

Crisis as a Vehicle for Educational Reform: The Case of Citizenship Education

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ABSTRACT: The authors argue that much of the discourse and reform in the area of citizenship education presently reflects a cult mentality that fails to consider the nuances of reasoned educational reform. Although the pattern of ill-conceived changes is endemic to the history of educational reform, it is notoriously unhelpful in producing substantial, lasting, or effective curricular change that understands and fosters democratic citizenship. The authors suggest that a more careful and nuanced examination of citizenship education is required to understand and promote participatory democratic citizenship. They also suggest this examination ought to include some consideration of the necessary psychological dispositions that promote active democratic participation.

RÉSUMÉ: Les auteurs soutiennent qu'une bonne partie des discours et des réformes dans le domaine de l'enseignement civique reflète aujourd'hui une mentalité culte qui oublie de prendre en considération les nuances de la réforme d'enseignement raisonné. Bien que le modèle des changements mal conçus soit endémique à l'histoire de la réforme de l'enseignement, il est indiscutablement vain de produire un changement curriculaire effectif, durable ou important qui comprend et encourage la citoyenneté démocratique. Les auteurs proposent qu'un examen plus détaillé et plus précis de la formation civique soit exigé pour comprendre et promouvoir la citoyenneté démocratique participative. Ils suggèrent aussi que cet examen doit tenir compte des tendances psychologiques nécessaires qu'il promet.

Introduction

A recent report investigating the poor performance of New Brunswick students on international tests relative to their counterparts in Alberta,

suggests that education reform in the former province is driven by questionable ideological assumptions and commitments rather than by reliable research and reasoned decision-making:

Previously proposed solutions have typically represented one interest or another. They have been based on personal experience, and on personal commitment to one model or another. They have fueled the divisiveness of the situation to such an extent that few will now speak candidly about the issues or about appropriate solutions. Those who venture solutions, do so with personal and anecdotal information rather than with information about the whole system. (Scraba, 2002, n.p.)

A policy audit in Ontario reached similar conclusions about educational reform in that province: "The provincial educational policies introduced over the six years were developed and enacted without much demonstrable attention to empirical evidence about what would improve teaching and learning" (Leithwood, Fullan & Watson, 2003, p. 24). Of course, what qualifies as quality teaching and learning cannot be answered through empirical study alone. In order to identify the best practices in the area of citizenship education, for example, we must achieve a clear understanding of appropriate educational goals within the area. In addition to relevant content knowledge, we believe the goals of citizenship education must include providing students with a sense of political voice and personal agency.

New Brunswick and Ontario are far from alone in their tendency to introduce poorly conceived educational reforms based on a sense of current or impending crisis. In *The Impossible Dream: Education and the Search for Panaceas*, Hunt (2002) points out that the history of public education reform in the United States contains many examples of attempts to reshape curriculum on the basis of narrow ideological commitments: "They seem to believe that their salvific action alone will rescue the world of education from the forces of darkness and superstition, selfishness and traditionalism" (p. xvi). Most notably, the Soviet Union's launching of Sputnik in the late 1950s and the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 both prompted fundamental educational reform in the U.S. based on the discourse of crisis.

The discourse of crisis is often employed by ideologues to justify major educational reform in Canada. The federal government is particularly adept at using such language to rationalize its intervention in an area of provincial constitutional jurisdiction. In 1961, Ellen Fairclough, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, utilized Cold War

rhetoric to justify federal intervention in technical and vocational education:

The nations of the Western world are today faced with a gigantic struggle, on many fronts, with the world of Communism. Our best minds in the world of science and technology have not ceased to warn us that if we are to win the economic, scientific and intellectual struggle with Communism we must without delay apply ourselves to a sweeping new approach to education. (Fairlough, 1961, n.p.)

The perceived lack of support by immigrant groups for the war effort in the 1940s, massive post war immigration in the 1940s and 1950s, rising tensions between French and English Canadians in the sixties and seventies, and the sense of exclusion among youth, women, cultural minorities and persons with disabilities were all cast as crises to justify federal intervention in citizenship education. The discourse of crisis has become more pronounced over the years, and the state's interest in citizenship education as a vehicle to promote national identity and unity has intensified accordingly (Sears, 1996). The discourse of crisis not only leads to ill-conceived educational reforms, but is also employed to advance particular ideological agendas. Robertson (1998), for example, contends that the discourse of crisis has been used by conservative ideologues in Ontario and Alberta as an excuse to implement a business driven schooling agenda based on human capital assumptions.

In her 2001 Massey Lectures, "The Cult of Efficiency," Janice Gross Stein (2001) suggests that the discourse of crisis is ubiquitous in contemporary public debate in Canada. She argues that public discussion of health care and education in particular is overtaken by a cult mentality that precludes meaningful dialogue about thoughtful and effective reform. A cult mentality blindly commits to simplistic slogans and dogma while remaining unreflective about attending assumptions, implications and alternatives. In this article, we argue that much of the current discourse and reform in the area of citizenship education reflects the cult mentality referred to by Stein. Although this pattern is endemic to the history of educational reform, it is notoriously unhelpful in producing substantial, lasting or effective curricular change that understands and fosters democratic citizenship. We conclude the article by suggesting that a more careful and nuanced examination of citizenship education and related schooling activities is required to understand and promote participatory democratic citizenship. We also suggest this examination must include consideration of the necessary

psychological and character dispositions that promote such participation.

The Rise of Citizenship Education

Kymlicka and Norman (2000) point out that, "the last ten years have witnessed a remarkable upsurge of interest in two topics amongst political philosophers: the rights and status of ethnocultural minorities in multi-ethnic societies, and the virtues, practices and responsibilities of democratic citizenship" (p. 1). Cairns (1993) similarly observes that, "the reawakening of scholarly interest in citizenship has been dramatic" (p. 3). He cites the proliferation of scholarly work in the field over the past decade, including hundreds of new books, the establishment of a new journal focusing on citizenship studies, as well as substantial attention to the subject in professional journals.

A key force driving this interest in citizenship has been a sense of crisis in democracies around the world about the disengagement of citizens from participation in even the most basic elements of civic life. This concern is commonly expressed in both the academic literature and the popular media. Table 1 below provides an overview of the overlapping crises of ignorance, alienation and agnosticism underlying this widespread concern particularly as regards young people (For a more complete discussion see, Sears & Hyslop-Margison, 2006).

In addition to the substantial consensus that disengagement poses a considerable threat to the health and stability of democratic societies, there is also widespread agreement that education must play a key role in addressing the problem. This belief has precipitated a flurry of policy and program development in many countries. Examples include national initiatives such as the citizenship requirement of the National Curriculum in England (Kerr, 2000), the development and implementation of *Discovering Democracy* in Australia (Curriculum Corporation, 2005) and the publication of *The Civic Mission of Schools* in the U.S. (Carnegie Corporation of New York & CIRCLE: Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement, 2003), as well as international programs such as the declaration of 2005 as the Year for Citizenship Through Education by the Council of Europe (Council of Europe, 2005). While there have been no national policies or program initiatives in Canada, almost all provinces have revised their social studies curricula resulting, in most cases, in more explicit attention to citizenship education. This includes, for example, the reintroduction of designated high school civics courses in Ontario and

British Columbia (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2005; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005).

Table 1. The Crises of Citizenship.

Crises	Manifested by	Signs of Health
Ignorance of civic knowledge and processes	Disengagement from formal politics (e.g., voting, joining political parties)	Re-engagement with political processes
Alienation from politics and civil society	Disengagement from nonformal civil associations (e.g., volunteering, non-violent community activism)	Active participation in civil society
Agnosticism about the values of democracy and democratic citizenship	Rise in political and social extremism (e.g., neo-Nazi and skin-head groups as well as violent expressions of religious fundamentalism) Rise in violent/ destructive forms of political activism (e.g., "Battle in Seattle," protest about Mohammed cartoons)	Non-violent and respectful political activity (e.g., peaceful demonstrations and political action campaigns)

The Language of Crisis in Citizenship Education

The degree to which a sense of crisis drives international citizenship education is striking. Citizens, especially young ones, are often described as ignorant of the basic information and ideas required to function as citizens; alienated from political and civic processes; agnostic about

democratic values such as open mindedness, respect, and appreciation of diversity.

In regard to the crisis of ignorance, The Civics Expert Group in Australia (1994) coined the phrase "civic deficit" (p. 132) to capture the idea of the pervasive ignorance among that nation's young citizens. It was no accident that they chose to use the term deficit just at the time – 1994 – when Western liberal democracies had a definite sense of crisis about reducing or eliminating fiscal deficits. The phrase was chosen to convey the urgency of the problem. The Advisory Group on Citizenship (1998) in England borrowed the language of deficit in their report to describe English students' knowledge of national history and government structures. In Canada a series of books, articles and reports over many years with provocative titles such as *So Little for the Mind* (Neatby, 1953), *What Culture? What Heritage?* (Hodgetts, 1968), "Privatizing the Mind: The Sundering of Canadian history, the Sundering of Canada" (Bliss, 1991) and *Who Killed Canadian History?* (Granatstein, 1998) have sought to raise alarm in this country about widespread civic and cultural ignorance among young people.

The crisis of alienation has, if anything, been more central to proponents of citizenship education around the world. Carole Hahn (1998) reported low levels of trust and very high levels of disengagement among young people in four European countries (Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and England) and the United States and the Advisory Group on Citizenship in England (1998, p.16) wrote of a "potentially explosive alienation" of young people from government institutions. In Canada, a series of reports from the Centre for Research and Information on Canada (2001) have lamented various manifestations of youth disengagement, particularly record low voter turnouts among 18-22 year-olds. One of these reports was provocatively sub-titled, "Is Canadian Democracy in Crisis?"

Finally, while not as widespread as the concerns about ignorance and alienation, there is a range of writing on the crisis of agnosticism – a lack of belief in the values of democratic citizenship: values rooted in concern for the common good, what Bellah (1986) and his colleagues in the United States called "habits of the heart." This deficit or absence in democratic values is sometimes evident in extreme behaviour such as radical politics of the right (skin-heads, neo-Nazis) or left (anti-globalization anarchists) but more often shows up, according to Bellah's group, in pervasive individualism which causes citizens to focus on private rather than public goods and to eschew civic associations. Barber

(1992) in the United States and Annette (2005) in England have raised similar concerns and argued for citizenship education in the civic republican tradition focused on developing not only the necessary knowledge and skills but on fostering the disposition to put the common good at least on par – and sometimes above – personal preference. The ubiquitous concern for promoting “social cohesion” which shows up in policy discourse in Canada is often rooted in the same set of concerns (see, for example, Russell, 2002 & Joshee, 2004).

The Crisis of Ignorance

The empirical evidence supporting the perceived crisis of ignorance facing citizenship and citizenship education is rather thin. McAllister (1998), an Australian political scientist writing about the so called Crisis of Ignorance argues that “ever since mass opinion surveys first began to be used in the 1940s they have consistently shown that most citizens are anything but knowledgeable about politics. The majority know little about politics and possess minimal factual knowledge about the operation of the political system” (pp. 7-17). Osborne (2000) advances a similar view regarding the historical knowledge possessed by Canadians. While scholars such as Bliss and Granatstein contend with some bluster that there is a significant decline in knowledge about Canadian history, Osborne argues that available evidence does not actually support this view. He suggests that Canadians' lack of historical knowledge is not novel, but has concerned educators and policy makers for more than a hundred years.

There is a second fundamental question related to the supposed crisis of ignorance: What is it, precisely, that Canadians do not know? The Dominion Institute initiated a series of surveys that received significant attention from the Canadian media. An analysis of some surveys conducted by the Institute raises concerns about their relevance to citizenship education. For example, one survey asked participants to identify actor Michael J. Fox as the Canadian on a list of various celebrities. Even questions that address political and historical knowledge more directly, including the name of the first Prime Minister or the names of the four original provinces, are not particularly essential to good citizenship.

In our view the knowledge necessary for citizenship is much more complex than that assessed by surveys such as those done by the Dominion Institute. Democratic ideas are understood and operationalized differently by societies over time and in varying

contexts. In truth very little is known about how young people understand complex concepts like the consent of the governed, the rule of law, and human rights. Authors of a recent study on young people's conceptions of democratic participation concluded "for the most part, youth participants in this study exhibited a fairly sophisticated understanding of voting and its place in the political system" (Chareka & Sears, 2006, in press). This study is an example of a growing body of work on young people's conceptions of key ideas related to citizenship but much more needs to be known before large scale conclusions are drawn.

We are concerned about levels of ignorance among Canadian citizens but recognizing that such ignorance has persisted over many years and is often related to arcane historical and political facts reduces the sense of impending crisis. With the sense of crisis alleviated, there is more time to generate a substantive investigation on the degree and nature of citizen ignorance, how this lack of knowledge relates to citizenship, and what might be done to improve the situation. Ultimately, we need to be far more specific about the types of knowledge students require to become active democratic citizens.

The Crisis of Alienation

The voting rates, numbers of young people joining political parties, levels of trust of politicians and public institutions indicate that many young citizens are in fact alienated from politics in both established and emerging democracies. Perhaps the critical indicator of this alienation is the worrisome decline in voting rates. As we noted above, Canadian voting rates have declined in three straight federal elections to a record low of 61% in the 2000 federal election (Centre for Research and Information on Canada, 2001). This same troubling pattern is reflected in democracies around the world with the most significant decline always among younger voters. While much of the rhetoric in citizenship education attributes this decline to growing cynicism among young people, a closer examination of the evidence indicates a more complex situation. Surveys of young Canadians suggest, "they are no more cynical than older Canadians" (Centre for Research and Information on Canada, 2001, p. 1), but exercise that cynicism in different ways.

Buckingham (1999) believes there is a much more positive way of reading young people's political disengagement. That is, young people have good reason to be alienated from a system that does not take their involvement seriously. He suggests that the deficit may not rest with the

young people, but with a political system closed to meaningful consultation and participation. Hahn's (1998) interviews with young people in Britain seem to confirm this position. Young citizens cited being ignored and not being taken seriously by politicians as key factors in their alienation. Similarly, Chareka and Sears (2006) found Canadian youth generally avoided voting because they viewed voting as an ineffective vehicle to express their political voice or provoke meaningful social change. The Centre for Research and Information on Canada (2001) suggests that structural factors such as Liberal Party hegemony, the permanent voters list and the First Past The Post election system might all contribute to young voter disaffection in this country. The centre argues that young people are no less alienated than their parents, but in the absence of a political commitment to a traditional party are less likely to vote out of a sense of duty.

Foster (1997) similarly contends that democratic and civic structures may need more attention than alienated citizens. Despite rhetoric to the contrary, she makes the case that the concerns of women are largely ignored in the form and substance of citizenship education. She points out that recent Australian citizenship education initiatives lack "a sound theoretical framework for conceptualizing women's relations with citizenship" leaving women and girls feeling excluded from the civic enterprise. Virtually all the female participants in another study explicitly excluded themselves from any future participation in several forms of formal political activity including running for office not because of lack of interest but because of a deep sense of removal from formal political processes. Osborne (2000) summarizes these structural deficiencies by observing that, "the democratic deficit is the symptom of a structural problem that cannot be fixed through better citizenship education, but only through changes in the political system" (p. 126).

While Hahn (1998) and Chareka and Sears (2005) found students largely alienated from the formal political process they did not find them alienated from all forms of political participation. Young people in both studies were very willing to participate in community activities when they could see themselves actually making a difference. This finding is echoed in Gauthier's (2002) research on the political participation of Quebec youth, which concludes that while there is a definite drop in participation within traditional party politics there are clear signs of a developing new sense of what it means to be civically engaged. In spite of popular conceptions, Gauthier concluded that young people are not

apathetic about political involvement since they are active in various other aspects of political and community life.

Although longitudinal data from advanced industrial democracies reveals that, "there is clear evidence of a general erosion of support for politicians" and formal politics, there is also indication that one "response to popular dissatisfaction has been a move toward participatory democracy" (Dalton, 1999, p. 63). Social movements such as feminism, environmentalism and, more recently, considerable opposition to global trade and monetary structures suggest an emerging grass roots form of citizen action. Protests against the war in Iraq brought millions of citizens into the streets worldwide. While reports indicate that protesters included a wide range of ages and social classes, many young citizens assumed leadership roles in organizing these rallies.

The Crisis of Agnosticism

What about growing concerns with the apparent lack of youth commitment to certain fundamental democratic values? Is it true that young citizens reject such basic democratic values as a respect for diversity, open mindedness, or a commitment to the common good? Glazer (1996) argues that fear of national disintegration lies at the heart of many recent public debates about American citizenship education. For example, some educators (Famularo, 2001) see recent efforts at inclusion, such as initiatives to introduce multicultural curricula, as undermining civic harmony. The same fear is reflected in Canadian educational debates and government policy decisions. The phrase *social cohesion* figures prominently in federal initiatives and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada's (CMEC) Pan-Canadian Educational Research Agenda identifies "Citizenship and Social Cohesion" as a central theme. In response to concerns about social disintegration, "social cohesion is invoked as a corrective measure that can help to increase social solidarity and restore faith in the institutions of government" (Joshee, 2004, p. 147). The desire to promote social cohesion implies an underlying fear that industrialized societies confront serious fragmentation in the face of economic globalization and growing cultural diversity. Citizenship education is considered a bulwark against such decay.

Ethnically motivated attacks on foreign residents in Europe and the United States or tensions between black and white students at Canadian high schools might suggest a serious deficit of democratic

values among young citizens. However, careful analysis indicates the situation is not that simple. Hahn (1993) reports that European and American students are very concerned about racism in their societies. So much so that they support limiting free speech and access to the press for identified racist groups. While one might argue that willingness to suppress basic rights for some groups is evidence of low levels of commitment to certain democratic values, it does demonstrate that many young people are genuinely concerned with ethno-cultural diversity, a fundamental requirement for the success of pluralistic democracies.

Canadian historian and nationally syndicated columnist Gwynne Dyer (2000) has written and lectured widely about how multicultural and immigration policies are successfully transforming Canada into a more diverse, tolerant, and stable society. The IEA study also reports very positive results related to students' acceptance of diversity. When asked if immigrants should have the opportunity to keep their own language, 77% of the students agreed or strongly agreed. On the question of being permitted to maintain their own customs and lifestyle, 80% agreed or strongly agreed and 81% felt immigrants should have the same rights as everyone else. Overall, the authors of the report on the study conclude that, "attitudes toward immigrants are generally positive" (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald and Schulz, 2001, p. 105). There is of course concern with the reliability of self-reporting as a data collection practice and we do not suggest there is no reason to be concerned about citizen commitment to the democratic values of open mindedness, tolerance, and respect and concern for the common good. However, we believe the situation is probably far more complex than typically understood.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Generally, there is a paucity of evidence regarding what children and young people actually know about democratic citizenship, what their attitudes are, and what kinds of educational programs might prove effective. Before developing and implementing sweeping reform, the development of knowledge within these areas is essential to citizenship education. Drawing on examples of policy and program reform in several jurisdictions, Sears and Hughes (2006) set out four conditions for providing a substantive base for reform: broadening and deepening professional and public discussion of issues; clearly defining what we are about – in this case the nature of democratic citizenship; taking a long

view – that is regarding reform as a long term recursive enterprise rather than the implementation of a ‘magic bullet;’ and building a knowledge base to support reform.

Janice Gross Stein (2001) argues that important public policy debates are never easy and rarely over. Indeed, part of necessary messiness of democratic dialogue involves ongoing debate between competing interests and the perpetual questioning of the status quo. Rushing to solutions with the hope they will permanently settle issues is almost never a good idea and certainly has not served us well in education generally or citizenship education in particular.

Ian Davies and his colleagues (Davies, Gorard, & McGuinn, 2005) contend that would be reformers often use the sense of crisis around citizenship education as a means “to gain curricular footholds” (p. 342). As illustrated above, on investigation many crises prove to be less immediate than their purveyors would suggest. For example, when Osborne (2000) probed Granatstein’s claims of rapidly declining knowledge of Canadian history he found the evidence lacking. He demonstrates that low levels of historical knowledge among the Canadian population is not new but has been of concern to educators and policy makers for 100 years or more and has precipitated at least four previous *crises of ignorance* in the field of history education which is often closely linked to citizenship education.

The same phenomenon of recurring crises can be seen in citizenship and citizenship education in Canada as well. In 1919 delegates from across Canada gathered in Winnipeg for The National Conference on Character Education in Relation to Canadian Citizenship. In his opening address to the conference Sir James Aitkins (1919), Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, touched on themes that show up in recurring concerns about citizenship for the next century: how to develop informed patriotism in citizens; how to balance commitment to community with individual rights and liberties; and how to ensure social cohesion in diverse societies (see also, Sears, 1996).

To point out that these concerns have been around for a century or more is not to say they are unimportant. It is to say, however, there is probably no need to panic about them and rush toward misguided solutions. Osborne does not argue that current levels of historical knowledge are adequate, but he does contend that any substantial debate about what to do about them has to take historical context into account. Recognizing the persistent nature of the issues we face should

allow time for careful data gathering and thoughtful development and implementation of policy and programs in response.

Taking the long view does not necessarily mean waiting a long time to act. Rather, it calls for recursive action – moving forward tentatively while continuing to collect evidence and making adjustments to reforms as necessary. Policy and program developers in England realized full well that “the evidence base concerning citizenship education prior to 2002 was weak” (Cleaver et al., 2005, p. 1) but they moved forward to implement the citizenship curriculum order anyway. They also put into place a multilayered system of monitoring and assessment including longitudinal and cross sectional research on school policies and programs and student progress as well as including citizenship as an area for investigation in the regular school inspections (Cleaver et al., 2005). All of these mechanisms feed information back into the system and provide a basis for adjusting policies and programs. It seems to us this kind of recursive action, moving forward on what we know with careful monitoring of progress to inform adjustments down the road is a sensible model for reform in public policy generally and citizenship education in particular. We need to move away from our addiction to quick and permanent fixes advanced more by ideology than informed discussion.

In regard to defining what position we hold on citizenship education, we maintain that important democratic ideas are complex, dynamic and often mean different things to different people. Sometimes those differences exist across time or contexts but often the same concept can be understood somewhat differently by people in the same time and place; that is, democracy, its practices and values are contested concepts. Take the idea of democratic government as the “the consent of the governed,” for example. Almost everyone would agree that rule by “the people” is a necessary condition for democracy but there is wide disagreement about what precisely that means. One area of contention might be who should constitute the governed whose consent is required? In ancient Athens, widely acknowledged as the first democracy, those included as citizens represented a minority of the total population: women, foreigners and slaves, although certainly governed, were not asked for their consent.

In contemporary Canada where a much larger percentage of the population is entitled to play a role in selecting those who govern, not everyone is included. Under the Canada Election Act voting is restricted to citizens over the age of 18 who meet particular residency

requirements. There are a number of organizations, in Canada and elsewhere, that feel age restrictions exclude younger people from legitimate participation in their own governance and argue that the voting age should be lowered. Similarly there have been a number of court cases challenging restrictions on prisoners voting culminating with a recent, controversial decision by the Supreme Court to strike down the restrictions. The point is simply this, while all agree that in democracies citizens have a right to participate in their own governance, exactly who gets included is contested.

A central premise for us is that students can and should construct sophisticated and complex understandings of these kinds of concepts. They can know something of the diverse ways in which particular democratic ideas have been, are and might be understood and operationalized to develop well-articulated views about the best way to understand and use them in their own context. For that to happen, learners must be touched in ways that are profound, insightful and discerning. Such learning takes place in a social context, takes into account the prior knowledge learners bring to the situation, puts them in active contact with a range of ideas different from the ones they hold, and stimulates reshaping and extension of their own ideas. Deep learning, then, cannot be abstract and remote; it must be embedded in situations in which the abstractions related to democratic citizenship find tangible, visible and public expression that can be put to the test.

With regards to democratic dispositions, the work of American pragmatist John Dewey, when properly understood, is especially helpful in highlighting the central role education plays in fostering the required psychological dispositions that promote engaged citizenship among students. Dewey (1916) believed that public education offers the best available vehicle to prepare learners to achieve their full democratic potential. He suggests this aim is achieved by simulating within the schooling environment the various elements of an appropriately designed and fully functioning democratic society:

Upon the educational side, we note first that the realization of a form of social life in which interests are mutually interpenetrating, and where progress, or readjustment, is an important consideration, makes a democratic community more interested than other communities in deliberate and systematic education. Since a democratic society repudiates the principle of external authority, it must find a substitute in voluntary disposition and interest; these can be created only by education. (p. 87)

Dewey's basic point here is that democratic citizens must be provided with the educational opportunity to develop a sense of political voice within various social arrangements that mimic the political relations of democratic society. If students are not so disposed through an education based on participatory decision-making, then it is entirely unrealistic to expect they will be prepared to accept and fulfill their democratic citizenship responsibilities as adults. The most fundamental knowledge students require is the knowledge that as public agents they can make a political difference in their society.

Dewey rejected the notion that a child's education should be viewed as merely coded preparation for civic life, during which disjoint facts and ideas are conveyed by the teacher and memorized by the student to be utilized or recalled somewhere in the future. Schools are an extension of community, and the student should be encouraged to operate as an active member, pursuing interests in cooperation with others toward social improvement. According to Dewey, it is a process of self-directed learning, assisted by the cultural resources teachers afford, that best prepares a child for the demands of responsible membership within the democratic community. Democratic participation is far less a function of various bits of knowledge than it is about a sense of personal and collective political empowerment.

Above all other considerations, Dewey's (1916) greatest educational concern was fostering the psychological dispositions in students to create engaged, interested and politically active learners pursuant to democratic socialization aims:

A society which makes provision for participation in its good of all its members in equal terms and which secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through interaction of the different forms of associated life is in so far democratic. Such a society must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder. (p. 115)

If students are not disposed toward these basic democratic dispositions through schooling, it is unrealistic to expect them to meet the corresponding imperatives of democratic citizenship.

In writing about some of the fledgling democracies in Eastern Europe, George Schöpflin (2001) makes the same point arguing that it is possible to have the form of democracy without an underlying commitment to democratic dispositions. He writes that "post-communist systems were consensual, a consent that was expressed regularly in

elections and through other institutions, but were not democratic in as much as democratic values were only sporadically to be observed" (p.110). Schöpflin argues that societies have what he calls first and second order rules. "First order rules include the formal regulation by which every system operates, like the constitution, laws governing elections, procedures for the settlement of conflict and the like" – the form of democracy. "Second order rules are the informal tacit rules of the game that are internalized as part of the doxa" – the spirit of democracy. In a democracy these second order rules include "key democratic values of self-limitation, feedback, moderation, commitment, responsibility, [and] the recognition of the value of competing multiple rationalities" (p. 120). In our view, citizenship education programs must give attention to developing both conceptual understanding and a commitment to these kinds of democratic values or dispositions.

In spite of platitudes about preparing students for democratic citizenship, the general attitude of educators seems more consistent with Gene Hackman's character in *Crimson Tide*. Hackman, playing the captain of a nuclear submarine, says to his first officer "we are here to defend democracy, not practice it." Too often citizenship education in schools is sterile and designed to teach about democracy rather than practice it, and students learn lessons different from the ones taught in their social studies class about exercising one's democratic rights. As Dewey (1916) compellingly argued, education for democratic citizenship needs to model democracy and schools must provide students with the dispositional qualities necessary to cultivate a far greater sense of political voice.

The cult mentality demanding reactionary citizenship education reform is often based on dogma, reactionary ideological agendas and the questionable crises of ignorance, alienation and agnosticism. A more effective approach to reform should appreciate the complex and multifarious nature of democratic participation, view knowledge of history and politics as one element in a more sophisticated concept of citizenship, and understand the fundamental importance of fostering participatory dispositions in schools. Indeed, scholars in the field have a responsibility to provide deeper analysis about the various issues related to citizenship education and, in the words of Janice Gross Stein, move the public conversation "from cult to analysis."

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