

Chapter 2

Why We Must Never Be Classroom Managers

Pete Bennett

This chapter offers a genealogical account of the issues surrounding 'classroom management' as manifest in schools, the Education and Training sector and in Teacher Education departments. Genealogy here is one of Foucault's methodological 'weapons' for flushing out assumptions; claims about what is right and what is wrong and judgments based on second order political positions. It does not believe that history is going somewhere or indeed has come from anywhere, but it does seek to identify the contingent events which may have prompted one course of action over other possibilities (Kendall & Wickham 1999: 29-31). In 2014 Ofsted published a report, *Low-level disruption in classrooms: below the radar* which underlined the degree to which a neo-liberal and at the same time retrogressive agenda had gripped English education. This 'survey report looking into the nature and extent of low-level disruptive behaviour in primary and secondary schools in England' was widely reported with the headlines suggesting that 'pupils are potentially losing up to an hour of learning each day in English schools because of this kind of disruption in classrooms' (Ofsted 2014: 5).

The idea that such a crude, unproblematized model of learning (which assumes 'listening' and 'learning' are synonymous) should be deployed is reason enough for response but both the methodology and the more detailed findings also expose the need for a more significant critique. There was also no recourse to a right to reply for the so-called learners whose disruptions these apparently were so this will hopefully be provided here as well. The report claimed to draw on 'evidence from Ofsted's inspections of nearly 3,000 maintained schools and academies' including 'from 28 unannounced inspections of schools where

behaviour was previously judged to require improvement' (Ofsted 2014: 4). More problematically still the report is supplemented by two surveys 'conducted independently by YouGov, gathering the views of parents and teachers' (*ibid*).

One thing that Ofsted and I both agree on is that 'The findings set out in this report are deeply worrying', though for very different reasons. The big news of this report concerns an apparent crisis affecting the life chances of too many pupils and visited upon them by 'disruptive' pupils who need to be brought into line by teachers. However much of this headline stuff appears to come not from 3,000 inspections but rather largely from the YouGov surveys. In fact, as the Executive Summary clarifies it is the surveys that 'show that pupils are potentially losing up to an hour of learning each day in English schools' (Ofsted 2014: 5) though it would be as fair to say that the surveys **claim** that pupils **might be** losing up to an hour.

Even the disruptive behaviours themselves (which include 'fidgeting' and 'talking unnecessarily') seem to have been defined by opinion polls rather than analysis and explicitly reinforce a set of traditional expectations of teachers and learners. Thus, when some teachers said that they ignored low-level disruption and just carried on, this is to be read only as a problem. And parents are co-opted merely to confirm this since 'Parents consistently say that good discipline is the foundation stone of a good school'. Thus, when 'teachers blur the boundaries between friendliness and familiarity, for example by allowing the use of their first names' (Ofsted 2014: 6), there's bound to be trouble. At best these are stereotypes.

When a Primary School teacher is cited listing the paradigms of disruptive behaviour, she is apparently accessing an ahistorical motherlode of descriptive common sense: 'Children talking between themselves when they should be listening; fiddling with anything; writing when they should be listening; refusing to work with a talk partner' (Ofsted 2014:7). These commonplaces of classroom management function as what Barthes deemed 'myth': their meanings constructed by collective (and long-term) consent in a process that

transforms history into Nature. The simplicity (and sometimes simple-mindedness) of much of the debate around 'behaviour' and 'discipline' is a clue for as Barthes suggested: 'myth acts economically: it abolishes the complexity of human acts ... it organises a world which is without contradictions because it is without depth' (Barthes 1972: 143). Barthes allocates to the 'mythologist' the job of mythifying the myth, proclaiming that 'What I claim is to live to the full the contradiction of my time, which may well make sarcasm the condition of truth' (Barthes 1972: 11).

Such sarcasm is hard to avoid when it comes to the report's account of 'disruption and the learner' and the grave news that a quarter of teachers 'thought it wasted at least five minutes per hour'. Some of the comments on students are hard to credit, for example the thought that teenagers might 'want to show off, are anti-establishment, or feel they have the right to be superior' or that 'Pupils are not prepared to listen unless they are entertained' (Ofsted 2014: 7). These are merely opinions: Marshall McLuhan, for example suggested that 'Anyone who tries to make a distinction between education and entertainment doesn't know the first thing about either' (McLuhan 1967: 68). Parents also direct blame towards teachers though it's very difficult to see the validity of a methodology whereby one group of key witnesses are dependent for information on the group who are apparently causing the low-level disruption (students). The result is galling in the sense it shows clearly where the debate about teaching and learning currently is and it's not a bright place in either sense. It will need a context if it is to be understood.

In this chapter I am going to attempt an explication of the long-term damage inflicted on notions of a rounded general education by this kind of thinking, whose 'sleight-of-hand' was to peaceably renegotiate the role of teacher from educator to 'classroom manager' with all that this now implies. In doing so I will also attempt to create what Foucault calls 'a history of the present' which is partly an updating development of Foucault's own 'history of the modern soul' in *Discipline and Punish* for these neo-liberal times (Foucault 1995: 34). This history rejects notions of the master narrative of progress in favour of what Rose calls 'a number of contingent and altogether less refined and dignified practices' (Rose 1996: 129).

As Kendall and Wickham explain 'History should be used not to make ourselves comfortable but rather to disturb the taken for granted' (1999: 4). Much of this 'taken for granted' here concerns the basic sets of assumptions about why children are in schools, how they should behave there and what role teachers play in these important rituals. The genealogist works knowingly on 'a vast accumulation of source material' to problematize the discourses in this case surrounding behaviour and its management firstly by understanding these as 'contingent', that 'the emergence of that event was not necessary but was one possible result of a whole series of complex relations between other events' (Kendall and Wickham 1999: 5).

I cite, as part of that 'vast accumulation of source material' a personal and professional experience which, in Foucault's terms is only now becoming a fact of history. I was teaching at a Secondary college at the time (a sixth form college running under school regulations) and was required to attend an end of year staff conference at which we were invited to consider the novel proposition that we were all managers. This was 1994, ten years beyond Orwell's imagined nightmare of ultimate accountability, but also relatively early in the designation of head teachers and principals as 'managers'. As a group of largely A level teachers we found the proposition that teachers might be 'classroom managers' as mere wordplay and probably a feeble attempt at cynical manipulation and we said so in no uncertain terms (as teachers used to in the early nineties). Now the notion of the teacher as a technician of 'classroom management' is a commonplace, though one which has in the minds of many teachers endangered the teaching function. What had seemed at the time a passing irritation has become in the fullness of time something much more sinister. With a combination of skill and sleight-of-hand the teacher had been reconstituted as a developer of human resources within the context of the industrial production market grade potential. And in the process the teacher had been set irreparably at odds with students, ironically reconstituted as 'learners' in the days after the failure of attempts to make 'customers' or 'clients' fit.

As Alex Kendall suggests: 'These sorts of ideas position teachers and learners in particular kinds of way' with teachers constituted as "the "other" to the learner' (Kendall 2011: 227). This is a model not of responsiveness but rather of management and accountability in which 'the learner is construed as an 'anonymous, decontextualized, de-gendered being' whose ' "responsibility" is to acquire 'skills' which are atomised and ordered by hierarchical and linear arrangement' while the teacher's role is to 'determine a range of suitable teaching and learning techniques, manage the learning process, provide support to ensure the student meets the desired outcomes, and assess the outcomes of learning' (Kendall 2011: 228). Hence in Kendall's version the 'learner' is both disenfranchised and yet also 'cast as the central protagonist in their own drama of social and economic success': 'The student is offered a stake in what is known but not in how it is known, who it is known by, whether it is worth knowing, or that there might be alternative ways of knowing' (Kendall 2011: 229).

Eve Tuck, a teacher educator from New York, sees in contemporary neoliberal education policies defined by 'the relentless pursuit of accountability' the disenfranchisement/ downgrading of the teaching role such that his neo-liberal context is 'an unworkable framework for school reform and teacher education' (Tuck 2014: 324). Tuck shows how outwardly progressive policies like No Child Left Behind (Every Child Matters in the UK), 'directly contribute to school pushout' (exclusion) (Tuck 2014: 325). So too here, with 'having a calm and orderly environment for learning': inclusion quickly becomes exclusion in an almost Orwellian doublethink. Tuck controversially uses settler colonialism as the ultimate metaphor of dispossession with the undesirables (once the great unwashed) 'managed out of their entitlements/ birth right: 'settler colonialism is the context of the dispossession and erasure of poor youth and youth of color in urban public schools' (Tuck 2014: 326). Rather than 'the dispossession and erasure of Indigenous peoples, neoliberalism as an extension of colonialism is concerned with the dispossession and erasure of the unworthy subject' (Tuck 2014: 341). This is Nick Peim's point too in his

Mythologies of Education, though in a different key and he sees this as part of education's 'deployment as population management', concerned with 'the distribution of identities within and for the social division of labour' (Peim 2013: 33).

These assumptions certainly pervade the Ofsted report above as does Peim's notion of education as a gift, though without Peim's 'problematic logic'. The point is that 'the obligations (...) of the gift of education are for life' and 'It is also clear that education is an offer that you cannot refuse (Peim 2013: 33). And the punchline in this case is the same as it is for 'poor youth and youth of color' and their equivalents everywhere: 'In many cases, and for certain segments of the population it is also, at the same time, an offer you can't accept. Refusal is also no escape, identifying you as being in need of reorientation, salvation and realignment' (Peim 2013: 38). Tuck argues that 'Pedagogies such as Self-Regulated Learning can be seen to emerge from the same ideological context as self-service tills in supermarkets', including the implicit irony about who is being served and/or is regulating in each case (Tuck 2013: 331).

The next historical fragment takes the form of a dramatized reconstruction of a professional encounter in Leicestershire in the 1990s between a teacher trainee (Secondary English) and his placement mentor. Both, though they could hardly know it then would later make significant contributions to a chapter in a book which sought to problematize ideas around 'classroom management' as a model of control because both have since written widely and perceptively about educational issues. However, back in the day the conversation was more narrowly about 'year nines' and the 'business' of being their teacher:

Student teacher, Julian (now Professor of Media Education):

'I'll never control these kids, Nick.'

Subject mentor and Head of English, Nick (now a widely published academic at a Russell Group university):

‘Why on earth would you want to control them?’

But that is exactly what is expected of the contemporary teacher in every practical sense as both the epitome and entirety of their ‘profession’. In exerting control over the behaviour of both their charges (dubbed ‘learners’ but more accurately ‘subjects of learning’) and their subject specialisms (‘academic’ largely as the dictionary defines; ‘not of practical relevance; of only theoretical interest’), they are practising ‘disciplines’ of both sorts but most significantly demonstrating the self-discipline essential to their professional code of practice. Rancière argues in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* that ‘To emancipate an ignorant person, one must be, and one need only be, emancipated oneself’ (Rancière 1991: 15) in other words that emancipating students requires only a supply of emancipated teachers. In these neoliberal times what appears to be the case is that what is similarly required for the intellectual enslavement and control of students is a reliable supply of teachers prepared to be themselves controlled. Hence Thomas writes: ‘The surveillance of students, and now the surveillance of teachers (and ultimately of all citizens of a corporate state), is not covert, but in plain view in the form of tests, that allow that surveillance to be disembodied from those students and teachers—and thus appearing to be impersonal—and examined as if objective and a reflection of merit’ (Thomas 2013: 215).

Tuck understands this process as ‘a narrowing of the activities of schooling, to what can be measurable’ which ‘renders teaching and learning as technological tasks’, ‘components of an ideologically driven agenda that is fundamentally redefining what it means to be a teacher in the U.S. (Tuck 2013: 110). This is entirely Foucault’s model of subjection and to a lesser degree Rancière’s notion of stultification. For the poet William Blake energy was ‘eternal delight’ but Blake was a creator. The ‘discipline’ involved in contemporary schooling is explicitly conservative, intent on channelling potentially disruptive energy into ‘shoulder to the wheel’ conformity: hence Foucault’s explanation that ‘Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience)’ (Foucault 1995: 149). Foucault writes about the ways

in which discipline fosters both docility and productivity: the best of both worlds for those who would like us to see education as the key to economic prosperity. Nick Peim (he who was earlier questioning the desire to control and now a significant voice from the academy) sees this as a clever deceit with its underlying instrumental rationality. In arguing that 'Education is the master-myth of our time', operating as 'a Heideggerian onto-theological principle' (something we must believe in rather than critically apprehend) Nick Peim identifies among "a series of specific myths in a turbulent system of differences" the 'myth of economic prosperity' (Peim 2013: 32). Here 'Policy buys into the mythology that equates investment in education with future prosperity and with the implicit project of social justice' even though education in modernity 'is fatally neo-liberal, structurally organized to maintain growing economic inequalities' (Peim 2013:39).

This is not a secret history but it may, in some ways, be a shameful one. When Richard Hoggart wrote his ground-breaking book *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working-Class Life* in 1957, he was drawing on his own experience as a 'clever' working class kid growing up in Hunslet, a district of Leeds (one of those clever poor kids who are now being outstripped in school by 'thick' rich kids in popular scare stories which are really diversions). In the second part of chapter ten, *Unbent Strings: A note on the Uprooted and the Anxious*, he considers the very shock troops of the meritocracy, the scholarship boys (those who got to better schools by passing academic tests). To Hoggart, even those whose place in the managed scheme is 'advanced' are compromised by an education which fails to convince those emotionally uprooted from their class in a world where in one sense, no one is ever 'declassified'.

These boys still exist and in greater numbers in our new inclusive model of education and are joined by many (probably many more) girls and yet the outcomes are often the same, they become 'uncertain, dissatisfied, and gnawed by self-doubt' (Hoggart 1957: 293). Such issues are precisely those that a centralised predetermined National Curriculum is unwilling and/or unable to address. What increasingly needs to be 'managed' are the

discrepancies between this theory and the practical demands of these post-/ super-/ hyper-modern times. Rather than ask who our 'learners' are, we list what they need to know and even more importantly plot how they are meant to develop so their progress can be monitored and managed. In Peim's terms 'Education tells us both what are and, more disturbingly, what we should be' (Peim 2013: 33) and most significantly that 'Self-improvement requires a structuring and context for its effective operation' (Peim 2013: 37).

Thus, there is an unwillingness or inability to deal even with the Present at a time when the Italian philosopher Franco Berardi is suggesting that young people have lost any kind of feasible idea of the future. He claims further that 'Corporate capitalism and neoliberal ideology have produced lasting damage in the material structures of the world and in the social, cultural, and nervous systems of mankind' (Berardi 2011: 8). And all this as a result of the failure of education to provide fundamental things like an active culture, a vibrant public sphere and forms of collective imagination (Berardi 2011: 9). Instead we find fear, including fear of failure, and those who Hoggart identified as 'gnawed by self-doubt' reconstituted as the mainstream. Writing of our 'hyper-modern times' the French philosopher Lipovetsky declares that 'a sense of insecurity has invaded all of our minds' (Lipovetsky 2005: 13). Berardi is concerned at the way in which, for example, student debt operates as a kind of blackmail, forcing people into 'any kind of precarious job'. In this time of 'finance capitalism and precarious salaries' (Berardi 2015).

Lipovetsky stresses the importance of understanding the hypermodern individual whom Berardi typifies as 'a smiling, lonely monad who walks in the urban space in tender continuous interaction with the photos, the tweets, the games that emanate from a personal screen' (Berardi 2015). Lipovetski offers a similar version which stresses the contradictory character of our potential learners: 'Hypermodern individuals are both better informed and even more deconstructed, more adult and more unstable, less ideological and more in thrall to changing fashions, more open and easier to influence, more critical and more superficial, more sceptical and less profound' (Lipovetsky 2005: 5). And teachers must resolve all of this

armed only with a curriculum that seeks to retreat to modified versions of a half-imagined past.

Hoggart's dismay is palpable and, sixty-one years later, we can only share his concern for the contemporary 'learner' who 'tends to over-stress the importance of examinations, of the piling-up of knowledge and of received opinion' and 'discovers a technique of apparent learning, of the acquiring of facts rather than of the handling and use of facts' (Hoggart 1957: 297). In simple terms, for Hoggart: 'He has been trained like a circus-horse'. Discipline, indeed and long known as Hoggart himself looks back to philosopher and sociologist Herbert Spencer fifty years before him. Spencer brands the 'established systems of education' as 'fundamentally vicious in their manner' and considers that they 'encourage submissive receptivity instead of independent activity'(Hoggart 1957: 298).

Michael Gove achieved notoriety as Education Secretary by, among other things, suggesting that he would never let evidence get in the way of a policy he knew to be the right one. He largely though escaped ridicule for his campaign for a knowledge-based curriculum, though its catchy slogan 'Facts, facts, facts' was taken directly from the mouth of that Dickensian grotesque Thomas Gradgrind (the grade-grinder), a satirical embodiment and indictment of the kind of education that Gove was striving to resuscitate. This 'man of realities' (Gradgrind not Gove) is named in a chapter entitled *Murdering the Innocents* (in case you miss the mode of address: irony is a dangerous weapon), the chapter that also introduces the trainee teacher M'Choakumchild (not shy of discipline this one) whose many 'knowledges' Dickens perceptively dismisses with the following: 'Ah, rather overdone, M'Choakumchild. If he had only learned a little less, how infinitely better he might have taught much more.' (Dickens). This was 1854 and has resonance still as a critique of the overburdening of teachers with 'stuff' rather than 'scope'.

Dickens is capturing something of the essence of the Victorian project of Elementary schooling, unashamedly an initiative which sought to shape and control: to domesticate not liberate. Peim writes of 'a well-ordered, morally-managed future' in which the rougher sorts 'could be remade as more or less self-regulating, more or less good and loyal citizens' (Peim 2013: 34). This confirms Kendall and Wickham's Foucaultian reading of the emergence of the classroom not 'as an attempt to foster the liberal, free, rational individual or as a result of the working class's efforts to educate and politicize itself' but rather 'concerned with the management of lives, not the meanings they drew on or left aside'(Kendall & Wickham 1999: 123) . The discomfort comes not from the limited character of these earliest moves in the direction of mass education but rather from the galling contemporaneity of these accounts of historical practice: indeed, a history of the present. Take Kendall and Wickham: 'this type of schooling was profoundly bureaucratic and disciplinary rather than democratic or progressive revolutionary...'(ibid) or Peim; 'They would be basically numerate and literate, manually skilled, mostly well-fed and imbued with national values' (Peim 2013: 34).

Peim goes on to flesh out the ways in which this became normalised. These include 'the definition of norms of progress and curriculum content, the deployment of pastoral discipline within the enclosed social space of the classroom, the ethic of self-managed motivation, the hortatory style of the assembly, the organization of the playground as the meeting point for the culture of the child with the culture of the school' (Peim 2013: 34). Here is the paraphernalia of classroom management where those who are performance managed manage performance. Peim complains that 'The child's very being is being charted on the grid of what already has been decided counts as developmentally significant' (Peim 2013: 35) to which we must add; as the teacher's very being is. For it is true in our contemporary context that: 'Maturity here is not achieved in the form of independence from the grid, the norms and the agents of judgment' but rather 'through bringing one's identity in line with the judgments made and orienting one's trajectory and one's aspirations accordingly' (Peim 2013: 35).

For Peim the idea of the teacher ‘cultural worker in close social proximity to her charges, was developed as the key instrument of “governmentality” since ‘The kindly disciplinarian dispenses education as the necessary correction of your wayward tendencies’(Peim 2013: 34). Again, the focus is not on what you need to know because ‘curriculum content hardly matters’ but ‘what you need to do and to be. You will be educated above all in the norms of conduct befitting your social destiny’ (Peim 2013: 34).

In *Discipline and Punish* Foucault (1995) explores the history of discipline and the disciplines, charting the change from the use of torture to more ‘gentle punishments which attempted to control populations by creating oppositions within them. These oppositions were manufactured in places like schools, hospitals, and prisons, wherein reside those Foucault dubbed ‘the judges of normality’:

The judges of normality are present everywhere. We are in the society of the teacher-judge, the doctor-judge, the educator-judge, the social worker-judge; it is on them that the universal reign of the normative is based; and each individual, wherever he may find himself, subjects to it his body, his gestures, his behavior, his aptitudes, his achievements (Foucault 1995: 304).

This is not about justice and fairness (or even injustice and unfairness) but about the representation and material enactment of social power. This is Foucault’s central interest, and ours: how modern society creates subject identities by management and discipline in the context of ideas about normality inculcated in institutions like the school and regulated by ‘qualified’ professionals, and the judgment of professionals. Foucault’s project is to write ‘a correlative history of the modern soul and of a new power to judge; a genealogy of the present scientifico-legal complex from which the power to punish derives its bases, justifications and rules’ (Foucault 1995: 23).

That portion of the ‘scientifico-legal complex’ deemed ‘education’ is intensely involved in what Foucault calls a “specific mode of subjection”: a particular version of the

process by which we are 'produced' as subjects. Here we get to the real issue of teacher accountability and the increasing focus on classroom management since the focus is no longer on education but rather on 'subjection', no longer on exploration but rather on 'treatment'. Here discipline and punishment systems are productive of particular kinds of knowledge and essentially political, a way of enacting power.

For Foucault discipline and disciplines are a means of producing 'docile bodies', whether that compliance is strategic or not. This produces the economic ideal more productive 'bodies' which are also easier to control on a mass scale: 'If economic exploitation separates the force and the product of labour, let us say that disciplinary coercion establishes in the body the constricting link between an increased aptitude and an increased domination'(Foucault 1995: 138) Discipline is political, 'a political anatomy of detail', making individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise, a 'modest, suspicious power' (Foucault 1995: 170). It works through hierarchical observation ('an architecture that is not built to be seen, but to see others'), by normalizing judgment ('Crimes of non-observance are created. One is made guilty for omission, the things you didn't do' and the examination (for Foucault both school test and hospital consultation) which 'combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalizing judgment' (Foucault 1995: 184). Discipline is in this way a form of power which works through sight, not physical force.

We are living at a moment where 'the examination' as both a generality and a specific experience has never been so important. Foucault helps us to understand why it has such a key role in the 'management' of populations aside from just being a way for professionals to assert their authority. Fundamentally 'The exam turns people into analyzable objects and forces them within a comparative system' transforming 'the economy of visibility into the exercise of power' (Foucault 1995: 187). Foucault writes of the documentary techniques, which make each individual a case. As we are 'written up in the record, so we are made visible and disempowered by being managed: incorporated rather

than accommodated. In this way, as Peim points out 'Education promotes a maniacally norm-related model of knowledge, identity and development' (Peim 2013:39). And those who resist this management by classification will be pursued as 'abnormals', requiring 'special' education or simply correction.

We must not though let talk of 'remorseless logic' allow us to see these events as inevitable rather than contextualised and contingent. Casting back for models as the traditionalists are wont to do, I can easily unearth a couple of examples of another view, progressive and resistant. The first is the cult sixties TV series *The Prisoner* which explicitly explored much of the ground that Foucault would very soon afterwards explore with eloquent clarity. *The Prisoner* is an object lesson in the representation of 'a multiplicity of often minor processes, of different origin and scattered location, which overlap, repeat, or imitate one another, support one another, distinguish themselves from one another according to their domain of application, converge and gradually produce the blueprint of a general method' (Foucault 1995: 138). What Number Six ('naming is incriminating') experiences in The Village, his place of gentle punishments is continual frustrating evidence that 'Discipline is a political anatomy of detail.' And his response is the one we might require from fellow teachers and students all is, 'I will not be pushed, filed, stamped, indexed, briefed, debriefed, or numbered! My life is my own!' (cue *maniacal laughter*). The other source is equally adamant and resistant though its source is not well known as the voice of progressive social policy. Lest we think that the modern trend of teachers 'owning' their results and school league tables is a given, it is worth checking the archive and specifically a speech that The Duke of Edinburgh gave to the Association of Technical Institutions in 1964 which reflected that 'It seems to be fashionable to choose the success rate in examinations as a criterion for judging the performance of schools' (quoted in Lowe 2007: 40). Remorseless logic? Actually no, since he went on to say that 'This might be convenient but makes a mockery of education in its widest sense.'

Education 'in its widest sense', as we have seen, is not exactly the priority in our neo-liberal times but that doesn't excuse us as teachers from ignoring or even side-stepping our

ethical responsibilities. We must resist the common sense of classroom management just as we resist performance management because they are essentially the same thing. In other words, we need to renegotiate the fundamental relationship between teachers and students in the interest of equality and social justice. In his essay *The Distribution of the Sensible* Jacques Rancière points out that 'Politics revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak' (Rancière 2006: 8). His *Four Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation* are a set of radical practices designed to expect this ability and talent from all participants in education. Rancière subjects teaching basics to a remorseless critique, for example the proposition that: 'To teach was to transmit learning and form minds simultaneously, by leading those minds, according to an ordered progression, from the most simple to the most complex' (Rancière 1991: 3). This, he feels like all of education and schooling was predicated on what he called 'the myth of pedagogy, the parable of a world divided into knowing minds and ignorant ones, ripe minds and immature ones, the capable and the incapable, the intelligent and the stupid' (Rancière 1991: 6).

For Rancière this belief in an inferior intelligence and a superior one creates limitation, dependency ('To explain something to someone is first of all to show him he cannot understand it by himself' (Rancière 1991: 6)) and effectively puts paid to notions of equality, which are shuffled into a redemptive future. Rancière presents a simple premise, which turns out in the current dispensation to be the most exacting and for some teachers the least feasible: 'To emancipate an ignorant person, one must be, and one need only be, emancipated oneself' (Rancière 1991: 15). His model of 'universal teaching' offers the very antithesis of the current norm-related model of knowledge, identity and development:

This is the way that the ignorant master can instruct the learned one as well as the ignorant one: by verifying that he is always searching. Whoever looks always finds. He doesn't necessarily find what he was looking for, and even less what he was

supposed to find. But he finds something new to relate to the thing that he already knows (Rancière 1991: 33).

It is an approach based on dignity and trust, a 'Community of Equals', '... society of the emancipated that would...repudiate the division between those who know and those who don't, between those who possess or don't possess the property of intelligence' (Rancière 1991: 71). Rancière speaks of 'the particular application of the power common to all reasonable beings, the one that each person feels when he withdraws into that privacy of consciousness where lying makes no sense'(ibid). In an era of G scores, prescriptive subject content and high-risk exams Rancière's invective seems strangely prescient: 'There are no madmen except those who insist on inequality and domination, those who want to be right' (Rancière 1991: 72). Rather than predicate a system on classification and rank, Rancière proposes an alternative based instead on equality, which may offer a better place to begin the recovery:

It is true that we don't know that men are equal. We are saying that they might be.

This is our opinion, and we are trying, along with those who think as we do, to verify it. But we know that this might is the very thing that makes a society of humans possible (Rancière 1991: 73).

Do you think we could manage that?

Activities

1. List and probe the different ways in which 'manager' and management' are used in your institution and/ or in schools, colleges and universities more broadly. Who or what is being managed here?
2. Explore the ways in which subject disciplines promote compliance and conformity.

3. What do you think Foucault means when he provocatively suggests that discipline is 'political'?

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