

Thinking Power and Pedagogy Apart— Coping With Discipline in Progressivist School Reform

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This article suggests that failure of progressivist school reforms is due in part to inadequate treatment of the relationship between pedagogy and classroom control. Traditional teaching techniques and disciplinary technologies coincided. Progressivist teaching methods undermined traditional disciplinary structures, without proposing an alternative classroom supervision theory. This study examines the way schools in a current, Israeli progressivist school reform initiative cope with classroom control, both conceptually and practically. Teachers' thinking and discourse is partitioned, such that teaching and control issues are kept distinct. Numerous school structures and other practices reinforce this partition. A number of questions are posed for the creation of a progressivist theory of classroom control.

This article is about pedagogy and control and about the mechanisms by which they are kept conceptually distinct in progressivist education. My interest in the topic is both practical and theoretical. Practically, this study reflects my attempt—as teacher and teacher facilitator—to grapple with the difficulties entailed in implementing progressivist¹ educational reform in Israeli schools. Theoretically, my perspective on these problems is informed by the history of current practices—specifically, the relationship between pedagogy and control in traditional classrooms and the way in which progressivism has influenced that relationship. I argue that a progressivist approach to classroom control has placed teachers in an untenable situation, both conceptually and in their daily encounters with students. I show how teachers in one Israeli school reform initiative cope with this problem and how school organization and the structure of teacher discourse assist them in functioning as progressive teachers and traditional disciplinarians.

For over a century the cycle has been repeated: Reformers criticize “traditional” schools as being unnatural and coercive places in which students are expected to absorb passively large quantities of information irrelevant to their life experience and developmental needs. Instead, reformers propose the adoption of progressive educational theories based on scientific

study of psychological development: active learning, relevant curricula, and the encouragement of student autonomy most suited for democratic life. Over time, these reform efforts have left schools relatively unchanged. Subsequent waves of reformers criticize schools along surprisingly similar lines and propose adopting a more progressive program based on the latest scientific advances that are different from the previous advances primarily in terminology (Cohen & Barnes, 1993a; Cuban, 1990).²

Progressivist ideas have captured our imagination; progressivist practices have had little sticking power in our schools. Many explanations have been offered for reform failure. Some blame the inadequacy of the instructional theory itself (Hirsch, 1996; Ravitch, 2000). Others have emphasized various dimensions of schooling and its administration, such as structure, culture, teacher training, curriculum design, and politics. Recent observers have emphasized the “wickedness” of the problem (Louis, Toole, & Hargreaves, 1999) and the need to develop multiple perspectives and systemic solutions, which would be adapted to the complex interrelatedness of the many and various elements involved (examples include Cohen, 1995; Cohen & Barnes, 1993b; Elmore, 1995; Little, 1993; Sarason, 1990, 1996). One element—classroom control—has received very little attention in this context. This essay seeks to remedy this lacuna, suggesting that the troubled relationship between progressivist pedagogy and classroom control is an important, though generally ignored, factor in reform design and implementation.

The article is organized into four major sections. In the first section I demonstrate how pedagogical and control issues conveniently converged in 19th century schooling practices. In the second section I show how progressivist pedagogical ideas undermined traditional disciplinary technologies, without replacing them with an alternative theory of classroom control. In the third section I analyze how teachers in an Israeli progressivist educational reform program cope with pedagogy and power issues, in theory, in practice, and in discourse. In the fourth and concluding section I propose directions for further research and action.

TRADITIONAL SCHOOLING: PEDAGOGY AS A FORCE IN THE PRODUCTION OF DOCILE BODIES

DISCIPLINE AS A TECHNOLOGY OF POWER

Foucault (1978) outlines the control mechanisms—or “mechanics” or “technologies” of power—constructed in the schools, factories, prisons, and hospitals of the 18th century. Here I shall summarize the most pertinent points in his analysis and then show how these disciplinary measures coincided with pedagogical theories. This background is doubly important, not only because it shows what the progressive educational program undermined

but also because it maps out some of the questions salient to the topic of classroom control.

According to Foucault (1978), the major problem facing 18th century prison, factory, hospital, and school—in short, social—organizers was how to manage multitudes of people in relatively limited spaces so that productivity was maximized and threats to the organizers' control was minimized. Thus, "discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies. Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience)" (p. 138). Note that in this analysis the discipline problem is not one of controlling unruly children, but rather it relates also to issues of economic efficiency (e.g., smaller adult-children ratios) and effective learning.³ How does discipline operate? Here I shall list four central techniques, illustrating them with examples from schooling.

Distribution in Space

The students are separated from the outside world by a wall or fence. Within the school they are partitioned into manageable groups. Within each group the teacher situates students in such a way as to minimize communication between them and to allow surveillance of all students. The student's position in the series corresponds to his or her rank in terms of knowledge attainment and skill level.

Control of Activity

Student activity is analyzed in regards to its components, which are then executed by the class in unison at the teacher's instruction. Each activity is meticulously mapped out in terms of the body's gestures and the way it is related to objects it employs. Time is meticulously broken down, regulated, and used exhaustively; no time is to be wasted; no student is allowed to be idle. A system of command allows the teacher to dictate the pace and order of student activity. Foucault (1978) quotes the *Journal pour l'instruction elementaire* (April, 1816) in giving an example of some of these mechanisms:

"Enter your benches." At the word *enter*, the children bring their right hands down on the table with a resounding thud and at the same time put one leg into the bench; at the words *your benches* they put the other leg in and sit down opposite their slates. . . . *Take your slates.* At the word *take*, the children, with their right hands, take hold of the string by which the slate is suspended from the nail before them, and, with their left hands, they grasp the slate in the middle; at the word *slates*, they unhook it and place it on the table. (p. 167)

Hierarchical Observation

Foucault (1978) explains that “the perfect disciplinary apparatus would make it possible for a single gaze to see everything constantly” (p. 173). Thus, the Ecole Militaire in Paris was organized for constant observation of students at every moment:

In the dining-rooms was a “slightly raised platform for the tables of the inspectors of studies, so that they may see all the tables of the pupils of their divisions during meals”; latrines had been installed with half-doors, so that the supervisor on duty could see the head and legs of the pupils, and also with side walls sufficiently high “that those inside cannot see one another.” (p. 173)

Surveillance was hierarchical, enabling teachers constantly to observe student activity and administrators to observe teachers.

Current school organization still commonly adheres to this program. Typically the principal’s office is located next to the teachers’ room and at the intersection of the two main halls, along either side of which the classrooms are distributed. Thus the principal simply steps out of his or her office to observe the presence or absence of teachers in their room and the presence or absence of students outside their classrooms.

Normalizing Judgment and Examination

Schools set a normative expectation for student achievement and other behaviors. Teachers compare students with regard to that norm and pass judgment: Good students are rewarded; bad students are punished. Teachers employ periodic examinations to judge students and administer corrective measures. The norm is both prescribed and “natural” at once:

The children of the Christian Schools must never be placed in a “lesson” of which they are not yet capable, for this would expose them to the danger of being unable to learn anything; yet the duration of each stage is fixed by regulation and a pupil who at the end of three examinations has been unable to pass into the higher order must be placed, well in evidence, on the bench of the “ignorant.” (Foucault, 1978, p. 179)

The demotion or exclusion of the failing student serves a number of purposes: (1) it is a warning to all students, demonstrating what happens to those who are unable to keep pace; (2) it is a corrective measure aimed at the “ignorant” student; (3) it homogenizes, ensuring that all the students in a certain grouping are of similar capability; and (4) it “*hierarchizes*,” making

the differential placement of students seem to be a natural consequence of their behavior.

In Foucault's (1978) analysis, power does not have to be actively and consciously exercised by the teachers; it is distributed throughout the school structure, in the minute details of spatial, temporal, and organizational arrangements. It is important to distinguish between these structural formations and the disciplinary tactics they make possible. For instance, normalizing judgment and examination make it possible for teachers to threaten students with failure. Appropriate spatial distribution makes it possible for teachers to separate and isolate problem students. These tactics are at the foreground of school power relationships. They are consciously employed by teachers and visibly resisted by students. In the background, silent and barely noticed, the disciplinary structures dictate the potential volume and boundaries of all that noise.⁴

All four elements of disciplinary technology—distribution, control, observation, and normalizing examination—were present in American schools by the middle of the 19th century (Butchart, 1998). Indeed, many of the basic elements persist in schooling even to this day (Gore, 1998).⁵

THE COINCIDENCE OF DISCIPLINARY AND PEDAGOGICAL TECHNOLOGIES

Disciplinary technologies were consistent with—indeed, in some cases even overlapping with—traditional pedagogical techniques. For the most part, the teacher did not need to consciously discipline his or her students; the teacher merely taught them; control was a by-product. Examples from *A Manual of Discipline and Instruction—for the use of the Teachers of the Primary and Grammar Schools under the Charge of the Department of Public Instruction of the City of New York* (New York Board of Education, 1873) demonstrate this point.⁶ The major techniques the *Manual* recommends to New York teachers are demonstration, recitation, oral drill, and examination. Thus, in teaching spelling,

various modes may be used in teaching the words singly for instance: Let the pupil point out given words on the blackboard and on the charts, as they are named by the teacher. A word may be erased from the blackboard, and the pupils requested to pronounce the word, and name the letters composing it. Parts of words may also be erased and the pupils required to name the missing letters. (p. 10)

Generally speaking, the various instructional techniques involve breaking the subject matter into small, digestible units and “frontally” teaching them to all the students at once. Teachers' authority as dispensers of knowledge coincides with their authority as controllers of student activity and

distribution. Frontal instruction enables teachers to observe student activity.⁷ The control of activity is also facilitated by setting a normative, uniform pace of instructional progress.

All the pupils in the grade should receive instruction relative to the same points, and write the same words simultaneously; thus all will attend to the same thing, at the same time, and proceed to a new lesson together. (New York Board of Education, 1873, p. 39)

Keeping pace is encouraged by means of periodic examinations, comparisons, and promotions:

Announce to the class that at the end of each month, except the one preceding the examination for general promotions, two or three of the pupils who are found to have made the greatest progress will be promoted to the next class above. This would act as an incentive to progress upon all the members of the class. (New York Board of Education, 1873, p. 52)

Thus we can see that instructional techniques of frontal instruction, uniform pace, and periodic examination intersect with disciplinary technologies. The importance of this coincidence will become more apparent when I consider some of the currently popular alternative pedagogies in the next section.

PROGRESSIVISM: DIVORCING PEDAGOGY AND POWER

I use the term *progressivism* to describe the educational ideas and movement that sought to replace traditional schooling practices with more scientifically advanced ideas about children's nature and learning.⁸ This movement transformed American educational thought during the first half of the 20th century (Cremin, 1962). Although the "Progressive Education Association" has since disbanded and the term *progressivist* has fallen out of grace, *progressivist* ideas still command the attention of modern reformers (Egan, 2002), and the traditional-*progressivist* dichotomy is still a pivotal axis for current debate (Hirsch, 1996).

In what follows I shall show how *progressivist* teaching methods conflict with traditional disciplinary technologies. My discussion of *progressivism* is not intended to be exacting or exhaustive. Instead, I focus on those concepts most salient to the issue of teacher control over the classroom. I give examples from both classical *progressivist* sources and certain more current reincarnations.

ALIGN SCHOOLING WITH SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS
ABOUT THE CHILD'S NATURE

Dewey (1981) laid out this basic tenet of progressivism in his "Pedagogic Creed": "I believe that the question of method is ultimately reducible to the question of the order of development of the child's powers and interests. The law for presenting and treating material is the law implicit within the child's own nature" (p. 450). Educational practices must adapt themselves to natural psychological development and authentic learning processes. Learning in school should be continuous with authentic experience and learning outside of school. The successful school will free the child's natural curiosity and propensity to learn; "unnatural" schools "result in friction, or disintegration, or arrest of the child nature" (p. 444). This opposition of authentic, natural, and effective learning to coercive, artificial, and ineffective learning is still reflected in current educational literature (see, e.g., Smith, 1998).

The vision of effortless, natural learning makes external control seem obsolete; after all, the child has no need for external control when playing games or engaging in other, natural learning activities. The idea of aligning schooling with natural learning is the basis, justification, and inspiration for almost all other progressive pedagogical practices. In what follows I shall touch on some central progressivist teaching methods and curricular imperatives.

CENTER SCHOOL STUDY AROUND THE CHILD, NOT VICE VERSA

Instead of basing study on the teacher or textbook, schooling should be child centered. Though Dewey (1938) took exception to the way his ideas on this topic were interpreted (Cohen, 1998), he heralded this "revolution" in a famous passage:

[In the old education] the center of gravity is outside the child. It is in the teacher, the textbook, anywhere and everywhere you please except in the immediate instincts and activities of the child himself. . . . Now the change which is coming into our education is the shifting of the center of gravity. It is a change, a revolution, not unlike that introduced by Copernicus when the astronomical center shifted from the earth to the sun. In this case the child becomes the sun about which the appliances of education revolve; he is the center about which they are organized. (Dewey, 1900, p. 34)

Child-centeredness has many pedagogical and curricular implications. First, and most important, school subjects should be chosen for their rel-

evance, appropriateness, and interest to the child. Many traditional subjects of study are considered to be boring and distant from students' experience.

Psychological research has further developed this progressivist concept into the distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation—the desire for rewards or fear of punishment—is typical of school learning, with its emphasis on grades and competition. Meaningful learning is the result of intrinsic motivation—that is, interest in or enjoyment from the learning task or topic. Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation contradict each other: “Studies have shown that the more students are induced to think about what they will get on an assignment, the more their desire to learn evaporates” (Kohn, 1998, p. 76).

Note that the child is at the center of the curriculum, not children. Because children have different interests and preferred methods or styles of learning, the progressivist curriculum must be flexible and multifaceted.⁹ Progressivist critics decry the uniform, lock-step learning typical of traditional schools, instead recognizing the classroom's heterogeneous nature and advocating “differentiated learning” (e.g., Tomlinson, 1999).

ACTIVE LEARNING

One of the major problems with traditional schools, according to Dewey (1981), is that “the child is thrown into a passive, receptive, or absorbing attitude” (p. 451). Good learning engages the child in activity, both verbal and physical. Instead of telling students about the material being studied, they are encouraged to discover the lesson themselves through experience. This idea provided the base for the inquiry method so influential in the reforms of the 1970s and still prevalent today (e.g., Harpaz, 2000; Postman & Weingartner, 1969).

COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Learning in traditional schooling is individualistic and therefore unnatural and alienated from out-of-school experience. In this regard Dewey (1981) wrote:

I believe that school is primarily a social institution. Education [is] a social process. . . . I believe that under existing conditions far too much of the stimulus and control proceeds from the teacher, because of neglect of the idea of the school as a form of social life. (pp. 445, 447)

Natural learning is social and best achieved in school through collaborative activities (Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Slavin, 1995). The teacher should

not be the focal point of the process but rather a peripheral facilitator of student learning groups (Harpaz, 2000).

AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT

Dewey's (1916) attitude toward testing and grading was generally suspicious:

How one person's abilities compare in quantity with those of another is none of the teacher's business. It is irrelevant to his work. What is required is that every individual shall have opportunities to employ his own powers in activities that have meaning. (p. 172)

Furthermore, the continuity of experience mandates that student learning and its assessment should be one and the same. Examinations may be an appropriate form of assessment for the recitation or drill methods of rote learning, but they are not suited to the assessment of understanding in active, inquiry, and cooperative learning methods. Moreover, standardized tests cannot reflect student creativity and are inappropriate or even unfair, given student diversity (Mabry, 1999). For these and other reasons—including the importance of intrinsic motivation discussed previously—current reforms advocate alternative and authentic assessment of student learning (e.g., Allen, 1998; Sizer, 1992).

SCHOOL AS EXPERIENCE OF DEMOCRATIC LIFE

For progressivists, education is “the fundamental method of social progress and reform” (Dewey, 1981). Thus, school should be a place in which students participate in a more progressive, democratic community, in order to bring that experience to bear on society at large. Dewey (1916) wrote the following in the concluding paragraph of *Democracy and Education*:

[T]he school becomes itself a form of social life, a miniature community and one in close interaction with other modes of associated experience beyond school walls. All education which develops power to share effectively in social life is moral.¹⁰ (p. 360)

The passivity and powerlessness of students in traditional schools hinder the development of these democratic, moral values. Current reformers continue advocating variations on this theme, invoking the concepts of autonomous and self-regulated learners and democratic classroom communities (e.g., Dalton & Watson, 1997; Kohn, 1996; McCombs & Whisler, 1997).

WHAT ABOUT CLASSROOM CONTROL?

The divergence of progressivist pedagogy from traditional disciplinary technology can now be spelled out.

Distribution

Students should be encouraged to connect school experience with life on the outside, often leaving campus to obtain knowledge from authentic sources. Classroom partitions are often broken down, as in the case of multiage or open classrooms. Within the classroom, students work in groups dispersed around the room; the teacher cannot observe all students at once nor easily command their attention. Student peer communication is freely allowed and even encouraged.

Control of Activity

Students are expected to be active, not docile. Activity cannot be uniform because students learn with different interests, styles, and pace. Moreover, the very idea of control is antithetical to the democratic classroom and the autonomous learner (Kohn, 1996).

Hierarchical Observation

Cooperative, active, and inquiry learning make constant observation difficult if not impossible: Each student or group of students works on separate tasks. In cooperative learning groups students face one another, making teacher eye contact with all students impossible. Moreover, much of what the students do is hard to distinguish from nontask behavior.

Normalizing Judgment and Examination

The acceptance and encouragement of student diversity in progressivism is at odds with the very idea of a norm. Alternative assessment of authentic tasks—which have no one correct answer by definition—are preferred over examinations. Many progressivist educators are queasy about grading; some reject grades altogether (Kohn, 1998).

Not only are the various progressivist pedagogical practices antithetical to disciplinary technologies, but also the idea of maintaining discipline in the sense of classroom control was and is ideologically problematic and even downright distasteful for most progressivist educators. Coercive discipline (extrinsic motivation) is seen as unfavorable for the development of true student interest (intrinsic motivation); in this sense it is an obstruction

to meaningful, authentic learning. Moreover, strict discipline also teaches a lesson, not necessarily congruent with progressivist aims. In this context, Dewey (1900) explained how the goals and methods of progressivism differ from that of the traditional school:

Order is simply a thing which is relative to an end. If you have the end in view of forty or fifty children learning certain set lessons, to be recited to a teacher, your discipline must be devoted to securing that result. But if the end in view is the development of a spirit of social co-operation and community life, discipline must grow out of and be relative to such an aim. There is little of one sort of order where things are in process of construction; there is a certain disorder in any busy workshop; there is not silence; persons are not engaged in maintaining certain fixed physical postures; their arms are not folded; they are not holding their books thus and so. They are doing a variety of things, and there is the confusion, the bustle, that results from activity. (pp. 16–17)

This image of the active, bustling progressivist classroom continues to capture the imagination of many contemporary progressivists, who explain that their classrooms may be noisy, but that it's "positive noise" or "the sound of learning".¹¹

Not only is strict, externally imposed control contrary to meaningful learning, it is also unnecessary where student interest and the thrill of active learning thrive. Dewey (1900, p. 60) explained that in traditional schools the reason "order . . . was so much a matter of sheer obedience to the will of an adult was because the situation almost forced it upon the teacher." Kohn (1998), a vocal advocate of progressivist principles and one of the fiercest critics of traditional discipline, echoes this sentiment: "I realized that the discipline problems I had experienced with some of my own classes were not a function of children who were insufficiently controlled but of a curriculum that was insufficiently engaging" (p. 14). Kohn (1996) demands that educators stop blaming the kids and take a courageous look at what's wrong with their curriculum.

Thus the overriding progressivist message regarding the problem of classroom control is essentially that it does not—or should not—exist.¹²

KEEPING PEDAGOGY INTACT BY KEEPING POWER DISTINCT

Optimism and good intentions notwithstanding, power struggles and classroom disturbances persist; indeed, often they multiply in the free spaces of progressivist reform.¹³ How do teachers cope with these problems and their stubborn persistence? What happens to power and control issues in the

progressivist classroom and school? How do progressivist teachers talk and think about discipline?

My thesis is that (1) teachers continue to cope with control problems in their classrooms by resorting to “traditional” coercive practices. However, (2) to keep this practice from threatening their pedagogical worldview, teachers keep the two issues—control and pedagogy—conceptually distinct, and (3) a number of school practices make this partition possible.

Before substantiating these claims, a few words about my method are in order. The observations contained herein are based on my work teaching and facilitating teachers in the Community of Thinking program (Harpaz, 2000; Harpaz & Lefstein, 2000), a progressivist school reform initiative being implemented by the Branco Weiss Institute for the Development of Thinking in a dozen Israeli schools. In one of these schools—I will call it the Birch Experimental High School—I was invited to conduct a workshop for teachers on creating a secure environment (more on the title later). In preparation for this workshop, I conducted a series of in-depth interviews with teachers and administrators in the school, surveyed teacher attitudes, observed classroom activities and related staff discussions. The examples in what follows are taken primarily from this school. I do not present them as decisive evidence upon which we can generalize the broader conclusions I offer in this article but rather as one possible explanation of what can and does go wrong in similar schools and reform initiatives. I recommend treating the observations as a body of nonsystematic impressions, which have the power to elucidate discussion and point further research.

COPING WITH POWER IN A PROGRESSIVIST CLASSROOM

Power struggles between teachers and students are a universal aspect of school life (Sarason, 1990), including that of Israeli schools (Arieli, 1994; Yaacobson, 1995). Indeed, this frequently unpleasant aspect of teaching is one of the factors attracting many teachers to the progressivist vision of interested, cooperative students inspired by the joy of learning. However, power struggles and classroom control problems have only intensified in the wake of the progressivist reform in the schools observed.¹⁴

At the Birch Experimental High School the teachers and administrators felt that discipline problems had reached a crisis level by the end of the school’s 4th year. Many teachers felt that the atmosphere in the school was unpleasant and even violent. School leadership was concerned about a significant drop in registration, explained as the result of the school’s reputation for being disorderly and violent. According to this explanation, parents preferred teachers who know how to keep students in line.

For these and other reasons, the teachers and administrators who gathered at the year-end summary and planning meeting decided to make

improving discipline one of the main goals for the following year. Although there was general agreement regarding the importance of the topic, a heated debate arose about the exact wording of the goal. A number of the teachers objected to the word *discipline* because of its coercive and authoritarian connotations. *Secure environment* was agreed upon as a compromise that avoided words with negative connotations (e.g., *discipline*, *control*, *violence*), instead emphasizing the need for positive safety on the one hand and conditions for learning—secure environment being reminiscent of the fashionable learning environment—on the other.

IN THE LESSON—WAYS OF COPING¹⁵

In the preceding section I made the distinction between structural and tactical mechanisms for classroom control. The structural arrangements in the Birch School are varied. Progressivist ideas are implemented extensively in the Community of Thinking model (Harpaz, 2000; Harpaz & Lefstein, 2000) in some of the classrooms. Other classrooms are characterized by more traditional, frontal transmission of knowledge.

Distribution in Space

In almost all classrooms students sit in pairs organized in rows facing the teacher. Students' places are assigned by teachers, who often move disruptive students. Exiting the classroom in the middle of a lesson is prohibited without the teacher's permission. A point of contention among the teachers is whether or not to evict disruptive students from the classroom. School policy is that teachers should keep all the students in the classroom, and if they have to evict a student, they should give him or her work to do and monitor the student's progress. That policy is rarely followed. It is quite common to find four or five evicted or truant students wandering the halls during instruction time. These students often disturb other classrooms, either by entering in the middle of a lesson or by making noise in the hallway—for example, slamming the bathroom doors or shouting at one another.

Control of Activity and Hierarchical Observation

Students in the progressivist classrooms work on different topics and at different paces. In the more traditional classes, students study at a uniform pace. None of the teachers control activity in detail as in the 18th century French schools described by Foucault (1978). Administrators rarely observe teachers. Teachers almost constantly observe students, though in the more

progressivist classrooms students will often study in research teams in the library, hall, or outside—arrangements that limit teacher surveillance.

Normalizing Judgment and Examinations

Examinations and grading are other points of contention among teachers. The current report card for 9th–12th grade includes quantitative grades and qualitative assessment; the 7th- and 8th-grade report cards provide only qualitative assessment. Many teachers oppose this policy, preferring to give numerical grades to the younger students also. Almost all teachers administer examinations; in the progressivist classrooms the examinations complement assessment based on written papers and other authentic “performances of understanding” (Wiske, 1998). A minority of teachers oppose examinations altogether. “Failing” students are advanced together with their more successful peers, with some minor exceptions: math studies (students are divided according to skill level) and a few “problem students” who were held back a grade primarily because of behavioral problems.¹⁶

TACTICS

Up to this point I have discussed the structural aspects of the Birch classrooms. In the following sections I focus on the tactics teachers employ. In this regard, there is no appreciable difference between teachers with progressivist and traditional orientations.

Typically, lessons begin with an effort to obtain order to begin a lesson. The teacher begins by cajoling students to sit down and be attentive: “Please be seated, I want to begin. . . . Yossi, do you want a special invitation?” If this approach does not succeed, the teacher will often demonstrate indignation. Raising his or her voice, the teacher might say, “Enough already; I’m not going to stand here and beg for your attention.” Finally, the teacher will either threaten sanctions or invoke them, usually making note of a student’s disturbance in the class record or sending a student out of the room “to calm down” or “until the student is ready to behave.”

During the course of the lesson there are constant disturbances:¹⁷ talking out of turn, standing up and walking around the room, struggling over books or pencils, kicking or pushing other students (usually in play), moving desks, passing notes, throwing trash toward the trash can, and complaining frequently and vocally about some other student’s behavior (e.g., “Teacher, Sara is bothering me”). I have identified and labeled four common teacher coping tactics: self-restraint, corrective interjections, angry explosions, and using immediate consequences.

Self-Restraint

Often teachers ignore the initial disturbances, hoping, as one teacher explained, that they would dissipate once he or she gets the lesson going and students become interested. Here teachers are faced with a dilemma: Stopping the lesson to deal with disciplinary problems may make the lesson boring (leading to further disturbances); ignoring the problems signifies acceptance or defeat. A few teachers confided to me that they tend to ignore the problems even though they “know it’s the wrong thing to do” because they “just don’t have the energy to constantly fight” with the students.

Corrective Interjections

An alternative to ignoring the disturbances is interjecting short corrective remarks into the lesson. A teacher employing this technique sounds like this:¹⁸ “Please open your workbooks to page 57. Chaim, put your feet down. Anat, hands to yourself. Who would like to read their answer to the second problem? Yes, Limor. Wait, Itzik, you’re disturbing us. Please, Limor, go ahead.”

Angry Explosion

Some teachers will continue teaching this way for the entire lesson. Some eventually explode:

Enough already. I can’t teach like this. I’m fed up with telling you how to behave. Chaim, that includes you and Itzik and your constant patter. I’m marking both of you down for disturbances. The next person who so much as utters a word will be kicked out. Class 8b! Why does it always have to come to this?

The outburst is almost always accompanied by a demonstration of anger and raised voice (if not shouting). The inevitability of the angry explosion seems to be widely accepted by students and teachers alike. Thus, a teacher will often signal to the students that his or her “patience is almost through” as a warning that the explosion is approaching.

Immediate Consequences

After the explosion, classes will commonly settle down for a few minutes and then either revert to periodic disturbances—accompanied by self-restraint or corrective interjections—or proceed to the final mode of coping: immediate consequences. In this strategy the teacher continues the angry tone of the explosion but returns to a matter-of-fact calm. The

teacher communicates to the class that he or she has “lost patience” or is “sick of being a policeman” and metes out immediate sanctions to every student caught disturbing the class. Sanctions usually involve physical displacement—either moving a student to the other side of the room or distancing the student from the classroom—or being marked in the class record for later treatment.

I have described the tactics common for coping with the constant stream of classroom disturbances. These disturbances are not specific to a particular student but rather universal and often relatively evenly distributed throughout the classroom. This outline of classroom management would not be complete without discussing the case of the individual problem student.¹⁹ When a particular student repeatedly disturbs the class, the teacher treats the student as an individual problem, demanding special attention. This attention typically includes referring the problem to the student’s “educative” teacher²⁰ or the school psychologist, private discussions—geared toward problem solving, scolding, or contractual negotiations—punishments, meetings with parents, involvement of school administrators, and sometimes attempts to move the student to another framework (class, grade level, or school). Often these problem students are diagnosed as learning disabled or emotionally disturbed or both. They are a subject of discussion among the entire staff (every teacher could readily list the seven “most wanted” problem students at the end of last year), usually in the context of comparing “horror stories” over a cup of coffee in the teachers’ room. Recently the school instituted a formal procedure by which problem students are discussed by relevant teachers at periodic conferences to develop concerted programs for improving their performance and behavior.

“THIS ISN’T SUPPOSED TO BE HAPPENING”: EXPLAINING THE CRISIS

How do teachers at the Birch School explain the existence of power struggles, disturbances, and other control problems? There are many and varied explanations; here are the ones most commonly offered in staff discussions:

1. Teachers and administrators are too permissive. Students think “anything goes”; they lack a clear and uniform structure.
2. Many students bring their serious emotional baggage to school. School is the outlet of anger and frustration formed in the home.
3. A number of students with learning disabilities or severe emotional problems should not be at the school. They are incapable of studying, become bored, and disrupt the classroom as a result.
4. School studies are irrelevant and uninteresting to the students. Bored students entertain themselves by disturbing the class.

5. The spirit of the times is a lack of respect for authority in general and teachers' authority in particular. Problem students do not respect their parents' authority either.

It is interesting to note that—in contrast to my expectations—none of the teachers blame the progressivist pedagogical innovations for the discipline problems experienced. Indeed, the only teachers that connect control problems to pedagogical practices are those who advocate improving instruction to better satisfy students' interests and needs. When specifically asked where discipline is more problematic—in their more traditional or progressivist lessons—teachers responded that there is no appreciable difference.²¹

How do teachers explain the persistence of discipline problems even in their progressive Communities of Thinking lessons? One approach is to deny the problem: What the traditional observer calls a disruption is actually an integral part of the learning process. A related explanation is that the perception of increased discipline problems in the progressivist classroom is merely illusory: Although there may be fewer problems, they are more visible on account of the progressivist classroom organization. Another approach is to claim that the reforms have not been adequately or fully implemented: For the reform to succeed, it needs to be fully implemented by all the teachers in all the classrooms. Another explanation is that the problems are the lingering effects of prior, traditional socialization. Dewey (1938) responded to critics in this vein:

There are likely to be some who, when they come to school, are already victims of injurious conditions outside of the school and who have become so passive and unduly docile that they fail to contribute. There will be others who, because of previous experience, are bump-tious and unruly and perhaps downright rebellious. (p. 62)

None of these explanations resolves the problem. Sometimes learning can be a noisy, disorderly affair. However, interpreting blatant disruptions as a productive part of the learning process requires quite a bit of imagination and denial, which often fall apart when an external observer is present or when the disturbances spill out of the classroom. The other two claims—that reforms have not been adequately implemented or have difficulty combating prior student experience—can explain initial failures but prove problematic in the long run: If partial reform fails, how can full implementation be justified? If progressivist practices are not appropriate for current students, then why should they be adopted?

The problem persists and threatens the teacher's belief system and identity. Recall Kohn's (1996) dictum, "When students are 'off-task,' our first response should be to ask, 'What's the task?'" In other words, student

behavioral problems are indications that the teacher is doing something wrong. Theoretically it is possible to admit failure—either of progressivism or of the individual teacher’s ability to implement it. But that “solution” threatens the very core of the teacher’s professional identity.

THINKING POWER AND PEDAGOGY APART

The “solution” to the problem of reconciling progressivist ideology with the persistence of discipline problems most commonly adopted is what I call “cognitive partition”: teachers *think* power and pedagogy apart.

I propose that we consider teachers’ educational thinking as if it were organized in a conceptual map divided into two distinct regions. Concentrated in the pedagogical region are learning theories, teaching methods, curricula, assessment alternatives, and lesson plans. In the disciplinary region are problematic students, incentives and punishments, school regulations, and classroom management techniques. Thought moves freely between the two regions, but it does not reside in both regions at once. An event can be conceived of either as a problem of control or as a pedagogical problem; however, much like the drawing that is at once an old woman and a young girl, once it is viewed in one way it is quite difficult to see it in any other.

Take, for example, the tactics for coping in lessons described previously. We can plot teachers’ position on the conceptual map based on their activity in the lesson. Up until the point of the angry explosion, teacher thinking roams about the pedagogical region. Instructional issues motivate the teacher’s decisions; for him or her, the classroom is a place of learning and the teacher’s role is that of facilitator of students’ knowledge acquisition or construction. The cajoling, self-restraint and corrective interjection strategies are all ways of avoiding overt power struggles or explicit treatment of control problems.²² At a certain point in the conduct of the lesson, the level and frequency of disruptions become too high to maintain the image of the classroom as a place of learning. The teacher’s thinking leaps to the discipline region: Control issues push pedagogical concerns to the periphery of consciousness, and the classroom is transformed into an arena of power relations. The teacher assumes the role of disciplinarian. After the class settles down, the teacher will either remain in the discipline region and employ the immediate consequences strategy or return to the pedagogical region and employ one of the strategies found there.

My description of this partitioned cognitive map reminded a colleague of a classroom lesson he had recently observed. The teacher—let’s call him Leon—led a discussion about progress and leisure activity. One student—I’ll call him Noah—adamantly argued that leisure has nothing to do with progress. In the discussion that followed none of Leon’s arguments persuaded him. Noah forcefully silenced all the other students who tried to

address the issue and refused to allow the discussion to continue (because the two issues were unrelated). To my colleague it was clear that Noah was far less interested in the topic than in the attempt to overpower the discussion. From a pedagogical perspective the lesson was ruined. Afterward, Leon claimed that it was a good lesson—he was happy that there was lively discussion and that Noah actively participated. Was it possible that Noah was trying to disturb the lesson? It's possible, responded Leon, but you just never can tell what a student thinks. He preferred to interpret the event as a pedagogical instance and not as a threat to his power. (Note how the student cleverly exploits the situation's ambiguity as a resource in his ongoing power struggle.) It seems that he was incapable of viewing the same event from both disciplinary and pedagogical perspectives.

Another example of cognitive partitioning is the pattern of teacher discourse in the secure environment workshops. Although I tried to steer workshop discussions to problems of discipline in instructional situations, the teachers constantly pulled the conversation to the problem of out-of-classroom disturbances (i.e., in the hallway or on the playground). This discourse creates a geography of school problems: Discipline problems are in the yard or hall; pedagogical problems are in the classroom. The "classroom discipline" category threatens that division and is therefore often censored from the discussion.²³

These examples point to some crucial elements of cognitive partitioning. First, the partition is functional, allowing teachers to maintain their progressivist pedagogical worldview even in the face of threatening power struggles, and vice versa. It allows one to teach as if there were no power issues and to struggle for power as if there were no educational implications (to that struggle). In this sense, the partition is psychological, serving emotional needs for the mitigation of cognitive dissonance.

However, the psychological aspect of the argument is secondary to its sociocultural or discursive aspect. In this respect, my use of the term *cognitive* is primarily metaphoric: I am not claiming that the partition is created ad hoc in individual teachers' minds but rather that it is part of the fundamental structure of teacher knowledge about pedagogy and discipline. This discursive partition sets the boundaries of what can and cannot be thought, seen, and spoken about. Foucault (1972) sets out one of the underlying principles of this approach:

It is based on the principle that *everything* is never said; in relation to what might have been stated in a natural language (*langue*), in relation to the unlimited combination of linguistic elements, statements (however numerous they may be) are always in deficit; on the basis of the grammar and of the wealth of vocabulary available at a given period, there are, in total, relatively few things that are said. We must look

therefore for the principle of rarification or at least of non-filling of the field of possible formulations as it is opened up by the language (*langue*). Discursive formation appears both as a principle of division of the entangled mass of discourses and as a principle of vacuity in the field of language (*langage*). (pp. 118–119, emphasis in the original)

The cognitive or discursive partition is an organizing principle for the “entangled mass of discourses” regarding the complicated and chaotic collection of activities that comprise schooling. The partition untangles this mass—classifying, associating, grouping, structuring, and separating the various occurrences into categories of pedagogy and control. The partition creates a “vacuity in the field of language” between those categories, making certain statements sound nonsensical or even unintelligible. For instance, though logically and grammatically possible, the statement “we should redesign the mathematics curriculum in order to mitigate discipline problems” sounds absurd in the context of current teacher knowledge and sensibilities.

SEPARATION MECHANISMS

The conceptual map is maintained by pushing control issues to the periphery of the pedagogical region and vice versa. At least two practices facilitate this cognitive or discursive partition.

Separate Organizational Functions

School structure commonly contains two parallel sets of functions and related positions and tasks. Typically there are two assistant principals: the pedagogical coordinator and the administrative assistant. The pedagogical coordinator works with subject-matter coordinators who direct the work of subject-matter teachers. The administrative assistant works with school psychologists, grade level coordinators, and educative teachers, who attend to disciplinary matters. Many teachers belong to both sets. However, they report to and consult with two completely different groups depending on the problem they face. This separate organizational structure facilitates the partitioning of pedagogical and disciplinary regions. A teacher will be called on to discuss his or her class in pedagogical terms in formal and informal meetings with members of the pedagogical staff and to consider it in terms of control and discipline in meetings with the administrative staff. Rarely will the teacher find himself or herself in a forum in which he or she is called upon to discuss both perspectives.

Separate Teachers' Manuals

One way of examining educational discourse is by investigating professional manuals designed for teachers.²⁴ In the past few decades, dozens of discipline or classroom management manuals for teachers have appeared. These manuals represent a genre—with common ideas, structure, methods, and rhetorical devices. Most of these manuals display progressivist uneasiness with the topic's coercive connotations. This sensibility is often apparent in the book's titles, for instance *Discipline with Dignity* (Curwin & Mendler, 1988), *Positive Classroom Discipline* (Jones, 1987) and *Discipline Without Tears* (Dreikurs & Cassel, 1972). Most of the manuals are designed as friendly, do-it-yourself handbooks for teachers, promising easy and immediate implementation in the classroom. Usually they open with a discussion of how central discipline is for teachers' success and how neglected the topic is in teacher preparation. Jones (1987) explains: "Discipline has been the bastard child of education—a topic no one wants to own" (p. 9). However, they explain that discipline does not have to be humiliating; teachers do not have to feel bad about being strict or punishing students.

The manuals' typical structure includes the following sections: a statement of the problem, causes of the problem, a survey of leading models for classroom management, a statement of the authors' approach, an elaboration of authors' approach dealing with special cases, and a "test-yourself discipline survey" summary of the book's major points. The models presented by the books are variations on the same theme: setting clear and firm limits and enforcing them with consistent sanctions.

Most of the books mention pedagogical issues in passing—the importance of an interesting curriculum to prevent student boredom—if at all. In the manuals that do devote attention to pedagogical issues, it is in the context of a separate chapter that surveys various approaches to good teaching (often including progressivist ideas such as differentiated and cooperative learning), completely unrelated to the rest of the book. Curwin and Mendler (1988), for example, devote chapter nine of *Discipline with Dignity* to the topic of "Discipline and the Process of Teaching." They explain that discipline problems are often caused by boring lessons. To solve this problem, they present a short list (20 pages) of ideas for improving teaching, including strategies for motivating students, characteristics of a healthy classroom ("learning is conceived as meaningful"), teaching and learning styles, teacher modes of instruction, "excitement and enthusiasm," creativity, evaluation and grading ("making it genuinely possible for all students to receive grades of 'A'"), competition, homework, cooperative learning, and technology. This list of ideas for improving teaching is in no way related to the disciplinary strategies outlined in the other eleven chapters; indeed, in some instances they appear to contradict each

other.²⁵ The manuals' implicit message is clear: Pedagogy and discipline are unrelated.

Similarly, handbooks devoted to instruction rarely address discipline and classroom management issues. For example, one "training manual" includes the following disclaimer:

If students have behavior problems, we understand teaching is much more difficult. But *The 7 Steps to Critical Thinking* is an instructional, not behavioral, approach to teaching. While *The 7 Steps to Critical Thinking* tends to improve behavior because it engages students, most of whom want to do something (if only to pass time), it cannot promise a solution to behavioral problems. Therefore, if you have behavioral problems, look to behavioral—and not instructional—solutions. (Hannel & Hannel, 2000, p. 34)

Thus, teachers' manuals maintain the cognitive partition, each region and its corresponding professional literature. It would seem that the division between management manuals and pedagogical handbooks reflects a similar division in teacher preparation:

Teacher education programs tend either to ignore classroom management entirely in their official curriculum, or they offer a discrete course in management or discipline. . . . [T]eaching management as a separate topic sends the erroneous message that it exists apart from curriculum, rather like oil and water. (McEwan, 1998, p. 137)

CONCLUSION: TOWARD A PROGRESSIVIST THEORY OF CLASSROOM CONTROL

In this article I have outlined the historical divergence of pedagogy and power in progressivist educational practices. Traditionally, the power technologies of distribution, control of activity, hierarchical observation, and normalizing judgment coincided with the pedagogical techniques of lecture, recitation, and examination. Progressivist educational reforms offered new pedagogical strategies that undermined traditional disciplinary mechanisms while providing no alternative solution to the problem, except for the promise that good teaching would dispel the need for control.

I have documented the teachers' activity and discourse in one progressivist reform program. Discipline has emerged as a central problem on the school's agenda. Pedagogical practices interfere with traditional disciplinary structures. Teachers cope with classroom disturbances by moving back and forth between the relatively nonconfrontational tactics of cajoling, self-restraint, and corrective interjections, and the coercive tactics of angry explosion and enforcing immediate consequences. Teacher knowledge is

partitioned into pedagogical and disciplinary categories, which “prevent” teachers from thinking and talking about the two issues as interrelated. This partition also functions as a survival mechanism for mitigating the frustration and cognitive dissonance experienced by teachers inspired by progressivist ideas yet suffering from the reality of power struggles in the classroom. School organizational structure and teachers’ professional literature maintain the partition. As a result, neither pedagogical nor disciplinary goals are adequately achieved.

As I mentioned at the outset of the article, my interest in the topic is that of an educator committed to progressivist pedagogical ideas. This article is not intended as a eulogy for those ideas but rather a call for their improvement (and the improvement of their implementation). It would be beyond the scope of this article to propose a specific or detailed plan of action for dissolving the partition and rejoining pedagogical and power issues. However, the article would be incomplete without some suggestions of questions such a plan should address:

1. *How can physical organization and design of the school and the classroom accommodate student learning needs while enabling teacher supervision and management?* One group of teachers to which I posed this question suggested octagonal classrooms, with movable partitions, allowing student learning groups privacy and quiet, when closed, and full classroom discussion when opened. I do not believe that this proposal is necessarily a good solution to the question, but I’m convinced that the ensuing discussion among the teachers—for example, should windows be included in the partitions?—is vital to stimulate teachers to begin thinking about the structures in which they operate and how those structures may be manipulated to maximize their control over potentially chaotic classroom activities.

2. *How can pedagogical and control issues be connected in school restructuring, teacher preparation, curricular planning, evaluation, and so forth?* A good example of a mechanism that connects the two issues is the “problem student committees” that have recently been instituted at the Birch School. These committees bring together relevant pedagogical and administrative staff to discuss both aspects of each problem student. This mechanism is just a small example of what restructuring needs to entail.²⁶ Similarly, curriculum planners should warn teachers of potential control problems inherent in lesson plans and of ways to cope appropriately. Courses on teaching methods, didactic workshops, and on-the-job training and mentoring should address control issues and the interrelationship between instructional and disciplinary decisions.²⁷

3. *How should a progressivist theory of power relations be formulated?* In his later writing, Dewey (1938) discusses social control as a guiding principle for classroom government.²⁸ Control should not be the teacher's strict monopoly but neither should it be entirely relinquished by the teacher. The classroom should be gradually democratized, as students and teachers grow capable of jointly developing and enforcing their own norms. Kohn (1996) describes some specific ways in which this type of classroom can be—and is—managed. Among the lessons we have learned in the Communities of Thinking program is to clarify for ourselves and to our students which issues are appropriately determined by the student and teacher community and which are better reserved to teacher discretion. As a program evolves and the community matures, greater authority is shared with the students.

This power sharing is not enough, however. A progressivist theory of discipline should also include an acknowledgement of the presence of power relations in the classroom, irrespective of pedagogical success or failure. A progressivist theory of government should also include specific mechanisms and rituals for student accountability (in the absence of constant observation and direct control), specifically appropriate for the various teaching methods advocated. In the Communities of Thinking program, these measures vary according to the particular context, as teachers and students develop and adapt procedures suitable to their needs and abilities. Examples include individual oral defenses of group activity, student research plans that separate large tasks into more manageable units with set deadlines, weekly research progress reports, periodic teacher-student conferences, and alternative tasks for students unwilling to meet formal expectations. Careful teacher anticipation and planning—essential for both flexibility and empowerment—greatly increase prospects for the success of these and other components of progressivist pedagogy.

I would like to thank the teachers and students at the 'Birch' school, who so graciously invited me into their classrooms, and my friends and colleagues at the Branco Weiss Institute for the Development of Thinking for their critical support.

Notes

1 I use the term *progressivist* in the broad sense of child-centered education and associated pedagogical ideas, which are fleshed out in the article's second section. See Egan (2002) and Ravitch (2000) for an exposition of the prevalence of progressivist ideas in current educational thought. In many ways current constructivist reforms are the latest reincarnation of progressivist ideas.

2 Not all the proposed reforms were identical and not all the reforms I call progressivist contained all the aspects I emphasize in this paper.

3 Tyack and Cuban (1995), for example, show how these latter concerns motivated the application of “scientific management” to schooling.

4 See Yaacobson (1995) for a detailed account of day-to-day tactics in teacher-student power relations. Note that in this context I am using the word *tactics* in the sense of short-term maneuvers (as opposed to strategy) and not in the sense that Foucault writes of “the composition of forces.”

5 Gore (1998) has observed power relations in an ethnographic study of a number of different and varied educational environments in Australia. I do not think that all the manifestations of power relations she lists are necessarily evidence of disciplinary technologies, though one can find in her article much evidence for the pervasiveness of the mechanisms described here.

6 The *Manual* is an ambivalent document, containing some of the seeds of progressivism: the centrality of experience, sympathy toward the student, the development of thinking, and so on. However, the primary image of pedagogy and discipline are those of the traditional schools of its time.

7 The *Manual* also mandates hierarchical observation of teachers by administrators. Teachers are warned that “neglect on [the teacher’s] part—nay, conscious inefficiency—is a crime.” Following is a brief warning: “It will be the duty of the City Superintendent and his assistants, at every examination of a school, to see that the directions herein contained have been carefully observed by the teachers.” Thus teachers are subject to the same disciplinary observation and examination as their students. Those contemplating committing the crimes of negligence or conscious inefficiency are advised to reconsider.

8 As Cremin (1962) points out, there is no one authoritative progressivism, rather many shifting and evolving ideas. My interpretation focuses on the progressivist spirit vis-à-vis curriculum and instruction, and is especially indebted to Egan’s (2002) analysis. I have illustrated my discussion of progressivism with quotations from Dewey (1900, 1916, 1981), which may upset some readers. (There seem to be a number of guards standing over Dewey’s canon, sounding the alarm at each “misreading,” e.g., Prawat, 1995, and Cohen, 1998). However, for the purpose of this article, “getting Dewey (and progressivism) right” is far less important than showing how the ideas have commonly been understood and applied in schools.

9 The emphasis on learning styles (and multiple intelligences) is a more recent development, which tends to call into question the possibility of adapting schools to the child’s nature because there are many different child natures (Egan, 2002). However, this recent emphasis is still clearly part of the general progressivist, child-centered spirit. In this regard see, for example, the Web page of the Calhoun School (http://www.calhoun.org/progressive_theory.htm). Among the three major progressivist theories at the heart of the school’s philosophy is “children have different kinds of ‘intelligences’ and learning styles.”

10 See Schutz (2001) for a more subtle analysis and critique of Dewey’s approach to democracy and education.

11 Silberman (1970) quotes the following excerpt from Bel Kaufman’s (1964) *Up the Down Staircase*:

[The students] crowded in the doorway, chirping like agitated sparrows, pecking at the seeds I had strewn—when who should appear but [the administrative assistant to the principal]:

“What is the meaning of this noise?”

“It’s the sound of thinking, Mr. McHabe,” I said.

... The cardinal sin, strange as it may seem in an institution of learning, is talking. (p. 145)

12 I maintain that this interpretation is the one most commonly understood by most readers—contemporary and current—of Dewey’s early writings. See Covaleskie (1994) for a

focused discussion of the meaning of “discipline” for Dewey and its relationship to democracy and Tanner (1997) for a discussion of discipline in Dewey’s Laboratory School. Covaleskie, interpreting Dewey, writes, “When we are forced to use [external imposition of order], it is because the tasks are not themselves sufficiently engaging to generate order, and are, therefore, not educative.” In a later series of lectures, Dewey (1938) presents a different approach, to which I shall return in the concluding section of the article.

13 My claim is based on personal experiences, field observations, and discussions with educators in a dozen Israeli schools implementing a progressivist program. I assume these schools are indicative of the Israeli educational system and suggestive of what is happening elsewhere in the world of progressive education.

14 Beyond this empirical observation, I argue that power relations are an inevitable aspect of schooling, progressive or traditional. This assertion is based upon a myriad of factors: extra-curricular social and psychological pressures that are carried into the classroom, healthy adolescent (and adult) resistance to authority, the desire to impress and entertain peers, and the general political nature of human relations.

15 Coping strategies are different from teacher to teacher, as a result of a number of factors, including experience, teaching style, and role. For the sake of this discussion I have described those strategies most commonly encountered. I believe that it is fair to say that almost all the teachers have resorted to each of the strategies at some point or another, the differences lying primarily in sequence and pace.

16 The official justification for holding back these students is their poor academic progress; however, from discussions with school administrators it has become apparent that the primary motivations are neutralizing the negative effects the students have on their peers’ behavior and classroom discipline. Another reason is tactical: The school would prefer to remove the students to another framework, but their parents resist (and there is no legal way to force them).

17 Arieli (1994) notes that the definition of what constitutes a disturbance is not constant; different teachers are disturbed by different activities, and students do not necessarily accept teachers’ interpretations. For my purposes I consider a disturbance to be activity that visibly distracts the teacher, the students, or me from attending to the substance of the lesson.

18 A note on the examples in this section: These are not verbatim quotations, rather composite fictions, based on the style and language of various occurrences.

19 Another category that I have not discussed is that of disciplinary problems outside the classroom: vandalism, fighting, insubordination to teachers in the hallways and yards, and so forth. I have chosen to focus my discussion on the classroom, in light of my interest in the intersection of pedagogy and control.

20 Israeli schools make a clear distinction between the role of educative teachers, who are responsible for the well-being and education of a classroom of students, and that of subject-matter teachers, who are responsible for the study of specific content matter. The educative teacher will typically meet his or her students for 1 hour a week to discuss current events, social issues, and group problems.

21 My impression is that these teachers are mistaken, that their more progressivist classes are more unruly. Indeed, some teachers often revert to more traditional instructional techniques when the class gets out of hand. McNeil (1986) describes a similar dynamic, which she appropriately terms *defensive teaching*, in which teachers water down lessons and avoid controversy so they can maintain classroom control.

22 The corrective interjection strategy may seem to resist this interpretation. However, disciplinary measures in corrective interjection are often subconscious or automatic. The teacher treats the classroom disruptions in a manner much like the way we wave gnats away from our eyes on a hot, humid day, not missing a beat in the conversation.

23 One could argue that this phenomenon simply reflects the fact that out-of-classroom problems are more bothersome to the teachers. I contend that this explanation is unsatisfac-

tory because it does not account for the sheer proportions—teachers spend far more time in the classroom than on hallway or playground duty. Another possible explanation is the public nature of the extracurricular problems: Teachers are not privy to one another's classroom problems; all teachers know about confrontations in public spaces.

24 I do not assume that progressivist teachers in Israeli schools use these manuals; indeed, I think that they are largely unaware of the latter's existence. Rather I claim that the manuals reflect the structure of the professional discourse in which the teachers participate.

25 Curwin and Mendler (1988) quote Combs (1965) in listing characteristics of the modern classroom that hinder learning. Among them are "preoccupation with order," "overvaluing authority," and "emphasis on force" (p. 168). Although they do not advocate any of these approaches, neither do they acknowledge the tension between the rules, reminders, and consequences they've outlined in preceding chapters and the vision of a free, nonauthoritarian and noncoercive classroom.

26 Other design aspects might include smaller school size, reduction in the number of students each teacher teaches (while increasing the amount of time with each student), and common planning time.

27 Winograd (2002), upon reflecting on a year of negotiations with children while teaching on Sabbatical, comes to similar conclusions. Among them, "When presenting methods, I need to raise both the micro- and macro-political difficulties of these methods, such as the inevitability of student opposition to any curricular experience, even so-called *student-centered curriculum*" (p. 360, emphasis in original).

28 Additional sources on which to base a progressivist theory of power relations are Clark's (1998) discussion of the differing moral bases of "discipline" and "control," and Tanner's (1997) discussions of redirection and the developmental approach to discipline developed in *Dewey's Laboratory School*.

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