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Ordering within moral orders to manage classroom trouble.

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ABSTRACT:

This paper demonstrates how classroom trouble warranting teacher intervention can stem from transgressions in different layers of the complex moral order regulating classroom interactions. The paper builds from Durkheim's treatment of schooling as the institution responsible for the inculcation of a shared moral order, Bernstein's distinction between the instructional and regulative discourses in any pedagogic setting, and the concept of verticality in the instructional discourse to illuminate how curricular knowledge might apply across different contexts. This paper proposes a similar vertical dimension of moral gravity in the regulative discourse, such that some moral expectations apply across any context, while others are highly contextualized. This paper then applies this frame to data from classroom observations conducted in prevocational pathways for 16 years olds created under Australia's "earning or learning till 17" policy. This paper describes the variety of moral premises teachers invoked in different teacher/class combinations, according to their level of moral gravity to display the dominant use of highly contextualized moral premises seeking institutional compliance, and minimal use of broader moral frames for these students on the brink of entry to the adult world.

KEYWORDS:

Morality, classroom trouble, prevocational programs, regulative discourse, moral gravity.

“ ... we must start off by studying moral rules as they really exist in society, in all their complexity.” (Giddens, 1972, p. 3)

Introduction

Under the Council of Australian Government’s (2009) recent policy, “Compact with Young Australians”, all Australian states effectively raised the minimum age for leaving school with the expectation that young people will be “earning or learning” until age 17. This blunt policy has uneven effects in its enactment, tending to retain non-academically inclined students in disadvantaged schools that service communities with fewer job prospects for young people, thereby pooling both economic and educational disadvantage in the same classes. The policy’s extended phase of compulsory education can be undertaken in “prevocational” programs in either secondary schools, or at Technical and Further Education (TAFE) colleges. These classes, in these schools/colleges, in these communities, then absorb much of the system’s friction and student disengagement on behalf of other classes, other schools, and other communities (Thomson, 2002). Te Riele and Crump (2002) coined the term “reluctant stayers” to refer to school students for whom “school has become a shelter from unemployment” (p.253), and whose “experience of schooling is negative: they do not get on with teachers, they find the curriculum irrelevant or too hard, and they find the school environment unsupportive” (p. 259). From these observations, these classrooms could be predicted to be volatile settings where students don’t want to be, and teachers work hard to achieve productive conditions for learning. As a dimension of pedagogic practice, the management of non-compliant classroom behaviour is varied and historically shaped, subject to ideological, legislative and policy shifts over time. Much scholarship in this space develops normative theory, that is, theory of the time that is premised on contemporary notions of how teachers *should* manage such behaviour, as opposed to research

asking how *do* teachers do such work. For example, in Australia, the work of Bill Rogers (2006) is popular in teacher education programs for its experiential wisdom and heuristic “good practice” guidelines, rather than for its rigorous empirical basis. In contrast to such imagined practice, classroom ethnographies have described a less ideal, more resilient “survival mode of teaching” in which “minimising incidents of misbehaviour and disruption often works against motivating students and engaging them in learning” (Johnston & Hayes, 2008, p. 115). Such empirical work describes “good enough” practice that gets teachers and students through their day. Similarly, the current effort to promote “whole school approaches” with uniform behaviour codes and consequences fails to articulate with empirical literature that highlights the chain of recontextualisations whereby teachers translate the same policy into a variety of practices (for example, Ball, Hoskins, Maguire, & Braun, 2011; Thomson, Hall, & Jones, 2010). The disconnections between empirical and more normative literatures could profitably be reconciled by asking staged enquiries that ask firstly: “How are teachers managing non-compliant behaviours?” then secondly: “How might this be otherwise?”

In this vein, this paper is interested in first understanding how teachers are actually working in the prevocational classes created under this policy, then how this practice might be rebalanced to better serve the students. To this end, the paper focuses on episodes of classroom trouble that provoked teacher intervention and what moral expectations the teachers invoked and legitimated in their efforts to regulate student behaviour. These moments bring to the empirical surface a variety of tacit moral premises that apply in classroom interactions, and can therefore be transgressed. In this way, the paper offers an elaborated vocabulary for understanding how trouble can stem from different layers in the complex moral order regulating classroom interactions. This vocabulary then allows us to compare and contrast the textures of moral orders invoked in different teacher/class combinations and different sectoral settings.

The paper firstly builds a nested conceptual frame from the basis of Durkheim's macro treatment of mass schooling as the institution responsible for the inculcation of a shared secular moral order, then Bernstein's distinction between the instructional and regulative discourses at work in any micro pedagogic setting, whereby the latter's "how" establishes the necessary moral order and social relations that enable the former's "what". While there has been considerable interest in the theoretical elaboration of the instructional discourse, there is less work focussed on the regulative discourse. In this space, we next develop a vertical scale of moral gravity ranging from the strongest, most localized gravity of moral expectations governing highly contextualized relations, to the weakest gravity of notionally universal moral precepts that apply regardless of context. We then focus on empirical moments of 'regulative flares', being moments when the teacher breaks the lesson flow to re-establish some operative moral order in class. Data from classroom observations of seven teacher/class combinations is drawn from an empirical project that involved classroom ethnographies in prevocational pathways in both high school and TAFE settings. By typifying the moral gravity levels explicitly invoked in their regulative flares, we characterize the set of regulative flares for each teacher/class combination, and identify commonalities and differences in their classrooms' moral ordering. This work allows us to reflect on what moral gravity might best serve the purpose behind extending compulsory schooling under "earning or learning till 17" policy.

Theorizing morality in schooling

For Durkheim (1993), morality is the glue of "unselfishness" that holds society together and makes society possible as something above and beyond the individuals it embraces, "to help people live together without too much harm or conflict, to safeguard in a word the great collective interests" (p. 65). Morality is defined as "the sum of definite and special rules that imperatively determine conduct" (p. 33), which produce regularity and predictability underpinned by a collective authority and a "spirit of discipline" (p. 31) such that the individual will "feel ... a

force unqualified by his personal preferences and to which he yields” (p. 34). Through morality’s web of duties, customs, norms, sanctions, rules, laws, obligations, constraints, coercive powers and ideals, the individual’s acts and thoughts are enlisted and shaped in the interest of the greater collective. For Durkheim, moralities (plural) are understood to be contextualized, malleable social facts that differ according to historical circumstances in a mutually reinforcing relationship with the institutional architecture of the society. Within any society moralities can also vary according to group memberships and positioning, but are generated by the collective not the individual. In this way, morality meshes autonomy, discipline and social attachment, and becomes an empirical object of sociological study, rather than a philosophical question. For Durkheim, the empirical question then becomes, “what ways of behaving are approved as moral and what are the characteristics of these modes of behaviour?” (1961/1925, p.55).

Durkheim acknowledged the capacity for change in moral orders: “As the milieu in which we move becomes daily more complex and more flexible, we must have enough initiative and spontaneity to follow it in all its variations, to change with it as it changes” (1993, p. 67). In his historical setting, Durkheim sought to understand the emergence of individualism as a moral frame that had reconfigured both institutions and moral codes, and the “rational” mode of secular morality that was replacing religious modes of altruistic interdependence in more complex capitalist societies. He also sought to understand the emergence of national moralities. This attention to the conditions and concerns of the historical moment distinguish Durkheim’s sociology of morality from philosophic approaches to the concept.

For Durkheim (1961/1925), schooling was the crucial social site responsible for the inculcation of some degree of moral consensus, and for the induction of the young into the ideals and mores of the “*conscience collective*” (Durkheim, quoted in Giddens, 1972, p.5). In this way the emergence of mass public schooling “as an organized moral environment” (Durkheim, 1972, p. 208) was a necessary response to the complex division of labour in modern society. The moral project of

the school was considered to be overarching: "... every level of school must form an integral moral environment, which closely envelops the child and acts upon this whole nature" (p.208). This project was understood to be responsive to change and prospective, not just reproductive in intent: "it is not enough for him [the educator] to conserve the past; he must prepare the future" (p.217). For Durkheim, the point of moral education was ultimately not about the management of classroom interaction, but rather about the deeper formation of habits and dispositions that the student will carry into life beyond the school setting: "The educator must intervene and link to the rules of discipline sanctions that anticipate those of later life" (p. 173). However, the dense humanity of classroom settings creates its own moral demands and possible sanctions. For this paper, Durkheim's normative argument raises an empirical question of whether and how the exercise of classroom discipline might link with lifeworlds beyond the classroom.

Bernstein built on Durkheim's attention to the essential moral project of schooling (Gamble & Hoadley, 2011; Moore, 2013) to develop a more detailed set of analytic concepts with which to understand how morality is variably inculcated in both families and pedagogic settings. In early sociolinguistic work, Bernstein (1971) conceptualised two ideal types of family "role systems" with distinct "procedures of social control" (p. 152), and contrasting modes of social control evident in their language and socialization. Under this description, the **positional** family type operates with clearly demarcated ascribed roles according to age, gender, or relationship status and invokes "communalized" rules by which "the child (the regulated) learns the norms in a social context where the relative statuses are clear-cut and unambiguous" (p.157). By contrast, the **personal** family type has less delineated, more individuated roles, and operates through more explicit and open negotiation of "judgements, their bases and consequences" (p.154). Regarding the expression of social control, Bernstein described the **imperative** mode of social control which allows no "discretion" or negotiation of roles, thus offers "the child only the external possibilities of rebellion, withdrawal or acceptance" (p. 156). Though the label "imperative"

suggests a focus on syntax, in his examples the imperative force was shown to also be carried in semantic choices. He contrasted the restricted, forceful nature of this mode with the elaborated mode of **appeals** which afforded the child some degree of role discretion and linguistic space for negotiation. Bernstein then subdivided the category of appeals into their personal or positional subcategories. A **positional appeal** invokes the expectations of an ascribed role and “norms which inhere in a particular or universal status ... the child is reminded of what he shares in common with others” (pp.156 - 157), while a **personal appeal** speaks to the child as an individual and “takes into account interpersonal or intra-personal components of the social relationship” (p. 158). For the purposes of this paper, Bernstein’s concepts alert us to the way moral corrections can emanate from, and exercise, differently scoped moral force and different moral footings.

Bernstein then considered the logical and pedagogical strengths and weaknesses of each family type and control mode, and acknowledged that parents will employ all modes at some time, while also having their “preferred modes of control” (p. 160). The positional family was understood to favour the positional, imperative mode of control; and the personal family type to favour the personal appeal mode. Bernstein then suggested these patterns were shifting in response to changes underway in the social fabric. Of particular interest for this paper, Bernstein’s discussion pointed to other “contexts of control” (p.159) beyond the family, presumably including the school, which could employ and display the same modes and procedures. This raised the issue of congruence between these contexts’ and families’ dominant modes.

In subsequent work, Bernstein more explicitly addressed the secondary school’s work of “character training ... attempting to transmit to the pupil images of conduct, character and manner ... by means of certain practices and activities, certain procedures and judgements” (1975, p. 38). The school’s moral training was understood to operate autonomously alongside the

family's, while being more exposed to the ambiguities of the broader society's "conflicting images of conduct, character and manner" (p. 49). At this stage, he referred to this work as the expressive order of the school, operating alongside the instrumental order of the curriculum and assessment work. Of particular relevance to this paper's interest in the contemporary moment of extended compulsory education in the absence of employment, Bernstein speculated that "it is quite likely that some pupils who are only weakly involved in the instrumental order will be less receptive to the moral order transmitted through the expressive order" (1975, p. 39). Bernstein continued to theoretically describe possible sociological (as opposed to psychological) conditions of commitment, detachment, deferment, estrangement and alienation in the "role involvement" (p. 48) to describe both students' and teachers' variable relations to the means and ends of the instrumental and expressive orders of schooling. With this typology Bernstein considered how different permutations of student and teacher "role involvements" might interact in classrooms. This question informs this study's sampling of teacher/class combinations as the unit of analysis.

In later work, Bernstein reconceptualised the expressive and instrumental orders as the "regulative discourse" and the "instructional discourse", which in their combination constitute pedagogic discourse (Bernstein, 1990). The relation between these discourses is such that the instructional discourse's "what", which carries the knowledge and skills to be transmitted, is embedded in and reliant upon the regulative discourse's "how", which establishes the social relations and moral order of the pedagogic context. Primacy is thus given to the moral order constructed and conveyed in the regulative discourse.

An ongoing dialogue between Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse and systemic functional linguistics (Christie, 1999a; Hasan, 1999) has made possible detailed empirical research into how classrooms operate. Much of this literature has explored and elaborated understandings of the instructional discourse. In particular, a combination of linguistics and Bernstein's typology of knowledge structures has informed concepts of "verticality" and "semantic gravity" in the

instructional discourse (Freebody, Maton, & Martin, 2008; Maton, 2009). This work resonates with Lemke's (1995) and Dowling's (1998) concept of "condensation" to describe growing disciplinarity and technicality in classroom language over time. These concepts help to understand the language resources that express the contrast between grounded, highly contextualized knowledges, and more abstract, decontextualized knowledges, to inform both curricular and pedagogic design.

Gamble and Hoadley's (2011) review of Bernstein's conceptualisation of the regulative discourse over time suggests the possibility of a cognate dimension in the regulative discourse, whereby children are moved from personal, contextualized modes of authority to impersonalised, less context dependent understandings of the morality implicated in social relationships: "The latter impersonalising of authority relationships is an appeal to a discipline, that which lies outside of the self. ... the social relation is potentially homologous with a relation to vertical knowledge" (p. 159). As an empirical demonstration of such a shift, Iedema (1996) uses the tools of Systemic Functional Linguistics in dialogue with theory from Bernstein and Foucault on transcripts of teachers' classroom talk to show how the nature of the regulative discourse **ideally** shifts from 'personalised commands ... in early schooling towards [linguistically] incongruent, institutionalised forms of control in later schooling' (p.98). The volatile secondary classrooms of interest in this paper, however, did not fulfil this theoretical ideal of transition to an impersonal moral order. Rather, the teachers were observed to variously cajole individuals, assert their authority as teachers, threaten to escalate issues to school management, reference workplace codes of behaviour and invoke universal notions of good behaviour. This variety suggests the teachers exploited a wider repertoire of moral forces in these classrooms beyond that resting in some ideal impersonal institutional order.

It should be noted that there are other approaches to understanding moral order in classrooms, informed by different theory and methodologies. In particular, studies using the detailed work of

conversational analysis reveal the presence and workings of normative rules, obligations, and expectations regulating student participation as constant ‘static’ (Freebody & Freiberg, 2000, p. 142) in classroom interaction. Such research shows how students are coached in, then held accountable to, a local moral order operating within the confines of the classroom through its constitutive categories of teacher and student. This corpus of work has contributed delicate analyses of typically early childhood education settings showing how students learn to “do student” appropriately, and how a moral order is thus conveyed and accomplished in classroom contexts. The ethnomethodological premises of such work purposefully confine any explanation of the moral order to the processes and resources of intersubjective interaction (for example, Baker 2000), and how order is achieved therein. This contrasts with approaches such as the one adopted in this paper, that understand the empirical moment as a realization of, and party to, larger social structures and processes that emanate from beyond the interactive context (Macbeth 2003). The problematic in this paper stems from the “earning or learning till 17” policy’s forceful retention of students who are unable to transition to the workplace, thus the relations within these empirical sites are themselves precipitated by external social conditions (Doherty, 2015a). We are interested in exploring and clarifying the plurality of potential moral forces called upon to regulate student conduct, from personal to impersonal. The next section develops a variable that helps conceptualise and order such variety.

Moral gravity and its layering

Freebody, Maton and Martin (2008, p. 194) define semantic gravity in the ID as “the degree of context dependence of knowledge, [which] shapes the capacity of students to move between concrete examples and abstract principles that go beyond the specific context.” The metaphor of gravity connotes a force that holds things down, in place: “where semantic gravity is strong, knowledge is likely to remain weighed down in its pedagogic context, disabling transfer” (p. 194).

To conceptualise a parallel dimension of verticality in the regulative discourse that moves between circumscription within a specific context and transferability across broader contexts, we propose a concept of **moral gravity**, being the degree of context specificity in the moral principle which seeks to shape or judge student conduct. Where moral gravity is at its strongest, the moral force stems from the local setting and the relation between the particular actors as individuals. Where moral gravity is at its weakest, the moral force stems from a diffuse universal principle that applies across all settings. Between these two extremes, we can conceptualise an ordinal series of layers that reference more or less specific contexts, moving from stronger (G++) to weaker (G--) moral gravity (see Doherty, 2015b for more detail). This variable offers an external language of description (Bernstein, 2000), that is:

a discursive structure which has been forged out of a constructive dialogue with antecedent theory, and with an empirical text ... the language of description is construed as a technology, the purpose of which is the analysis of texts as expressions of social relations and the cultural practices which (re)produce them. (Dowling 1998, p. 130)

In Table 1 we summarize these layers and exemplify how they might be expressed in classroom interactions.

Table 1: Coding moral gravity layers

Ordinal Code	Strength of moral gravity	Context referenced	Hypothetical example in classrooms
5	G--	Universally applicable principles	“Manners, please!”
4	G-	Relating this context to other institutional contexts	“You won’t be able to do that at work!”
3	G	In the larger institutional context of the school	“It’s school rules!”
2	G+	In our immediate institutional setting	“I won’t allow that in my class!”
1	G++	In the here and now between you and me	“I expect better from you.”

Starting from the bottom of the table, the strongest gravity layer, G++, is moral force that derives from the particular relationship between two people and the moral expectations that have built between them over time. This layer resonates with Bernstein's concept of "personal" modes of control, with appeals premised on the "particular attributes of the child" (2000, p. 94). Transgressing these expectations compromises the interpersonal relationship. Corrections in this layer would appeal to the student, and invoke the special relationship between the two individuals.

The next layer, G+, also stems from the particular local context, but rather than referencing the person-to-person relationship, draws its moral force from the institutional roles people are occupying at the time (teacher and student) and the rights, expectations and obligations that could be expected to adhere to those positions. This layer thus moves towards Bernstein's concept of "positional" control, which appeals on the basis of "general attributes of the child (age, gender, age relation etc.)" (Bernstein, 2000, p.94). Transgressing these moral expectations jeopardises the institutional work underway in this particular setting. Corrections would remind participants of their position in the classroom setting and re-assert the expected institutional order.

The mid-range level, G, refers to the rules and moral obligations that flow from the larger institutional setting (for example, the whole school) in which the immediate context is situated. This higher level force places certain obligations and expectations on all parties, regarding how the work of the institution should be conducted. Transgressing these rules jeopardises the actor's relationship with the whole institution, and corrections can involve other parties beyond the immediate context. The distinction between G+ and G acknowledges the potential adaptation or recontextualisation of larger institutional orders such as school rules when they are enacted. Within schools, teachers could be expected to tailor school rules to some degree in the management of their own classrooms. In this way, students in secondary schools move between

different moral micro-climates when they work with different teachers across a school day but these micro-climates are embedded in, and have ongoing recourse to, the larger institution's more powerful sanctions.

The weaker gravity layer, G-, invokes moral claims whose force derives legitimacy from institutional settings beyond the educational setting. For example, students in school might be held accountable to standards of behaviour that notionally apply in the workplace, or the home. This project was interested in whether this level of moral gravity would be more evident in the TAFE settings, given that sector's more explicit focus on vocational preparation. Transgressions in this layer offer teachable moments to make connections between behavioural expectations in the local context and beyond. Corrections would invoke other social domains and their moral expectations. However, by the same token, actors in the immediate context are not able to exercise the rewards or sanctions of such external institutions so the expression of social control could only ever be an appeal to the students' judgement, not an imperative in Bernstein's terms.

The weakest gravity in Table 1, G--, invokes universal moral principles, such as manners, safety, politeness, and respect, which are understood to apply regardless of setting. In some ways, this layer mimics the strongest gravity of interpersonal relations, but the universal principle would apply equally to strangers regardless of any pre-existing relation.

This heuristic typology outlines how moral gravity can be weaker or stronger according to the frame of reference invoked in the situational demands. Each layer can exert some moral force, and the regulative work to maintain order in classrooms could potentially draw on all levels in some way. These layers are not necessarily exhaustive, merely indicative. For example, the work of Qoyyimah (2014) points to another near universal layer of religious morality governing Indonesian classrooms in both secular and religious schools. Teachers can selectively move up or down the gravity levels in their classroom management interventions. Students might equally invoke different layers of moral gravity to justify or defend their behaviour. Establishing which

moralties (plural) are invoked and what moral logics dominate help us understand how teachers actually seek to manage classroom trouble.

The empirical project

The empirical project was designed as classroom ethnographies in Year 11 non-academic pathways in two high schools, two TAFE colleges and one hybrid TAFE/high school setting. These sites were purposefully sampled in communities with limited youth employment opportunities, where the “earning or learning till 17” policy could be expected to have the greatest impact. The design was informed by Watson-Gegeo’s (1997) insistence on the importance of a holistic perspective on teacher-student interactions, and Hammersley’s (1990) “action” model that attends to how order is achieved. A total of eight teacher/class combinations were each followed across 3 to 4 weeks of their timetabled contact time. One of the TAFE settings operated a self-paced program, which created very different classroom organisation and talk, so this case has not been included in this paper’s analysis. At the hybrid site, the same teacher was observed working with 2 different class groups across the period, thus was involved in 2 of the teacher/class combinations. When permitted, classes were audio-recorded. Detailed field notes tracked what topics were introduced in the ID, how the teacher sought to organise the students’ learning activity (the intended RD), and what else disrupted the intended lesson plan, including any regulative flares. These were episodes in the classroom talk where the teacher explicitly corrected or intervened in disruptive classroom behaviours (Doherty, 2015b). These flares were later transcribed from audio recordings or field notes and collated. The idea of layered moral gravity grew from our focus on regulative flares in the classroom observations, and our observations of the variety of moral forces invoked in these classrooms.

As a departure from the orthodox reporting of ethnographic research in rich qualitative description, this paper borrows the conventions of descriptive statistics as a way to distil and convey typical patterns, commonalities and differences across the sampled combinations from

the vast quantity of data generated. Though unorthodox, we defend this choice as scholarly “trespassing” (Weis, Jenkins & Stich, 2009, p. 913) that offers a useful and illuminating way to summarise and report classroom observations without losing complexity. Accordingly, the variety of moral premises teachers invoked in such moves were coded according to their level of moral gravity. Each explicit moral move in the transcribed flares was coded on a 5 point Likert-like scale where 1 represented reference to an interpersonal code between individuals (G++, strongest, most contextualized moral gravity) and 5 represented reference to universal principals of good behaviour (G--, weakest, most de-contextualized moral gravity). All relevant moves were coded by the same coder, then checked against the conceptual categories by another. While it is recognized the Likert scale used is technically an ordinal scale, for the exploratory purposes of this analysis it is treated as interval level measurement following common practice in educational research (Lehman, 1991). In the next section, each teacher/class combination and their moral gravity profile is briefly described.

Teacher class combination profiles.

ASE: This teacher/class combination was a large Prevocational English class (approximately 17 students, though attendance fluctuated) working with a young but experienced female teacher in a public secondary school in a community experiencing high welfare-dependency and high population transience. A sequence of seventeen classes, most of 70 minutes duration, was observed. These classes were devoted to two tasks the students had to complete for assessment purposes, the first a persuasive marketing brochure, the second a script for a business proposal to be delivered in a speech. The teacher offered a number of models in class, supplied detailed scaffolding templates to support the students’ work, then supervised and consulted with students in the computer laboratory while they researched their individual topics and drafted their texts. The intended regulative discourse thus shifted between whole-class instruction, some teacher-led class discussion around models, and individual seatwork with teacher monitoring and individual

teacher-student dialogue. The teacher made no assumptions that students would continue to work on their assignments at home, and spent much of her class time reminding students of due dates and stressing the need to complete the tasks to pass the subject.

Over these classes, 371 regulative flares were documented, in particular when the teacher repeatedly protested about students' swearing ("*Language!*"; "*Can you please stop the language. I don't like it!*"; "*Watch your language ... that's not appropriate!*"), and redirected off task behaviour ("*Can you please come back to your desk and actually do some work on your assignment?*", "*Stop being inappropriate and get on with your work!*"). The vast majority of her corrections were coded as 2 (G+) referencing the specific classroom context and its obligations ("*Come on, focus! Sh!*"; "*That's it? All you've done in 70 minutes?*"). Otherwise, this combination generated a higher proportion of 3 (G) flares ("*Please don't eat in class ... You know the rules!*") than 1 (G++) flares ("*You were the one who promised me a draft today.*").

ASM: This teacher/class combination was a Prevocational Maths class in the same school and community as ASE, with some of the same students, but a different teacher. This teacher was a mature female with a variety of professional experiences in her background, who by her own account, relished working with these students, and cultivated much closer, more personal relations with each student based on her close knowledge of their personal circumstances. The observed sequence of fifteen 70 minute lessons addressed numeracy applications in everyday settings, and all notionally followed a similar regulative design – the teacher supplied a worksheet or tasks on an overhead projector slide, then the whole class worked through the questions using an initiation-response-evaluation format of teacher-led discussion. Using student responses, or her own contributions, the teacher then worked the mathematical problem on the board, while the students copied that working into their books which were later collected as evidence of learning. Despite this well established modus operandi, the flow of these lessons was continually interrupted by topical diversions initiated by both students and teacher. Across the 15 classes

observed, class attendance fluctuated from 9 to 17, with 393 regulative flares coded. Again the majority of flares were coded as 2 (G+) (*"If you are going to talk, I'm going to separate you."*; *"At the rate we're going you're going to be working at the last week of school when we should be having a bit of fun time!"*; *"Guys! Too much talking!"*) but with a higher proportion of 1 (G++) episodes (*"Mate, I don't want to have to get angry the first day."*; *"I know you're not on the planet today mate, but you need to do the work. I know you're smart and just do a couple ... I know you're not well, cross and cranky."*; *"Well, you know, I'm pretty lenient, but I don't like that. ... And you promised me at the end of last term you'd work a bit harder."*)

AT11W: This teacher/class combination was in the same high welfare, high transience community, but located in a unique hybrid setting, offering a differently structured school program for non-academic pathway students. Classes were relocated in TAFE college premises for the final two years of compulsory schooling. This allowed ongoing access to TAFE training workshops and more opportunity for work experience. This young experienced female teacher taught the social science curriculum, addressing topics such as setting life goals, promoting mental health, communication skills, dealing with bullying. Her classes were tightly paced, shifting between teacher presentation often supported by video clips, student activities including pair work or small group tasks to develop ideas, and short individual written tasks that served as a cumulative record of curricular topics in the students' books.

Off task or disruptive student behaviour was moderated largely by the teacher's sense of humour that quickly restored the intended flow of the class (*"I'll give you one more minute or I'll bore some people to death because they're done."*; *"I can see people had sugar at lunchtime."*) This teacher also routinely made explicit moves acknowledging and praising appropriate student behaviours (*"I'm impressed. Go you good things. It's awesome to see your focus."*). Over the seven 70 minute lessons observed, attendance fluctuated between 11 and 18, with 127 flares transcribed, the majority coded as 2 (G+) (*"I would hate to have to shift you because you are being a little too energetic for me today. It has taken you*

five minutes to get in here and get organised.”), but also some coded as 1 (G++) (“*You know how you said you were really good last lesson ...*”).

AT11V: This combination was in the same hybrid setting as *AT11W*, with the same teacher, same year level, same curriculum but a second class of 20 students. While the teacher implemented the same lesson plans, the different set of students, their absences, and their wavering levels of engagement created different realizations of that lesson. Over the 7 lessons observed, student numbers fluctuated between 15 to 20, and 119 flares were coded showing very similar patterning as the *AT11W* teacher/class combination.

BSA: This teacher/class combination was situated in a public secondary school in a large town that had suffered the loss of its historical economic basis in mining and manufacturing industries, thus experiencing higher unemployment than other urban centres. The teacher was a mature, early career teacher, whose manner was calm, respectful and dignified. This was a prevocational mathematics class, addressing similar applied numeracy skills as *ASM*, however this teacher developed unit workbooks around a narrative theme from which various numeracy problems stemmed. With this self-contained resource, the teacher allowed some students to work ahead independently at a faster pace. The rest of the students worked as one group under the teacher’s directions, participating in class discussions of the problems, attempting the problems independently, then contributing to a joint working which the teacher recorded on the board for students to copy if necessary. The ‘working ahead’ students frequently disrupted the teacher’s lesson with procedural questions (“*Excuse me Miss ...*”). Student numbers fluctuated between 7 and 16, but the faces often changed, with new students arriving in the class, others absent on work placement, and students shifting to other programs. This teacher described a strategy of often talking with parents about their child’s progress, and often mentioned this possibility in class (“*Don’t forget tomorrow night is parent/ teacher nights ... bring your folks. I’d love to speak to your Mum ... I can find nice things to say about you all!*”). To correct student behaviours she often drew the

individual student out of the classroom to talk with them alone (*"I understand ... but you are not to make phone calls in my class"*). Across the six 70 minute classes observed, 97 flares were transcribed, with the majority coded as 2 (G+) (*"You need to get it all down ... work a bit quicker ... Move your tail a bit please."*; *"Don't call it out. Just write it down and give other people a chance."*).

BSB: This teacher/class combination was situated in the same school and community as BSA. The teacher was a younger experienced male who enjoyed jocular banter with the students (*"I'll get in trouble for making you think first thing in the morning"*), but also insisted on school rules for uniform and mobile phone usage. The social science curriculum focussed on life skills such as budgeting, banking choices and income management. This teacher prepared PowerPoint slides for each lesson. These staged the planned progression of topics and activities including teacher instruction, class discussions and student tasks, and provided notes on curricular content, which the students were expected to copy into their books. Class size fluctuated between 4 and 12, with new faces appearing and disappearing over the thirteen 70 minute classes observed. Despite the small numbers, class discussions were often derailed by students' exuberant participation that introduced inappropriate content referencing sex, crime or drugs at any opportunity. 120 flares were coded, with the majority coded as 2 (G+) (*"Ready to move on? C'Mon!"*; *"P, you actually need to do something; B, stop yelling please ... don't yell and don't swear!"*), but there were also significant proportions coded as 1 (G++) (*"Ooh – cranky again today!"*; *"You broke our deal – no more coffee for you!"*) and 3 (G), (*"Jumper off please and if you wear those shorts again, you'll be sent straight to the office."*) thus showing more variance than the BSA profile.

BT: This was a small teacher/class combination sampled in a TAFE college setting in the same town as BSA and BSB. This program was structured differently to the school settings, in that the teacher/class combination worked together all day (from 8.30am to 4pm) four days a week, allowing more flexibility and integration in the curriculum. In this way the curriculum addressed prevocational maths, literacy, communication skills and occupational health and safety, through

the integrating device of planning and conducting a fund-raising event for charity. The teacher had an industry trainer qualification (Certificate IV), while all the other teachers had teaching degrees. Her five class members were students with educational histories or needs that had made further participation in mainstream school settings untenable. This teacher was supported by a youth worker at all times. To work towards the fund-raising event, the teacher had allocated roles for an extended role play of a committee undertaking the various tasks of planning, marketing, purchasing, risk management and health and safety. This required someone chairing meetings, taking minutes, liaising with external parties and so forth. These activities were interspersed with classroom-based tasks such as keeping an individual written record of the project phases, a cooking class, mock job interviews, internet research and a guest speaker. Given the long days together, this setting offered more flexibility for moving between activities in response to student dis/engagement. When confronting non-compliant behaviours, this teacher at times made explicit reference to what would be expected in a workplace. For example, a late student explained he was tired from moving house, to which the teacher replied, *"I can relate to tired, but if it's work, your boss won't care!"*. In addition, some of her classroom routines such as signing in and out each day mimicked workplace practices (*"Some of you forgot to sign off."*). Four days were spent observing this teacher/class combination, and a total of 119 flares were coded. While the majority were coded as 2 (G+) (*"Oy! How about we bring decibels down – focus on this, focus!"*; *"Please move. I need to get through this work ... if not, I'll can the project."*), this teacher made proportionally more use of weaker gravity moves (G-) (*"Is this how you'll talk in a professional setting?"*; *"The meeting was organised for you with [college principal]. In the workplace, you can't turn up with someone else."*) reflecting the greater workplace orientation in TAFE settings.

As an overview of the seven teacher/class combinations, Figure 1 offers a raw profile of each in terms of the number of flares that referenced different moral layers. These summary profiles indicate that much of the explicit work of classroom management for these students, in these

classes, in these communities, invoked the moral expectations particular to the institutional context of the classroom. In other words, the dominant moral order for students retained in an extended phase of compulsory schooling under “earning or learning till 17” policy operated at the level of strong gravity, G+, asserting the moral demands of the immediate classroom setting.

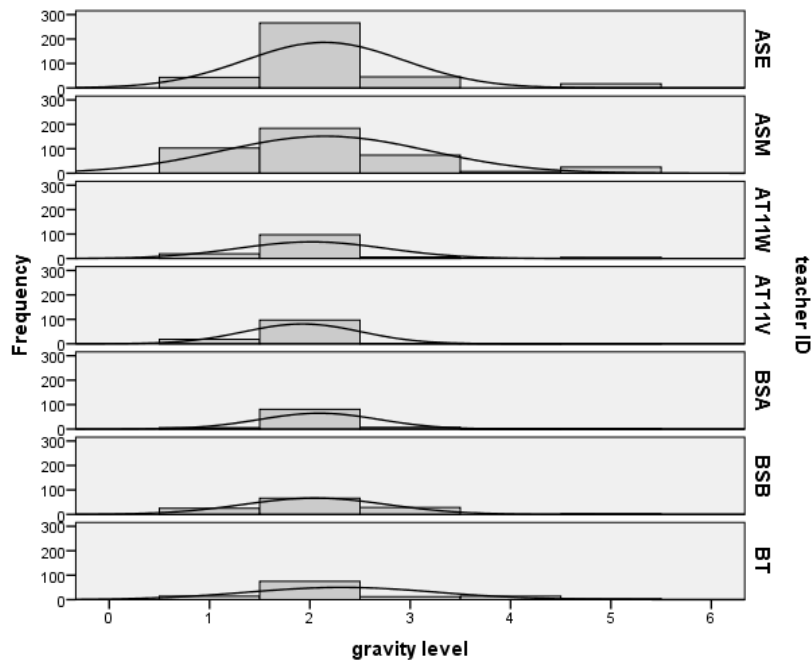


Figure 1: Histogram of moral gravity frequencies X teacher/classroom combinations.

Figure 2 recalculates these spreads of frequencies as percentages of each teachers’ total number of flares, and reassembles the teachers’ profiles into a clustered bar chart. The graph confirms that the bulk of moral work around these students invoked classroom expectations in the G+ layer, with some personal appeals in the interpersonal space of G++ and some being done at the larger institutional layer, G, of school rules and systemic sanctions.

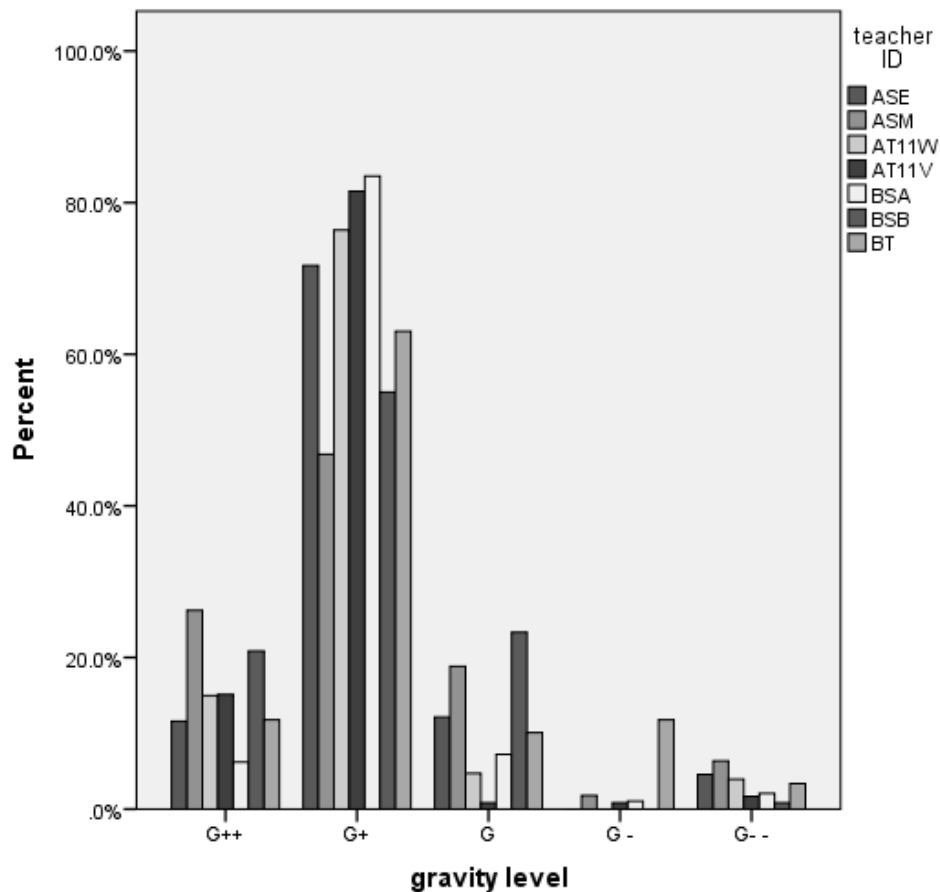


Figure 2: Clustered bar chart summarising sampled teacher/class combinations' regulative flares by moral gravity.

From this visualisation, it also becomes evident that BT was the only combination in which moral expectations were being linked to wider institutional settings beyond the school to any notable degree. Similarly, it appears that little use was being made of the G- - layer, in which moral expectations reference notionally universal norms that apply in all walks of life.

Comparing and contrasting teachers' use of the moral gravity spectrum

The next stage of analysis was to plumb any differences in the mean level of moral gravity across teacher/classroom groups, that is, the “preferred modes of control” (Bernstein, 1971, p. 160). invoked in these classes. Table 2 reports on each teacher/class combination's distribution of moral moves and calculates a hypothetical mean value.

Table 2: Mean moral gravity of regulative flares X teacher/class combinations

Teacher/ classroom combination	Total number of flares	Mean	Standard Deviation
ASE	371	2.14	.794
ASM	393	2.15	1.036
AT11W	127	2.02	.745
AT11V	119	1.92	.585
BSA	97	2.09	.597
BSB	120	2.05	.720
BT	119	2.32	.947
Total	1346	2.12	.853

Differences between the mean moral gravity values expressed in the sampled teacher/class combinations were statistically tested using an analysis of variance (ANOVA) model. The assumptions underpinning analysis of variance (ANOVA) require that distributions within groups be approximately normally distributed, variances across groups be approximately equal, observations be independent, and the dependent variable be of interval level of measurement. While the last two requirements were met in all cases, the other assumptions for this model were not met. “Bootstrapping” techniques (Davison & Hinkley, 1998) were accordingly used to estimate parameters such as means, standard deviations and confidence intervals. Essentially a bootstrap program takes multiple samples with replacement from the data set and, for each sample, calculates the parameter of interest (for example, the mean and standard deviation). The distribution of the parameter estimates across all the samples is then analysed and used to establish confidence limits around the parameter. One of the advantages of this technique is there is no requirement for the original data set to be normally distributed. One thousand samples were drawn with replacement as the basis for this analysis. Figure 3 presents the error bar graph of mean values of moral gravity episodes for each teacher/class combination and their 95% confidence intervals.

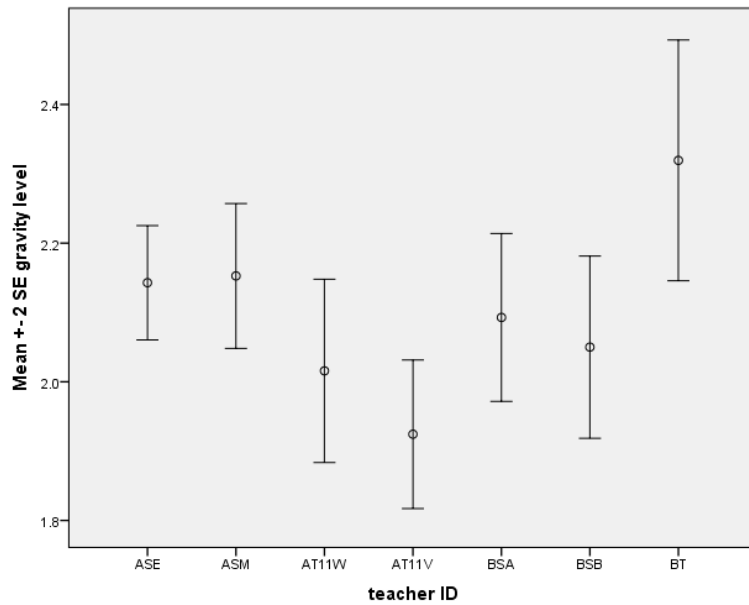


Figure 3: Line graph of moral gravity mean X teacher/classroom combination with mean error bars

The range for BT mean does not seem to overlap that of AT11W or AT11V which suggests some statistically significant differences. While the data across teacher/classroom combinations was not normally distributed, the histograms displayed in Figure 1 would suggest the distributions are reasonably symmetrical. A decision was made to proceed with an ANOVA model to compare differences in mean gravity level across teacher/classroom types but to use bootstrapping to obtain parameter estimates. Table 3 reports the ANOVA. There was a statistically significant effect of teacher/classroom cases on mean moral gravity scores $F(3, 1339) = 2.756, p < .012$ with a small effect size ($r = .112$).

Table 3: ANOVA - mean moral gravity X teacher/classroom combination

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	11.931	6	1.989	2.756	.012
Within Groups	966.287	1339	.722		
Total	978.218	1345			

Follow up pairwise comparisons were conducted using the Games-Howell procedure as it is considered to offer the best performance when there is inequality in the variances across groups. The confidence interval for each comparison was cross validated through bootstrapping. There was a statistically significant difference (MD) in mean moral gravity level between teacher/classroom combinations ASE and AT11V, MD = .218, $p = .023$. This represents a small effect size, $r = .124$. In addition, there was a statistically significant difference (MD) between teacher/classroom ASM and AT11V, MD = .228, $p = .039$, with a small effect size $r = .101$. Finally, there was a statistically significant difference (MD) in mean moral gravity level between BT and AT11V, MD = .395, $p = .003$. This represents a small effect size $r = .244$.

These statistically significant differences between pairs highlight the case of AT11V. This teacher's explicit moves displayed the strongest moral gravity – working consistently at the level of interpersonal or classroom setting moral expectations, without recourse to the moral force of school rules/sanctions that peppered the moral work in the ASE and ASM cases. The interesting point here is that all three settings were in the same disadvantaged community, but it would appear that AT11V classroom relations did not (need to?) invoke the force of the larger institutional layer. The moral work by the same teacher with another class group (AT11W), however, was not significantly different to the other combinations' practice on these terms.

The significant difference between BT and AS11V is also telling. Both of these programs were located in TAFE college settings, and could potentially harness the vocational orientation of these contexts for their prevocational students. However, the moral order invoked in the BT case plugged into forces with weaker moral gravity, thus more decontextualized moral forces, more often than the AT11V combination did. The teacher in BT was thus attempting the harder

work of invoking the expectations of workplaces (to which she did not have recourse), rather than the immediate classroom focus that was maintained by the teacher in AT11V.

Conclusion – reflecting on moral topographies in extended compulsory education

This paper offers a language of description to elucidate ordering within the moral order of classrooms. It drew on the nested contributions from a coherent genealogy of theoretical thought starting with Durkheim’s understanding of the morality work inherent in educational settings. Bernstein’s elaboration of these Durkheimian principles conceptualised how moral order is carried by the regulative discourse underpinning any instructional discourse in pedagogy. The next generation of theoretical elaboration came from systemic functional linguistics, with the variable and criteria of verticality in the instructional discourse. These theoretical contributions have enabled progressively closer analyses of what goes on in classrooms.

By shifting the focus to the regulative discourse, this paper’s concept of moral gravity informed a similarly vertical mapping of moral footings, from the strong gravity of highly contextualized interpersonal relationships and their moral force, to the weak gravity of de-contextualized universal norms and their moral force. This typology helped to conceptualise transgressions of different orders and different professional responses to such transgressions. As an empirical language of description, it also helped to distinguish the patterning in the different moral forces invoked in these classrooms, and identify how teacher/class combinations across the sample both shared a common dominant mode and displayed nuanced differences in the management of classroom trouble. The regulative flares in these typically volatile classrooms brought a variety of moral expectations to the empirical surface. The spectrum of moral forces implicitly governing behaviour in schools more generally became evident. The observed classrooms created under the “earning or learning till 17” policy failed to satisfy the theoretical ideal of gradual socialization into the impersonal order of the institution over time. Rather, teachers in

these spaces were kept busy repeatedly re-asserting classrooms expectations for students who continually flouted them. At times, teachers appealed to the person; at other times, they escalated the matter by invoking larger school sanctions. Only rarely did teachers in the sampled teacher/class combinations link their moral expectations to lifeworlds beyond schooling. How might this be otherwise?

Durkheim argued that the moral work undertaken in schools should “link to the rules of discipline sanctions that anticipate those of later life” (Durkheim, 1961/1925, p. 173). The distributions across the vertical mapping helps us to reflect on the strength of such links, and what layers are potentially being over-used or under-used to cater for these students’ transition into other life settings and citizenship more fully. The strong default of moral disciplining within the confines of the classroom context (G+) evidenced across all the sampled teacher/class combinations, and the minimal use of the weaker gravity forces (G- or G--) that align with expectations beyond the school need challenging if the policy is to achieve its long term goal of greater workforce participation. Exerting discipline that only demands positional compliance within the constraints of the classroom setting is, as Bernstein predicted, likely to further exacerbate the accumulated friction between these young people and the school institution.

The five layers reported here were developed in conversation with the classroom ethnographies undertaken, and do not claim to provide an exhaustive account of what moralities can flow through classrooms. It could be expected that religious schools will have an overt layer of weak, de-contextualized morality that invokes a god and the moral expectations that flow from the religion. Single sex schools might similarly exercise a layer of what constitutes right and proper conduct for boys or girls. In this way, Durkheim’s work continues to pose the empirical question of what kind of moral forces occupy what kinds of sites, and ongoing normative issues of what moral forces should be exercised where and when.

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