

The Essential Moral Dimensions of Citizenship Education: What Should We Teach?

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ABSTRACT: This paper presents an argument for reconceptualizing citizenship education as a kind of moral education. Before this can happen, we need to turn attention away from the current debates between cosmopolitans and nationalists about the appropriate sphere for political allegiance. These distract us from more important concerns about the content of citizenship education. The debate between cosmopolitans and nationalists is briefly described in order to clarify the questions and illustrate several issues relevant to educators. This discussion is followed by an argument for teaching future citizens about moral disagreement and conflict as a way to prepare them to participate effectively and responsibly in political discourse.

RÉSUMÉ: Ce papier soulève un débat; celui de reconceptualiser l'éducation civique en une sorte d'éducation morale. Avant que ceci n'arrive, nous devons détourner votre attention des débats actuels entre cosmopolites et nationalistes sur le milieu propre à l'appartenance politique; ce qui nous éloigne de sujets beaucoup plus importants comme celui du contenu de l'éducation civique. On décrit ici brièvement la polémique entre cosmopolites et nationalistes afin d'élucider les questions et illustrer plusieurs problèmes auxquels les enseignants font face. Un raisonnement y fait suite, expliquant aux futurs citoyens les désaccords et conflits moraux qu'ils peuvent rencontrer et ainsi les préparant à participer efficacement et sérieusement à la vie politique.

Introduction: Citizenship Education as Moral Education

All education which develops power to share effectively in social life is moral. (John Dewey, 1916)

This paper stems from the premise that citizenship education, sometimes referred to as political education, is a form of moral education with a particular set of aims. Foremost among these is the goal of learning to live with others. This initial claim is analogous to the statement that political philosophy is a form of moral argument (Nozick, 1989; Kymlicka, 1990). Moral argument in political philosophy is often about various interpretations of ethical ideals that people cherish (such as freedom and justice) and the application of these ideals to particular cases and concerns. When brought into any public sphere (such as a policy forum or town meeting to name two) the argument becomes part of the ongoing communication between citizens who are trying to understand one another. If they are committed to living peaceably and fairly together in a pluralistic, democratic society, such communication is obviously essential, as it is to the pursuit of any common goal in a society.

Seen in a similar light, citizenship education is (or should be) about preparing citizens to constructively engage in an ongoing moral argument about how to live together, in other words, how to participate in various public spheres characterized by diverse perspectives and understandings. Despite the differences between people's beliefs and desires, there will occasionally be shared commitment to finding and furthering some common good. On this view, citizenship education is about learning ways to live peaceably and fairly with each other, in the face of conflicting interests and values. Thus, the thoughtful examination of ethical ideals and constructive communicative practices should be at the heart of this educational enterprise.

However, much of the contemporary discussion about citizenship education takes educators in another direction, in particular, to debate about where peoples' political allegiances ought to lie. Arguments between cosmopolitans, who want to prepare citizens of the world, and nationalists, who want to teach mainly particular democratic traditions, distract from more important questions of what citizens need to know and why. Questions of purpose rather than polity can direct attention back to the dispositions and understandings required for responsible citizenship, or the necessary conditions for effective participation in the many public arenas people find themselves in. I believe these are essential questions, and with a few notable exceptions (Callan, 1997; Sehr, 1997; Vokey, 2001) are infrequently asked with education in mind.

Because of the persistent interest in political allegiance, the contour of the debate between nationalists and cosmopolitans is outlined in the first part of the paper. Even at the start of what has been called a new

global age, this debate continues to deflect attention from the real point of citizenship education as thoughtful initiation into a range of social and political practices. It has even gained ground since September 11th, as people understandably struggle with increased tensions between nations, regions, and various political, religious, and cultural affiliations.

In the second part of the paper, I suggest that citizenship education should be viewed as moral education with a particular set of ends in view. This is by no means a new conception but I do suggest some ways in which the vision that others have articulated might be further shaped for classroom studies and investigations. My discussion includes an argument for teaching about the nature of moral disagreement as a way to understand conflicting political perspectives voiced in public forums. I also present an argument for nurturing the communicative virtues that are necessary for fruitful deliberations about public concerns such as the just distribution of benefits and burdens. I conclude the paper with several examples from teachers and students who have practiced education for citizenship as a collaborative endeavor in which conflicting value positions are examined, and communicative virtues are, in part, cultivated through engagement with history, current events, literature, and drama.

Part 1 – Nationalism Versus Cosmopolitanism: Contemporary Debates

According to Kymlicka (1990), the landscape of political philosophy has experienced ground breaking shifts in the last several decades, thrusting previously entrenched features aside to make room for new ones. Throughout most of the 19th and 20th centuries, a traditional line in the sand demarcated thinkers on the left from those on the right, socialists from free market capitalists, those who believed in equality as the first principle from those who cherished individual liberty above all, and liberals somewhere in between but on the same line. The mainstream concerns of political theory over the same time period were with various conceptions of justice and freedom and the way these were interpreted in areas such as judicial systems. Such concerns have also been part of citizenship education in schools. Much of what students learn about rights and responsibilities (what we owe people, what we are owed) has been laid within this traditional political framework.

In Kymlicka's view, the image of one line on which political principles fall from left to right is an inadequate description of the contemporary political world and peoples' varying commitments to it.

Present realities (and theoretical frameworks) simply do not fit the traditional picture. "There are issues of our historical and communal 'embeddedness' which are not addressed in traditional left-right disputes," Kymlicka writes. "We cannot begin to understand feminism and communitarianism, (to name just two) if we insist on locating them somewhere on a single left-right continuum" (p. 2). Importantly, Kymlicka acknowledges that there are both left and right variants of each of these socio-political movements.

Philosophical debates over the last 20 years have revealed that the political ground is shifting, and more than the traditional left-right continuum is changing. For one thing, the very idea of an inclusive arena in which principles and policies might be rationally discussed and debated by diversely situated citizens, has been severely criticized. According to some, the public sphere that Habermas (1991) envisioned is fundamentally flawed, and even as an ideal is too restrictive (McCarthy, 1992). Critics like Nancy Fraser (1992) and Iris Marion Young (1989) write that it is an exclusive sphere that leaves many people on the margins. Others say Habermas' influential conception of a public sphere ignores at its peril the historical contexts in which particular political and social practices arose (Walzer, 1996; MacIntyre, 1987). Reconstructing the public sphere to effectively address concerns of liberty and equality from multiple perspectives, has been an important project over the last two decades, and theorists such as Rawls (1987), Ackerman (1987), Benhabib (1992), and a host of others have contributed to the ongoing discussions.

Questions about the public sphere, including its scope, its central concerns, and the status of its members, have also surfaced in discussions about citizenship education. For the past 50 years (Wade, 1999) citizenship education has been promoted as the place in the curriculum where students learn about democratic ideals, policies, and practices of their nation. In the educational arena, as in other public spheres, the application of social justice in actual contexts has been contested by women, minorities, and others, and never more vehemently than in the multicultural milieu we now find ourselves in, at the beginning of the new millennium. Which justice? For whom? Whose democracy is it? What does it mean to have rights? What happens when rights conflict? How will we teach these things? School curricula, textbooks, and teacher preparation programs have all struggled to keep up with information on emerging political issues and agendas from many directions: indigenous peoples, immigrants, environmentalists, labour groups, and so on. Faced with so many competing voices clamoring for

recognition, educators with an interest in citizenship education for social justice have tried to re-imagine the terrain (Sehr, 1997).

However, much of the debate about the goals and content of citizenship education often returns to the question: What ought to be the polity, or the context, for civic concern? Communitarians (MacIntyre, 1981) advocate for the most local of attachments: neighborhood, community, or cultural groups. Others look to the national context where the ideals of democracy are firmly rooted in peoples' consciousness if not in all of their practices (Rorty, 1999; Walzer, 1999). And recently, years after initial interest in global education, there has been a resurgence of interest in an adaptation of the ancient Greek ideal of cosmopolitanism, described by Martha Nussbaum and others in the following section.

Cosmopolitanism

Proponents of the cosmopolitan ideal argue that we should be citizens of the world, and that citizenship education should prepare us for global allegiance. They claim strident allegiance to countries, or extreme patriotism, is destructive and damaging to prospects for global peace. At the very least, even moderate patriotism renders people blind to the interests or conditions of those beyond their borders. According to some (Nussbaum, 1996; Ignatieff, 1993) extreme nationalism inevitably leads to disaster. Nussbaum writes that emphasis on patriotic pride is "both morally dangerous and, ultimately subversive of some of the worthy goals patriotism sets out to serve – for example the goal of national unity in devotion to worthy moral ideals of justice and equality" (p. 3).

Instead, these goals would be better served by the "very old ideal of the cosmopolitan ... a person whose allegiance is to the worldwide community of human beings" (Nussbaum, 1996, p. 4) not to any particular nation. Nussbaum offers arguments for cosmopolitanism and more to the point here, education for cosmopolitanism, in three related claims that originate with the Stoics:

- First, the study of humanity entailed in such a conception of civic education and attachment leads to more complete self-knowledge. We see ourselves more clearly when we see ourselves in relation to others.
- Second, political deliberation is continually sabotaged by partisan loyalties. Such sabotage is avoided by taking a larger worldview, and by recognizing allegiance to justice that transcends local affiliations. We will make headway in solving problems that require

international cooperation only when we seriously consider others' interests and claims to be treated as equals.

- Third, cosmopolitanism "recognizes in people what is ... most worthy of respect and acknowledgment: their aspirations to justice and goodness and their capacities for reasoning in this connection" (p. 8)

According to Nussbaum, one is not forced to abandon local affiliations in order to be a world citizen. Indeed the Stoics found these to be the "source of great richness in life But we should also work to make all human beings part of our community of dialogue and concern" (p. 9). In educational contexts this means learning to recognize humanity within difference and coming to understand our common ends, no matter how variously they may be instantiated in ways of life around the world. An education that takes national boundaries as morally salient reinforces the "unexamined feeling that one's own preferences and ways are natural and normal" (p. 10). Nussbaum goes so far as to say that self-definition by reference to one's country is reference to a morally irrelevant characteristic.

Critics of Cosmopolitanism

Critics of cosmopolitanism offer a number of arguments, some claiming that a nationalist focus for citizenship education remains the most appropriate because it links us to our own histories and traditions. Gertrude Himmelfarb and Michael Walzer (whose names are not often found in the same sentence) both argue that citizenship has little meaning except in the context of a state. There is no world community, writes Himmelfarb (1996), so what is it I might belong to, and how would I find out what my responsibilities are? This is not to say obligations beyond one's borders do not exist, but the primary focus of civic concern ought to be on national matters. As Walzer writes, "I have commitments beyond the borders of this or any other country, to fellow Jews, say, or to social democrats around the world, or to people in trouble in far-away countries, but these are not citizenship-like commitments" (1996, p. 126) Those commitments belong to a state where allegiance is real and concrete, not merely imagined or hoped for.

Even if one could conceive of some kind of world community that circled all of humanity, it is such an abstraction, it is difficult to know in any specificity what is meant. Beyond asserting that we are all human beings, what can anyone say by way of concrete detail about the lives and circumstances of people on other continents (or even the next state or province)? Critics claim that extending circles of attachment to the

entire world is not an attainable goal (Noddings, 1984). Difficulty in accurately imagining other peoples' lives is partly to blame. How can a person care in even a minimal way for so many strangers? But there is also a question of the appropriate limits of moral obligations, what one is bound to do versus what is supererogatory. It might be a good thing to participate in relief efforts halfway around the world but are people ethically required to do so? If this demand conflicted with a local one rooted in a special relationship, most people could easily choose between them. Moral responsibilities arise from the particular contexts in which people live, the attachments they have, the roles they are born into or take on, and as Bok (1996) writes, "these cannot be overridden by obligations to humanity at large" (p. 39).

Some see trouble for both nationalism and cosmopolitanism. Neither one is a satisfactory response to present global realities, what Falk (1996) calls the originality of contemporary circumstances. Traditionally, national consciousness reflected the reality of the sovereign state as the organizing basis of international society, and as the philosophical basis for education, socialization, and loyalty. Increasingly, the "autonomy and primacy of the state is being seriously and cumulatively compromised, if not challenged, and even superseded, by various types of regionalization and globalization, especially by complex forms of economic, ideographic, and electronic integration" (p. 54). The reasonable response is to look beyond one's borders for identification with larger humane ideals but at present a cosmopolitan orientation will not do. Such an orientation assumes that an ethical context for global dialogue already exists, which is simply not the case (p. 56). No matter its compelling moral foundation, cosmopolitanism is still naïve with respect to the realities of the world.

To project a visionary cosmopolitanism as an alternative to nationalist patriotism without addressing the subversive challenge of the market-driven globalism currently being promoted by transnational corporations and banks... is to result risking a form of fuzzy innocence. A credible cosmopolitanism has to be combined with a critique of the ethically deficient globalism embodied in neoliberal modes of thought and the globalism that is being enacted in a manner that minimizes the ethical and visionary content of conceiving of the world as a whole. (p. 57)

Recent and repeated protests against the World Trade Organization suggest that some people would agree wholeheartedly with Falk's point.

A Different Question

Does one need to choose between a nationalist and a cosmopolitan focus? Not if one believes that allegiance lies not with a particular polity but with political ideals. Gutmann (1996) believes that primary allegiance is to the ideal of democracy and that only a conception of nationalism in which this ideal figures centrally is sufficiently moral to deserve loyalty. She defends democratic humanism as the central goal for citizenship education. Individuals need to reject the notion that primary allegiance is to any actual community, and recognize instead the moral importance of being free and equal citizens of a democracy. Capacity to act to further justice everywhere increases when individuals are thus empowered. On her view, the constitution of just democracies is necessary to achieve justice in the world. Gutmann brings out an important distinction between what is morally salient and what is politically salient. A true democratic education rejects the idea that national borders are morally salient. But since borders remain politically salient, then public education ought to cultivate in students the skills and virtues of democratic citizenship within national borders.

In Hilary Putnam's (1996) view people would not know what justice was unless it was learned it through practices within a democracy. In the absence of concrete ways of life the universal maxims of justice are virtually empty because actual reasoning is necessarily situated within a historical tradition. For Putnam the choice between nationalism and cosmopolitanism is an empty one. People need the context of their own traditions to understand what justice is. But it is important to remember that present affiliations and claims to belonging have *potential* moral relevance for participation in all public spheres.

Sissela Bok (1996) claims that educators should not have to choose between teaching for nationalism or cosmopolitanism, but should instead teach students how to weigh the competing ethical demands of each context. There is no reason to teach children that claims to national or other identities are morally irrelevant:

Rather, the question is how and on what grounds to weigh these claims when they conflict, and what responsibility to acknowledge with respect to each. Education programs that declare either a global or more bounded perspective to be the only one are troubling insofar as they short circuit reflection concerning such choices (Bok, 1996, p. 42).

*Part 2 – Examining the Nature of Moral Disagreement:
Understandings and Dispositions*

Underneath the arguments about where political concern ought to be directed, to a local, national, or transnational sphere, are the questions that should be central to citizenship education. These are not focused on *where* concerns ought to be directed, but on the dispositions and abilities needed to deliberate in all the public spheres in which people find themselves. (This holds even if opportunities to effect change at local levels come up more often.) Certainly there are differences in the kind of knowledge needed for effective participation in community concerns, federal matters, or global affairs. These differences should not be underestimated. Importantly, they point to expertise necessary for making responsible decisions and they should partly determine the content of citizenship curriculum. All the same, it is worth exploring the notion that in all contexts, local to global, we will often ask the same moral questions (Putnam, 1990) among them:

- How should we live together?
- How can we best attend to our own needs and the needs of everyone else? and,
- What should we do when we disagree?

Deliberating these questions, whether considering what to do about community revitalization, national health care, or acid rain requires a range of competencies and background knowledge, specific to the problem at hand. In different contexts, the three questions will take on different shades of meaning for the interlocutors. Yet the expression of certain virtues such as trustworthiness, patience, and perseverance are essential, no matter the site of discussion or the scope of concern. One need not conflate the local and the global in order to discover the underlying moral foundation that grounds discussions about how to treat one another as free and equal human beings.

On my view, the development of “communicative virtues” (Burbules & Rice, 1991) ought to be at the core of citizenship education. But before laying out what these virtues might look like, I need to say something about the deliberations students are being initiated into. A prerequisite to developing communicative virtues is an understanding of the nature of political and moral disagreement and how it might be resolved in particular cases. Disagreement is a fact of life. In complex disagreements there are often many considerations involved and these considerations come into frequent conflict. People try to balance disparate interests and concerns, their own and others’. Attempts to reconcile changing and

competing interests occur within a single individual and within a single society (Hampshire, 1977).

What is needed is insight into the moral frameworks in which one is situated and in which others are located. Two philosophers, James Wallace (1988) and Thomas Nagel (1991) offer exactly such insight, Wallace because he turns his attention to the ethical contexts in which arguments are located, and Nagel because he turns his attention to the root of disagreements about public matters. Both have important things to say to anyone interested in citizenship education.

Moral Disagreement in Context

In political disagreements, people argue from within particular political and therefore moral frameworks and traditions. But we often fail to realize that people who oppose us are arguing from moral frameworks as well. Within these frameworks, others have assigned value to, or prioritized commitments, in entirely different ways. Other people can have legitimate perspectives even if their views oppose our own. Understanding the nature of moral disagreement helps us correctly identify problems, clarify key concepts, and sort out people's perspectives so we can begin to deliberate in good faith about practical solutions to practical problems. The goal is never to "wash-out" or eliminate differences, but to more clearly perceive them and what they might mean for understanding each other's position.

It is Wallace's (1988) belief that "actual moral controversy remains embroiled with relevance problems and conflict problems" (p. 7). Relevance problems occur because even though two or more people agree on the meaning of a concept (for example, murder is wrongful killing) they often disagree on the application of the concept to a particular case. People disagree on whether, for instance, euthanasia is an instance of murder. The other kind of moral disagreement is based on problems of conflict. Conflict occurs when two principles to which someone is committed (including the resulting moral duties and obligations that arise from that commitment) clash in an actual case. Take the 1999 riots in Seattle that began with organized protest against the World Trade Organization. At least two and likely three principles were in conflict: the right of free citizens to participate in acts of civil disobedience, the right of innocent people not to be punished, and as well, the right of free citizens to inhabit a safe and peaceful environment. Wallace writes:

Public officials ... have a responsibility to preserve public order and safety. They also should protect individuals who are innocent of any

offenses from arrest and judicial punishment. In a time of widespread rioting, looting and disorder, measures necessary to control disturbances which threaten public order- mass arrests ... for example, may also substantially increase the possibility that innocent individuals will be arrested and punished. In this situation, to what extent is it justifiable to risk punishing innocent people in order to control riots? How far may public officials risk the public's safety to protect individuals from miscarriages of justice? The answers to these questions will require a determination of the relative importance of these considerations in the particular situation. (1988, p. 8)

The questions Wallace poses are one example of the way a classroom discussion on conflicting democratic principles might begin. Introducing students to the idea that there are problems of relevance and problems of conflict is an important task for educators teaching for citizenship. This is because learning to deliberate in the public sphere is, in part, learning to understand the nature of disagreement in order to keep dissenting views from paralyzing discussion. Recognizing that other perspectives have moral worth, that is, they fit within a framework that is recognizably moral, is a beginning. Knowing that we can learn more about the issues that divide us may not dissolve those divisions, but it is a place to find some common ground. The knowledge that other people have legitimate points of view, even when you do not share them, is essential political knowledge. This knowledge, coupled with a belief in the possibility of rationally solving problems, moves deliberation forward. Wallace writes, "if it should turn out that such problems do not admit of solution by rational means, then it is not clear why any moral considerations should be of great concern to those committed to seeking intelligent reasoned solutions to the problems of living" (1988, p. 8).

The Impersonal Versus the Personal Standpoint

Nagel (1991) also provides a promising way to view the task of citizenship education in terms of learning to deliberate, although he does not write explicitly about this enterprise in *Equality and Partiality*. Instead he lays out an argument for social and political deliberation that recognizes individuals are pulled in different directions by two standpoints held simultaneously: the personal and the impersonal. This is not the first time such a division has been pointed out by a philosopher. Walzer (1999) speaks of a divided self in *Thick and Thin* and adds a further division; people are divided selves first as individuals occupying different roles (parent, teacher, friend) second as inheritors of

multiple traditions (religious, cultural, political) and finally, as individuals committed to higher social and political ideals such as equality. Like Nagel, Walzer believes the self speaks with "more than one moral voice" (1999, p. 85).

Nagel sees the most difficult and complex pull between moral voices is between the voice that speaks for particular concerns, attachments and affections, and the voice that speaks for humanity at large, the human collective. It might otherwise be described as the pull between concern for the particular pursuit of a good life and concern for the common good. His case is disarmingly simple: we each know that our own existence matters to *us*, and because of that, we can know with equal certainty that other peoples' lives must matter to *them*.

You cannot sustain ... indifference to the things in your life that matter to you personally. Some of the most important have to be regarded as mattering, period, so that others beside you have a reason to take them into account. But since the impersonal standpoint does not single you out from anyone else, the same must be true for the values arising in other lives. (Nagel, 1991, p. 11)

In this sense, people are pulled by commitments to both the partial and the universal. Because individuals do not occupy only one point of view, each is susceptible to the claims of the other point of view. The division is represented by the claims of the individual versus the claims of the collectivity, the latter, in fact, gives force to individual claims.

The impersonal standpoint in each of us produces ... a powerful demand for universal impartiality and equality, while the personal standpoint gives rise to individualist motives and requirements, which present obstacles to the pursuit and realization of such ideals. (Nagel, 1991, p. 4)

The reconciliation of these two standpoints in given cases is the essential task of a political system. The standpoints exist in the individual, but they also exist in society. Sometimes these standpoints will play out in conflicts within private lives, sometimes within particular societies, and sometimes they will be identified with conflict on a more global scale, or between ethnic groups such as those explored by Michael Ignatieff in *Blood and Belonging* (1993). The tensions between commitments to equality and partiality will never be fully resolved, but in each context and case people find themselves in, the task will be to balance competing demands.

Arguably, the most important civic role is to participate in public conversations about needs, rights, and responsibilities, all the while knowing there are multiple interpretations of these to consider. One

should not expect this process to yield any certainty when it comes to solutions we construct. Pragmatists such as Hilary Putnam write that we are not aiming toward a universal truth or ultimate resolution in these discussions. Answers do not exist outside our deliberations about them. They are, after all, human constructions, and their success as solutions is best evaluated by the degree to which they meet particular needs. In the absence of a final word, or a universal truth that might bind us all, we need to continue to talk about how to live together. We need to keep the conversation going and we need to do this in the face of persistent moral disagreement that threatens to shut conversation down. Much of this disagreement will arise from the dual standpoints people hold.

Extending this argument to education, it is clear that students should be prepared to understand and balance the inevitable tensions people experience because of dual attachments to the impersonal and the personal standpoint, or in Nagel's words, equality and partiality. Individuals need to respond appropriately to the claims made by others, and balance them against the need to pursue their own ends and have that pursuit protected. This calls for a great deal of thoughtful deliberation in the face of conflicting demands, both internal and external. Therefore, an effective education for citizenship will help students develop the requisite abilities and dispositions to deliberate responsibly in public spheres despite inescapable tensions and even the risk of failure.

These abilities and dispositions, or communicative virtues, can be clustered together in a coherent conception of public virtue. The idea of public virtue has been recently discussed at length in Callan's *Creating Citizens* (1997), and it is worth turning to his conception to give a fuller sense of why communicative virtues, both intellectual and moral, figure so importantly in any justifiable program of political education.

Callan speaks of his conception of public virtue as an ideal, in many ways a potential rather than a present reality. On his view, to talk about public virtue is to envision, "a shared way of public life constituted by a constellation of attitudes, habits and abilities that people acquire as they grow up" (1997, p. 3). He describes the constellation to conclude what might well be called communicative virtues:

These include a lively interest in the question of what life is truly and not just seemingly good, as well as a willingness both to share one's own answers with others and to heed the many opposing answers they might give; an active commitment to the good life of the polity, as well as confidence and competence in judgment

regarding how that good should be advanced; a respect for fellow citizens and a sense of common fate with them that goes beyond the tribalism of ethnicity and religion and is yet alive to the significance these will have in many peoples' lives. (p.3)

It is important to remember that the acquisition of these abilities and attitudes is not the inevitable result of growing up. Good citizens are created over years, shaped by a number of forces and experiences, including, importantly, education aimed at this very goal. Respectful deliberation takes practice, and competent decisions to further the good of others as well as of oneself require understanding, patience, and openness to a range of views. These things develop over time with guidance and structured experiences. The moral dimensions of this process begin with what Callan calls, "a commitment to moral reciprocity" (1997, p. 26). One must be able and inclined to enter into the moral perspective another occupies in order to fairly assess any claims being made. Genuine communication between people requires a commitment to try to understand each other. This in itself is a character trait worth cultivating through education, for the sake of, writes Callan, "the vitality of the political order" (p. 3).

Conclusion: Keeping the Conversation Going

A number of communicative virtues are essential for conversation to take place within educational settings as well as beyond them. Among these virtues are: humility, tolerance, empathy, patience, curiosity, integrity, and a sense of justice. These are not simply acquired; they need to be deliberately and thoughtfully cultivated. Discussion of how each of these communicative virtues might be developed merits another paper on particular curriculum for citizenship education. My central purpose here has been to explore the terrain of citizenship education as it could be, and lay out several steps in conceptualizing it from the standpoint of moral discourse. I am not alone in wanting to re-inject ethical content into discourse about political education. Lawrence Blum believes citizenship education has to teach us to "care for worthy collectivities," (1999, p. 126) wherever they are found. Sehr (1997) writes that we need publicly oriented citizens who will "organize to take control of the powerful institutions of society, or create new social institutions through which to build social justice, fairness, equality, economic opportunity – in short the conditions necessary for the self-development of all members of society" (p. 55).

These are important goals, but in the absence of further discussion about means, they do not take educators far in planning curriculum. The particular ends of citizenship education in social studies are underspecified. I may know, in a general sense, *why* I should teach for a morally aware citizenry, but questions of *how* are left unanswered. Fortunately, there are many classrooms in which teachers believe citizenship education is by definition, education to further justice and equality. These teachers emphasize understanding conflict as well coming to terms with the complex nature of needs and rights. I want to briefly describe three illustrations of good practice in this area, one at the elementary classroom level, one at the intermediate (middle years) level, and a third at secondary.

The first is a research project led by Kathy Bickmore (1999) an education professor who joined a grade four Toronto classroom for a year. Her goal was to help teach about conflict and to research students' understandings about both personal and global conflict and resolution. Students explored human needs and wants by re-enacting scenarios in which relief workers try to hand out food to refugees, and a desert community tries to decide equitable distribution of limited water. Photographs and contemporary news stories supplied background knowledge. Students explored local and interpersonal conflict using "multiple communication strategies" to try to come to fuller understandings of people's emotions, intentions, and the consequences of their actions. Importantly, in each case examined through reading, writing, and discussion, the emphasis was less on resolution than understanding. The class investigated the origin of the conflict, the competing claims involved, and the difficulties inherent in balancing rights, distributing goods, and meeting human needs. "Complex international material" enhanced learning experiences by providing multiple representations and entry points for understanding main ideas (1999, p. 67.) But the local remained important too, emphasizing for students the connections between their own lives (the personal standpoint) and the lives and interests of others (the impersonal standpoint.)

A second example comes from a British Columbia school where students in Grade 6 are working their way through a number of novels in small literature circles. *Number the Stars*, a story of the Danish Resistance, is one of the novels, and *The Summer of my German Soldier* is another. One book in Kit Pearson's trilogy about British children brought to Canada in WWII is a third. Each novel is characterized by its moral conflicts: choosing between our obligations to help strangers and

our responsibilities to family members, becoming a pacifist versus going to war, and weighing principles of individual freedom against those of public duty when they are competing for primacy. In *Looking at the Moon*, by Pearson (1998), thirteen-year old Norah knows what courage is all about – it is fighting the Nazis. Refusing to fight is cowardly. Then she is confronted by her cousin Andrew's doubts about joining up, and suddenly the world is far less simple than she thought. The Grade 6 students examine the conflicts from many points of view, and imagine the consequences if the protagonist in each novel had not acted as he or she did, or if the conflict was viewed from another perspective. Then students were asked to rewrite a passage based on another standpoint, even another moral framework.

The third example comes from a Grade 11 and 12 Drama class in Vancouver. In preparation for a Remembrance Day performance, students spent the term studying conflicts of the 20th century and their historic roots. They addressed far more than the history of the World Wars and Canada's role in them. Ethnic and religious wars as well as the Vietnam War were explored from multiple perspectives. Many of the students in the school are first and second generation immigrants from Asian nations. Some of these conflicts have special significance for these students and their families. The intent was to extend the understandings (and empathy) of the larger student body about war including causes, conditions, and casualties. It is a feature of the lives of people around the world, and the legacy of war affects everyone, whether or not they were Canadians who lived through World War I or II. The dramatic performance included scenes from a number of well-known plays written from the diverse points of view of refugees, prisoners of war, political figures, religious leaders, and soldiers. The performance also included an original piece students wrote on Gandhi's efforts to bring peace and justice to his homeland and to the world, illustrating with particular poignancy universal struggles for dignity and freedom.

In important and moving ways these students and their teachers fulfilled the aims of citizenship education as moral education that I am arguing for. This education includes developing abilities to:

- Listen with humility to other people,
- Find relevant background knowledge and multiple perspectives on issues at hand
- Communicate one's own position and interests openly and truthfully
- Imagine with compassion and sensitivity other lives, and;

- Consider, by using what Dewey (1927) called “situated intelligence,” decisions made in the name of justice, freedom and the good.

The endpoint to be hoped for is the creation of a “politics of virtue” in Callan’s sense, that is, a public sphere in which differences are sensitively and compassionately accommodated, and social justice furthered. The classrooms I have described reflect this commitment. In each setting, a teacher recognized that the ethical demands of education for citizenship are complex and multifaceted, yet essential. These teachers were able to introduce students into spheres of concern larger than the one they ordinarily inhabit, bounded as it was by their particular backgrounds and interests. Once introduced to these spheres, students were given opportunities to participate in practices that enlarged their social understandings, deepened their political perspectives, and developed tools for communication based on the moral values of respect and trust. A politics of virtue demands all these things, and only a political education with the same virtues at its centre, can hope to cultivate them.

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