Justin Powell

Disciplining: From corporal punishment to full-body segregation

The text written by William Pinar on "strict discipline" raises issues that can be uncomfortable and yet will benefit most from leaving the closet behind. Pinar here emphasizes the vulnerability of young learners, behavioral norms under continuous pressure as schooling rises in importance for life chances, the power of masters, and the tensions of guiding and disciplining children and adolescents as they orient themselves morally in their own cohorts and in contrast to their elders. His concept of *Currere*, or the running of the course and the lived experiences of curriculum that constitute a person's education (see Pinar 2011), underscores the significance of subjectivity, individuality, indeed: developmental distinctiveness. Pupils' innocence and their blossoming on the path to adulthood as well as the close contact required in interactive learning processes inherently provide moments of fondness and aversion – and sometimes even passion. The latter have become *verboten* in an age shocked by innumerable cases of sexual abuse in family, ecclesiastical, and pedagogic settings, and sensitive about the lifelong damage often caused by such acts. There are also costs to ignoring the potential and the need for understanding and intimacy in learning processes, whether intergenerational or among diverse peers.

We carry not only facts and figures into the future within us, but the relationships that brought about the most memorable moments of learning, so often based fundamentally on mutual respect and caring. Conversely, the rules of discipline and standards of behavior in the communities into which we are socialized have, from antiquity, gone hand-in-hand with corporal punishment of various kinds, from flogging or whipping to other forms of chastisement and hazing. In a self-declared enlightened age, student bodies are disciplined not so much through the direct physical application of force between master and pupil, but rather via a range of mechanisms, from the ordering of chairs by row and group division by sex and dis/ability (among a host of characteristics) to individualized mind-altering pharmacological treatments like Ritalin. Then as now, ultimate measures of "strict discipline" – often leading to stigmatization and/or the valorization of difference – include separation within schools or even segregation in total institutions.

Three contemporary forms of exceptionally strict disciplining of youth accepted in many Western societies today are college preparatory boarding schools, special schools, and juvenile justice institutions. While all are highly legitimated disciplinary fields, the first lends itself to the construction of an elite "prepared for power" (Cookson/Persell 1985). Special education, often provided in separate classes and schools, serves mainly disadvantaged boys, many of who respond to their respectless societal position with violence and crime, often leading to confinement in the criminal justice system. The latter two are neighbors in contemporary education and social policy, representing institutions that – whether following models of paternalistic or punitive benevolence – are devoted to guarding behavioral norms and to limiting freedom when necessary to achieve collective goals of order and hierarchy (Richardson/Powell 2011): special education's domain stretches far beyond the boundaries

of general education. These responses to dis/ability and deviance often err on the side of discipline as they establish and reify group boundaries too often detrimental to children and youth reaching their individual learning goals.

Highly legitimated, these systems respond to "abnormality" with a broad range of tools, but with considerable emphasis on (re)grouping, often coupled with segregation, to constrain contact(s) as well as increase supervision and control by adults, usually members of specialized professional groups. Perhaps the strictest discipline of all – legitimated by disciplinary discourses and maintained by professional power – results from segregated organizational forms and penal institutions that never fail to produce deviants from the norm (Foucault 1979). Segregation is still among the dominant modes of socializing elites to assume positions of power and privilege, and to believe that they have legitimately inherited the Earth. Likewise, segregation remains a common mode of delivering special education support and services in many countries, however much such organizational forms have been called into question by global norms of inclusive education that value diversity in learning and emphasize the costs of stigmatized segregation (e.g. Peters 2003; EADSNE 2011). Rebellious and recalcitrant youth are segregated in reform schools or prisons under the assumption that this will, in teaching "lessons," improve behavior. Largely ignored are the life-long costs of such experiences youth endure while separated from the mainstream. Even the boarding school releases its graduates into a world marked by diversity, not the homogeneity of social status lived by the young of wealthy and aspiring families. The inexorable trend toward co-education has changed the elite segment of college preparatory education, but the other two forms of segregation remain populated mainly by boys. In distinct contrast to select campuses, which obscure their nature as total institutions with grand architecture and graduate pupils into lives of privilege (Khan 2012), segregated special schooling has become synonymous with limitations, labor market exclusion, and low social status (Tomlinson 2012). More than ever, being disabled remains linked to being less educated than one's peers; conversely, attaining less education leads to an increased risk of becoming disabled, of experiencing poverty, and of suffering social exclusion (Powell 2011). Indeed, following educational expansion, youth with less education are increasingly identifiable and stigmatized. This, in turn, will likely beget criminality, raising the ante to complete social control in reform schools or prison.

If organizational forms that segregate students are losing legitimacy globally, they nevertheless remain ubiquitous. As these institutions adjudicate the balance of justice between individual rights and community preferences, they provide "therapeutic" responses offering both retribution and redemption. Thus far, fully inclusive education systems that embrace and learn from diversity across social boundaries have been realized in only the fewest of countries. Yet international charters, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN 2006), emphasize accessibility and a range of other measures to ensure all students' educational and social participation, regardless of their dis/ability status and including children, youth, and adults of different social and educational, ethnic, or migration backgrounds and of different genders. Its stipulations challenge the legitimacy of segregated schooling as anti-democratic; it demands that policymakers address myriad structural and cultural barriers to inclusion (Powell 2011). At the same time, we witness the gradual strengthening of human rights, "education for all", and inclusive education becoming transformative in many countries worldwide.

Debates rage on about how best to organize schooling, to discipline deviant behavior, and to address the inequities of social dis/advantage. The gap between those with access to elite secondary and tertiary education and those needing additional support to achieve their learning goals seems to be widening. Because special education serves many of the most disadvantaged youth, it also shares an organizational community with the juvenile justice system, whose lawyers and judges all certainly belong to the group of educational winners (Richardson/Powell 2011). Shifting paradigms of normality within education and society (e.g. Davis 1995) go hand-in-hand with the invention and careers of particular diagnoses and therapies, even as social phenomena like homosexuality are continuously at-risk of (renewed) medicalization and "attention deficit disorder" is ascribed to masses of children (see Conrad 2007). Considerable cultural differences and change in dis/ability classification emphasize the importance of historical analysis, as the categorical boundaries between groups of students are continuously being redrawn. Such contemporary measures of strict discipline, bureaucratically elaborated and protected by the mantle of clinical science, legal compliance, and organizational boundaries, may seem less immediate and obvious than in previous eras, but their encompassing power stands far greater than the lash.

If, as one might upon first reading Pinar's text, reflexively reject that our own age has much to do with the direct, and from time to time sexualized, forms of "strict discipline" of yesteryear, the three briefly sketched types of segregation extant today indicate perhaps even more effective, institutionalized (self-)disciplining of individuals. In which ways do the covert lived sexuality and exquisite self-repression in such panoptical settings lend themselves to queering as the rod and whipping did in the past? Certainly these aspects of schooling and education more generally have been (too long) hidden due to their challenge of powerful societal norms. Similarly, the effects of segregation on the most advantaged and disadvantaged learners alike remain marginalized in education studies, despite the need to continuously examine its taken-for-grantedness. Analyzing the unintended consequences of full-body segregation as perhaps the strictest form of behavior modification enables us to grasp the enormity of the sublimation of institutional segregation as contemporary chastisement.

References

Conrad, Peter: The Medicalization of Society: On the Transformation of Human Conditions into Treatable Disorders. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press 2007

Cookson, Peter W./Persell, Caroline Hodges: Preparing for Power: America's Elite Boarding Schools. New York: Basic Books 1985

Davis, Lennard J.: Enforcing Normalcy, Disability, Deafness, and the Body. London: Verso 1995

EADSNE: Mapping the Implementation of Policy for Inclusive Education. Odense, DK: European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education 2011

Foucault, Michel: Discipline and Punish. New York: Vintage 1979

Goffman, Erving: Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall 1963

Khan, Shamus Rahman: Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School. Princeton: Princeton University Press 2012

Peters, Susan J.: Inclusive Education: Achieving Education for All by Including those with Disabilities and SEN. Washington, DC: World Bank 2003

Pinar, William F.: The Character of Curriculum Studies: Bildung, Currere, and the Recurring Question of the Subject. New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2011

Powell, Justin J.W.: Barriers to Inclusion: Special Education in the United States and Germany. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers 2011

Richardson, John G./Powell, Justin J.W.: Comparing Special Education: Origins to Contemporary Paradoxes. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 2011
Tomlinson, Sally: The Irresistible Rise of the SEN Industry. Oxford Review of Education 38(2012), N° 4, 1-20
United Nations: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. New York: United Nations 2006

Prof. Dr. Justin J.W. Powell, Université du Luxembourg, Route de Diekirch, L-7220 Walferdange, justin.powell@uni.lu

---

Nancy Beadie
Learning the Drill

In August 1845, the Reverend Drury Lacy of Raleigh, North Carolina critiqued the educational practices of his time and, more specifically, those used to teach Latin to his 13-year-old daughter Bessie at the female academy she attended eighty miles west in the town of Greensboro. As contrasted with the methods of physical discipline ascribed by William Pinar to the masters of male Latin grammar schools in Renaissance Europe, Rev. Lacy emphasized methods of mental discipline. An experienced educator himself, Rev. Lacy had an informed understanding of the pedagogy he believed best suited to develop an "elegant linguist," elsewhere asserted as his chief educational objective for his daughter (Walbert 2002, 126). Writing in response to a report on her studies that Bessie had apparently provided in a previous letter, Rev. Lacy commented: "The fault I find with the teaching of the present day is that there is not half *drilling* enough. For instance, I should have greatly preferred your being *drilled* at least 2 years in reading *Caesar* & Sallust *from lid to lid,* & select portions of Ovid, and writing out & out *Main's* Introduction – turning English into Latin and vice versa … before you opened Virgil at all" (Walbert 2002, 127).

Effected through a combination of individual and group recitation, drilling consisted of the repetition of passages verbatim. It promised simultaneously to implant the substantive content of classical texts and narratives in young people's minds, to cultivate habits of correct speech, and to foster a disposition to accept correction in language and behavior. Drill or recitation was, in this way, both a form of behavioral discipline and a means of cultural transmission. It was the practical pedagogical expression of faculty psychology, the reigning philosophy of education of the day, often referred to as "the discipline and furniture of the mind" (see Kimball, 1986).

Initiation by this means into the language of Latin and the cannon of Roman civilization, from Caesar to Ovid to Virgil, represented a relatively elite experience in the United States of the 1840s, the more so when the youth in question was a woman. No doubt, the elite nature of the experience was central to the point in this case. A scion of an important Virginia family and pastor of the Raleigh, North Carolina Presbyterian Church, Rev. Lacy presumably sought to prepare his daughter to assume a place among the cultivated leading