A conceptual analysis of discipline, and a consequent proposal for deeper social and moral education through classroom management

Something simple and critical is missing from most classroom management systems: a consistent attempt to educate pupils about the principles on which the authority to manage their behaviour is justified. When children cross acceptable boundaries of behaviour, we often do little to develop their thinking beyond models of broken rules, compliance, and incentives to ideas of restitution and community awareness. We do little to get them to think about how they are engaged as citizens. When classroom contracts are used, there may be little ongoing attempt to justify the value of compromise and negotiation, and develop better social understandings. Even systems of democratic and community discipline that do this often follow governmental structures (e.g. Judicious Discipline (Gathercoal, 1993)). But do the teachers and students examine why these systemic grounds are taken? By means of overt attention to social contract theory, the argument that follows suggests that teenagers can be engaged with justice theory at a variety of appropriate levels, more than in most developmental and community approaches, and participate in democratic processes to facilitate morally and socially educative behaviour management in what is otherwise considered unproductive classroom time. In this paper I contend that much of the problem stems from incomplete understandings of discipline and behaviour management, and look at how we can expand our understanding a step beyond even progressive and community-based programmes, and get better results by actively engaging with the philosophy.

Differing conceptions of discipline and its purpose

While they are far from philosophical analysis, dictionary definitions highlight consistent themes and ambiguities in common English usage. A classic English set of definitions might include similar definitions to the following under the transitive verbal uses of 'discipline':

>to train by instruction and exercise; drill.
>to bring to a state of order and obedience by training and control.
>to punish or penalize in order to train and control; correct; chastise.
>(dictionary.reference.com)

The thread of control is clear. None of the definitions provided have a focus upon the mind of the recipient, or the ability to make active choices: they appear to treat the recipient more as an end than a developing means. These are also all understandings that are enacted from an external locus of power, as apart from the separately lexicalized 'self-discipline'. Indeed, in teacher conversations, it is all too frequent to hear discipline referred to as something done <u>to</u> others, rather than as a collegial endeavour.

When used in partnership with school, as 'school discipline', a straw poll of native speaker intuitions produced a much reduced set of possible definitions: primarily related to the maintenance of good order in the school or classroom, though this is somewhat English language specific: native speaker analyses of the German word 'Disziplin' focus much more on the internal quality of self-discipline, highlighting its overlap in English with concepts of classroom and behaviour management.

Ambiguous terms can go together with ambiguous thinking, and when the goal of the classroom form of the concept is disagreed upon, it makes it even less clear on how to progress in the debate on how best to engender good discipline.

I hope to highlight a confusion of purpose at the heart of many understandings on the theory and practice of classroom management: does it aim towards responses and behaviours to be trained, consequent ends to be achieved, or a developmentally educative purpose? These are all tied in various ways to different conceptions of discipline. The moral purposes a practitioner may hold for their teaching may be in contradiction with regularly occurring actions they take, or at very least philosophically inconsistent (Butchart & McEwan, 1998); and classroom management actions can be so routine that this tension is normalised, rendering reflective progress more difficult. One might come to argue that this is only a real issue with firmly practically-focused, philosophically flimsy material; but for practical purposes there is much of this in the environment, and the pragmatic tools making their way into classroom teachers' hands often sacrifice conceptual exposition for clarity and usability.

Many narratives seem to talk of discipline when they mean punishment for enforcement. Goodman (2006) puts forward three justifications given for discipline: that it is part of becoming a good thinker, that it leads to order which leads to learning, or that it is an independent good (which ties to developmental thinking). She demonstrates a nuanced understanding of the social effects of classroom management policies, but adopts a practical definition of discipline as sanctions to secure submission to rules (with the understanding that this leads to skills and subject knowledge).

Peters (1976) supported the "rules" conception, whereas Dewey rejected discipline as submission to legitimate authority as an end in itself. That discipline is an independent good is a moral claim that the principles behind the laws are good, which in a pluralist climate we may be uncomfortable with an institution making.

Foucault's hugely influential analysis of the school as a disciplining institution (1975/1995) works on a meaning relating to securing obedience to rules, yet any semantic disagreement over what the term denotes does not force a rejection of his conclusions, simply a careful separation of terms.

For Snook (2003), discipline is both the means by which rules can be enforced, and obedience to relevant rules. He argues that genuine commitment leads to self-discipline: those in schools may not have this (pupils have often not made a conscious choice to be there for themselves), so he consequently allows and distinguishes between external and internal discipline, as separated above. If a person knows what they should do but doesn't do it, then they are poorly disciplined: educative or retributive sanctions can then be adopted.

While these conclusions have merit, this dual conception of discipline may still lead to confusion and there is further depth to be explored.

Wilson (1981) conducts a careful and enlightening examination of various usages of the concept, though I differ over the conclusion to which much of the reasoning leads. He contends that there is confusion and misunderstanding over discipline and moral education, and opts for a definition of "obedience to established and *legitimate authorities as such*" (p.30). This leaves important scope for discussion of the legitimation of authority, which I pursue elsewhere but is beyond the scope of today's paper.

He highlights the importance of accepting rules not due to incentives or force but due to conscious respect for the rules themselves. He draws comparison to the better disciplined

subject gladly giving obedience, in contrast to an ill-disciplined soldier muttering about rules but following them anyway (p.38). This respect for the legitimacy of the authority has an interesting parallel in the classroom, where order supported by some peripheral factor, such as a personal liking for the teacher, might not be considered good discipline. This provides grounds for comparative evaluation of culturally-tailored classroom management practice: Noblit (1993), Delpit (1995) and others have written about the benefits of demonstrating personal authority, more than the authority of one's position, in working with African American communities. By this argument, such groups can be inflammatorily described as having a less developed understanding of, and response to, just authority, and thus being less capable of demonstrating good discipline. Such working at the level of one's audience's understanding bears comparison to finding a zone of proximal development in line with Kohlberg's stages of moral development.

A well-disciplined individual can be said to be one who understands and accepts legitimate authority, and the better they follow it, the better self-disciplined they can be said to be. The somewhat military usage of 'disciplined' as controlled or kept in line is much more prevalent when used of groups. I would build upon Wilson by further breaking the concept down dependent on the number described, and how our understandings of language in use will work to retard conceptual development:

A well-disciplined individual: usually a description used with the sense of one doing what is necessary to achieve a longer-term goal. The legitimate authority is the compulsion of a necessary intermediate stage to achieve a dependent goal: perceived causal necessity for a personal desire.

A well-disciplined individual (as part of a group): either the above, or with a focus on obeying the discipline of restrictions on an individual for better effectiveness of the group, or both. The individual is thus tacitly accepting the group's goal: a threatened or cowed individual is not well-disciplined. This second understanding looks distinctly like a political morality; right behaviour at a level beyond the personal. It bears similarities to the individual reading as it is what is necessary for *the group* to achieve a longer-term goal. Either a group or an individual can be managed, but it is common to think of groups when we are thinking of those people under the direct authority of others. It is in these contexts that we are likely to think in the quasi-military sense of "do they obey effectively?" The question of the legitimacy of the authority then comes in: it may be being presumed. The subject's discipline is to their place in the structure, and the legitimacy of the structure is not examined when used in this context.

This relates more closely to the transitive verbal, 'imposed' senses of discipline: the punishment imposed to compel the desired obedience and order, if it is not coming from self-discipline: perhaps the individual is not well-disciplined, perhaps the authority is illegitimate, or perhaps the legitimacy of the authority is not perceived.

A well-disciplined group: they work together well, obeying the authority *that we expect is the relevant, local sense of just authority*.[1] The source of authority seems a crucial aspect here. When speaking of a classroom, do we understand the authority to be the teacher's instructions, or the learning which the teacher's instructions is meant to enable, or the

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[1] That the authority must be just is questionable in practice: While I would like to stipulate this for a definition, there appears to be overlap with the "well-controlled" understanding of discipline.

improvement in society such learning is intended to bring about? Relevance Theory in (linguistic) pragmatics describes how an audience, in searching for meaning in any communication, will process as far as meets their standard of relevance, and then stop (Sperber & Wilson, 1995). When attempting to communicate effectively we must let what we expect our interlocutor to understand by a lexical choice bear weight. With a poorly understood concept, communicative effectiveness is key, and yet when you are communicating about it, you are likely making allowances for your interlocutor's probable understanding of the term, which is an impediment to developing nuanced or progressive understandings in a regular context. Beyond the utterance itself, expected referents are also similarly affected. This explains how much disagreement or confusion can go unnoticed when two parties discuss someone who is "well-disciplined", as even if they share an understanding that there must be a just authority, the identity of that referent is not established and can be presumed differently to both parties satisfaction. So in live communication those with questionable motives might continue to be described as "well-disciplined" without their alternative justification being clear enough to challenge.

For a school context, there is some confusion as potential sources of authority appear to overlap. A well-disciplined pupil could be such both in the senses of respecting legitimate authority (not so a terrorised pupil), and disciplined to do work for the lexical purpose of being a pupil: learning. The two overlap here, as the system/teacher's authority may be argued to come from the fact that they enable the learning, which might further explain some of the conceptual difficulties.

Thus I stand further from a requirement of obedience in discipline than Wilson does. He encourages an element of prompt obedience to authority (p.43), whereas I would rather suggest a willingness to accept the judgment of someone else in certain domains when you have established they are better qualified to judge the best course of action than you. This can be prompt: there is a pragmatic element to not evaluating the authority of a trusted source at every moment. But Wilson's broader embrace of obedience is more prone to be understood as including an unhelpful element of the 'control' senses of discipline, as a common cause of such co-operation. When just authority is established, obeying it is disciplined, but a fast response includes both notions of acceptance and conditioning. They may both be present in the common usage of the term, but we benefit philosophically here by separating them.

Thus an examination of the concept of discipline exposes little directly to do with rules at all, except in how well-founded rules can provide justification of authority. It undermines traditional carrot-and-stick notions of incentives, and reveals discipline to be an educational objective in its own right, not just a facilitator for education—thus raising the question of how best we can teach the understanding necessary to be well-disciplined to schoolchildren.

To return to lay conceptions, because of the effects of its community editorial procedure, it is actually specifically noteworthy to cite Wikipedia here: "While the purpose of child discipline is to develop and entrench desirable social habits in children, the ultimate goal is to foster sound judgement and morals so the child develops and maintains self discipline throughout the rest of his/her life." A definition is sought by iterative revisions aiming to close on a non-controversial core, which is developed in subsidiary sections, rather than a dictionary with options, so is a snapshot of where community wisdom converges, and likely to correlate closely with many teachers' understandings.

This is at the heart of the issue: should discipline be something that's imposed on the student (and indeed the teacher), and on what grounds? Should it describe the system, or

the internal skills? It may be unhelpful to continue to use this single word for the intrinsic concepts, and at this point it would be better to treat specific actions and goals individually, such as self-discipline, school systems, and classroom management; to look at the goals of specific processes, and examine their justifications.

Discipline and classroom management, and their justifications

In recent manuals on classroom management, the split between ideas of discipline and classroom management come unhelpfully alongside a shift in linguistic preference away from the word 'discipline', which has come to sound archaic and early twentieth century in all but the most traditional British English, towards other terminology. One distinction unhelpfully masked by the language change is the loss of the moral dimension allowed for by the word 'discipline' — whereas 'classroom management' is a specific set of skills, and that these skills must be used is presumed, so the moral question is avoided. The history of specific developments in classroom management is marked with major milestones and theoretical shifts, and has been given book length treatments elsewhere.[2] There is, however, no clear theme and consensus as to what the most effective systems are, and much less on the theoretical assumptions they should encapsulate. Differing cultural contexts and specifics of evolved environments has much to do with this[3], along with a willingness to devolve decisions to those with specific micro-environmental experience, but the lack of consistent philosophical base amongst those even with the expertise and will to be writing about school discipline is not always accompanied by a wary acknowledgement of these fundamental difficulties. Books in the behaviourist mould such as the works of the Canters (1993) have an ends-focused approach that handily illustrates the belief that discipline is to enable the delivery of learning, rather than that they are taking responsibility for the developing of a questioning person. Others such as Marland (1993) and Cowley (2006) are of popular methodology. Intended to be useful and practical, by writing from within a system they still reveal to the attentive reader where its walls are. Instant solutions to short-term problems are understandably popular with over-stressed teachers, but the potential philosophical inconsistencies highlighted above may serve to hinder the achievement of their own broader educational goals. While this is not a criticism of these works in themselves, nor of their aim to give detailed practical advice at which they often succeed from their chosen particular philosophical perspective, it is rather an attempt to highlight the danger of concentrating on the tactical level when the strategic picture is unclear — a danger that can potentially undermine one's whole educative mission that is hidden behind such descriptions as "matching the behaviour management theory you learned in college with the reality of being in the classroom" (Cowley, 2006).

How do we justify engaging in classroom management? A useful approach will be to look at this as a set of instances of a broader issue: of why there should be certain restrictions on individuals' actions or preferences when they conflict with those of others. There is not

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[2] Often such histories are student texts, or a precursor to the author's own project and preferred approach. An example of the former with a postmodern approach to impartiality is Scarlett, Ponte and Singh (2009), and useful summaries of the history in New Zealand are given in Marshall and Marshall (1997) and Macfarlane (2007), while the volume edited by Evertson and Weinstein (2006) summarises many contemporary issues.

[3] The final section of Evertson and Weinstein (2006) covers six examples of this, and practical guidance for dealing with such is given in chapter nine of Scarlett, Ponte and Singh (2009)

space here for a discussion from first principles of co-operation and justice, but it will be instructive to look at how deeply the authors of works on classroom management seek to justify their mission.

Many might take tacit justification from the current status quo of compulsory education: if school attendance is mandatory, this will be predicated on a belief in certain goals, rights, or values. If these have trumped the student's right to make autonomous decisions about their attendance, it is likely that the same arguments would justify actions to smooth the achievements of these goals, and thus the question can be skirted. This does run the substantial risk, as explained above, of clouding existing moral failings, and leaving teachers without easy recourse to justify their actions to non-compliant pupils.

Obedience based approaches can clearly fall into this category, whether seeking to find the right authoritative/authoritarian balance, or masking coercion with choices and 'natural' consequences. But there is nothing inherently in ecological, context-responsive, or many conceptions of care-based approaches to compel holding any deeper justification.

As Butchart (1998) argues, we should not ask what works—all manner of barbarity 'works'—but rather ask to achieve *what ends,* or *with what consequences?*

Imagining if attendance were voluntary[4], it is easier to conceive of the topic thrown open to discussion: for what reasons are the students attending? How can we best help them achieve their goals? Should some of these goals take precedence over the goals of other individuals, and why? For example, in a school setting you could deploy a utilitarian argument that actions that disrupt learning in the classroom due to someone wanting to play loudly are restricting the rarer opportunity to learn French effectively afforded by a knowledgeable teacher. Perhaps some compromise will be reached, allowing for the importance to the individual of certain types of play. If the students' voices are given value, even to a limited degree, different moral conclusions can be evaluated.

And surely learning will win many arguments for why people come to school.

This sits much more in line with relational, community, developmental, or democratic approaches to classroom management, and I explore further benefits of such approaches below.

Returning to other authors working at a conceptual level after a conceptual examination and justification of discipline and classroom management reveals just how different conclusions can be when lines of argument are not traced back as deeply to their philosophical roots.

In "School discipline in Moral Disarray" Goodman (2006) claims that:

> School discipline appears to rest on three justifications:
> Discipline is intrinsic to academic mastery, embedded in the learning process itself...
> it establishes order in the classroom and order is the gateway for learning...
> it is an independent good – no school discipline, no obedience, no self-discipline.

How do these stand in comparison to the conception of discipline as analysed above, rather than discipline as supported by school disciplinary codes, as is Goodman's focus?

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[4] For practical purposes, we can build a strong argument here even if school attendance is compulsory, by locating the compulsion further back in the chain, for example building on "because your parents make you come to school"; but I would argue we should be as transparent as we can be—not least because Machiavellian motivations are frequently detected by children.

1) Discipline as intrinsic to academic learning. When recast as 'rules for how to learn', these rules are domain specific: what is considered the most effective learning outcome will be dependent on context. If one's moral code contains any degree of consequentialism it is thus impossible to consider discipline always a good, as one could be disciplined within a system that works for the greater bad. Perhaps it appears good to learn how to hold a bow to play a violin, but such knowledge may later be turned to some great moral evil. Discipline is for effective schooling, but the moral status of that rests on effective schooling being a good, where some environments may be a suboptimal or indoctrinatory systems. The developmental approach is worthy of endorsement, even if this conception has broadly fallen from favour. The comparison with Dewey's mastery of the instruments of action is notable: Goodman quotes that for Dewey this is "inseparable from the interest and attention a child brings to an endeavour". So, on my definitions, this suggests that if intrinsic motivation leads to better self-discipline, it is better than a system of incentives and sanctions for achieving grounded learning goals.

2) This is not intended to be a description of externally imposed order as understood by classroom management, rather the internal virtue understanding, as a gateway to further virtue, which needs no further justification. This could very well be understood as a class with self-discipline, as conceptualised above.

3) As an independent good, it is a small step from "rules justified by order...to rules justified for their own sake". This is an uncomfortable destination.

Goodman reminds us "The infusion of school rules with elevated moral status was central to Durkheim's classic work on school discipline" (Durkheim, 1925/1961)[5] Discipline so considered an independent good crashes horribly with the simple notion that obedience to good rules is good, but not all rules are good rules.

Submission to sanctions becomes the focus in practice when obedience to rules in itself becomes a virtue, and gaining compliance rather than examining or explaining justification becomes the issue. Here can be found the source of much conflict in the classroom, again rising from the level of conceptual understanding.

So much can be done, and simply, to alleviate this. Whether or not one wishes to agree with the possible assumption that goodness is wholly dependent on outcome, we can add an explanation for pupils of why rules are good; we can explain why order leads to learning. Classroom management can be defended from a number of pragmatic positions. Reminding pupils of previously-resolved and temporarily-forgotten foci or diverting interruptions need not follow any of these three conceptions. To force desired behavioural responses without an attempt to enlist intrinsic motivation lies firmly in the twentieth century with B.F. Skinner. I conclude this section with two quotations (ibid) that illustrate that sometimes, in contrast with my continuing emphasis on the importance of grounding our arguments as well as we can, even when our reasoning becomes quite divergent we can reach similar powerful conclusions:

> Discipline policies are weakly linked to the moral and educational purposes
> of schooling …

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[5] Durkheim has it as restraint of natural impulses as a good in itself: if one believes that submission to political authority when it goes against individual will is a good, then there is traction in this. Durkheim's notion of being effectively autonomous while under the control of rules does however require a specific position on how independent one must be to be considered autonomous.

> Going public with the moral goals of education would afford students the opportunity to align themselves with moral purposes now obscure. Without such an alignment, students are likely to perceive much of school authority as illegitimate, punishment as undeserved, and obedience as involuntary.

With so much difference to be found between those making a serious moral and conceptual investigation of school discipline, one would expect oceans of separation from the positions held by working classroom professionals where thinking seriously about such things is likely not a primary concern. This is where a pragmatic focus should tend: while important, an ever-finer dissection of concepts in contemporary journals will likely have less impact on lives than communicating a strong and nuanced understanding to those interacting with children every day.

Public understandings of discipline and classroom management

One could argue anecdotally that most people outside the education sector primarily want teachers to keep kids in line and learn to obey: they trust education, as they variously understand it, to take place as long as attention is being paid to the teaching.[6]

Much of the debate in New Zealand over the last fifty years has been over the subordinate question of whether or not 'discipline' (punishment) should be physically imposed. One does not have to look far into the past to find the adage "spare the rod and spoil the child" in regular use: it has only recently fallen out of favour in a small number of countries, among small sectors of the population.[7] It is unlikely that much active thought has been given by many to the moral status of children, rather that current convention and power structures continue unchallenged. This may be at odds with the principles governmental structures we choose to manage ourselves. Are traditionally approaches to discipline and classroom management supported out of empathy-free practical convenience; out of tradition; as the most practical way of getting end results? Many with liberal social views would not take so kindly a view of a group of adults who are 'other' with similar capabilities to our children being subdued so. Our education of teachers barely touches on moral issues such as this, which are all the more important to open to discussion due to their contested nature. In accordance with pragmatic principles I shall suggest addressing the most accessible and practical part of the issues initially, rather than presupposing a significant change in what beliefs are considered acceptable. To discuss whether discipline and punishment should be physical or not misses a deeper-seated point, that the immediate targets of maintaining order or achieving short-term goals are only part of a complete classroom management, let alone the development of discipline.

There has not to my knowledge been a large scale survey of teachers' opinions on the meaning and purpose of discipline since Wilson's Discipline and Moral Education: A Survey

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[6] I would suspect the banking concept of education is still very much alive in the public domain, which shows we may not always be communicating important messages as a profession amidst the noise of policy reform.

[7] The recent anti-smacking legislation is not universally popular. There remains an abiding belief that physical interference from an authorised third party is unacceptable, but parents are exempted—alongside an increasing hostility towards other parties participating in the social correction of one's children.

of Public Opinion and Understanding (1981), leaving scope for a contemporary survey.[8] Wilson highlights with quantitative data how people's conceptions of discipline were mostly skewed towards good order and top-down imposition, with an increasing trend towards more abstract and liberal views as you move from younger to older children, to adults, to more theoretically engaged professionals (e.g. from classroom teacher to head to university researcher). When staffroom discussions focus on immediate problems and efficacy, the commercial toolkit approaches without philosophical background are understandably popular.[9] The picture is more complex than this, though. How aware are teachers of the philosophies they may be unknowingly following? Even when attempting to act in line with a specific philosophy, what people actually do can differ from what they profess to believe. Do teachers even have the practical freedom to look beyond achieving an ordered day in the classroom to see or care about consistency?

While the anecdotal evidence of cultures in the mainstream school is overwhelming, there is an increasing body of evidence in favour of progressive, developmental, and community-based discipline systems (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988; DeVries & Zan, 1994; Goodenow, 1993). Can something be produced authoritatively to evaluate the merits of different approaches to classroom management? Books published with similar focuses on community, such as Macfarlane (2007), whose methodological approach to restitution has echoes of Kohlberg's Just Community (see Power & Higgins-D'Alessandro (2008)) and which adherents of developmental approaches to discipline could put to use, may find themselves considered as a curious subset of discipline—perhaps 'community discipline'—because the philosophical argument about *why* certain types of management need to be done, and how they are justified, has not been made loudly enough. Authors continue to write within branches of the field, but criticism of the shape of the filing system, which marginalises certain types of work because of the social and political status quo, has not yet gained sufficient widespread popular traction. Yet debates about discipline are increasingly attending to long-term social good: what might produce the best outcomes for children and for society, as well as the easiest day for teachers.

If asked what the purpose of classroom control is, the answer given by some professionals may sit as part of a loose conceptual chain. Perhaps classroom management is for learning. Or is it for order, which enables learning? Or for schooling, which does similar? Even the most robust-looking links can be questioned: does schooling lead to learning in a more direct way than other uses of a pupil's time? What types of learning are most important? The adage remains that what is learned is often not what the teacher thinks they are teaching. Drawing a justification from a chain of causal relationships leaves more scope for error than from one clear set of principles. There is more room for mutually inconsistent assumptions appearing accidentally at different stages, if not carefully examined. If discipline promotes order on principle (x), and order leads to education on principle (y), then (x) and (y) must be consistent. This is simple to do in bald logic, but with complex and situated variables such as in education, the potential for an oversight increases greatly. Inconsistent conceptions of how procedures lead to desired results, and a need to refer to

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[8] Specific related phenomena are researched however, such as how idealism and theory-orientation in new teachers reduce in the first few years after qualification: perhaps these are considered to have more potential for positive intervention.

[9] I hope I do not cause too much political contention by claiming that this is a weakness of a market structure in this situation, where what we want may not be what is best for us all, when our interests our not fully aligned with those of broader society and the children.

numerous stages to consciously hold a justification for an action a number of stages down a chain, means that responses to misbehaviour might likely take place that are drawn from habit, and not conscious, contingent, reasoned decision.[10] This is a foundational argument for the project I am about to propose: that a consistent and simple understanding will both lead to better decisions and be more accessible for discussion, in contrast to a set of overlapping beliefs with less clear rational backing. It is hard to have a consistent explanation to hand of why a) classroom management promotes b) discipline for c) an effective learning environment which leads to d) some idea of education, and at the same time carry out the many demands of classroom teaching. A simple model may be a distinct improvement over an overly-simplified understanding of a complex one.

Kohn (1996) has argued that many of the popular relational approaches of the late twentieth century (e.g. Cooperative Discipline, Discipline with Dignity) are still coercive practices where adults control children with consequences in a similar, but more subtle, way than with punishments. Rather than acquiescing to "teacher says do this"—which much appears to be when you become aware that a limited choice offered between a range consequences is still an imposed restriction—how much better would it be for children to be clear that there are rational reasons for certain controls of everyone's behaviour, rather than that 'might makes right'.

A simple model may also help in isolating presumptions and first principles clearly. Explanations of why disciplinary actions are taken often do not touch on fundamental understandings of what education is taking place, as one might expect from the common mismatches mentioned above between learning models presumed for classroom teaching and those used in behaviour management.

In all school interactions, social learning is taking place (Jackson, Boostrom, & Hansen, 1993). Dewey describes society as an "organic union of (social) individuals", and the school as a "mode of social life", where moral learning takes place through necessarily relating to others. With a functional, order-maintenance approach to discipline, many systems give social learning less attention than academic curriculum content. Regardless of whether the professional has a social constructivist understanding of pedagogy, awareness of the learning that might be taking place from adult modelling makes the reasons given for taking disciplinary actions of clear importance; and, with this awareness, explanations of why certain violations are morally or conventionally wrong appear to be important factors that are often missing if we want to give the impression that we have authority for any other reason than our relative size and power.

If it is part of the desired outcomes of schooling to maximise social as well as academic learning, one can look to build on works in the traditions of developmental and community discipline. While getting positive results here must be balanced with possible costs in other areas (e.g. firm control may help to get through curriculum faster, but at the cost of modelling real-world social interactions, or explaining the justification of a particular action), regardless of how much time it merits due to its intrinsic worth, the additional time needed to provide a grounded justification for disciplinary actions is much smaller than might first be assumed: So much of classroom management, even in well-run traditional environments, is considered 'uneducative' time—it is in that time that most of the new ideas can be

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[10] These could likely be inappropriate responses to different types of violation, as defined in Nucci's (2006) work distinguishing moral and conventional code violations in schools, which have an increased risk of appearing unfair and arbitrary.

conveyed to the children, rather than continuing to hit them with the same repeated messages of force.

We work in a climate where raising such issues for pupils' consideration can be an oasis in a desert: when we further connect the social and the moral we may touch many unspoken needs. Like a man buoyed up in service of his god, many teachers might be rejuvenated to see clear moral elements to their classroom management work. Sanger (2012) provides a number of references supporting the claim that the core of the current prevailing educational ideology is grounded in "*the* task of education [being] fostering students' basic academic learning" (Olsen & Sexton, 2009), and criticising that view. He provides a wonderful exchange from a 2007 paper of his about respect being ends based, in the discourse of education in which we are embedded. Sanger highlights a growing body of literature addressing the lack of moral language in teaching and teacher education, and I leave this section with his quotation from Sockett and LePage (2002) and observation that is striking in juxtaposition:

> Teachers do not lack moral sophistication because they are not moral people. Just the opposite, most teachers are drawn to teaching because of their moral commitments.
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> Moral language is missing in classrooms, but it is also missing in the seminar rooms and lecture halls of teacher education … the dominant discourse of teacher education continues to reflect a largely technical view that typically obscures teachings' [sic] moral dimensions, contributing to its impoverishment.

Community discipline

What type of citizens do administrators seek to develop through their school systems? Whether they aim to produce functioning members of society, critical citizens, consumers, workers, or something else is a political issue. There are clear alternatives here, as highlighted by the ideas of critical pedagogy: To learn to fit into, or be fitted into, society; to be subject to it, conditioned into its reward and punishment systems, or to develop some sort of critical understanding and be emancipated. While some societies work more smoothly with a citizenry that is not as understanding of their power structures, I am writing here for first-world democracies, and will go on to justify that a citizen educated in the means of social interaction in which he will be engaged in adult life is better prepared for it, and more likely to fully participate. To deny this is to deny one of the major arguments for education as a preparation and practice for adult life with this learning about living together; about society as well as the content of factual and skills curricula.

Work on discipline, classroom management, and schooling as social and community processes has steadily increased in influence since its inception twenty years ago. Alfie Kohn's "modest attempt to overturn the whole field of classroom discipline" brought these ideas to a broader population in "Beyond Discipline" (1996). Such works evaluate learning environments as communities, where the recognition and inclusion of the points of view of other individuals is important: fertile environments for the discussion of politics and justice. Group discussions of rights, co-operation, and restitution of harm done in the community can be common occurrences within such systems. The systems' specific suggestions can

feature geographical, cultural and philosophical differences: Margrain and Macfarlane (2011) make suggestions tailored to Maori communities, Gathercoal (1993) to the USA, and while many such systems are based on social constructivist pedagogies, Summerhill and Sudbury Valley democratic schools follow discovery-based models. A comparative study of these approaches, however, found far more of core importance that was common to many than significantly different (Watson & Battistich, 2006). Whether in group settings or a one-to-one discussion between an educator and a pupil, these systems are much more suited to open discussions of rights and authority.

If a state, teacher, or administrator[11] wants their classrooms to prepare pupils for adult democratic life, there are thus tools to assist with this. Educators that work within such models report high levels of classroom order, as well as more socially and morally aware environments (Watson & Battistich, 2006). Despite positive reviews in the literature, a number of potential difficulties may inhibit adoption of such methods, such as training issues, teacher habit, and existing school culture (ibid). There is also the issue of political will: such systemic changes take root more effectively with active and continuing support from school management. However, I propose that even outside of such systems, a community contextualisation of other classroom management actions can in similar ways encourage thought about living in a social environment.

There are different reasons underlying why an authority is presented as justified in such systems and different possible defences of the value of compromise & negotiation; but on what foundations do they stand, and are these discussed in the classroom? Without a deeper examination of the assumptions under which they operate, pupils and teachers are still not thinking about values and rights at a fully foundational level. Unspoken foundational values which one is bound to accept are coercive in themselves, and still underlying in many such systems. What I propose is a structure that encourages overt discussion of social contracts to open up explorative discussions of justice, control, and discipline, in which all parties can over time explore as deeply as they desire and are capable of to find satisfactory grounding for fair restrictions on their behaviour to which they can consent.

If the moral reasoning behind it is made overt, the justification of community morality can be made in the most acceptable way possible to people's individual moralities. I suggest social contract theory as a model from which to begin to explore co-operation and disagreement because it is an approach to political theory that is simple enough to understand at a basic level, but one that can help students understand the structure of governments and institutions to some depth. It can be simplified to the point where children can productively understand and participate in the discussion of democratic rights themselves: it is of pragmatic benefit. As a profession, we do not typically appear to be explaining the justification for discipline, and we need to do so if we wish to dismantle a vision of *fiat* power still being imposed from the teacher's chair. Without such an addition our discipline systems are not as socially educative as they could be, whether a school is already using community discipline systems or prefers to retain some other approach. This explanation might prove a critical additional level for the inquisitive child's mind that always asks a further "why?" If school regulations are based on democracy, why? And why is that worthy of my respect? Simply because the organisation of the state is such? That is hardly an answer in keeping with the exploratory and open ethos behind such systems, but one

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[11] The level to which it may be morally correct to devolve such decisions I shall address in a future paper on the different obligations of justice upon individuals and institutions, and consequences for local education governance.

which many would be pushed to find a way beyond without some simple principles on which to draw. If one wanted simply to educate, for example, citizens accepting the principles of American democracy, one could fall back on the rights granted by the Constitution as in Gathercoal's system; but in many democratic societies these rights and their foundations are under ongoing debate and discussion. What grants the constitution the right to be the foundation of political values? Such a justificatory termination does not set up the best foundation for political inquiry. There is still a fundamental coercion, just more deeply rooted that before, if exploration of these philosophical baselines is not permitted and encouraged—if a satisfactory justification is not understood.

Social contract theory as an effective explanatory system

Why is this system likely to be practical? Social contract theory is a model which is relatively simple to explain, can be understood at a number of levels, and is theoretically defensible, with more than one potential foundation to explore (rational self-interest (Gauthier, 1987), or less individualistic models such as that offered by Scanlon (1998)).
While research has suggested that moral explanations must be at a level proximal to the child's current stage of development to lead to progress (Blatt & Kohlberg, 1975), there is also evidence—this example from a middle school environment—that work two levels above a student's understanding led to noticeable benefits (Walker, 1982). Social contract theory does not necessarily step outside a pupil's zone of proximal development, especially in the secondary classroom where discussions about rules, fairness, and contract are often already in place.
Social contract theory allows for negotiation with and just response to arguably unjustified forces, for example, the extent to which parents have authority of their children's choices. Pupils can come to recognise loci of power and their justifications, in keeping with critical pedagogical principles. Such a model can also encourage deeper exploration of how to approach disagreements arising from differing values, more than a simple community discussion of desired outcomes would do. Such a discussion could reduce to the democratic preferences of the majority, and not on values beyond that. Contractual discussion can help to explore the idea of there being different notions of rectitude in two domains, the personal and political. I will also argue it is simple for teachers to engage with, without extensive training. It makes pragmatic as well as ideological sense.
In further work, I will look to make a more substantial claim: that within a democratic framework, with a parcel of values a fair number of educators are likely to hold when their practical convictions are fully philosophically expanded (pragmatism, utilitarianism, rationality, respect for pluralism and individual determination of personal morality), it becomes morally incumbent on our governing bodies to develop such social thought. Instead of tracing justification as far back as a classroom contract, and leaving the impression that the authority to uphold it remains the resolution of a past argument (perhaps we don't like that wall-mounted behaviour contract any more, but teacher makes us use it: hardly any less coercive than other prior authorities!), we can take a step towards conflict resolution systems in democratic schools, where it becomes an exercise in practical politics. We can track potential sources of rightness under disagreement. This is politically moral education, less coercive, and individually engaging. Situations can be explored and explained to different degrees at different times, so as not to interfere with the curricular

business of the school: in day-to-day disciplinary interactions a swift resolution can be sought, with fuller discussion postponed to a regular gathering if sufficient agreement is not reached. In time, the knowledge a teacher will strive to be fair begets its own short term compliance, which ought not to be abused lest the reasons behind it be forgotten. Immediate resolution can still be fast enough to deal with problems speedily, but follow-up discussions can engage the pupils, provide rational justification for the solution (encouraging rationality not blind obedience) and be clearly principle-based, in the ideal manner of many societies. The rational support can take place in the well-established manner of restorative discussions, but rather than saying "that behaviour was wrong", or "that behaviour was wrong because we agreed it was so", asking "why was that behaviour wrong?" with a real attempt to go to the level of philosophical depth the pupil requires. Both teachers and students can thus develop their own political as well as personal morality: a socially aware understanding of how to work with others and to compromise somehow over fundamental disagreements when others hold values different to your own.

This is the project which an examination of the philosophical foundations of discipline has suggested: due to the confusion in conceptualisation and performance of disciplinary procedures, combined with the benefits of democratic community approaches, I suggest the development of a comprehensible means to explore the reasoning behind conflict adjudication and to strip away a further layer of presumed values, engaging with justification that rises from deeper than both the educator's preference and the current structure of society. In the current political climate where different interest and belief groups hold to different bodies of facts as well as values, developing an understanding of how to bridge this divide as well as from where an argument draws its authority is becoming an ever more necessary element of global citizenship.

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