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ABSTRACT

The premise of "Judicious Discipline" states that for students to become responsible citizens they must be given responsibility. Its operating theory is that building a school culture through a non-punitive, democratic approach to classroom management and school discipline produces students who are responsible for their own actions and who consciously strive to do good for society's sake. It claims that students in schools and classrooms where "Judicious Discipline" is practiced establish and maintain better interpersonal relationships than students and educators in schools where the rewards and punishment or stimulus/response theory is practiced. It asserts that in schools/classrooms where the principles of "Judicious Discipline" are applied, educators contribute favorably to students' social development, their sense of autonomy, and help to prepare them better for living and learning in a democratic society. This paper describes and discusses an action research project that was approved by Gustavus Adolphus College (Minnesota) and employed both quantitative and qualitative measures to test the theoretical outcomes of implementing "Judicious Discipline." The findings indicate that "Judicious Discipline" provided students, educators, administrators, and staff with a common language of civility used to solve social problems and think about what was right and good. (Contains 18 references and 10 tables.) (BT)

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Judicious Discipline: 5 Years Later

Paul Gathercoal and Virginia Nimmo

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Judicious Discipline: 5 years later

Paul Gathercoal
California Lutheran University

Virginia Nimmo
Mankato School District

A paper presented at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) 2002 Annual Meeting, (SIG – Classroom Management) 1-5 April 2002, in New Orleans, Louisiana

"How do we know *Judicious Discipline* will do what it says it will do?" This is the question asked of school psychologist, Ginny Nimmo, by her district administrators in Mankato, Minnesota. Ginny and her colleagues were preparing to commit time, energy and money to implement *Judicious Discipline* in selected schools in her district. Naturally, Ginny's superintendent wanted to know if this move, this paradigm shift, to democratic classroom management practices would actually have a positive effect.

Judicious Discipline professes that in order for students to become responsible citizens they must be given responsibility. This notion of giving students responsibility is antithetical to the more practiced theory that responsibility for good citizenship is couched in the educator's power to wield punishment upon wrong doers and tangibly reward others for their good deeds. From this well-practiced and popular teacher-centered classroom management approach to *Judicious Discipline*, a student-centered, education approach, it is one mammoth leap. The leap is so great that some educators will simply not be able to make the shift; and so, schools were chosen to implement this model based on the school's culture and the belief that teachers in the chosen schools were ready for such a "leap of faith."

Judicious Discipline operates on the theory that building a school culture through a non-punitive, democratic approach to classroom management and school discipline will produce students who are responsible for their own actions and who will consciously strive to do *good* for societies' sake. It is also claimed that students in schools and classrooms where *Judicious Discipline* is practiced will establish and maintain better interpersonal relationships than students and educators in schools where rewards and punishment or stimulus/response theory is practiced. *Judicious Discipline* argues that there will be a transfer effect of good citizenship at school into the home, workplace, the sporting field, and to other social settings. Unlike the rewards and punishment models for school/classroom discipline, students' citizenship skills will be transferable from situation to situation. The rewards and punishment models tend to modify behavior for specific situations only; there is no transfer effect. It is claimed that in schools/classrooms where the principles of *Judicious Discipline* are applied educators contribute favorably to students' social development, their sense of autonomy, and help to better prepare them for living and learning in a democratic society.

Driven by her administrators' request for accountability, Ginny approached Paul Gathercoal and asked for help with the research design. Paul developed a research proposal and it was submitted to and approved by the Institutional Review Board (for research on human and animal subjects) at Gustavus Adolphus College. The design was

an action research model that employed both quantitative and qualitative measures to test the theoretical outcomes of implementing *Judicious Discipline*. The design also encouraged and enabled the sharing of ideas that emerged as useful models for implementation of *Judicious Discipline* in the research schools and classrooms.

The research results and the models for implementation have been shared widely at conferences and workshops, including the American Educational Research Association's Annual Conventions in 1997, 2000 and 2001, and published in esteemed journals such as, the *Phi Delta Kappan* (Landau & Gathercoal, 2000) and the *Kappa Delta Pi Record* (Gathercoal & Crowell, 2000). Some research papers are available online from the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) clearinghouses (Gathercoal, 2001; McEwan, Gathercoal & Nimmo, 1997). As well, several useful implementation resources were generated from the action research findings including the "Conducting Democratic Class Meetings" videotape (Gathercoal & Connolly, 1997) that can be purchased from Corroboree, LLC, 159 Glenbrook Avenue, Camarillo, CA 93010 or ordered online at http://www.dock.net/gathercoal/Video.html.

One of the quantitative measures used throughout the five-year research project was a questionnaire developed by The Social Development Group, Research Branch of the South Australian Department of Education, and published in their 1980 book, *Developing the Classroom Group*. This questionnaire was used throughout the action research to ascertain students' levels of social development and provide researchers and subjects with one measure that provides information about the "health and culture" of specific classroom environments.

The researchers found an implicit positive correlation between qualitative measures, (videotaped interviews and anecdotes), and the students' responses to the questions on the social development questionnaire. This triangulation of data affirmed the validity and reliability of the questionnaire results. So much so, that researchers and teachers began using the quantitative summaries as diagnostic tools to indicate what corrective strategies the educator could take to align classroom management practices more closely with the principles of *Judicious Discipline*. For example, when the student responses indicated problems with student/student relationships, democratic classroom meetings were recommended and implemented as one strategy the teacher could employ to enhance communication between students and improve student/student relationships.

The social development questionnaire differentiates between power and affect relationships through a series of eight true/false questions and places the student's response in one of four developmental groups "dependent," "rebellion," "cohesion," and "autonomy." The level of students' social development was measured in four categories; two power categories, "teacher power" and "student power," and two relationship categories "student/student relationships" and "teacher/student relationships." The "teacher power" category represents how much power the teacher held in the classroom versus the student's sense of power. The "student power" category represents how much power individual students felt they had versus other students in the classroom. The "student/student relationships" category represents how well all students get along with each other; and, the "teacher/student relationships" category represents how well all students get along with their teacher. So, it was possible for one student to respond at the "dependent" stage for "teacher power," the "rebellion" stage for "student power," the "cohesive" stage for "student/student relationships," and the "autonomous" stage for

"teacher/student relationships." Researchers would then score this example, as one count for each stage of social development for the individual student. By collecting this information for every student in the school, researchers were able to measure central tendencies and make recommendations for improving the school and classroom culture.

Student behavior for each developmental stage is described in the South Australian Education Department's (1980) book, *Developing the Classroom Group*, and pertinent passages are reiterated below:

- ☆ In **stage 1**, the main issue is dependence. Students are generally dependent and submissive, and do what the teacher says. The students' interaction is mostly through the teacher, so there is low covert interaction among students. There is little disruptive behavior, but some "attention getting." Order is fairly high. Anxiety levels are high in some students. Some students are bored. Motivation is extrinsic; approval, praise and encouragement from teacher and parent/caregiver(s) is important. There is fear of punishment.
- ☆ In **stage 2** the main issue is rebellion. The students test, challenge and try out the teacher. The student group separates into two camps, one in opposition to the teacher, the other seeking to maintain dependent group behavior. Some students challenge or ignore the teacher's efforts to control the class. Noise level tends to be high. Trust level among students is low, and aggressive interactions and put downs are common. The rebellious sub-group is extrinsically motivated by peer group approval, moderated by fear of teacher punishment. The intrinsic motivation is for autonomy, moderated by dependency needs.
- ☆ In **stage 3**, the main issue is cohesion. Students are friendly and trusting to each other and the teacher. There is very little disruptive behavior. There is lots of interaction but of an orderly type. They conform to group norms. There is little disagreement, as this is seen as disruptive to the harmony of the group. This inability to handle conflict results in some covert bad feeling. Extrinsic motivation comes from praise and encouragement from peer group and teacher. Breach of class norms brings strong group disapproval.
- ☆ Autonomy is the main issue at **stage 4**. Individuals are self-directed, able to seek and give support but function well without it. Students take responsibility for their own learning. There is a high level of interaction. Agreement and discussion are the norm; agreement occurs in the context of disagreement.

  Feelings (positive and negative) are openly expressed. Students work the same with or without the teacher present.

  Disruptive behavior is virtually non-existent. Students show flexibility and adaptability in a variety of learning situations without demanding conformity of all members. They utilize self-awareness and empathy rather than rules to choose behavior. Motivation is mainly intrinsic. Social behavior is based on respect for self and others. Learning is seen as a way of gaining personal competence and joy. (p. 31 - 35)

Note that the description for Autonomy or the 4th stage of social development closely parallels Kohlberg's (1976) fifth stage of moral development (the principled stage or "social contract theory" stage). It was evident to researchers that when classes of students' indicated that they were largely operating at the autonomous stage of social development, the videotaped interviews and anecdotes indicated that those students were also operating at the principled level of moral development.

For example, two kindergarten boys were playing with a bin full of *Hot Wheels* cars when one boy declares, "This car belongs to me, it looks like the other one [that is here], but this one belongs to me. I brought it from home."

The other kindergartener asks, "Are you sure this isn't a property issue?"

"No I brought this one from home, it's mine."

After a little more play time, the questioning kindergartner says, "I'll tell you what, let's line all these cars up and you can put yours next to the one that it looks like."

The other kindergartner quickly back-peddles with, "Oh, maybe this isn't mine, but it looks just like mine." Not a problem, as five-year-olds use social contract theory and the language of civility to solve a property issue.

Another example finds a fourth grader telling what she knows about *Judicious Discipline* on videotape,

> "I know that it helps us keep a clear balance on everything that happens and that everyone has rights in the *Judicious Discipline*. Um, everywhere you go there is this *Judicious Discipline* and we are always reminded about it. Um, if someone is not acting in the *Judicious Discipline* way or taking responsibilities, they are reminded, usually. Um, let's see, that everyone has to respect everyone else's rights and take the responsibilities of that. I know that having the *Judicious Discipline* means I have rights and responsibilities." (Gathercoal, 1996)

Doesn't this sound like respect for the rights, life and dignity of all persons? (Kohlberg, 1976)

Still other fifth graders commented on videotape,

> "Everyone has a positive attitude in our class because everyone feels like their opinion is, is like okay to have one and stuff. And we talk out all our problems and we compromise on everything and we're really good about respecting other's feelings and stuff."
>
> "You don't get in trouble for no reason, like sometimes someone might tell on you cause they think that you did something and you didn't, so [the teacher] talks to you and she believes you if you say that you didn't or something."
>
> "And with the rights and responsibilities we all wrote 'em down and we all had to sign the sheet and then we made some rights and responsibilities for [our teacher] and she had to sign that sheet."
>
> "Uh-huh, and so for the most part everyone follows their rights and responsibilities." (Gathercoal, 1996)

This sounds a lot like Kohlberg's (1976) principled level, and the awareness that particular moral or social rules are social contracts, arrived at through democratic reconciliation of differing viewpoints and they are open to change, within principle.

Researchers found it fascinating how the qualitative findings tended to match the quantitative central tendencies found by administering the social development questionnaire to classroom groups. The students cited above all came from classrooms where autonomy or social development stage 4 was the primary response on the social development questionnaire. When students from classrooms where the central tendency response was at social development stage 1 or the dependent stage were interviewed on videotape, there was silence as students sat dumbfounded when asked open-ended questions about rights and responsibilities, respect and justice. Those students simply did not have the language to know where to begin to talk about rights, or what their responsibilities were, or comment on respect or what was fair and right. There was a noticeable qualitative difference between these student's interviews, marked by a distinct inability to respond to open-ended questions, and the language displayed in the interviews with students who had been taught about *Judicious Discipline*, and that are quoted above.

Generally, the schools implementing *Judicious Discipline* found success, but it did not occur over night. Implementing *Judicious Discipline* takes time. *Judicious Discipline* is *front-loading*; you can't just jump in and use it. The teacher has to teach *Judicious Discipline* to his or her students. Students need to know and practice the language and concepts embedded in *Judicious Discipline*, and they must develop their own expectations for civil living around the framework of democracy, or the balance of individual rights and the rights and interests of the rest of society. Our research indicates that this usually takes between four to eight weeks, if students are learning about *Judicious Discipline* for the first time. However, if the entire school is using *Judicious Discipline*, that time can be reduced to zero as students come to school expecting the *Judicious Discipline* model to be in place when they get there. This is illustrated in the following table, as one elementary school where the social development questionnaire was administered to all students, five times, over a five-year period, continued to make progress, virtually beginning where they had ended each time the questionnaire was administered.

TABLE 1., provides the distribution of responses at the various levels of social development (dependency, rebellion, cohesion and autonomy). The reported "N" indicates the number of responses that were given by all students answering at a particular stage of social development for the four constructs (teacher power, student power, student/student relationship, and teacher/student relationship). As a result the reported "N" is four times the population of the school.

TABLE 1. School-wide Results for the Elementary School's Questionnaires

Questionnaire #1 - Administered to All Students in September 1995

Dependency	Rebellion	Cohesion	Autonomy
N = 449: 26%	N = 68: 4%	N = 736: 42%	N = 498: 28%

Questionnaire #2 - Administered to All Students in January 1996

Dependency	Rebellion	Cohesion	Autonomy
N = 335: 20%	N = 179: 10%	N = 570: 34%	N = 602: 36%

Questionnaire #3 - Administered to All Students in May 1996

Dependency	Rebellion	Cohesion	Autonomy
N = 284: 17%	N = 129: 8%	N = 510: 31%	N = 742: 45%

Questionnaire #4 - Administered to All Students in October 1999

Dependency	Rebellion	Cohesion	Autonomy
N = 122: 9%	N = 169: 13%	N = 419: 32%	N = 602: 46%

Questionnaire #5 - Administered to All Students in June 2000

Dependency	Rebellion	Cohesion	Autonomy
N = 101: 8%	N = 139: 11%	N = 280: 22%	N = 748: 59%

Note the increase in responses at the autonomous level and the decrease in responses at the dependency level over the five-year period. This is exactly what should happen if a school's culture is truly shifting from a teacher-centered, autocratic form of classroom management to a student-centered, democratic form of classroom management. Qualitative data (anecdotes, videotaped interviews with teachers, students and administrators, and other artifacts) all support the questionnaires' results indicating a shift from teacher-centered classroom to students taking responsibility for their behavior and civic responsibilities, including learning.

Unseen in the preceding table, but made evident in the following tables, is a distinct difference in student responses at various grade levels. The data indicates that the "early adopters" were the upper grades and the lower grades came later. Qualitative data indicated that lower grade teachers thought that their students would never be able to do *Judicious Discipline*. Again, substantiating the treatise that moving to *Judicious Discipline* is truly a paradigm shift for many teachers. Nonetheless, at the end of five years, every classroom in the elementary school, except one, scored high toward the autonomous stage of social development in all four categories, two power and two relationships categories. This tends to dismiss the myth that the lower grades "can't do

Judicious Discipline." Maybe it is the teacher's beliefs and not the students' abilities that impede the process?

TABLE 2. through TABLE 7. provide the distribution of responses at the various levels of social development (1 = dependency, 2 = rebellion, 3 = cohesion and 4 = autonomy) at three times during the five year period for the upper grades (3 – 5) and the lower grades (1 and 2). The tables indicate that the upper and lower grades were probably equal in terms of student responses to the questionnaire in September 1995, that the upper grades moved more towards autonomy at the end of the academic year than did the lower grades, and that after five years, the upper and lower grades were probably equal again, but all moved further towards autonomy in terms of student responses to the questionnaire.

TABLE 2. Upper Grade September 1995 Responses to the Questionnaire

September 1995 – Grades 3 - 5																
	Teacher Power Ratings				Student Power Ratings				Student/Student Ratings				Teacher/Student Ratings			
Subject	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
3rd Grade	14	0	6	1	0	3	14	4	1	1	17	2	0	1	11	9
3rd Grade	18	0	4	1	5	0	9	9	1	0	15	6	1	0	2	20
3rd Grade	15	1	7	0	2	1	12	8	2	2	12	7	0	3	10	10
3rd Grade	11	0	8	0	0	0	14	5	1	1	14	3	0	0	2	17
4th Grade	16	0	6	1	3	0	13	7	0	0	20	3	0	3	10	10
4th Grade	16	1	6	0	7	3	8	5	2	0	16	5	2	3	9	9
4th Grade	17	1	6	0	4	3	10	7	3	1	18	2	1	1	9	13
5th Grade	15	0	10	3	0	0	20	8	2	2	15	9	1	2	10	15
5th Grade	17	1	9	0	1	1	13	12	3	0	17	7	0	0	10	17
5th Grade	26	0	2	0	0	1	18	9	2	1	20	5	1	0	5	22
Total Count	165	4	64	6	22	12	131	74	17	8	164	49	6	13	78	142

Dependent			Rebellion			Cohesion			Autonomy		
N=	210	22%	N=	37	4%	N=	437	46%	N=	271	28%

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TABLE 3. Lower Grade September 1995 Responses to the Questionnaire

September 1995 – Grades 1 and 2																
	Teacher Power Ratings				Student Power Ratings				Student/Student Ratings				Teacher/Student Ratings			
Subject	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1st Grade	22	0	0	0	6	0	7	9	1	1	12	8	0	0	8	14
1st Grade	21	1	0	0	3	1	3	15	0	1	21	0	0	0	1	1
1st Grade	21	1	0	0	5	4	6	7	3	1	15	3	4	0	8	10
1st Grade	21	0	1	0	1	3	11	7	2	0	17	3	1	0	6	15
2nd Grade	17	0	6	0	0	1	14	8	1	0	18	4	0	0	9	14
2nd Grade	20	0	3	1	5	2	11	6	0	1	19	4	0	1	5	18
2nd Grade	15	0	8	0	10	2	7	4	0	0	22	1	0	0	5	18
2nd Grade	19	0	5	0	4	2	6	12	1	0	19	4	0	0	9	15
Total Count	156	2	23	1	34	15	65	68	8	4	143	27	5	1	51	105

Dependent			Rebellion			Cohesion			Autonomy		
N=	203	29%	N=	22	3%	N=	282	40%	N=	201	28%

TABLE 4. Upper Grade May 1996 Responses to the Questionnaire

May 1996 – Grades 3 - 5																
	Teacher Power Ratings				Student Power Ratings				Student/Student Ratings				Teacher/Student Ratings			
Subject	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
3rd Grade	1	0	5	14	3	3	4	10	8	5	4	3	3	4	0	12
3rd Grade	0	0	3	16	0	1	3	15	4	0	10	5	0	0	1	18
3rd Grade	2	1	8	9	2	1	3	14	0	1	12	7	1	2	4	13
3rd Grade	1	0	1	19	3	0	9	8	3	5	6	7	2	3	0	16
4th Grade	0	0	2	20	0	1	1	20	2	0	5	15	1	6	1	14
4th Grade	0	0	9	12	2	3	1	15	3	2	6	10	1	3	4	13
4th Grade	2	2	2	14	3	3	0	14	3	4	9	4	2	3	3	12
5th Grade	1	1	7	17	4	4	7	11	10	8	4	4	5	10	1	10
5th Grade	0	0	1	23	0	0	3	21	10	4	6	4	0	2	1	21
5th Grade	1	2	3	22	1	1	3	23	12	4	11	1	1	6	6	15
Total Count	8	6	41	166	18	17	34	151	55	33	73	60	16	39	21	144

Dependent			Rebellion			Cohesion			Autonomy		
N=	97	11%	N=	95	11%	N=	169	19%	N=	521	59%

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TABLE 5. Lower Grade May 1996 Responses to the Questionnaire

May 1996 – Grades 1 and 2																
	Teacher Power Ratings				Student Power Ratings				Student/Student Ratings				Teacher/Student Ratings			
Subject	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1st Grade	14	0	5	0	3	0	7	9	1	0	18	0	0	1	11	7
1st Grade	19	0	3	0	4	2	13	3	0	0	19	3	0	0	12	10
1st Grade	18	0	2	0	6	1	7	6	2	1	16	1	1	1	9	9
1st Grade	20	0	1	0	2	4	11	4	1	0	15	5	0	0	7	14
2nd Grade	16	2	3	0	2	1	11	7	3	0	18	0	1	0	11	9
2nd Grade	21	0	2	0	1	0	11	11	2	0	18	3	1	1	10	11
2nd Grade	17	0	4	0	1	1	14	5	0	0	19	2	0	1	8	12
2nd Grade	18	0	5	0	3	0	12	8	4	0	14	5	1	0	12	10
Total Count	143	2	25	0	22	9	86	53	13	1	137	19	4	4	80	82

Dependent			Rebellion			Cohesion			Autonomy		
N=	182	27%	N=	16	2%	N=	328	48%	N=	154	23%

TABLE 6. Upper Grade May 2000 Responses to the Questionnaire

May 2000 – Grades 3 - 5																
	Teacher Power Ratings				Student Power Ratings				Student/Student Ratings				Teacher/Student Ratings			
Subject	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
5th Grade	1	2	0	19	0	4	2	16	4	0	6	12	1	0	2	19
5th Grade	0	1	2	19	1	0	2	19	2	1	7	12	0	0	4	18
5th Grade	1	7	1	11	0	0	4	16	4	2	6	8	1	1	2	16
4th Grade	0	6	4	14	0	6	2	16	4	4	5	11	0	1	7	16
4th Grade	0	4	3	16	0	2	5	16	5	3	8	7	1	0	5	17
4th Grade	5	2	5	11	2	1	3	17	5	4	8	6	1	1	6	15
3rd Grade	2	2	4	10	1	0	2	15	9	1	5	3	0	3	3	12
3rd Grade	1	4	1	9	0	0	1	14	0	0	9	6	3	0	1	11
3rd Grade	4	6	2	4	0	0	1	15	0	0	12	4	0	0	5	11
Total Count	14	34	22	113	4	13	22	144	33	15	66	69	7	6	35	135

Dependent			Rebellion			Cohesion			Autonomy		
N=	58	8%	N=	68	9%	N=	145	20%	N=	461	63%

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TABLE 7. Lower Grade May 2000 Responses to the Questionnaire

May 2000 – Grades 1 and 2																
	Teacher Power Ratings				Student Power Ratings				Student/Student Ratings				Teacher/Student Ratings			
Subject	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
2nd Grade	1	1	7	9	2	7	2	7	3	1	9	5	2	0	5	11
2nd Grade	0	5	1	16	0	3	2	17	2	1	10	9	0	1	0	21
2nd Grade	3	6	1	13	3	4	4	12	4	2	11	6	1	2	3	17
1st Grade	0	3	5	9	6	6	1	4	0	3	8	6	1	2	4	10
1st Grade	0	1	7	9	3	0	7	7	3	5	7	2	3	6	4	4
1st Grade	1	1	6	11	3	5	3	8	1	0	6	12	0	1	6	12
1st Grade	0	1	0	17	0	4	4	10	1	0	12	5	0	0	0	18
Total Count	5	18	27	84	17	29	23	65	14	12	63	45	7	12	22	93

Dependent			Rebellion			Cohesion			Autonomy		
N=	43	8%	N=	71	13%	N=	135	25%	N=	287	54%

In another fifth and sixth grade only school, approximately 300 students in twelve distinct homerooms informed researchers of the value and need for conducting democratic class meetings. A comparison of central tendencies on students' social development questionnaires indicated that two teachers who conducted democratic class meetings in their homerooms maintained a classroom climate that was more aligned with *Judicious Discipline* than did the ten teachers who did not conduct democratic class meetings.

We found that in September 1995, students in all homerooms were probably similar in their stages of social development. The results for September 1995 are presented in Table 8. The reported "N" indicates the number of responses that were given by all students answering at a particular stage of social development for the four constructs (teacher power, student power, student/student relationship, and teacher/student relationship). As a result the reported "N" is four times the population of the school.

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TABLE 8. Results of Student Responses to Questionnaires in September

Teachers Who Conducted Democratic Class Meetings
September 1995 Questionnaire Results

Dependent	Rebellion	Cohesive	Autonomous
N = 76: 49%	N = 20: 13%	N = 54: 26%	N = 54: 26%

Teachers Who Did Not Conduct Democratic Class Meetings
September 1995 Questionnaire Results

Dependent	Rebellion	Cohesive	Autonomous
N = 412: 40%	N = 145: 14%	N = 248: 24%	N = 223: 22%

By eying the percentages, we concluded that the two groups were probably equal in September. By February, differences in questionnaire results began to emerge and qualitative data indicated that students who were involved in democratic class meetings felt more empowered and felt more of a sense of belonging to the group. The February results indicate that while the school is making good progress in the area of social development, the two teachers who conduct democratic class meetings are making great progress. The results for February 1996 are presented in Table 9. The reported "N" indicates the number of responses that were given by all students answering at a particular stage of social development for the four constructs (teacher power, student power, student/student relationship, and teacher/student relationship). As a result the reported "N" is four times the population of the school.

TABLE 9. Results of Student Responses to Questionnaires in February

Teachers Who Conducted Democratic Class Meetings
February 1996 Questionnaire Results

Dependent	Rebellion	Cohesive	Autonomous
N = 11: 6%	N = 19: 10%	N = 18: 9%	N = 148: 76%

Teachers Who Did Not Conduct Democratic Class Meetings
February 1996 Questionnaire Results

Dependent	Rebellion	Cohesive	Autonomous
N = 170: 17%	N = 224: 23%	N = 193: 20%	N = 399: 40%

Note, too, that the responses for rebellion are twice as high in the teachers who did not conduct democratic class meetings than the teachers who did conduct democratic class meetings. Qualitative data indicated that conducting democratic class meetings was a way that students could vent their concerns and question authority in a way that did much to reduce problem social situations and quickly led students through the rebellion stage to the cohesive stage.

The May questionnaire results continue to show that the two teachers who conducted democratic class meetings maintained high autonomous level response rates and the ten teachers who **did not** conduct democratic class meetings continued to score very high in the rebellion stage of social development. The results for May 1996 are presented in Table 10. The reported "N" indicates the number of responses that were given by all students answering at a particular stage of social development for the four constructs (teacher power, student power, student/student relationship, and teacher/student relationship). As a result the reported "N" is four times the population of the school.

TABLE 10. Results of Student Responses to Questionnaires in May

Teachers Who Conducted Democratic Class Meetings
May 1996 Questionnaire Results

Dependent	Rebellion	Cohesive	Autonomous
N = 11: 6%	N = 11: 6%	N = 28: 14%	N = 150: 75%

Teachers Who Did Not Conduct Democratic Class Meetings
May 1996 Questionnaire Results

Dependent	Rebellion	Cohesive	Autonomous
N = 158: 16%	N = 268: 27%	N = 182: 18%	N = 383: 37%

These results and complementary qualitative findings support the need for conducting democratic class meetings when implementing *Judicious Discipline*. The elements for conducting democratic class meetings, that follow, were gleaned from interviews with students and teachers who through trial and error found strategies that worked best for them when conducting democratic class meetings.

There is no "right way" to conduct a democratic class meeting. The data indicates that successful democratic class meetings can take many different forms and the "best" organization and structure for any class will probably emerge as the academic year progresses. Nonetheless, some elements that work well to facilitate and democratize class meetings did emerge as "key elements" for success. The following is a list of key elements that will be helpful for teachers who are organizing and conducting democratic class meetings for the first time.

Some Key Elements for Conducting Democratic Class Meetings

- **Determine who can call a class meeting and when they should be held. What is a proper time, place, and manner?** Some teachers make it known that any student can call a class meeting whenever one is necessary. Other teachers determine a specific time, place, and manner. Both methods and a variety of methods in-between can work well as long as the calling of a class meeting has the effect of giving students a sense of significance and some power and control over what happens in their classroom. The important element is that democratic class meetings will occur and that there is some mechanism for calling a class meeting to order.

- **The teacher should lead the class meeting.** Our action research indicates that when teachers hand over the leadership role to students, the class meeting digresses. Many teachers think having "Class Officers" and empowering them with the administrative power to lead the meeting is "in line" with democratic principles and that the practice leads students to autonomy. In fact, our research findings indicate the opposite. The whole process of deciding and empowering "Class Officers" propagates popularity contests and competition. These contests generate ill feelings and can result in a major break down in community building and in students' achievement of the autonomous stages of social development. **There should be one educational leader in the classroom and that is the teacher.** The teacher needs to conduct the democratic class meeting.

- **All students and the teacher should be seated so everyone can see the faces of the others in the class meeting.** How we position ourselves says much about power relationships.

  - ✓ To instill a sense of significance and power in the students, **sit in a circle or square shape where everyone can communicate easily with any other person in the class meeting**. The physical environment in the classroom should be as *inclusive* as possible, and students and teachers who sit comfortably in a closed circle provide for a feeling of community that encourages positive and productive communication. The more "formal" physical arrangements (sitting in rows) have the effect of excluding students, or allowing students to exclude themselves. This feeling of exclusion may occur for other reasons, e.g., name-calling, or an individual's posture within the circle; but, by sitting in a circle, the physical environment is optimized and communication is amplified.

- **Set the expectation that we will never use names during the class meetings.** Using names casts an accusatory finger at the person being named and has the effect of putting that person on the defense. It also causes ill feelings. Negotiate with students not to use class members' names. Ask, "How would you feel

if everyone in the class was talking about you?" Most students would feel embarrassed and defensive. Suggest that when talking about problems and behaviors that the class should talk in terms of, "a person who acts in this way..." rather than, "When (Person's Name) acts like..." This protects individuals in the class and allows them to participate in the discussion about behavior and not about personalities.

- **Set the expectation that we will stay on the topic and carefully guard any sharing about our families during the class meetings.** The efficiency of any class meeting is mediated by the class' ability to stay on topic and to discuss all agenda items with an open mind. By guarding carefully what is brought to the attention of the meeting and by keeping the topic free of "family or personal concerns" the class meeting is more likely to flow quickly and smoothly.

- **Students should never be coerced to participate in the class meeting.** It is a good idea to set the ground rule that it is okay to "pass" if an individual chooses not to contribute to the discussion.

- **It is a good idea for each student and teacher to have a personal class meeting journal.** In this journal the teacher and students can write down their thoughts and goals. Kindergarten students can record their thoughts in a journal. Often, the younger students will record their thoughts in picture form. This is okay; it is a powerful feeling when students view themselves as writers and readers of their own journal entries.

  - ✓ **It is important that the teacher participates by writing in his or her personal journal.** This sends a strong message to the students that this is important work; so important that the students' writing will be valued along with the teacher's writing.

  - ✓ **A good way to begin class meetings is to write in your personal journal for a few minutes.** This writing can occur at the beginning of class or at the end of class, and it can take place in small groups or be done individually. It is a good idea to vary the format, small groups one meeting, and individually the next.

  - ✓ **Give guidelines or categories for writing in the personal journals and display these guidelines for all to see.** You may want to change the guidelines or categories from week to week. Some guidelines or categories that have worked well are: Concerns, Clarification's, and Delights, **or** Something I'd Like To Talk About, Something I'd Like To Work On, and Things That Are Going Well. Using three categories is a good idea and encouraging everyone to write at least one thing in each category works well. Always ensure that one of the categories allows students to raise issues that are problem areas, another category allows for

questions, and the third category encourages celebrations and the acknowledgment of success.

- ✓ **After everyone has had time to write in their personal journal, assemble in a circle and use the personal journal entries as the agenda for the democratic class meeting.** Begin by asking, "Does anyone have concerns or clarifications they would like to discuss?" Save the "Delights" for the end of the meeting; they tend to make everyone feel good and do much to build community in the classroom.

- **It is a good idea for the students and the teacher to write down the goals they set for themselves after or during the class meeting.** The teacher and students can use their class meeting personal journal to write down goals they set for themselves. It is important that individuals set their own goals. No one should ever set a goal for someone else. It's okay to pose possible goals as questions, "What do you think about setting a goal like, ...?" But, to set a goal for someone else again brings about a co-dependent relationship and diminishes the mentoring relationship.

  - ✓ **Writing goals down is important.** Verbalizing goals accomplishes several things. It gives us something to strive for that is in a form we can visualize. It encourages us to take ownership in problem solving; and it gives us a measuring stick for our personal growth and performance in life. Writing the goal down is important, but sharing the goal with others is another matter.

  - ✓ **Never direct members of the class to share their goals or musings in their personal journals with others.** If they choose to share their goals, that is fine, but some goals may be more personal than others, and it is not for anyone else to decide what is personal and what is not. For example, one student may write down the goal, "I need to start listening better." If this goal is shared with others, then others may taunt the goal-setter with, "You need to listen better!" and this can cause ill feelings and will not help the goal-setter to make an honest self-assessment or encourage him or her to set more goals in the future. In fact, you may want to warn your students, "It's important to write your goals down (and cite the reasons above as to why it is important), but be careful who you share your goals with and be sure and celebrate when you accomplish the goals you set for yourself."

  - ✓ **Self-assess the goals individuals have set.** The teacher can ask, "How are we going with the goals we set last meeting?" Without iterating the goal, the teacher and students can verbally self-assess, "I'm doing pretty good" or "I'm having some trouble with my goal." This allows the class to celebrate with those who achieve their goals and offer moral support for those who may not be achieving as much as they think they should. Note

that at no time does the person have to state what her or his goal is, they just offer an assessment of their progress. As with other agenda items, the teacher and student should all have the right to "pass" if they do not wish to respond to the question.

Educators are well advised to include democratic class meetings in their repertoire of teaching strategies when they implement the principles of *Judicious Discipline* in their classrooms. As educators shift from autocratic class management practices to a more democratic style of management, it serves educators and their students well to have the key elements for conducting democratic class meetings in place. When democratic class meetings are conducted, in concert with the practice of *Judicious Discipline*, educators can feel proud that they are truly preparing tomorrow's citizens for living and learning in a democratic, free society.

The findings of five years of action research suggest that teachers need to take the time to teach students about *Judicious Discipline*. Teachers who take the time to teach about and practice *Judicious Discipline* in their classrooms reap many benefits. Students in their classrooms are more likely to respond on the social development questionnaire at the autonomous stage, and as a result, these teachers are less likely to feel frustrated and/or experience high levels of work-related stress. Our research indicates that educators who practiced *Judicious Discipline*, ostensibly as it is designed to be used, were respected by others and they taught their students respect by giving them respect; these teachers were "models of respect." These educators indicated that using *Judicious Discipline* gave them feelings of professionalism they had not experienced before. They felt that they were using management strategies that were legal, ethical, and educationally sound. In teaching about *Judicious Discipline* and providing students with a "language of civility," educators found common ground for discussing, mediating and reconciling social problems that developed as a result of living and learning in a democratic classroom/school. As well, students who learned about *Judicious Discipline* were able to use "the language of civility" to advocate for themselves and to use it to solve their own social problems. Students with Downs Syndrome were able to learn the language and respond to its use as a modifier of inappropriate behavior and as a reminder of socially appropriate behavior. Students with emotional and behavioral disorders were treated with respect, and the result was learning the concepts of conflict resolution and a language to help them in the school community and future society.

In classrooms where teachers **did not** spend adequate time teaching about *Judicious Discipline*, or conducting democratic class meetings, researchers found that educators and students had less than healthy student/student relationships and teacher/student relationships tended to be adversarial. Students' responses on the social development questionnaires indicated they were operating at the lower stages of social development. This was also evident in student interactions in unstructured settings, and evident in the large number and kinds of student referrals to the school counselors and the large number and kinds of referrals for assessment by special educators.

One delightful finding was that teachers who used *Judicious Discipline* ostensibly as it is supposed to be practiced, indicated lower levels of work-related stress than those who did not practice *Judicious Discipline*. During videotaped interviews with teachers and administrators, when asked the open-ended question, "How's your stress level?"

Those who practiced *Judicious Discipline* invariably responded, "*Judicious Discipline* has lowered my stress level." The respondents marked the time when their stress was reduced by the time they "took up" using *Judicious Discipline*. Teachers who were in classrooms where *Judicious Discipline* was poorly implemented or not used at all simply reported, "Teaching is very stressful." Those subjects noted no quality of difference in their stress level. If there is one good reason to use *Judicious Discipline*, it is that it will probably lower an educators work-related stress level.

Finally, a word of caution, *Judicious Discipline* is antithetical to the beliefs of those who practice stimulus/response theory in schools and honestly think that students can be controlled with rewards and punishment. Educators who use *Judicious Discipline* well need to be mindful of the effect their performance and advocacy for individual rights and responsibilities will have on those "in that other camp." Our research found instances where educators were literally "pushed out" of their schools because of their advocacy for and use of *Judicious Discipline*. *Judicious Discipline* is "powerful stuff" and when one truly understands the principles, some of our past educational practices and those of our colleagues become laughable in light of finally knowing what it is to be a professional educator. Our research indicates that educators should tread easy on this road to *Judicious Discipline*. Never embarrass your colleagues and never be too zealous in your advocacy. Prepare yourself to be identified as different from other educators. Maintain your principles and seek out educators with similar philosophies of discipline for support and counsel.

Students, too, quickly know that things are different when they come in contact with teachers who use *Judicious Discipline*. As two fifth grade boys remark,

> "You know, I mean anything that you might have had in the past besides judicial discipline, it will not be as fair or as good as it would be if you had judic...judicial discipline!"
>
> "*Judicious Discipline*!"
>
> "*Judicious Discipline*!"
>
> "It's good, it helps you solve your problems instead of making you wake up and think about your punishment, instead of what you did wrong."
>
> Because a lot of the times, like in my old school, when I got in trouble I wouldn't, I wouldn't think as much about what I did wrong. I'd think more about the punishment, because they wouldn't stop to talk to you, they'd just say [taps his finger on the table], there you go, that's your punishment."
>
> "Yeah."
>
> "And they wouldn't say anything about, they wouldn't ask me why I did it. They wouldn't ask me what I might do in the future to solve it, they'd just say, there you go, that's your punishment." (Gathercoal, 1997)

These same boys, when asked what they would do if they moved somewhere else and *Judicious Discipline* wasn't practiced responded that they would "teach them about it." This sentiment was expressed over and over again in other videotape interviews.

Students felt so strongly about the use of *Judicious Discipline* that they said they would teach others about it.

Judicious Discipline did much to establish a new school culture in some schools. It provided all students, educators, administrators and staff with a common language of civility that was used to solve social problems and think about what was "right" and "good." As Langer (1989) reminds us in her book, *Mindfulness*, "Our perceptions and interpretations influence the way our bodies respond. *When the "mind" is in a context, the "body" is necessarily also in that context.* To achieve a different physiological state, sometimes what we need to do is to place the mind in another context." (p.177)

Practicing *Judicious Discipline* helps everyone to construct a context that they perceive as fair, free, and caring. When we truly believe that this is the state of our environment, we are more likely to think of ourselves as having value; and as a result, we will be less likely to act out against people and things in that environment.

The teacher who uses *Judicious Discipline* avoids power struggles and encourages students to be responsible for their actions. The teacher remains on the same side as the student and is rarely viewed by the student as the problem or the adversary. The teacher remains student-centered. The teacher maintains the role of mentor and guide when the student is in trouble. The teacher remains ever the educator, armed with knowledgeable resources for teaching and learning. The teacher embraces student behavior problems as a "teachable moment;" another opportunity to teach about what is "right" and what is "good." When educators make that paradigm shift, that philosophical and cognitive leap to *Judicious Discipline*, they feel proud and happy every time a student calls out, "Teacher!"

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