Teaching in New Times

Week 11
Subjectivity
Activity 1: Define these key terms

• Define these terms and provide concrete examples

• Self actualisation
• Pathologies
• eugenics

• Psychometrics
• Developmental psychology
Activity 2: The normal curve

Examine the graph on the next slide

• Discuss how this "simple" technique of governance has made human variability more orderly and hence more easy to act upon

• This image of the Normal Curve is applied to the construct of intelligence (x axis refers to score on IQ test). Discuss the way in which this has reorganised the way we understand ourselves, our education systems and has worked to regulate schooling and our society
Activity 3: Imbecile scale

• Analyse the image on the next slide from the 1920s of the "imbecile scale" showing steps defined by "mental age" determined by performance on the Stanford-Binet test (look this up online) Image from government report.

• Discuss this scale in terms of notions of jobs, individuals described as a danger to society and social class

• Can you see any parallels in contemporary schooling and society?
Steps in mental development.
Where they stumble—the limit of development of each type.
(Reprinted from the survey of Oct. 11-13.)
Activity 4: Behaviour think sheets

• Looks at the next slide and discuss the "behaviour think sheet" used as a behaviour management technique in schools
• Describe how it seeks to work on students’ conduct, include their subjective selves
• Who does it make responsible for such conduct?
• What structural and sociological explanations of misconduct does it ignore? (cf. Tait, 2019, p. 109)
Behavior Think Sheet

You have made choices that have caused you to need to stop and "Think about It."

Name_________________________ Date_____________________

1. What was my behavior?
   
   _____________________________
   _____________________________
   _____________________________

2. What were the reasons for my behavior?
   
   _____________________________
   _____________________________
   _____________________________

3. How did my behavior affect others?
   
   _____________________________
   _____________________________
   _____________________________

4. What is my plan to improve my behavior?
   
   _____________________________
   _____________________________
   _____________________________

5. Do I need to apologize to anyone? If so, to who and why?
   
   _____________________________
   _____________________________

Student______________________ Parent______________________ Teacher______________________
Activity 5: psychological disorders

Tait’s chapter raises some problems that can be found with the ways in which psychological disorders are ‘discovered’ and normalised. Consider some of the ‘disorders’ experienced by school students (or others) that you have come across.

• What do you know about these disorders? How have you gained this knowledge? What are the implications of the management of these for the role of the teacher, relationships with other students, and the organisation and management of the school? What would happen differently if some of these were considered examples of difference rather than as ‘not normal’ or a ‘disorder’?
Activity 6: Psychology and the school

- Tait’s chapter suggests that psychology has played an important role in constructing a view of the individual student. What do you consider to be the characteristics of the ideal student? Why do you think these ideals have been formulated?

- Consider the implications for an education system that relies on psychological explanations of misconduct over structural explanations, such as class, gender and race.

- What role does a psychological perspective of the individual play in the governance practices of a mass schooling system?
Activity 7: Psychology and subjectivity

• What is the relationship between the concepts of ‘subjectivity’ and ‘psychology’?

**Hint:** Think about the notion of the ‘subject’ as discussed in Tait’s chapter and the ways in which psychology is concerned with the individual. Psychology is one of the many disciplines that concerns itself with human subjectivity, and psychology itself often plays a role in subjective experience, particularly in the field of education.
Activity 8: The notion of ‘discipline’

• How is the term ‘discipline’ used differently when referring to governance, the organisation of knowledge and behaviour?

Hint: the term ‘discipline’ is used in different contexts and in relation to different bodies of knowledge. In governance we talk about discipline as governing the population; in the organisation of knowledge as different categories of knowledge such as physics, maths, geography and so forth; and in relation to behaviour, as a way of ensuring the desired behaviour.
Activity 9: The manufacture of ‘difference’

• What do you understand by ‘the manufacture of difference’? Think of some examples. (eg ADHD)
• What is the role of teachers in the management of difference?

Hint: The teacher is at the centre of diagnosis and treatment of learning and conduct disorders. They must now be able to intervene on a wide range of learning differences as de facto psychological therapists.
Activity 10: The self help industry

• Choose one or two self-help books you have read or know about and discuss the techniques they suggest to self-govern subjectivity. What kind of individual are these self help books encouraging you to become?