course in the appropriate direction. If teachers' concern for the welfare of students is a necessary prerequisite for the programme to work a way needs to be found to develop this aspect. 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 men 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). The important issue is that teacher differences in moral judgement and conceptualisation are related. And, in turn, relate 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.

What can be done about the moral judgement of teachers? 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 length of time teachers stay at a school may be relevant here. The present study revealed lower DIT scores for teachers who were older and/or had been at the same school for long periods of time. Research 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, must be considered: 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. If the moral judgement level of teachers really does matter as much as the present study suggests, 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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