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Journal of Early Childhood Research 2012 10: 88 originally published online 1 September 2011

DOI: 10.1177/1476718X11406243

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Journal of Early Childhood Research

10(1) 88–99

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DOI: 10.1177/1476718X11406243

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Abstract

This article critiques guidance approaches to discipline, that are employed in early childhood environments with an aim to create democratic environments for children, and as part of 'good' practices. Advocates of guidance claim that this is a more humane or democratic approach to discipline that empowers children, and therefore, power in the classroom appears as more equalized or distributed. The author adopts a particular perspective in the field of educational psychology by using Foucault's conceptualization of power and confession (1981). This analytical context opens up avenues to problematize guidance's claims about the nature of teacher–child power relations, and children's autonomy. Guidance is then re-read as a subtle, often invisible way of regulation, that sheds new light on a particular kind of autonomy children are allowed. The article concludes with an emphasis on the necessity to be vigilant with guidance. Vigilance is needed to keep in sight that guidance is a discourse that positions subjects in power relations and its quest for democracy is a part of its discourse with power implications rather than its ultimate goal.

Keywords

classroom management, Foucault, governmentality, educational psychology, school discipline

Introduction

Guidance approach is recently endorsed as 'best' practice in promoting positive behaviours¹ and is assumed as ethically more desirable or humane than other, controlling forms of discipline. It is claimed that guidance creates more democratic or 'egalitarian' educational environments in which children are empowered (Gartrell, 2004; Porter, 2008). Proponents of guidance approaches (Gartrell, 1998; Kohn, 1996) argue that the concept of 'discipline' is attached strongly to the concept of 'control', thus its use brings unwanted connotations. Instead of working towards students' submission to classroom rules as a result of punishments and rewards, and because of the authority

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of the teacher, guidance approaches aim to create an environment where children can fulfil their needs and teachers collaborate with students to reach certain agreed on behavioural goals.

Guidance, as Gartrell (2004) defines it, also has a long-term objective in regards to democracy:

Guidance teaches children the life skills they need as citizens in a democracy (Wittmer & Honig, 1994): respecting others and one's self, working together in groups, solving problems using words, expressing strong emotions in acceptable ways, and *making decisions ethically and intelligently*. . . . The teacher . . . *empowers children* to solve problems rather than punishing them for having problems they cannot solve . . . (p. 21, emphasis added)

Guidance teaching is character education in its truest, least political sense – guiding children to develop the empathy, self-esteem, and self-control needed for *autonomy*, Piaget's term for the capacity to *make intelligent, ethical decisions* (Kamii, 1984). (p. 22, emphasis added)

Underpinning these claims guidance draws on the strong image of 'the child' according to which they are considered as decision-makers, autonomous choosers and constructors of their own moral self. In sum, 'it trusts children to direct themselves' (Porter, 2008: 14). Due to its 'egalitarian' nature and the strong humanist ideals it carries – drawing on democracy, non-coerciveness and empowerment – guidance is rarely critiqued in regards to its claim of empowering children (for example, Millei, 2007, 2010). Neither guidance techniques employed to reach these goals are subject to examination. With the help of the Foucauldian conceptualizations of power I account for the discursive power of guidance that regulates children by shifting the regulation that adults perform to control children to be carried out by the children on their own conducts and selves.

This way of placing classroom discipline under scrutiny joins other studies in the field of educational psychology that 'expose those particular ways in which the actions of adults can serve merely to impose a means of control as part of a web of governmentality . . . and these ways will either lead to harmful consequences or those which are at best unnecessary' (Billington, 2006: 6). This body of work (for example, Billington, 2000, 2006; Billington and Pomerantz, 2004; Martin, 2004) focuses on the examination of 'psy' sciences and practices in the context of institutions and systems with the use of social theory to provide professionals with 'healthy criticality' (Billington, 2006: 7).

Keeping order in classrooms is a challenging task that often causes frustration to teachers who are in a constant search for 'good' practices in disciplining/managing children. Due to prevailing humanistic discourses regarding the desirability of democratic relationships among children and adults, and the influence of child-centred pedagogy, teachers strive to offer choices to children, to mediate and negotiate rather than control, and to let children problem-solve in regards to their deeds. These practices are considered as 'good'. I also uphold these as 'good' and something worthwhile to follow. My first argument in this article, however, is develop a critique that leads to raise a constant awareness on guidance's so-called less coercive ways of deploying power. Second, this article also serves as a critique about guidance's taken-for-granted emancipatory nature.

Guidance arguably has potentially emancipatory outcomes for children by creating a more democratic environment where children have more chances for autonomous action. It also includes children in decisions and takes into account their opinions. Empowerment, however, is not power free, therefore it needs to be closely examined (Cruikshank, 1994). Moreover, in an examination it is also worth considering whether being 'more humane' equates with the lessening of regulatory power, as proponents of guidance claim (Gartrell, 2004; Kohn, 1996; Porter, 2008) or rather that it

may lead to a powerful form of regulation that might begin questioning guidance's 'true' and apolitical humanist potentials (Gartrell, 2004).

Guidance as humanistic

The view of children as capable and resourceful individuals possessing rights began to penetrate early years discourses stemming from the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1989) and the emergence of the sociologies of childhood (James and Prout, 1997). This view is apparent in recent pedagogical, curriculum and discipline approaches that form 'good' or 'best' practices in the early years (such as Arthur et al., 2008; Gartrell, 2004; Maynard and Thomas, 2009; Porter, 2008; Stonehouse, 2001). Ethical codes and considerations recently also utilize this image of the child (Early Childhood Australia, 2006). This perspective constitutes children as enacting their rights, constructing their own knowledge and morals, possessing different forms of social, emotional and cognitive competencies early on, and as active participants in their own lives and decisions effecting their lives. This humanistic discourse empowers children and positions them as agentic and highly capable individuals with great potentials and 'equal' rights to adults.

Similarly, teachers are positioned as 'good' professionals if they take up this view of children and employ the ethical practices promoted by guidance (Gartrell, 1998; Kohn, 1996; Porter, 2003). For example, Kohn (2001) positions adults this way: 'A caring adult wants to help children learn to make responsible decisions about the things that matter to them – and to help them see the results of those decisions' (p. 52). Gartrell (2004) draws on the undisputable ideas of democracy to argue for the use of guidance by teachers: '*guidance* has a definite, proactive outcome: the teaching of *democratic life skills* (the skills needed to be healthy individuals and productive citizens in a democracy) ... a priority of education should be teaching democratic life skills' (p. 63, original emphasis).

This egalitarian approach to discipline sits with other humanistic discourses in early childhood. Recent pedagogical approaches consider children as authors of their learning and constructors of their knowledge, thus having similar or even greater importance in teaching and learning as teachers do. Thinking about children as collaborative learners cooperating with teachers in learning communities (Fleer et al., 2006; Kohn, 2001) is a powerful example of this discourse. Policy discourses view children as citizens similarly to adults, or as participating members in national economies (such as Commonwealth of Australia, 2007; Government of Western Australia, 2004). In another field children are seen as research collaborators instead of research objects or subjects (Christensen and James, 2000; MacNaughton et al., 2001). These examples further illustrate the nature of humanistic discourses present in early education today.

The institutionalization of humanist discourses or liberalizing pedagogy appeared during the 1960s and 1970s (Martin, 2004). According to Walkerdine (1993) these pedagogies aimed 'to allow the freest and most natural of possible developments' for children (p. 453). Their appearance was signalled with the introduction of constructivist psychology and child-centred pedagogy (Fendler, 2001; Hultqvist, 2001; Slee, 1995). Piaget was a strong advocate of child-centred pedagogy. His aim was to raise adults who are citizens in liberal democracies and are resistant to autocracy because they construct their own moral worldviews (Piaget, 1932/1965). The field of classroom discipline followed these trends. Democratic developments in classroom discipline meant to democratize the child–teacher relationship and schooling itself (see Levin and Nolan, 1991, for a discussion on the democratization of classroom discipline). The outlawing of physical punishment in schools was a pioneering step in this process (Hyde, 1992). The subsequent introduction of increasingly 'humane'

forms of discipline that use self-discipline and self-regulation to keep order, such as the democratic discipline of Dreikurs and Cassel (1990), rather than teachers' autocratic control are some other developments in this democratic prospect (Millei, 2007, 2010). Guidance approaches are recent examples that further develop the democratic ideal by thinking about children as strong, agentic and active individuals ready to participate in moral decisions regarding their own lives. They also strive to create a more 'egalitarian' environment in which children can act autonomously.

Guidance's democratic prospect aims to deliver an 'egalitarian' form of regulation through a trading, equalizing or sharing of power between children and adults that happens through the 'relinquishing [of adults'] power' (Kohn, 2001: 84; Porter, 2008). The acquisition of a high level of moral reasoning skill attributed to children is claimed to make them able to construct their own moral and ethical world. As Porter (2008) eloquently summarizes this argument:

More than merely enforcing compliance, discipline aims to teach moral behaviour and to develop children's empathy and moral reasoning (or 'conscience') (Kochanska et al., 2003). In terms of *acting* morally, children are more willing to abide voluntarily by their parents' guidelines when they are not imposed externally, but are self-generated or independently endorsed by the children . . . With respect to moral reasoning, children are more willing to listen and will develop more sophisticated moral thinking when their parents reason and negotiate with them. (p. 21, original emphasis)

The conceptualization of 'humanist self' is inherent in the above excerpt (Martin, 2004). The 'humanist self' entails that the child develops a 'concept of adequacy and a concept of perceived self' (Beatty and Clark, 1971, quoted in Martin, 2004: 195) and strives to minimize the possible discrepancies between the two. Through this learning process (minimization) the child's self is shaped to be 'adequate'. Built on this idea of intrinsic learning, 'egalitarian discipline' is a move to free children from external adult control, a control that other approaches to discipline exert through punishments and rewards.

Moreover, guidance, according to Kohn (2001: 60), aims to create a 'truly' democratic environment for children. An environment that is free also from forms of covert manipulation carried out in the name of democracy exemplified by the Dreikurs et al. (1982) approach. In order to maintain egalitarian relationships between children and teachers, guidance approaches draw on particular techniques of discipline. They utilize problem solving, mediation or negotiation, self-determination, self-regulation, self-reflection and choices. These techniques, according to guidance, focus on empowering children by fulfilling their need for autonomy. Autonomy is understood by guidance in two ways. First, it is considered as an inherent 'human need' (Porter, 2007, 2008) building on the ideas of Maslow (1968) and others. Second, autonomy is defined as a goal of education by drawing on Piaget (1932/1960) as in Gartrell's (2004) book. In this way, autonomy is understood as independent, 'intelligent and ethical decision making' performed by the child (Gartrell, 2004: 68) that guidance techniques utilize. It is argued, (paraphrasing Porter) (2008: 77), that by catering for children's autonomy, children will be able to steer their own course in life, to make choices for themselves, and to exercise volition.

In summary, by utilizing humanistic discourses, guidance approaches argue that they aim to relinquish adult power in order to fulfil children's need for autonomy, and consequently to empower children. This claim, however, is not as unproblematic as it might look at the first reading. First, the promotion of self-determination, self-regulation and so on engages children in a process of exercising power on themselves by themselves (Cruikshank, 1994), consequently, these processes are not power-free, but rather they displace the need for containment and regulation.

Second, by guiding children's construction of morals and the decisions they make, through mediation or offering choices, a particular form of power or regulation is exerted, that is cloaked in a humanistic discourse and therefore is harder to trace. Moreover, these techniques empower children in one sense, but they also serve as means for their more 'effective' regulation, or reaching 'better behavioural outcomes' to use Porter's words (2008: 30). These techniques also become a central normative goal of guidance due to their potential for forming future moral citizens. They powerfully shape the subjectivities of children with 'noble' aims: to 'adequate' children's selves. In the next section I take a closer look at these latter claims by using the Foucauldian perspective of power that helps to understand the ways in which power works through guidance techniques in less visible or unexpected ways (Gore, 1995).

Thinking about power and guidance

Power can be conceptualized differently than is understood by guidance approaches. Power, in a Foucauldian sense, is diffuse and assembled in power relations that are always shifting rather than concentrated on behalf of individuals or groups of people (Foucault, 1980), as Wolfgang (2005) a proponent of guidance explains:

When a teacher facilitates, intervenes, or interacts as a form of limit setting with children, her actions have an inherent degree of power . . . and also show the amount of freedom or autonomy (Erickson, 1950) that the teacher has granted to the child to manage his [*sic*] own behaviour. (p. 32)

In the Foucauldian view, power is productive in shaping the social world, 'power produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, [and] produces discourse' (Foucault, 1984: 61). Power shapes how problems and behaviours are understood, how people are classified, and ascribes appropriate ways to steer or govern conduct. By producing discourses, power also 'shape[s] identities and regulate[s] bodies, desires, [and] selves' (Seidman, 1998: 235). Guidance, in this understanding, is a discourse that produces particular understandings of the world, 'the child' as a subject of guidance, and 'guidance' itself. Guidance's idea about 'the child is thus not *the* 'truth' about children's 'real' nature but *a* 'truth' such as any other understanding of children and their conduct. 'The child' in guidance is a constitution which has implications for power and positioning children in certain ways.

Discourses of guidance approaches constitute 'the child' in ways that make up children's temperament, and regulates their relationships, belonging and ethics. They inscribe 'self-discipline' in morals and affects of children. Guidance discourses constitute 'the child' as filled with particular capacities that are ready to be skilled, such as self-reflection, flexibility, cooperation, interpersonal and decision making skills and so on (Fields and Boesser, 1994; Han and Kemple, 2006; Jambunathan et al., 1999; Porter, 2003). These discourses position children in power relations that enable the use of subtle techniques of power seemingly working on children's behalf. For example, 'the child' is constituted as standing in a dynamic relationship with her/his environment and others and actively constructing her/his knowledge and skills through interactions. This idea of 'the child' draws on the Vygotskian notion of socially constructed knowledge (Wertsch and Tulviste, 1994). This Vygotskian notion of knowledge plays an important role in the exercise of power through discipline approaches. It serves as an instrument of authorization and validation for intervention into the process of the child's knowledge construction, in short, it legitimates the intervention into this process. Thus, the intervention injects *socially desired* understandings into the process of knowledge construction to reach 'considerate' behaviours and in this way disciplines the child in unexpected ways.

By continuing this analysis, in a Foucauldian understanding guidance ascribes children with particular forms of social competence that stretches over certain qualities, dispositions and abilities. These are taken as particular truth about children's social development and called by Porter (2003: 60) as 'universal social skills'. Mize's 1995 research (used in Porter, 2003: 60) describes these as 'being positive and agreeable; being able to use contextual and social cues to guide one's own behaviour; and being sensitive and responsive to the interests and behaviour of playmates'. By constituting these skills as being acquired as part of children's social development, guidance promotes the attainment and training of these social skills early to students in order to pre-empt or to deal with inconsiderate behaviour. With the use of this strong instrumentalist discourse and based on a particular logic of progressive efficiency (Fendler, 2001), guidance assumes that the more developed children are in these areas, the more efficient they are in building relationships, reflecting, negotiating and solving social problems, and therefore, they cause less disruption. Constituting 'the child' as having these social skills or the lack of those wields power in at least two ways.

First, it constitutes the emotions of 'the child' as amenable for training and regulation so 'the child' can develop 'mastery' in these (Porter, 2003; 69). In other words, the child's emotions can be trained in a particular way so that she/he likes to be with the people with whom she/he is assigned, and is able to consider their needs. Thus, 'the child' is regulated here through her/his own constructive capacities that create feelings and attention toward others (Hultqvist, 1997). Moreover, the child's subjective experience as to how she/he has to perceive the world and feel about it, is normalized, evaluated and improved if necessary (Fendler, 2001). The expression of feelings and teaching self-expression are mechanisms for this normalization (Tobin, 1995). So, while behaviour conditioning targets children's behaviour, guidance approaches makes the children's relations, emotions, her/his inner understandings of the world and her/his own constructive capacities the objects of regulation and normalization.

The second way constituting 'the child' as lacking or having social competence wields power is that children with 'social skill deficits' or 'developmental delays' are potentially identified as belonging to certain social groups who exhibit 'inappropriate' behaviours or have alternative morals (Porter, 2003). Such groups of people identified by proponents as those who live in 'poverty and unemployment, [have] drug and alcohol problems, and are inconsistently lax and harsh' in their parenting (Bell et al., 2004: 5). Porter (2003) adds to this list separated or teen parents, with the assumption that they are likely to have children who lack social skills. While the possible intention is to counteract the assumedly negative influences the children of these parents have encountered, labelling their social skills as 'inappropriate' engraves 'historically specific power relations' (Fendler, 2001: 131). Thus, power works through inscribing social problems onto individual incompetence in social skills. Constituting 'the child' as an active constructor of knowledge and ascribing to 'the child' forms of social competence, mobilize particular techniques and mechanisms of power that utilize children's self-regulation.

I offer another example to demonstrate the ways in which power works in rather concealed ways in guidance. Wrapped in a humanistic discourse, Porter (2003) positions children in the following way: children are agents of change, 'who can make a difference for themselves and their world, can control their own actions and feelings, and can act on their values' (Porter, 2003: 14). Here 'the child' is constituted as wanting change and as capable to make changes. This discourse mobilizes 'the child'. Moreover, 'the child' is constituted as capable of self-regulation and who uses this capability to act morally. Guidance in relation to these constitutions then constructs particular and limited avenues for children to live with these assumed desires and capabilities. Hence guidance empowers children. Consequently, under the influence of guidance discourses it would appear that both the classroom environment and discipline generally have become more humane. Whilst this

may be the case from a teleological point of view, I demonstrated that it does not mean that exerting power is becoming less pervasive or more extensively distributed. Here power works through a particular process of empowerment by regulating children with the use of particular techniques of power, such as self-regulation and offering limited options for action.

Moreover, if the outcome of children's self-directed conduct ends up being disruptive, it is considered as a 'developmental error' by guidance (e.g. Gartrell, 2004; Porter, 2008). This understanding legitimates adult intervention that happens in the form of delivering guidance – mediation or negotiation to solve problems, or the development of moral and social skills – however, this intervention is not power free either. Rather, it facilitates children's actions in relation to the above principles, thus demonstrates for them the only available and acceptable alternatives, hence its regulatory effects. The use of the technique of self-reflection contributes to the working of power by uncovering children's 'real' desires for both children and teachers. The technique of self-reflection is particularly worthy of closer examination to further demonstrate the productive and concealed nature of power in guidance.

Self-reflection as confessional

Self-reflection, and the verbalization of emotions and thoughts, are avenues to acquire knowledge about ourselves and to express our thoughts and feelings. Mediation and negotiation are the preferred problem solving techniques of guidance (that also includes conflict resolution) to restore order in the classroom. It is argued, that children feel more empowered during guidance, than if punishing ways of discipline were employed to deal with disruption (Gartrell, 2004; Porter, 2003). Mediation and guidance both utilize the technique of self-reflection. It is claimed by Kohn (1996) that while children solve conflicts and disruption issues by themselves – through mediation and negotiation – they also 'become active participants in their own social and ethical development' (p. 77). This development happens, according to guidance, as a result of children matching their acts through the process of self-reflection to a particular moral code upheld in the class or by the teacher. For children to be experts in this process, that is the self-reflection and constant evaluation of someone's acts, is the aspiration of guidance. As Porter (2003: 16) articulates: the aim of guidance is to 'teach them to act considerately' according to moral standards.

Self-reflection and the verbalization of observations might bring to the fore those aspects and feelings of the person that remained unspoken and therefore un-interpreted so far. During self-reflection and verbalization the child learns about herself, and also understands herself in the discursive context offered by guidance and the particular moral standards of the context. So the child constitutes herself as a particular individual inscribed by this knowledge and believed to be her 'true' self. Therefore, without the outward use of power by the teacher, the child accommodates her acts and shapes herself according to moral norms. Power, thus, is applied in a more covert and seemingly non-coercive way compared to the application of punishment.

In other words, gathering knowledge about the self and self-expression assembles in to a particular technology that is called 'confession' (Foucault, 1981). Confession forms part of 'technologies of the self' (Foucault, 1994). A technology refers to a set of ideas, which forms the basis for crafting specific subjectivities and it relies on knowledge production about the object it targets. Thus, self-reflection gathers a specialized knowledge about a particular child. By expressing this knowledge to the teacher and witnessing that herself the child's feelings, thoughts, desires and choices are easily subjected to regulation and self-regulation. At the same time a confessional relation develops between the child and the teacher through which power works not as domination but in the form of the regulation of the child's 'inner world'.

The confessor (the child) as she confesses (verbalizes her thoughts on herself) becomes a subject of the authoritative or expert discourse of the confessors (the teacher). In this way, the child's feelings, thoughts, desires and decisions will be evaluated by the teacher and the child against the scientific knowledge utilized by guidance, her learning needs will be defined, the path to self-improvement and self-development is marked out. Confession mobilizes the child, as a productive and autonomous subject, to execute self-development on her self, consequently the subject becomes empowered. This subject, however, is regulated in this process by the discursive context and in this way there is no need for externally imposed rewards or punishments. The child, thus, is enfolded in power through the expert discourses of guidance without the need for external discipline.

Confession requires someone to be present (or virtually present) to whom one confesses (Foucault, 1981). Through confession, the child becomes the subject of the authority and authoritative discourse of the confessor teacher. In confession, therefore, a particular knowledge of the child is created in regards to what 'being considerate' means and involves, and at the same time the 'considerate child' is constituted through inscribing the child in a particular way. This child, however, has little to do with the 'essence of the child' or the 'truth' about the child. In other words, by expressing her feelings and thoughts in a particular way that is prescribed by guidance discourses, the child reflects upon and expresses whether she was thoughtful, whether she thought about her acts and feelings in the light of particular moral standards brought upon by the confessor, or whether she chooses what is right after this consideration.

The confessional process, on the one hand, creates a site for teaching-learning or intervention by the expert teacher. The child becomes enveloped in a matrix of practices that constitutes her 'learning needs' and assigns paths for her development. These are, for example, teaching self-control, demonstrating empathy, teaching constructive thinking or coping strategies, teaching the viewing of events differently or responding differently and so on (for a fuller list, see Porter, 2008). On the other hand, the child understands herself according to the knowledge that she produced during confession therefore she legitimates and takes up the subject position of the 'considerate subject'. Thus, she shapes herself to be a 'considerate child'. By taking up this position, however, she becomes instantly regulated because this position is not a choice of her own.

Guidance discourses not only foster the child to understand herself as considerate but also foster the child's will to act considerately, as Porter (2008) elaborates: 'They need to act thoughtfully, not out of fear of retribution nor even because they are being supervised, but because they know that it is the right way to act' (p. 16). Thus, the child is regulated through discourses of guidance that produce a particular subject position for the child to take up, and also through creating this subject position as a desirable one or the only subject position that is morally right. Constituting this position in this way makes it desirable for the child and she willingly takes it up as her own choice without the need for external coercion.

From the previous discussion it emerges the use of morals appears in guidance discourses in two understandings: first, as self-regulation of conduct according to external moral codes embedded in ideas of human nature, such as respect of the other, responsibility for others and oneself, cooperation and so on. The second understanding is taking the form of ethics (Miller and Rose, 1990). Whilst in the confession process moral codes embedded in expert discourses are delivered by the teacher, ethics is understood as the self-crafting of one's self through making choices (Rose, 2000). In this way and as an example of ethics, the child knows that she is considerate if she understands her action as a result of thinking about it. Thus, she chooses to act considerately because certain ways of behaving are expected by moral codes and she understands herself as considerate by reflecting on her action of consideration. Through these two forms of morality, responsibility is reshaped into a form where individuals become responsible for their own reality, that is, to adopt

moral standards as if they were their own and to desire to shape their lives to be particular 'types' of individuals, in this case, to desire to be 'considerate'. Governing through these forms of morality is what Rose (1999, 2000) termed 'ethopolitics'.

Guidance by using the technology of confession regulates through self-regulation, which can be an empowering process but from which power is never absent. The humanistic discourse that frames guidance shifted the dominance of outside control to the application of a range of practices that regulate children in more covert ways. A particular type of autonomy (to make pre-regulated choices) and (to follow a regulated path of) moral and ethical development govern the guiding process that appears in the disguise of freedom (autonomy) and empowerment. This process creates a self-sustaining dynamic enveloped in humanistic discourses that, in a circular manner, creates an even greater requirement for and justification of guidance to empower children.

Discussion

In summary, by applying Foucault's conceptual tool, I have critiqued two claims of guidance: first, that guidance is more egalitarian, democratic or humane and that this is achieved through the equalization of power between teachers and children. Second, that guidance provides an environment in which children can act more autonomously, participate in decisions, make choices and therefore are more empowered. The scope of this article was to deliver these critiques. Nevertheless further work is necessary to analyze the ways in which everyday discourses and practices of guidance and other discourses coexist in classrooms to regulate children and teachers as well. For example, research might examine the ways in which guidance fashions teachers and children to be particular types of ethical individuals and to understand themselves as such. Or to say it in another way, further work might examine the ways in which teachers are governed to use guidance in order to be seen as ethical individuals or 'good' practitioners and to understand themselves as such. Similar research was undertaken to make visible the constitutive force of discipline through a study of a particular school for 'behaviourally disturbed children' by Laws and Davies (2000).

In relation to children, studies might uncover the discourses and techniques of power by which children are regulated to act 'considerately' (Millei, 2005) and to shape themselves as 'adequate' individuals. Also, it is important to examine in what ways those children who do not take up these subject positions are marginalized, pathologized and remediated, especially if they belong to particular cultural, class, ethnic, gender and age groups, such as discussed in Youdell (2006) and Graham's (2007) work. Graham (2007) examines individual statements about 'problematic' behaviours with a concern about how particular statements function and how they constitute 'disorderly objects'. Youdell (2006) seeks to demonstrate ways in which 'particular social and cultural practices and identity markers come to be entangled with being a good student (or not)' (p. 34).

Guidance approaches employ techniques and discourses that are fairly recent and originate in Western culture (Corcoran, 2003, 2007). Among these techniques negotiation first gained a strong foothold in the family (Beck, 1997; Cunningham, 1995; Vanderbroeck and Bouverne-De Bie, 2006). Following its acceptance at 'home', negotiation acquired a normative aspect in schools accompanying more democratic forms of pedagogies during the 1980s and 1990s (Fendler, 2001; Vanderbroeck and Bouverne-De Bie, 2006). Negotiation in this way became a somewhat universal and taken-for-granted 'truth' in solving problems of conflict in Western culture. Examining those discourses and techniques of power of discipline that non-Western contexts deploy is a necessary agenda for future research. Such examples for non-Western form of discipline is discussed by Riojas-Cortez and Bustos Flores (2009) in regards to Latino families. Latino families are likely to discipline young children through '*consejos* a form of advice told through a story (Valdés, 1996) and storytelling (Riojas-Cortez et al., 2003)' (p. 187, original italics).

Guidance discourses constitute particular understandings of 'disruption' and 'the child'. They argue that their view of children follows the strong image of the child, thus the child is considered as a competent social actor, which is again culturally bound and represents those competencies that are constituted by Western discourses. This discourse limits conceptualizations of the forms children's competence could and should take. In this way and on the one hand, other ways of being competent and strong might be sidelined or subjugated, and in some cases interpreted by guidance practitioners as disruptive behaviour or 'developmental errors'. On the other hand, it is necessary to understanding the ways in which teachers construct the idea of 'disruption' often coloured by discourses of gender, age, ethnicity, class and culture is necessary. Riojas-Cortez and Bustos Flores (2009) and Araújo's (2005) outline some examples of how understandings of 'indiscipline' are altered by diversity. Araújo argues that 'indiscipline' is often explained by teachers as caused by children who belong to ethnic or 'racial' minorities, while the children who are being disrupted by these students are seen to be those who belong to White middle-class families.

Children's discourses are also important to be included in deliberations on ideas about 'disruption'. Araújo (2005) asked older students (8–14 years) about their ideas on the causes of 'indiscipline'. Students used different reasonings and discourses to teachers and reported that teachers' lack of fairness and consistency with the applications of sanctions, and the differentiated attitudes teachers had for diverse students often led to 'indiscipline'. Students also constituted 'indiscipline' as arising from students' cultures, where interactions between students were brought into the classroom, caused disruption and resulted in teachers' sanctions. Researching with or alongside children is an emerging and important area of early childhood research. This new method of research enables researchers to account for children's constitutions of 'adequacy' and 'disruption' in classrooms that might provide novel insights into the ways in which discourses of discipline/guidance engage children and teachers in power relations and constitute and reconstitute their selves.

Note

1. (http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/feelings_and_behaviours/promoting_positive_behaviours/promoting_positive_behaviours.html)

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