

Discipline (or Punishment) in Post-apartheid South African Schools: A Historical-analytical Reflection

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ABSTRACT In the history of the South African schooling system authorities have used two contrasting ways of maintaining order, stability and normality in schools. These are, discipline¹ employed to enforce general rules governing learners' conduct and punishment² that involved the intentional infliction of physical pain. In this paper the researchers proffer a historic-analytic of these concepts to show that they are not only distinct, but indeed opposite, if not incompatible educational methods. Drawing from the colonial-apartheid prefect system tradition, the paper maintains that prefectship used punishment as a form of discipline. And yet, global policies attest that punishment whose central features are authority, and inflicting pain on an offender is incompatible with a humane democratic society. To conclude, the researchers defend a notion of learner self-discipline that treats learners as self-legislating agents able to contribute to democratic governance in post-apartheid South African schools.