

# Modulating Power and ‘New Weapons’: Taking Aim at the ‘Education Revolution’

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## Abstract

*This paper looks at the emergent performative culture seducing education in the Australian context. It links this corporate discourse to Deleuzian theorising of control societies to postulate that what we are experiencing is a new form of power relations – that of the modulating mechanisms of power. These modulating mechanisms overlay disciplinary power such that the self is modulated through the amplification and frequencies of the instruments of modulation: the simulation, the categorical sorting and the sample. These instruments are increasingly utilised within the performative culture of the Australian Federal Government’s Education Revolution as examples of the performative ‘terror’ or the abstraction of the self from the terrain in which they move. Finally, some new weapons are suggested that may offer preliminary and tentative ‘movement’ in deterritorialising ways through the enclosed spaces of mass, compulsory school and the policy that shapes it.*

## Introduction

This paper is concerned with the changing forms and expectations of schools in the new millennia. The purpose of this paper is twofold. Firstly, I would like to explore the notion of the performative culture from a Deleuzian perspective, to see how useful it is to cast performativity within a shift in relations of power, from disciplinary power to modulating power. Secondly, I would like to suggest ways that the current Australian ‘Education Revolution’ may be understood within the context of Deleuze’s theorisation of the societies of control and the seduction of education by the corporate or performative mechanism.

One of the reasons for doing this lies with a comment Deleuze made in his essay “Societies of Control”. When talking about the shifting organisation of power, he remarked: “There is no need to fear or hope, but only to look for new weapons” (Deleuze 1992, 4). Currently debate surrounding the current and future direction of education in Australia seems struck by an impotence – we recognise the problems but are increasingly lacking the ‘weapons’ to be able to impact on policy direction. Unmasking the mechanisms of power within the performative culture is the first step in thinking about these ‘new weapons’. This paper utilises Deleuzian notions of ‘geophilosophy’ that see the self in terms of its cartography, where “even in a person there are the lines that make them up, or they make up, or take, or create” (Deleuze and Guattari 2005, 33). This paper is about the lines, increasingly informed by performative discourses that grid the late modern educational subject. ‘Mapping’ these grids may better position us to see the possibilities within performative culture, to resist or struggle with, and to engage with Deleuzian notions of rhizomatic disruption because “the rhizome has no beginning or end, it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing” (Deleuze and Guattari 2005, 25). There is no sense that the ‘old ways’ are better than the ‘new ways’, but rather that we need to look at education not as a causal, evolutionary progression but as a series of rhizomatic ‘accidents’ that have lead us to where we are today but that can be challenged and destroyed (Kendall and Wickham 2003, Deleuze and Guattari 2005).

The purpose of this paper is to look at performativity, framed as it is within neo-liberal and globalising trends in education, as a means to better understand the complex and changing faces of schools. One of the effects of these trends has been the increasing spread of the performative culture throughout schools in Australia. The performative culture has become part of the fabric of mass, compulsory education, impacting on the ontological and epistemological foundations of the teacher and student in these late capitalist times. It has infiltrated education at all levels, from policy to homework, from teacher responsibilities to student

expectations, such that it is now perceived as a key motivator for educational reform and the resetting of expectations of pedagogy and learning (Burnard and White 2008, Ball 2003).

### **The performative culture and the repositioning of education**

In late-capitalist times education has become an increasingly contested space that is utilised by governments as a “major political issue” (Ball 2008). This has seen the repositioning of education through perspectives “dominated by the perspective of economics” exemplified by education as the “producer of labour and skills and values, like enterprise and entrepreneurship, and of commercial ‘knowledge’” (Ball 2008, 11). In other words the terrain of education is changing. The competing interests and philosophies of the social significance of education is being replaced with the “hyperactivism” of educational policy, as governments become more and more concerned with education as an economic tool (Dunleavy and O’Leary 1987). This is not new – economic discourses have been highly influential in education for centuries. However, what is new is that these economic interests have increasingly superseded the private interests in Australian education that are conceptualisations of the individual as self-fulfilled, self-actualised and self-reflective (Reid 2009). The privileging of this economic vision in Australian education is being understood as performative similarly to the reform agenda of elements of the United Kingdom and the United States.

The performative culture may best be understood as the linking of “educational achievement levels with economic development and international competitiveness between contemporary western democracies” (Burnard and White 2008, 667). In practice this has seen an increasing emphasis on the measurement and testing of students, on reporting using mandatory standards and systems, the implementation of state-sanctioned teaching methods and the rise of “modernist and bureaucratic” reform agendas that prioritise neo-liberal conceptions of education as business (Burnard and White 2008). Marshall argued that this reform agenda is part of “busno-power”, or the linking of neo-liberal agendas with pedagogy to shape the subjectivities of teachers and students (Marshall 1998). In a lecture given in 2010, Barry McGaw, the Chairman of the Australian Curriculum Assessment Reporting Authority (ACARA) framed Federal Government reforms in education as being driven by globalised economic competition between countries, so that Reading, Mathematics and Science can be valued only through comparison with other countries (McGaw 2010). The language used was of “best practice”, “accountability” and “competition”. Curiously absent was the learner – an implicit argument that the economic needs of the nation supersede the benefits to the individual?

There are three common articulations of performativity closely aligned with certain theorists that deal with specific manifestations of this shaping of the self. The first of these chronologically is the work of Jean-Francois Lyotard and his examination of the increasingly ‘performative’ political and bureaucratic mechanisms that correspond with certain ways of understanding knowledge and the self within those knowledge systems (Lyotard 1984). The individual performs according to measures of outputs of production and becomes known as representations of those measurements (Lyotard 1984). Part of Lyotard’s critique of performative university cultures concerns the changing role of the knowledge expert. The second articulation of performativity is closely aligned with the work of Judith Butler, who understands performativity through gender to argue that the self may best be considered as a masquerade, where the performance regulates a complex system of expectations and consequences (Butler 1997). Whilst Butler’s work opens a very interesting line on the performance of subjectivity this falls outside the limited scope of this paper.

The third articulation of performativity, and the most useful for this paper, argues that performativity is best understood as “a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change” (Ball 2003, 216). This critique of performative culture has been particularly powerful in the United Kingdom, with increasing attention being paid in the United States and Australia as educational researchers have explored the implications of economically driven education reform. Writing in the context of the United Kingdom, Ball argued that education reform concerns the ways that teachers are made subject through commodifying discourses that

seek to measure effectiveness, productivity, outputs and/or quality (Ball 2003, 216). Ball uses Lyotard's notion of performative terror to argue that many teachers find their values and ethical understandings challenged or displaced. In essence, teachers become enmeshed within relations of power that produce subject who live their "lives as neo-liberal professionals" (Ball 2003, 217). One consequence of this in schools has been the privileging of "the logics of accountants, lawyers and managers" over the judgment of the teachers (Ball 2008). The significance for Ball is that the performative culture has had the following consequences for the work of teachers: an increase in levels of emotional pressure and stress, an increased intensity of work, changed (diminished) social relationships, an increase in paperwork, an increase in surveillance of teachers' work and a developing gap in schools between senior staff and teaching staff (Ball 2008). There is also evidence that the performative culture has acted in certain ways to enshrine elements of disadvantage among school staff, despite the anti-discrimination rhetoric of the performative culture (Lumby 2009). In Australia this performative culture has also seen schools engage with corporate thinking where effective organisational reform is seen as best delivered by the market. As a result, many schools are now engaging with business models that use the media and marketing as strategies to 'be competitive' (Meadmore and McWilliam 2001). The privileging of competition within education is not new, however the high stakes involved, the relentless surveillance and the fluidity of competition are key features of the performative culture and are critical in establishing the performative (and modulated) self of both teachers and students.

### **What are the Societies of Control?**

I argue that this performative culture is representative of changing regimes of power from disciplinary to modulating effects of power. This extends Ball's contention that performativity is "a new mode of social (and moral) regulation" that should be considered as a shift from disciplinary societies to societies of control (Ball 2000, 2). This paper adds to Ball's understanding and utilisation of Deleuzian theory in three areas. Firstly, I argue that the shift from discipline to control entails an entirely new form of power, namely modulating power that is different from Foucaultian notions of disciplinary power. Secondly, I explore performativity, within the context of NAPLAN testing, the My Schools website and the issue of performance pay for teachers. Thirdly, I frame my work within the context of the Australian Federal Government's "Education Revolution".

In 1990, Gilles Deleuze published a short essay "Postscript on the Societies of Control" that argued for a new approach to understanding power within late modern society. For Deleuze, Foucault's work on disciplinary societies had reached its highpoint early in the twentieth century, and the subsequent decades had seen a gradual shift in technologies of power, such that "*societies of control* are in the process of replacing the disciplinary societies" (Deleuze 1992, 4). Living in the control society is typified by the following features:

[Life] is more closely and minutely monitored, regulated and policed than ever before, where personal privacy is *more* or less non-existent, and where information about our whereabouts, personal details and spending habits is ceaselessly collected by both governments and corporations (the two entities are now all but indistinguishable) (Newman 2009, 105).

Control societies can be contrasted with the disciplinary society which entails power being understood through the ideal of "environments of enclosure" (Deleuze 1992). In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, institutions were created and infiltrated modern life that had core practices of enclosing individuals. For Deleuze, the best exemplar of this was the factory, that had the goal and function "to concentrate; to distribute in space; to order in time; to compose a productive force within the dimension of space-time whose effect will be greater than the sum of its component forces" (Deleuze 1992, 3). These environments of enclosure included prisons, schools, hospitals, and families. One of the hallmarks of these enclosures was the way that they approached 'knowing' the individual through those mechanisms that focused on the body. These carceral institutions implemented a range of micropractices that had as their objective the disciplining of the body: "The human

body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it” (Foucault 1991, 138). Schools were placed where the disciplined bodies of staff and students, parents and principals, were the sites through which power was played out.

We can surely accept the general proposition that, in our societies, the systems of punishment are to be situated in a certain political economy of the body: (...) it is always the body that is at issue – the body and its forces, their utility and their docility, their distribution and their submission (Foucault 1991, 25).

For Deleuze “disciplinary society was what we already no longer were, what we had ceased to be” (Deleuze 1992, 3). Disciplinary power was being replaced by newer, more mobile technologies of power that he termed modulating effects of power. Deleuze described the major differences in this way:

Control is short-term and of rapid rates of turnover, but also continuous and without limit, while discipline was of long duration, infinite and discontinuous (Deleuze 1992, 6).

Whereas disciplinary power can be considered as dominated by moulds (such as fairly static enclosures/institutions that individuals are cast within), power in societies of control is a modulation; “a self-deforming cast that will continuously change from one moment to the other, or like a sieve whose mesh will transmute from point to point” (Deleuze 1992, 4). In disciplinary societies, power is contained within the institution – shifting place meant starting again within the relations of power. In societies of control, power is never constrained through enclosure, meaning that one is always subject, that there is no starting again due to shifting space. The limitless postponement of modulating power means that the subject is never finished with the technologies of power. The school student never starts again and will always be constituted by the various forms of measurement enacted at schools. For example, universities link entrance with forms of assessment done in schools. Those students who gain entrance in different ways are constituted in different ways, for example when we talk about mature-age entrance to universities or we typify those students in schools seen as coming from low socioeconomic areas as disadvantaged. In short, what can be communicated to these students is the practice of abstracting themselves in modulating ways long after they have left the enclosure of the secondary school.

For Deleuze societies of control were dominated by corporations rather than enclosures. Enclosures are static and rigid, rooted in particular contexts of space-time. Corporations are fluid and gaseous, in multiple places at differing times. They weave like a serpent rather than burrow like a mole (Deleuze 1992, 7). Power “operates through challenges, contests and highly comic group sessions” where the “brash rivalry” is presented as motivational and constructive (Deleuze 1992, 4-5). Deleuze argued that this corporate ideal was increasingly seducing education. He saw it in the rhetoric of performance pay for teachers, the shift from organised schooling to perpetual training, from the examination to continuous control (Deleuze 1992). He saw it in the increasing social and policy power of the market and marketing within education, and the “grabbing of control and no longer by disciplinary training” by the various organisations and authorities that disembodied education (Deleuze 1992, 6). I would argue that one of the ways that this can happen is through standardised testing where the teacher and the learner are removed from the equation to become bytes or bits of information that is used in settings spatially distant from the activity. In disciplinary societies the number was also utilised as a technology (think of the soldier’s serial number, or the student’s examination mark) but it is this abstraction of the subject, both temporal and spatial, from the use and context of the information that is one of the key features of the modulation of power. As well, with the changes in the assemblages of knowledge, the use of the information becomes amplified in its possibilities and impacts.

### **Does modulating power replace the disciplinary power?**

There is some debate as to the articulation of the shift to power in the work of Deleuze. In his essay he seems to argue that modulating power has replaced disciplinary power. However, I think it is better to think of

modulating power as overlaying the mechanisms of disciplinary power. Foucault argued that disciplinary power “hasn’t replaced all the others, but infiltrates the others, sometimes undermining them, (...) extending them, linking them” (Foucault 1991, 216). Savat (2009, 59) argues, as a corrective to Deleuze, that disciplinary power and modulating power need to coexist as they often use similar technologies albeit with different intensities:

They have, in other words, something resembling a different amplitude and frequency to one another, both of which, however, affect the same surface, and at times by the way of the same instrument.

This is the “principle of superposition”, where the antagonism between the disciplinary power and the modulating power is itself productive of the ‘dividual’ (Savat 2009, 58, Deleuze 1992). Colwell argues that it is this antagonism that allows a different result of power – the Deleuzian dividual as opposed to the disciplined and governmentalised individual of Foucault (Colwell 1996). The dividual is the product of modulating power and disciplinary power, in the same way that the Foucaultian subject is the product of “a triangle, sovereignty – discipline – government” (Foucault 1991, 102, Savat 2009). The difference between the two may be understood this way:

An individual is an extended unit, it is a number, like the prisoner in a cell or the labourer on an assembly line. A dividual, on the other hand, is a variation in an intensive parameter. Performance elements, large and small are informed, tracked and stored in the database, and results fed back to make fine adjustments in the codes that govern them as they unfold – a continuous ‘deformation’ of differences substitutes for the rigid form of the individual (Bogard 2009, 22).

If we think about this in terms of schools, it means that disciplinary power is still productive of subjectivities and knowledges. The body is still a site for normalising judgement and as such institution of the school is heavily governed by the technologies of hierarchical observation, normalising judgment and examination (Foucault 1991). However, the superpositioning of the modulating effects of power means that there are other, more subtle, covert and fluid forms of power that modulate conduct and organise the individual through grids that are more multiple, dynamic and amplified than in the past. Partly this is done through the technologies of simulations, where “the subject is increasingly no longer required to be present so to speak” (Savat 2009, 48). The simulation of aptitudes and characteristics through the collection of testing data stored in the database is an example of this simulation.

The database largely removes context from the equation, presupposing a level playing field imbued with meta-narratives that essentialise positionalities while breaking them down to small deformations that become the stuff to debate. For teachers and students it overlays the pastoral power embedded in community relationships and, instead, constitutes the subject as codes and data that are not usually understandable or coherent. The data is controlled, not by people, but by faceless acronyms far away, removing the temporal and spatial relationship (and reassuring elements) of coercive or disciplinary power to replace them with the nameless and the faceless. In short, modulating power is abstracting of commonly held notions as to what education should be. Savat (2009, 56) argues that when considering modulating power:

One is not made into a ‘good individual’. Whether one makes oneself such or not is an irrelevancy – in fact, it doesn’t even register since the modulatory machine simply does not contain a connection amongst components capable of even recognising it.

To challenge modulating power I argue education should be understood at the micro level – in local settings that value the subtleties, nuances and aberrations of educative relationships through which possibilities emerge as to how one can move in deterritorialising ways within increasingly enclosed terrains. Savat (2009) argues that the instruments of modulation are the simulation, the categorical sorting and the sample. The simulation may best be explained as the amplification of data being used to pre-empt and model the future,

such that the individual becomes exterior to the functioning of the institution because they are being pre-constituted. Categorical sorting becomes the “infinite comparative process that determines which norms, profiles or categories you are” (Savat 2009, 53-54). Lastly, the sample has overlaid the disciplinary examination because it requires no awareness – it can operate effectively with or without the consent of the participant. The examination (to be effective) requires the earnest effort of the subject because the sample uses the subject regardless of their engagement. I see these instruments of modulation as immersed in the uncertainty of the subject, and it is this that is part of the terrain of fear of control societies.

One of the key features of control societies concerns the ways that fear becomes omnipresent at all levels of human interaction. This fear may best be considered as a landscape that is “played upon and accelerated by various aspects of contemporary culture” (O’Sullivan 2006, 311). Performativity deploys this fear in unique and isolating (or abstracting) ways. One way to think of this in Deleuzian terms is to see fear as a key feature on a map (or a nodal point) that traps people within its orbit, giving the illusion of movement as they circulate around the feature but always maintaining an approximate distance from the feature. In other words, in control societies fear becomes a key player in how the self is ontologically positioned within the world. Fear becomes engaged in a dynamic relationship with competition, where each is a cause and an effect of the other.

This is not to argue that fear is unique to control societies. For example, in mediaeval times there were multiple fears such as damnation and witchcraft that captured the imagination of the population. However, fear in control societies may be distinguished in three ways from contemporary understandings. The first of these concerns amplitude. Contemporary life is increasingly influenced by the landscape of anxiety through the new and mass media that “select, isolate and exaggerate apparent threats and in doing so contribute to the alienation of contemporary life (we become spectators in a fearful world)” (O’Sullivan 2006, 311). The second of these is the isolating effect of fear – it has become productive of practices of isolation and abstraction from the self. In this way, we can argue that fear has become the technology of modulating power that sees the individual act upon the self through the performance elements, and the ways they are informed, tracked and stored in the database, the ways that they are used to further abstract the self from their world (Bogard 2009). Thirdly, and linked to the other two, fear has become small, intensified and bodiless. This micro-fear is fluid and multiple and has become increasingly difficult to name, and therefore discuss and understand. Above all it has become impersonal, removed, de-individualising and more terrifying as a result. This could be the manifestation of Bateson’s “double-bind”, where insanity (particularly schizophrenia) is a result of the inability to communicate – we can be understood as becoming fearful, but not being able to communicate that fear to another person because of the contradiction inherent (Bateson and Bateson 2005, Doni and Marabello 2009). This is consistent with Lyotard’s explanation of performativity as a system of “terror”, where the contemporary equivalents of the Spanish Inquisition rather than the medieval church or superstitious beliefs are the discourses of accountability and competition (Lyotard 1984). This is reinforced by Rose, who argues that it is the soul, rather than the body, that is increasingly the focus of the subjectivity of individuals: “technologies of subjectivity are established that enable strategies of power to infiltrate the interstices of the human soul” (Rose 1990, 8). I would argue that it is in this context that education in Australia can be increasingly characterised.

### **The situation in Australia**

The reform agenda and the “Education Revolution” should be understood within the context of a performative culture driven by a superficial understanding of the role and purpose of education in contemporary society. In earlier work I have argued that this performative culture has serious implications for the ways that students understand and locate themselves in increasingly complex and contradictory hierarchies that privilege certain narrow and limiting ways of being (Thompson 2010). The performative culture sees the teacher and the student as a series of inputs and outputs that is conceptualised as an economic assemblage. These conceptualisations are produced through, but not limited to, the culture of high

stakes testing such a part of the performative culture of education that has seen education return to practises of selection (Youdell 2004). In these examples, education reform in Australia is more reaction than revolution as: “A genuine education revolution would look to the future not the certainties of the past” (Reid 2009, 12).

In Australia this performative culture has manifested as three related ‘modulatory machines’. The first of these is the ongoing debate surrounding high stakes testing, such as the national benchmark testing NAPLAN delivered to Years 3,5,7,9 and the various state-based tertiary entrance examinations that Year 12 student sit. The second of these is closely linked with NAPLAN testing through the Federal Government initiative, the “My Schools Website”. The third of these is the ongoing debate about the nature and expectations of teachers’ work linked to the idea of performance pay. I posit that these policies and practices are manifestations of the performative culture, and will explore the detail to suggest ways that they concur with Deleuze's conception of societies of control.

These conversations are highly political, especially considering how they have been deployed in the context of a federal election in August 2010. I will briefly outline some of this context before exploring it in a Deleuzian lens. The purpose of using NAPLAN, the My Schools website and the notion of performance pay is not to engage in a critique of the validity and nature of standardised testing and/or the policy decisions being made. Rather, it is to consider them as educational practices that may be seen as exemplars of modulatory machines within performative cultures. Given the recent nature of the examples, there is a paucity of research and academic debate published, so evidence is often limited to anecdotal evidence, conjecture and the proliferation of online media comment.

#### *NAPLAN*

The National Assessment Program – Literacy And Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an annual assessment program that began in 2008 that is administered to all school students in Years 3,5,7,9. Test questions cover literacy and numeracy and consist of multiple choice, short answer and narrative answers. There is a proliferation of debate about NAPLAN from the perspectives of teachers, parents and policy makers. Largely, this debate focuses on whether it is a fair and reasonable assessment of student abilities within differing educational and societal contexts rather than challenging the assumptions and articulation of power that underpin these forms of assessment.

There is increasing anecdotal evidence that despite the ‘commonsense’ explanation of NAPLAN as a fair and accurate measure of student abilities, it seems to be deployed and experienced more as a mechanism of control than an innovative revolutionary initiative. Rather it appears to have become a modulatory machine that produces fearful dispositions from staff and students. Newspaper reports contain examples of this fear, ranging from stories of teachers cheating on student tests to ensure that they are evaluated in the most positive light, schools telling some students to stay at home for fear of dragging down their test results, to principals and teachers being told that their jobs depend on their NAPLAN achievements (Howells 2010, Harrison 2010, Barrett and Minus 2010). Conversations with teachers indicate that many schools are now focusing a significant part of their curriculum to strategies and content designed to maximise their scores. Reid suggests that in countries who have adopted, and later discarded, the high-stakes model there were a number of unintended (and often unhelpful) results (Reid 2009). These included the narrowing of the curriculum, schools becoming institutions that ‘hide’ information and even manipulate data, focus teaching intervention on a narrow band of students and tell educators what they already know – that the results largely reflect the school’s demographics (Reid 2009, 11). At the very least the knowledge being valued in this form of measurement is arborescent; or “a sad image of thought that is forever imitating the multiple” (Deleuze and Guattari 2005, 16). The certainty of this form of measurement is used in the categorical sorting of subjects. Anecdotal evidence suggests that teachers are feeling as though they are being evaluated through the performance of their class on this testing and are modulating their practice, even though they do not necessarily agree with these pedagogies – abstracting the teacher from their ethical and philosophical

understanding of their world (Ball 2003). Schools are setting up action groups of teachers in order to intervene in the pedagogy of those teachers whose results are lower than their peers. Temporary teachers are parlaying NAPLAN results as examples of their competence as they search for continuing contracts and permanent appointments (Bonnor 2010). In short, there are consequences of the productive nature of the modulation of power deployed far beyond what is understood through the political spin of the Education Revolution. By 'unmasking' the modulating effects of power we are in a better position to disrupt these corporate practices and assemblages in education.

What the Education Revolution produces is a performative articulation experienced throughout the length and breadth of the terrain of education. Teachers and students are increasingly valued, and 'know' themselves, as professionals and/or learners through their ability to influence and enact desirable outcomes measured by NAPLAN testing (Chilcott 2010). What is becoming obvious is the ways that this reinforces, rather than recasts the inequities and inequalities in the current terrain of education (Symes and Preston 1997, Chilcott 2010). This terrain constructs both how the subject can act, and what they can say about their positionality - the faciality machine that Deleuze and Guattari were at pains to point out traps the individual, not just through how they can act, but also those truth statements that they are entitled to speak (Deleuze and Guattari 2005).

This has increasingly been the key facet of the Education Revolution that has not been acknowledged at the government or systemic level. There seems a belief that education can be understood in terms of inputs and outputs and that accountability promises improvement. As Reid (2009, 11) points out, this accountability is premised on the ideas of education markets where accountability is dominated by competition that leads to "greater segregation and exacerbate achievement gaps in schooling". This approach to education is based on the promise of certainty, and a construction of the teacher/learner as a static, quantifiable object. Increasingly there has been higher stakes added to the high stakes testing. In January 2010, the Education Minister Julia Gillard launched the "My Schools Website" that allowed parents to access data that compared 'similar' schools. This site ranks schools against benchmarks and then compares them with schools from similar socioeconomic backgrounds. There is much evidence that this site has numerous problems, however, what increasingly seems the focus of the comparison is the simulation of teaching against external samples that often seem hard to justify (Bonnor 2010). There is media and anecdotal evidence that the ways that this data is used has added to the 'fear' of the teacher and the student (Barrett and Minus 2010, Thompson 2010). The 'double-bind' may be considered in the ways that the aspirations of education are increasingly used against those who work within them. This seems to manifest itself in the abstraction of the self from the 'professionalism' and the resultant inability to communicate what it is that is fearful - precisely because what they are fearful of is exactly that which they understand as fair and reasonable (Meng 2009). To paraphrase Reid, it is not accountability that promotes terror, it is the form of accountability and the way it has come to dominate discussion that is the manifestation of control societies (Reid 2009, 11).

As part of the 2010 Federal election in Australia, both political parties committed to performance pay for 'good' teachers, where a significant part of that description derived from a teacher's ability to improve student NAPLAN results or maintain pre-existing high standards. I would argue that this is an exemplar of the effect of modulating power. It employs the technology of simulation, as it is based on the risk assessment of (apparently) declining literacy, numeracy and science standards and the challenges this presents for the Australian economy in the global market (McGaw 2010). It also entails a simulation of what a good teacher and a good student should be and the link between these and economic rationalisations for the future. As well, there is also evident category sorting in that teachers will be sorted, into good, average and bad, with the commensurate financial rewards/disincentives offered. Thirdly, the examination of the teacher has been deindividualised (the Deleuzian individual) through basing performance pay (in its early conceptualisation) on samples outside of the ability of the teacher to interact with - NAPLAN testing and the MY Schools website. What it will do is enact another grid or line of performativity through which the teacher and/or student have to move and it will most likely be another form of the micro-fear of the control society.

What we are seeing through the increasingly seductive politics of performativity is the overlaying (superposition) of the database over the relational tradition in education. The NAPLAN testing, as a machine of the control society, is slowly becoming seen to be more significant in the judgement of education than the positive interaction between teachers and student. At one level, this could be understood in terms of the difference in care. Disciplinary power cares for the individual to the extent that it is able to be productive (Savat 2009). Modulating power, on the other hand, does not recognise the individual because its operations act to break down the 'rigid' individual to discrete information that can be stored and acted upon. As such, there is no care for the individual, rather there is care for the information gathered and the ways that it is used. For example, this could be phrased as the prioritising of performance elements over an holistic appraisal of teacher's work. As part of the media coverage of the Federal Government's My Schools Website, the then Federal Education Minister Julia Gillard encouraged parents to challenge teachers, to have "robust conversations" with them about the results of their class in the NAPLAN testing designed to "put pressure on people" (Coorey 2010). The increasing utilisation of measurement within the performative culture of education prioritises what can be measured, quantified, broken down and used in increasingly unsophisticated, but seductive or persuasive ways. By unsophisticated I mean that there is a bluntness to the datum collected, a bulldozerish machine that ploughs through subtle or nuanced articulations or understandings. That which can't be quantified or numerically evaluated becomes increasingly undervalued. This is also true of disciplinary power, but what distinguishes modulating power is the hyperintensity (or amplification) of its apparatus and connections. Newman argues that it is this "weaving of an intricate web of overlapping circuits of control, information gathering and identification" as opposed to the institutional context that differentiates modulating power (Newman 2009, 105). It is in these circuits that teachers and students (amongst others) are producing their self and their understandings of the world and their place in it.

### **So, what are the 'new weapons'?**

In his paper "Performativities and Fabrications in the Education Economy" Ball identifies two 'old weapons' that could be usefully deployed to disrupt the homogenous performative culture of education. I would like to briefly mention these three before suggesting two 'new weapons' as we wrestle with the idea that performativity gets in the way of schooling but is in fact a vehicle for changing what schooling (and its composite parts; learning, teaching, professionalism to name a few) is (Ball 2000, 16). I also think it is important to acknowledge that the performative culture is itself fluid and dynamic, and rather than seeing it only as oppressive, it may present opportunities for freer and deterritorialising movement in schools in ways perhaps not as obvious in previous articulations of schooling. Unmasking these possibilities for Deleuzian 'lines of flight' could be one of the key strategies of disrupting elements of the control societies (Deleuze and Guattari 2005).

The first 'old weapon' that Ball suggests can be useful in disrupting the performative culture is trust (Ball 2000, 17). As a result of the contemporary mechanisms of performativity the trust traditionally underpinning pedagogic relationships has been replaced by competition, such that there is now a shift from collective professions to the categorical sorting of winners and losers within "commercialised professionalism" (Ball 2000, 17). That this trust has been eroded at the policy level is clearly articulated by the removal of the teacher as a professional able to respond to the learning needs of individual students in their situated contexts to be replaced by assessment systems such as NAPLAN. Perhaps, as a strategy to disrupt the performative culture, we should be more concerned with relationships at the local level and privilege trust for oneself, and therefore trust for others, as a key platform of our "care for the self" (Foucault 1990). The second 'old weapon' is the use of humour, particularly "a certain rueful humour" that when applied to the assemblages of performativity in educational institutions allows an ironicisation of the contradictory and competitive education machine. Using humour as a strategy circumvents the abstraction of the self (particularly through performative fear) by being shared with others. Humour, particularly rueful humour, is collective in its deployment and may be increasingly useful in dedividualises the abstracted self. In Deleuzian terms, humour

can be rhizomatic; it bubbles along through landscapes, throwing up connections and possibilities that are fluid and creative (Deleuze and Guattari 2005).

I would like to build on the importance of trust and humour to suggest two 'new weapons' that we could deploy to disrupt the performative culture of education. Firstly, I would suggest that we need to address fear in our professional relationships. Fear is the organising principle of subjectivation in the control society. What makes it particularly persuasive in the ways that it traps the subject through the gridded 'micro-fear'. The fact that students and teachers in Australian schools are increasingly subject to an Education Revolution that promotes 'terror' needs to be disrupted by creating opportunities for fear to be communicated rather than isolated. In short, we need to promote strategies to talk about fear (maybe in trusting and humorous ways) within our interactions with colleagues and students.

Secondly, I would argue that we need to privilege research and practices of education as understood in local settings with localised subjects rather than samples and populations. Education needs to be understood not as a corporate venture, or as a competitive multinational, but as a set of local practices that are dynamic, important and productive that can rarely be understood in numerical ways. The challenge of modulating power, as Deleuze sees it, is for the modern subject to "discover what they are being made to serve, just as their elders discovered, not without difficulty, the telos of the disciplines" (Deleuze 1992, 447). What we are being made to serve, it appears to me, is the performative culture of education through the modulatory machines of NAPLAN testing, the My Schools website and the threat implicit in performance pay for teachers as an extension of the NAPLAN results. What we should be trying to do is to disrupt this culture in these and other ways to promote the critical freedom that Deleuze saw as possible (Semetsky and Lovat 2008).

## Conclusion

This paper does three things. Firstly it looks at theorising of the performative culture of education within the context of Deleuzean notions of control societies. Secondly, it argues that there is a new form or power that overlays disciplinary power, that of modulating power, and that this has implications of for schools and schooling in late modern times. Thirdly it has briefly looked at the increasingly performative culture of education in Australia and suggested some strategies that may be used to disrupt some of those negatives effects of modulating power. This has been a theoretical paper, and as such it finished with more questions or possibilities for future endeavour. The first of these concerns researching many of the theoretical assumptions. How are schools and the subjects within /without fearful and how does this impact on their self and their world? In what ways are the students positioned as learners within the performative culture, and how will this construct their understandings of the good citizen as we move further into the 21<sup>st</sup> century? What opportunities are there for subjects to resist – how can they deterritorialise the enclosed spaces of schools, and how do they negotiate for themselves (if at all) freer spaces and moments? Lastly, what are the 'new weapons' that schools and those involved in schooling are currently deploying, and how effective are they in disrupting the modulating effects of power that abstract the individual from their world?

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