

A History of Democratic Education in American Public Schools

Schools in a Democracy & Democracy in Schools

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Discussions and recommendations concerning issues of democratic education in urban schools and civic engagement by urban students

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“There is perhaps no more problematic concept in American education than that of democratic schools.”

-- Michael Apple and James Beane

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Is America possible?

-- Vincent Harding, *Hope and History: Why we must share the meaning of the movement* (1990, p. 178)

Democratic classrooms and schools offer the best hope for public support of public schools.

-- Institute for Democracy in Education

If we all agreed about everything, we wouldn't need democracy.

-- Deborah Meier

The philosophy in the classroom of this generation is the philosophy of government in the next.

--Abraham Lincoln

I want a democracy so compelling even the children will want to try it.

-- John Harris Loflin

A democratic school is one that above all, tries to enable people to create their own world collectively rather than to fit into one that is created for them.

-- Michael Engel

What does a democratic process look like in a large urban school?

-- Mark Koester, Jefferson Open School, Lakewood, CO

Democracy is like a life raft—it bounces around a lot, your feet are always wet, you're not sure where you are going. But, you never sink.

-- General Colin Powell

Giving children a sense of ownership in the classroom can lead to a kind of open and cooperative learning environment that most teachers just dream about.

-- Michelle G Zachlod, 1st grade teacher, California City, CA

To save the democracy we thought we had, we must take democracy to where it's never been.

-- Francis Moore Lappé

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	6
<i>Preface I</i>	7
<i>Preface II</i>	8
<i>Preface III</i>	9
<i>Overview</i>	10
<i>Orientation Statement: The 21st century--the century of democracy</i>	12
<i>Introduction: What does a democracy require of its schools?</i>	14
<i>Democratic Education defined</i>	16

PART ONE: A REVIEW OF HISTORY

The development of American democracy: The efforts of citizens to make it genuine	20
2000-2099: Democracy's Century?	22
Arthurdale Schools: Elsie Clapp and progressive education in the 1930s	23
Education as if citizenship mattered: Covello and Franklin High School	24
Vito Perrone and the struggle for democratic schools	24
Grace H. Pilon's Workshop Way: Self-managed learning and democratic schools	24
Dennie Briggs's Val Verde Project: Creating and growing learning communities	25
Youth who challenged America to live up to her promises	26
Other student protests: Walk outs, boycotts, strikes, sit-in's, demonstrations, rallies	27
The contributions of the Alternative Education Movement to democratic education in public schools	29

PART TWO: YOUTH AND CIVIC EDUCATION IN THEIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

High school Civics: A 20th century concept irrelevant to the needs of a 21st century democracy	31
Urban youth's negative view of civic education	32
The effect of social class culture on American conceptions of democratic practices: Rethinking democratic education with working-class students	33
A common interest, but no common ground: Rethinking youth's civic engagement	34
Reinterpreting <i>e pluribus unum</i> : Combining civics and multicultural education by teaching mutual respect	36

PART THREE: DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION TODAY

Legitimizing the role of public schools in expanding the democratic way of life	40
Democratic school reform: A powerful and positive force for the revitalization of public schools	40

League of Democratic Schools 42

No Child Left Behind 42

“Paper” democracy vs. “living” democracy: Critiques of three national-class civics programs: We the People, Restoring the Balance between Academics and Civic Engagement in Public Schools, and Liberty’s Apprentice 44

The struggle for control of public education: Market oriented policies vs. democratic values 46

Some parents may not see the value in classroom and school democracy: Influences of conservative national “authoritarian populist” groups 48

How do social, economic, and political conditions help or inhibit civic engagement of urban African American youth? 49

PART FOUR: RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1 Have high expectations for students: Democratic education 56

Recommendation 2 Advance multicultural education to include democratic education 56

Recommendation 3 Move to an advanced democracy 60

Recommendation 4 Look deeper into Gutman’s emphasis on “mutual respect” 62

Recommendation 5 Have many school councils, not one school board 63

Recommendation 6 Teacher education: Teach teachers democratically 64

Recommendation 7 Ensure democracy: Prepare teachers with an attitude so they will have one also 66

Recommendation 8 Appreciate collectivist family culture when practicing democratic education in American public schools and classrooms 67

Recommendation 9 Use a pedagogy of democracy 68

Recommendation 10 Promote student self-assessment: Practicing democracy at the individual level 68

Recommendation 11 Model the Constitution for students: Make public schools First Amendment schools 70

Recommendation 12 Advance service learning to “action civics” in all classes: Going from serving the community to shaping the community 71

Recommendation 13 Have 1-3 student representatives on local urban school boards 75

Recommendation 14 Democratize intelligence: Expand what it means to be smart and provide the corresponding assessment alternatives: Intelligence, testing and the politics of one-size-fits-all 76

Recommendation 15 Move beyond traditional frameworks for understanding civic engagement by urban youth 78

Recommendation 16 Realize the future of urban school reforms is democratic public schools and classrooms: Hip-hop culture meets school democracy 80

- Recommendation 17 Advance culturally relevant teaching to politically relevant teaching 84
- Recommendation 18 Reinvent adolescence: Puberty, rites of passage, and student voice: Introducing students to adulthood and citizenship at the same time 84
- Recommendation 19 Follow England's lead: Democratic values and competencies cannot be acquired through formal teaching alone, but need to be practiced by students in classrooms and schools 88
- Recommendation 20 When reforming civic education, don't criticize...co-opt! 89
- Final Thoughts: Is democratic education in American public schools enough? 91

APPENDIXES: SUPPLEMENTING IMPLICATIONS OF CURRENT RESEARCH

- Appendix A Why America's public schools need democratic classrooms and schools and why most teachers and students resist 98
- Appendix B Barriers to democratic education for African American children 103
- Appendix C Four critiques of democracy 112
- Appendix D Discipline revisited: Discipleship not discipline, moral development vs. behavior modification—The influence of school democracy on school and classroom discipline 114
- Appendix E A sustainable world needs sustainable schools; sustainable schools need democratic education: Student voices in decisions for a world they will inherit 117
- Appendix F How democratic education can bring peace and justice to society 120
- Appendix G Democratic Anarchy: School democracy for today's youth 126
- Appendix H Student councils or direct democracy: Involving a few students and staff or all students and staff in school decisions 129
- Appendix I Iroquois Democracy: A genuinely American democracy for public schools 130
- Appendix J A living democracy vs. a thin democracy: The ideas of Francis Moore Lappé 133
- Appendix K Democracy in the classroom: Three examples 138
- Appendix L A Learner's Bill of Rights: Empowering students to develop the assertiveness necessary to require a share in classroom and school decision-making 142

RESOURCES:

- Schools, organizations, books, journals, magazines, articles, encyclopedias, blogs, videos, and studies 144

REFERENCES

153

If readers have any comments or question pleased contact johnharrisloflin@yahoo.com

Adults, why do you fear children's participation?

-- Concern for Working Children Annual Report 2003

Listen, create an environment where students feel their voice is taken seriously and acted upon, and then involve them in school decision-making. The positive action and school improvement follows as sure as night follows day.

-- Derry Hannam, School Inspector, United Kingdom

If public schools exist to promote democratic values it would appear that they need to remove hierarchy. Education for democracy thus becomes education freed from authoritarian relationships.

-- C. Winch & J. Gingell, *Key Concepts in the Philosophy of Education*

We must remove the contradictions in our culture that embrace democratic ends for its schools, but resists the actual practice in schools of democratic means from which the ends cannot be separated.

-- The Institute for Democracy in Education

We need to treat students like citizens now, not citizens in the future.

-- Sheldon Berman, Superintendent of Hudson Public Schools

Although we teach about democracy we rarely practice it in most classrooms and schools.

-- H. Jerome Freidberg, Professor of Education, University of Houston

Implementing democratic governance and small democratic groups in a large public school is not only doable; it brings schools closer to their historic mission.

-- Sheldon Berman, Superintendent of Hudson Public Schools

Freedom and justice, however important, can never be enough; learning about democratic citizenship must be more than an academic exercise.

-- *First Amendment Schools*, p. 21

It is up to educators, then, to reconnect the heart of the educational process to the democratic mission of schooling — to reconnect education to democracy.

-- Westheimer & Kahne

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Although I am aware of ideas and research in other countries that are more advanced or may contradict the various ideas and research presented here, this paper is limited to American public schools and especially those in urban settings.

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I was also inspired by a new sense of democracy compelled by the Internet, Wikipedia, You Tube, blogs, and the multitude of global possibilities for human voices to be heard via the World Wide Web. I believe the 21st century will be an era where the value and usefulness of democracy will be tested globally on a daily basis to see it lives up to its promises.

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AERO is the Alternative Education Resource Organization www.educationrevolution.org

IDEC is the International Democratic Education Conference www.idec2008.org

IALA is the International Association for Learning Alternatives www.learningalternatives.net

I speak the password primeval, I give the sign of democracy,
By God! I will accept nothing which all cannot have their counterpart of on the same terms.

-- Walt Whitman (Song of Myself: 24)

PREFACE I

If people are to secure and maintain a democratic way of life, they must have the opportunities to learn what that way of life means and how it might be led. Although common sense alone tells us this is a true statement, **there is perhaps no more problematic concept in education than that of democratic schools** (my emphasis), a concept that some consider almost an oxymoron. How can this be so? Simply put, many people believe that democracy is nothing more than a form of federal government and thus does not apply to schools and other social institutions. Many also believe that democracy is a right of adults, not of young people. And some believe that democracy simply cannot work in schools.

Others are committed to the idea that the democratic way of life is built upon opportunities to learn what it is about and how to lead it. They believe that the schools, as a common experience of virtually all young people, have a moral obligation to introduce them to the democratic way of life. They know, as well, that such a life is learned by experience. It is not a status to be attained only after other things are learned. Moreover, they believe that democracy extends to all people, including the young. Finally, they believe that democracy is neither cumbersome nor dangerous, that it can work in societies and it can work in schools (Apple and Beane, 1995).

Teaching students to share responsibility for the learning and school governance while also teaching and learning with them the ways to resolve issues and conflicts is to experience life in a democracy.

-- Institute for Democracy in Education

PREFACE II

What happened with Dewey and democratic education in the United States?

Historical studies of progressive education tend to be of two kinds or two points of view:

(1) The first relates how the well-intended, but faulty ideas of John Dewey and his cadre of pedagogical progressives successfully replaced the academic curriculum with an anti-intellectual, utilitarian one. As a result of these reforms, American schools lost their focus—a consequence we are still paying for today.

(2) On the other hand, the second narrative relates how Dewey created a theoretically sound, ambitious plan for improving American schools that, except for a few well-documented examples, never really took hold because conservative critics and social efficiency experts squashed the movement before it was ever given a chance.

Thus, Covello's Franklin High School (see page 24) largely followed the overall trajectory of progressive education, which, generally speaking, began with the innovative ideas of Dewey, found greatest support in the 1930s, evolved into the life adjustment movement, limped along through the Cold War, and died a sudden death with the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 (Johanek & Puckett, 2006).

What happens in the (public school) classroom (not in Iraq or Cuba) will, in the final analysis, reveal how deep are the roots of (America's) democratic commitment.

-- paraphrased from H. G. Hullfish

PREFACE III

America: What changes will the war in Iraq bring to American society?

Popularized by the rise of democratic governments in the former Soviet Union and South Africa, and the events surrounding the failed democracy movement in China, citizens around the world are more than ever looking to democratic ideals and democratic governments to replace non-elected ones. This is illustrated by the pro-democracy movement in Myanmar (Burma), and the drafting of a constitution in Afghanistan and Iraq. Articles in the newspaper such as, "Bush to pressure Cuba for democratic reforms" or "Bush calls for democracy in the Middle East" and "Bush urges democracy in African nations" provide evidence for the recognition of and respect for self-determination (Loflin, 2004).

Relevant to these events is the fact that every major U.S. war has brought or made possible social changes. American women's right to vote came after WW I. The seeds of the Civil Rights movement were planted during WW II and the Korean War. Vietnam influenced the lowering of the national voting age to 18 and pushed the Civil Rights Movement to fruition.

America: Practicing what it preaches—democracy in Iraq and in American public schools

Although there is a strong debate over the reasons and purposes of the war, due to the fact that many see the conflict as one of democratization, raises certain questions such as, "How democratic is American society?" or "How can we improve American democracy?"

It will be hard for the women and men who fought in the Middle East to accept a vote counting method that may be manipulated, a two party system where the parties are so similar nothing really changes, various social justice issues that our democracy cannot seem to affect, or how some Americans are left out of the system due to democracy itself. (See "Democracy as Paradigm for Colonization" Evans, M., 2006)

To the extent American soldiers are trying to win the hearts and minds of Iraqis--and especially the Iraqi youth--concerning the spirit and empowering qualities of democratic self-determination, how could they deny the same and more to their children and their neighbor's children?

In other words, our Iraq war veterans will not be able tolerate a constitutional democracy that is less than the system they were "selling" to the Iraqis.

It will be hard for U.S. soldiers to return to America and not hear the voices of public school students who are beginning to want a say in classroom, school, learning, and community decisions that directly and indirectly affect them; and, who want to know how democracy works—all due to the America's desire to spread this method of governance globally. To say that we want democracy in China and not provide America's own children and youth the opportunity to practice this form of community in their classrooms and schools, is the worst form of hypocrisy--an image Americans cannot afford to present to the world.

OVERVIEW

A recurring theme in this paper is the meaning of democracy and the meaning of education. Just how we are to approach democracy is a matter of considerable debate. Different understandings imply contrasting educational practices (Smith, 2001b). To help the reader it is necessary to contrast a “classical” conception of democracy in which democracy is seen as a form of popular power, and a “contemporary” conception where democracy is viewed as a representative system of political decision-making (Carr & Hartnett, 1996).

	Classical Direct democracy	Contemporary Representative democracy
View of democracy	Grounded in a way of life in which all can develop their qualities and capacities. It envisages a society that itself is intrinsically educative and in which political socialization is a distinctively educative process. Democracy is a moral ideal requiring expanding opportunities for direct participation.	Results from, and reflects, the political requirements of a modern market economy. Democracy is a way of choosing political leaders involving, for example, regular elections, representative government and an independent judiciary.
The primary aim of education	To initiate individuals into the values, attitudes and modes of behavior appropriate to active participation in democratic institutions.	To offer a minority an education appropriate to future political leaders; the majority an education fitted to their primary social role as producers, workers and consumers.
Curriculum content	There is a focus on liberal education, a curriculum which fosters forms of critical and explanatory knowledge that allow people to interrogate social norms and to reflect critically on dominant institutions and practices.	Mass education will focus on the world of work and upon those attitudes and skills, and that knowledge have some market value.
Typical educational processes	Participatory practices that cultivate the skills and attitudes that democratic deliberation require.	Pedagogical relationships will tend to be authoritarian and competition will, as in society generally, play an essential role.
School organization	Schools are communities in which the problems of communal life are resolved through collective deliberation and a shared concern for the common good.	Schools are organized around a pyramidal structure with the head at its apex.

Education for public or private purposes: Democracy or corporatocracy? (Sleeter, 2008)

These two conceptions of democracy (classical and contemporary) and their implications for America's public schools are also the concern of school democracy advocate Christine Sleeter.

Since the U.S. is actively exporting its conception of democracy to the world, citizens in other nations might imagine that Americans would have a robust conception of what democracy is and are each totally involved in a government "...of the people, by the people, and for the people..." That is not the case, however, according to voter turnout rates (United States Census Bureau, 2005) and the quality of civic knowledge of US public schools students (Nation's Report Card: Civics 2006, 2007).

The relationship between democracy, capitalism, and power

How one views the extent to which U.S. political decision-making actually uses democratic processes and institutional structures depends on how one interprets the relationship between democracy, capitalism, and power. This is the essence of Sleeter's concerns about America's public schools in a corporatocracy which Perkins (2005) defines as U.S. government under global capitalism.

According to Sleeter's 2008 essay, advocates of capitalism link the ideal of free enterprise with democratic freedoms, extolling the primacy of individualism, property rights, and personal responsibility. Critics of capitalism view concentrated wealth as leading to minority control of power, which undermines governance by the people. This creates a limited conception of democracy, leading people to equate it with the right to vote for representatives, which "tacitly has become capitulation to rule by an elite."

Sleeter's "critique of capitalism" orientation fits well with the orientation of direct democracy. The advantages of representational democracy to "corporatocracy" are now clearer.

What does a 21st century American democracy require of its public schools?

The importance of understanding the implications of the struggle for control of American public education between its traditional democratic values and today's more market oriented policies (Engel, 2000) is vital to helping America and its public school students find authenticity and responsibility in their 21st century "global village" home.

Using the dynamics created by contrasting direct and representative democracy and how each imply different values which lead to contrasting educational practices will simplify the seemingly complicated argument for the 21st democratic education paradigm supported by this paper.

"A History of Democratic Education in American Public Schools" will help traditional-oriented educators and democratic education advocates answer the thesis question of this document: What does a 21st century American democracy require of its public schools?

I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of society but the people themselves, and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them but to inform their discretion.

-- Thomas Jefferson

ORIENTATION STATEMENT

The 21st century--the century of democracy

“To make the world safe for democracy” was the rationale President Woodrow Wilson used as the United States entered WW I in 1917. With just over 125 years of democratic development, Wilson believed that the time had come for America to play a larger role on the world stage. America, Wilson reasoned, was the greatest force for democracy and good in the world.

Nothing much has changed if we look at the past 20 years during which the U.S. has declared the “superiority of democracy” almost daily to the world community. Through diplomacy and/or force, its present efforts to influence Iraq, China, and Cuba or supporting pro-democracy movements in Myanmar as well as legitimizing its own (presidential) election processes, US policies have kept the concept on everyone’s mind, *creating the potential to make the next 100 years the century of democracy.*

Oddly, voter turnout rates and involvement in civic activities by ordinary Americans appear in sharp contrast to US public relations efforts. For example, the current way the US is “selling” democracy to Iraq, the Iraqis must think 100% of Americans are registered and vote in each election. They might be persuaded to believe by US enthusiasm for reproducing American democracy that American citizens are completely involved in their community’s decisions.

As well, average Iraqis must think American public schools are the fertile soil; no, in fact the hotbed of democracy where its young are introduced to, prepared for, and given opportunities to practice this noble community in preparation for this great democratic way of life US citizen soldiers so wish Iraqis could experience.

It is strange that the schooling system which was created to ensure democracy is the most undemocratic institution in America—except for the prisons which you can avoid by behaving or the military which is avoided by not enlisting.

-- Dr. Donald Glines, *Educational Alternatives for Everyone All the Time*

However, the American public schools are not democratic and each American knows this intuitively. No statistics are needed. Now, many may not know of or understand this particular and presently obscure duty of public schools, nor otherwise care; but, they would be hard pressed to deny that it makes good American horse sense that if American society is to be truly democratic, its young must be provided ways--especially in their classrooms and schools--to understand and practice what that way of life means and how it might be led.

The problem is the topic has not been brought to the public’s attention the way it will be now that the US is supporting and in some cases fighting to enable self-government in various nations. The American public

must realize that if its style of democracy is to be taken seriously as an example, it cannot be non-democratic in its own public schools and Public Square with its own young. The public must consequently renew this “obscure“ spirit of public education. Public schools, as the common experience of most young people, provide the best chance to fulfill their country’s moral obligation to prepare students, its future citizens, for the democratic way of life.

This paper intends to expose hypocrisy. America does not provide its youth the same opportunity it desires for each world citizen. These writings will review the history of democratic education to seek an understanding of why the public schools of our globe’s strongest proponent of democracy are not, in all aspects, democratic.

INTRODUCTION: WHAT DOES A DEMOCRACY REQUIRE OF ITS SCHOOLS?

American public schools and American democracy (Bernard & Mondale, 2001)

The American Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776. As the United States grew in the early 1800s, citizens realized the importance of an educated populace to a healthy civic society and nation. Until the 1850s, most formal education in the United States took place in private schools. Pushed by a need to educate all children, especially recent immigrants, the locally controlled public “common school” was formed to instill the common set of political and social values needed for nationhood and a shared American society. By 1890, 9 out of 10 pupils were enrolled in public schools.

Early “equality” meant difference, not sameness, of treatment

By the early 1900s, the growing public schools were influenced by a need for school leaders. Some were reformers dissatisfied with the “politics” that influenced local control or what was to be in a common curriculum. To policy elites, “democracy at its best” meant schools administered by trained superintendents, not by lay people. As well, “Equality meant difference, not sameness, of treatment.” Spreading the curriculum into several tracts created equality of opportunity for students of varied ability and for the numerous ethnic/racial groups.

In the late 1960s, reformers encouraged a more decentralized administration, and smaller schools with increased parental involvement. Because tracking led to “academic segregation” they argued for the same high academic standards for all students.

In the 1990s, school choice (options within a public school district, choices between public and private schools, and the options of homeschooling, virtual schools, or free schools) created a competitive market, putting “...a new spin on democracy.”

At the beginning of the 21st century, expanded versions of education include alternative assessments, self-actualization, global/environmental responsibility, educational equity (Friedlaender & Darling-Hammond, 2007); and, “democratizing” the concepts of intelligence (Williams, 1998), adolescence (Loflin, 2007), multi-culturalism (Loflin, 2007), and the body (Loflin, 2006a).

From public schools as examples of democratic local control *to* assimilators of a common culture, *from* improving democracy by “expert” leadership *to* tracking, and *from* smaller schools *to* school choice as a means to high achievement by all, this public institution reflects what kind of democracy and society America has and wants. This paper will trace schools in a democracy and democracy in schools in all their definitions and forms. The summary and the insights in the “Recommendations” will be helpful to preparing Americans for a truly 21st century democracy.

Is there a “participation gap” as well as an achievement gap? (Glickman, 2008)

Democratic education advocate Carl Glickman notes that as well as an intellectual achievement gap, American public schools have a “participation gap.” This and the stagnating intellectual achievement gap in

America are major issues related to each other. To address them, he asserts, requires a renewed focus on the purposes of a democracy and the practices of education.

Glickman looks at indicators showing participatory democracy is in decline. He notes connections to civic and religious groups are down, people are less connected to family and friends and more live alone, people are less informed about public affairs, and trust in key institutions is low. People with the least education are the ones least involved. Glickman's research shows the following:

- In 1975 58% college graduates participated in some kind of community project for that year.
- By 2005 that proportion had been cut to 35%.
 - For those who dropped out of high school, the decline was from 32 % to 15%, a 55% drop.
- By 2007 few high school dropouts left their schools having participated in a community project.

As American cities have become more diverse, Glickman is concerned that its inhabitants may tend to withdraw from collective life, have more distrust of neighbors, and withdraw even from close friends. He sees less volunteering, giving to charity, working on community projects, and registering to vote. What is disconcerting, he believes Americans have less faith that they can actually make a difference to improve the quality of life in their community.

Elections returns reflect Participation Gap too

According to the Higher Education Research Institute, the percentage of students who voted in high school elections fell from 72.0% in 1966 to 21.5% in 2006 (Pryor et al., 2007).

The United States Census Bureau (2005) figures, with respect to the percentages of registered voters 18 to 24 year who voted in presidential elections, show an average turnout rate of 41% between 1964 and 2004. The 1964 rate of 51% was the highest rate over next 40 years. The 2004 turnout rate was 42%. Lows were 32.6% in 1996 and 32.3% in 2000.

With respect to the percentages of all registered voters who voted in presidential elections, the average rate between 1964 and 2004 was 60%. The 1964 rate of 69% was the highest rate over next 40 years. The 2004 turnout rate was 58%. Lows were 54% in 1996 and 55% in 2000.

Democracy: A common terminology

Many understand democracy as a concept with a meaning that is constantly changing due to challenges and disputes. This is not because people cannot agree on its definition, but because the very idea of democracy calls for a continuous discussion, re-evaluation, re-making, and re-organization about what it actually means and entails. (Dewey, 1916; Gallie, 1955; Parker, 2003; Biesta, 2007).

America has Abraham Lincoln's broad definition of democracy as government "...of the people, by the people, and for the people..." UNESCO suggests "the twin principles of popular control over collective decision-making and equality of rights in the exercise of that control." Members of a group have an equal

right to be a part of the decisions that affect the group. This takes in Dewey's idea that democracy is more than a form of government, but is mainly "a mode of associated living." See Jefferson and Dewey p. 17.

From a political definition to include a social/cultural-orientation: A more inclusive democracy

This is a movement from a political definition to include a social-oriented, and a culturally more inclusive democracy, taking popular sovereignty seriously by emphasizing forms of citizen action beyond voting. It opens up a new civic space for direct and cooperative involvement in public life for participatory democracy (Parker, 2003). See Recommendation 3, p. 60.

Democratic Education: A common terminology

What is Democratic Education? Perhaps a view of possibilities can continue a conversation about the definition. Currently, the definition seems to be bound by general areas: (1) Democratic processes, school governance, civic education, citizenship; (2) Freedom to choose, learning without compulsion; and, (3) Self-actualization, global aspects.

Democratic processes, classroom/school governance, civic education

All children, regardless of family economic status or future occupation, must acquire the skills, knowledge, and civic values needed to perpetuate American democracy. To meet these requirements, students should receive a type of education that actively engages them as citizens in their own schools and communities (ASCD, 2002).

Students can be highly involved in classroom decisions concerning class rules, curriculum, or assessment rubrics. Morning meetings, weekly class meetings, a classroom constitution, and a bill of rights and responsibilities are other examples. Involvement of students in democratic schools can go far beyond traditional student councils where participation in school decisions is limited to academic status and decisions concerning picnic menus or school dances. Globally, in many democratic schools, students help with school climate, school rules, scheduling, curriculum, budgeting, and hiring decisions. See: www.idec2003.org.

Freedom to choose, learning without compulsion (IDEC Resolution, 2005)

In any educational setting, young people have the right to decide individually how, when, what, where and with whom they learn, to have an equal share in the decision-making as to how their organizations--in particular their schools--are run, and which rules and sanctions, if any, are necessary. This implies that students who are presently not "able" to decide, are provided experiences to foster the progressive development from a more dependent "stage" to this level of self-directed learning.

Aspects emphasize self-actualization, human rights, and environmental awareness (Hecht, 2002)

Democratic education views the purpose of learning as creating a developmental process, which accompanies people throughout their lifetime. Such a process promotes the multi-facet development of

one's personality, encourages independence and authenticity, fosters respect for human rights, and increases social and environmental responsibility.

Democratic schools (Education Revolution, 2000a)

This list includes schools, both public and private, which have described themselves as democratic, or have been described as democratic by researchers. Generally, these schools involve some or all of the characteristics noted below, although there is no exact definition or requirement for a democratic school (Education Revolution, 2008b):

- shared decision-making among the students and staff
- a learner-centered approach in which students choose their daily activities
- equality among staff and students
- the community as an extension of the classroom

There are currently 208 schools listed in 29 countries and 85 schools in 33 U.S. states and Puerto Rico.

Characteristics of teaching for democracy

Sleeter (2008) describes several key characteristics of teaching for democracy:

- students considering social issues in relationship to public good,
- students using democratic decision-making processes in the classroom,
- teachers embedding content in critical thinking about real issues,
- teachers engaging students in multiple perspectives and multiple sources of knowledge,
- schools affording all students access to high quality education, and
- students' cultural and linguistic identities being supported and viewed as legitimate aspects of citizenship.

Also see Resources: Public democratic schools, p. 144.

Thomas Jefferson and John Dewey: What does a democracy require of its public schools? (Bernard & Mondale, 2001; Smith, 2001a)

To understand the history of the development of democratic education in the U.S., a review of the ideas of Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) and John Dewey (1859-1952) are needed. In the early 1800s, Jefferson believed the survival of America's budding democracy required the education of all citizens, with control by local communities, not the federal government. By teaching the correct political principles to the young, public schools for all could nurture virtuous citizenship. Literate citizens who knew the basics of democracy could better understand public issues, elect virtuous leaders, and sustain the delicate balance between liberty and order. Local control gave citizens a chance to practice self-rule.

John Dewey voiced a similar commitment to education in a democracy through an emphasis on political socialization and wise collective choices. Like Jefferson, Dewey recognized most Americans lacked

knowledge of democratic processes. This limited democracy's potential. Democracy is not just a political system in which governments elected by majority vote make decisions. It is a public democratic life defined by a certain kind of *character*: (1) a mutual regard for others; and (2) an ambition, through communication and deliberation, to make society both a greater unity and one that reflects the full diversity of people's individual talents and aptitudes. To Dewey, public education is the fundamental method of social progress through which democratic character (social intelligence--individual activity-based community consciousness) is taught and experienced.

Education's moral duty: Right social character (Smith, 2001b)

Here, education must be oriented toward the individual because it recognizes the formation of a certain social character ("sociability") as the only genuine basis of right living. Yet this "right character" is not just about individuals, rather it concerns the influence of a certain form of institutional or community life upon the individual and that the social organism, through the school, may determine ethical results. *The community's duty to education is therefore its paramount moral duty.*

Thus, students learn democracy by being members of a group or community that acts democratically. Through communication and participating in the process of deliberation, in classroom shared decision-making and school governance, students learn to view themselves as social beings with individual interests and a concern for the common good.

Through its public schools, a democratic society makes provisions for participation in the common good of all its members on equal terms. This secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through the interactions of the different forms of associated life.

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 (See p. 59 and Appendix K, p. 138) which secure social changes without introducing disorder.

Education for democracy is education freed from authoritarian relationships

Public education fails when it neglects the fundamental principle of the school as a form of community life and education as a social process. School is more than a place where certain information is to be learned. When viewed democratically, school is a community in which communication and deliberation flourishes; thus, we consider the nature of relationships between student and student, students and teachers, and teacher and teacher. As Winch and Gingell (1999) note, if schools exist to promote democratic values it would appear that they need to remove hierarchy. *Education for democracy thus becomes education freed from authoritarian relationships.*

PART ONE: A REVIEW OF HISTORY

HISTORY

- Some examples of democratic practices in American public schools 20
- The development of American democracy: The efforts of citizens to make it genuine 20
 - The women's suffrage movement 20
- America's dilemma: Democracy or Hypocrisy? 21
 - The "Rights" Movements: How returning soldiers challenged America to live up to its promises 21
 - WW I, WW II, Korea, Vietnam, 26th Amendment. Persian Gulf, Iraq 21
- 2000-2099: Democracy's Century? 22
 - How will Middle East War veterans see America and will this mean a more democratic society? 22
 - It's all about democracy: Being continually genuine 23

HISTORY: INDIVIDUALS

- Arthurdale Schools: Elsie Clapp and progressive education in the 1930s 23
 - Education as if citizenship mattered: Covello and Franklin High School 24
 - Vito Perrone and the Struggle for Democratic Schools 24
 - Grace H. Pilon's Workshop Way: Self-managed learning and democratic schools 24
 - Dennie Briggs's Val Verde Project: Creating and growing learning communities 25
- ### OTHER ACTIVITIES: 1950-2008
- Youth who challenged America to live up to her promises 26
 - Barbara Rose Johns: Teens initiate US civil rights movement 26
 - Other student protests: Walk outs, boycotts, strikes, sit-in's, demonstrations, and rallies 27
 - Youth activism today: The legacy continues: MySpace, blogging, "buycotting," text messaging 28
 - The contributions of the Alternative Education Movement to democratic education in public schools 29
 - Alternative school checklists that endorse school/classroom democracy 29

HISTORY

In their 1995 book, *Democratic Schools*, authors Michael Apple and James Beane list the following actions as examples of democratic practices in American public schools:

Pasadena, CA, 1937 Students share solution to community problems

Third graders study problems in their school, homes, neighborhoods, and community--they collect their recommendations in a booklet distributed throughout the community;

Baltimore, MD, 1953 Students do citizenship

High school students conduct a voter registration drive among ethnic minority residents, a study of housing relocation issue, and begin a community health campaign;

Port Jarvis, NY, 1972 Students share in school design decisions

Nearly 125 students, teachers, administrators, parents, board members, and community organizations meet to consider projects they might undertake to redesign their schools;

Ulysses, PA, 1979 School graffiti problems

At a weekly meeting, elementary students/teachers debate and vote on a new rule: anyone defacing school property will spend free time over 3 days working with the custodian;

Belvidere, IL, 1990 1st graders impact environment

Concerned about the size and contents of a local landfill, students undertake a campaign for conservation and recycling in their school;

Madison, WI, 1991 Student/teachers collaborate to create relevant curriculum

Middle school students/teachers create a curriculum out of their questions and concerns that arise in themes as "Living in the Future," "Problems in the Environment," and "Isms."

The development of American democracy: The efforts of citizens to make it genuine

The following is a review of the past century and the events and circumstances that inspired those demanding America live up to its Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Bill of Rights.

The women's suffrage movement.

After 1910, progressive women's rights efforts began to grow. The movement had women entering more of public life. The National Women's Party was creating a female political culture led by politically savvy charismatic leaders. Between 1910 and 1917 the number of states giving women the right to vote grew from 4 to 11. In 1916 Montana elected the nation's first woman to Congress (Women's suffrage movement, n.d.).

World War I acted as a powerful catalyst for social change since it required people to break from their traditional gender roles. The necessity of the country to have people work and support the war effort brought women out of their homes and in more contact with the public, showing what they could do and their future potential.

Women became involved in many activities that substantiated and defended the idea of a woman's right to vote. Women were members of local and national advisory groups in finance, manufacturing, social ills, all aspects of national and European war relief, education, and civil defense efforts.

One outstanding WW I group, the National League for Women's Service ("The Woman Army"), was involved in every aspect of hospital work, entertaining soldiers, Red Cross/national disaster efforts, patriotism/propaganda, conservation, and home economics awareness (Stieber, n.d).

Although World War I did slow down the suffrage campaign in favor of "war work," this added yet another reason to why women deserved the vote (Oregon Sate Archives, n.d.).

America's dilemma: Democracy or hypocrisy?

The women's suffrage movement was the obvious way to test America's promise of equality and freedom under law for all citizens. This laid the groundwork for the many rights movements that followed

The "Rights" Movements: How returning soldiers challenged America to live up to its promises

A review of American history since 1900 reveals a relationship between (a) the limitations of America's promise of "All men/ women are created equal" with its manifestation in equal rights and justice under law, and (b) the experiences of soldiers and personnel.

Many members of so-called minority groups risked their lives and culture in war defending an America where they were treated unjustly. Yet, these experiences provided the rationale to challenge these limitations. Re-experiencing discrimination after returning home from defending America in war against totalitarian regimes made it a duty to expose the moral hypocrisies in American culture.

Also, a major part of the American push for social justice was indirectly due to the foreign policies and the rhetoric of democracy that supported them. This put America in the political global spotlight and thus a scrutiny by a world audience. This pressured American leaders to "practice what they preached."

WW I (1914-1918). During WW I approximately 371,000 black Americans were involved. 200,000 fought in Europe. After WW I, many African Americans returned to the US to find the prejudice and discrimination, which they did not experience in Europe, still prevalent in the north and the Jim Crow south.

In 1941, due to economics, the growth of the US armed forces, and pressure from the government, the country's defense industries where opened to black workers.

WW II (1939-1945). A total 1,000,000 Black Americans were in WW II, with 500,000 stationed overseas. Aware of their contributions to the war effort in WW II, many Black Americans became restless. As they listened to patriotic songs and speeches about freedom for all, they became determined to make these ideas truly meaningful for themselves.

In 1946, President Truman moved to strengthen civil rights laws and integrated the armed forces. This provoked a storm of criticism from the South, but Truman refused to compromise, saying: *Yes, my forebears were Confederates. . . . But my very stomach turned over when I had learned that Negro soldiers, just back from overseas, were being dumped out of Army trucks in Mississippi and beaten* ("Harry S. Truman," 2008).

Korean War (1950-1953). In 1950 almost 100,000 African-Americans were on active duty. By 1953, over 600,000 had served in the military. Over 5,000 African-Americans died in that conflict.

Anti-communist situations in **Cuba**, the **Congo** (1960) and **Dominican Republic** (1965) most likely required black intelligence officers and soldiers.

Vietnam (1962-1972). Of all the men and women who served, 275,000, or 10.6%, were black. At the time, blacks represented 12.5% of the U.S. population (Smith, 1996). It can be inferred that the experiences of armed service men and women before, during, and after Korea influenced **Brown vs. Board of Education** (1954), and those in Vietnam influenced the passage of the **Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1960, 1964, 1965 and 1968**. Their experiences also brought political support for Martin Luther King, Caesar Chavez, the American Indian Movement (AIM), and the women's rights movement.

26th Amendment. Throughout most of American history 18-year-olds could join the armed forces, but could not vote until they were 21. During the Vietnam War this glaring inconsistency stood out because there was a draft and the war was unpopular. In 1971, the 26th Amendment was signed by President Nixon.

Persian Gulf War. (August 1990-February 1991) Out of the combined U. S. and international forces came 400,000 American men and women, and, among them, 113,000 African Americans (Sylvester, 1995).

The Iraq War. Current figures are not available on those exactly involved. Government figures do say almost 78% of the active component enlistment are Caucasian for Fiscal Year 2005 (United States Department of Defense, 2005).

2000-2099: Democracy's Century?

Democracy reform in the United States has taken on a renewed, urgent focus as presidential, congressional and state elections become increasingly hard-fought and closely decided. From basic concerns about election procedures to fundamental questions about full and equal representation, political leaders and the American people are engaged in a national dialogue about the health of American democracy not seen in a generation or more.

With the current global politics and wars, both civil and national, around democratization, plus the struggles of developing new democracies and national pro-democracy movements, the start of the 21st century is filled with individual, household, community, local and national conversations and debate about the potential of open and free democratic governments. In light of what is presented here, if this momentum continues, the world community will engage and judge, in a daily global experiment with democracy, to see if various democratic forms of government can live up their possibilities--and in particular--will watch to see if a nation such as America lives up to its democratic potential.

How will Middle East War veterans see America and will this mean a more democratic society?

It is a substantial argument of this paper that the same rationale used by past US servicepersons--that there is a gap between American rhetoric and reality--to justify lobbying for significant changes in society in

order to make America more authentic will, in “Democracy’s century,” be used to influence all Americans to be open to a better quality democracy—*one so compelling even the children will want to try it!*

What is potentially different about these veterans is the fact that many personnel are citizens in the National Guard, not professional soldiers. The Iraqi (and Gulf) War vets, returning to their jobs and families, whose children attend public schools, will be open to seriously considering democratic education if approached. They may not necessarily be for democratic schools, but will not be against a pro-democracy movement in public schools either. How could they be? This is especially the case if they view:

- US/their efforts in Iraq as “a cause” to spread democracy to that country and the Middle-East
- Iraqi schools as places for children to be exposed to democracy’s potential
- what has been going on since the early 1990s in regard to democratic education

The growth in the number of more democratic public schools and instances of shared decision-making in classrooms, plus the international development at the public and private levels--illustrated by the now 15 annual International Democratic Education Conferences (IDECs, see: www.idec2008.org) and the new regional IDECs in Europe and Asia--will be influential. This momentum is illustrated by US organizations listed in this paper (League of Democratic Schools, CIRCLE, Forum for Democracy in Education, First Amendment Schools, etc., (See Democratic Organizations, p. 145) and the push to lower the voting age to 16 (Ferguson, 2004; Weiser, 2004; Kamenetz, 2008) will each combine to offer a rationale for veterans to consider democratic education when asked for their support.

Democracy’s like a life raft. You’re constantly going up and down. Your feet are always wet.
You may never know where you’re going, but you never sink.

-- General Colin Powell

It’s all about democracy: Being continually genuine

Democracy is not a goal, it is a path. Democracy must constantly be reworked and improved upon. Middle-East war veterans know they defended American democracy and wished to share it with others. Thus, they know they must provide opportunities for their children, or their neighbor’s and co-worker’s children, to practice this ideal progressively by age and grade in their own public schools, carrying forward President Thomas Jefferson’s dream that public education be education for democracy. In “Democracy’s Century” democratic public schools and classrooms will provide the means for American democracy to be continually more genuine.

HISTORY: INDIVIDUALS

Arthurdale Schools: Elsie Clapp and progressive education in the 1930s

Arthurdale, West Virginia, was created by New Deal policymakers in the mid-1930s as a “resettlement community for displaced coal miners.” Its schools (1934-1941) were a landmark in efforts to bring Deweyan ideals of progressive education to bear on community life. Community-centered pedagogy was central to

school leader Elsie Clapp's progressive notions of child-centeredness, activity, and "culture community" which she professed fostered learning and citizen involvement (Perlstein, 1996).

Education as if citizenship mattered: Covello and Franklin High School (Johanek & Puckett, 2006)

What might schools look like if citizenship mattered as much as reading and math? Dr. Leonard Covello (1887-1982) founded Benjamin Franklin High School in East Harlem, where he lived, in 1934. Influenced by social activists and his own immigrant experiences, Covello saw public schools as best situated to be centers for democratic education. Having direct contact with the community, they should cultivate a spirit of friendliness and intelligent cooperation. Like his contemporary Paul Robert Hanna (Stallones, n.d.) who in 1936 wrote the classic *Youth Serves the Community*, Covello wanted students to graduate with the willingness and capability to be change agents for a just and humane society. This promoted local democratic processes, cultivating a richer citizen participation in resolving intercultural conflicts among immigrants.

Through Covello's idea of "community-centered schooling" Franklin became a force for revitalization of the community in east Harlem. At Franklin, students studied and helped solve neighborhood problems. Teachers were dedicated to civic activism for democratic ends.

Covello left in 1956. Franklin became the Manhattan Center for Science and Math in the early 1980s.

For more on Dr. Covello see: <http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&q=leonard+covello+democratic>. View the October, 14 1940 *Time Magazine* article mentioning Ben Franklin High "Lessons for Democrats" See: www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,764836,00.html?promoid=googlep

Vito Perrone and the Struggle for Democratic Schools (Carini, 2005)

Vito Perrone (1933-) is an educator who taught at Northern Michigan University, the University of North Dakota, and Harvard Graduate School of Education. Influenced by Leonard Covello, he professes similar views about the role of education.

Perrone believes any educational practice needs to be assessed against its ability to contribute to building a society in which all members have increasing opportunity to participate fully in social and economic life, and in which every individual is better able to realize his or her potential within a socially interactive community. That education is about community, democracy, and concern for the well being of all humanity is what makes Perrone's vision and leadership so powerful. See his 1999, *Lessons for a New Teacher*, published by McGraw-Hill (ISBN-10: 0072324465).

Grace H. Pilon's Workshop Way: Self-managed learning and democratic schools (Thweatt, n.d.)

Starting in 1927 and over the next 40 years, K-8 educator Grace Pilon developed the concept of "The Workshop Way." During the 1960s she refined the approach. Through other teachers, conferences, and universities, the word spread.

Through her observations she became interested in the attention spans of little children. Some children consistently finishing their work “on time” and were satisfied daily. There were others, however, who consistently became frustrated because they never had enough time to finish. It seemed to her that classroom living was a cruel way of life for too many children. Pilon loved children and dropped classroom approaches that hurt a child’s nature.

Self-management of learning: Students do more of the talking, modeling, and decision-making

Pilon’s response was to give 100% of students the right to be the active agents in the learning process, then the immediate mastery of knowledge skills cannot depend upon right answers. *It must depend on an environment that provides equal opportunities to manage the same experiences in different ways.*

Subject matter is not individualized. It is the way and the time for learning to learn and learning to think that are individualized. Students feel their worth as learners and thinkers and begin to believe in themselves.

In the Workshop Way, where the growth of worth and dignity is primary, students develop feelings of importance and intelligence, and experience the power of managing their own learning. Workshop Way develops in the student a strong self-concept, a comfortable sense of inner self-direction and self-discipline, and an internalized respect for the rights of others while exercising their freedom of choice.

Workshop Way: Self-managed learning leads to critical consciousness

Pilon developed a system that goes beyond rhetoric and gives teachers a step-by-step plan to bring about change in their individual classroom. Her Workshop Way, based on democratic foundations, helps build thinking individuals who are liberated from unhealthy fears of failure. This provides access to equal opportunities for whole person growth. *Here students develop the critical consciousness which will result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world.* These students will be prepared to challenge the status quo and become the active adult citizens of tomorrow (Pilon, 1991).

The National Association of WW Educators was established in 1977. In 1990, WW Inc. was formed. See: www.workshopway.com/timeline

Dennie Briggs and the Val Verde Project: Creating and growing learning communities

During the summer of 1965, one of the first demonstration projects funded under President Johnson’s War on Poverty provided the means to temporarily change the traditional structure of a public elementary school. The Val Verde Project worked with 200 economically disadvantaged children in grades Pre-K to 6th, mainly Black and Latino students/families living in a rural area of Riverside County in Southern California (The Planned Environment Therapy Trust Archive and Study Centre, 2005).

The project was coordinated by Dennie Briggs, who brought his experiences as a former prison and Navy therapist and the influences of the “social learning” concept of Maxwell Jones. The staff was a team of elementary teachers. School dropouts, college students, and parents who were all trained as teacher aides.

The focal point of the project was the daily staff “seminar” meeting. These leaderless sessions set norms/standards, handled conflicts, and reviewed and planned the individual, classroom, and daily school activities.

What is relevant here is that the project continually questioned the inherent and underlying matter of authority and its use (or abuse) in the teaching situation. This was manifested in the concept of a “Learning Community.” This was a group with a family-like atmosphere where all members have a say, and all members have something to learn and teach others. This climate came in the form of: (1) a non-hierarchical or “multiple leadership” orientation, (2) cooperative learning and peer tutoring, (3) daily classroom meetings/peer discussion groups which shared in decision-making, and (4) classroom peer-oriented meetings where problems were talked out--*turning conflicts into learning experiences*.

Although the school did not continue, the program did show the importance of para-professionals, and linking school and community. With the program being voluntary, attendance was considered “spectacular.” The school had less behavior problems than regular public schools according to the evaluations.

Briggs went on to promote peer tutoring (See his: *A Class of Their Own: When Children Teach Children* [1998] Bergin & Garvey Paperback) and influenced educators to turn student-student conflicts into learning experiences. He created the Youth Action Teams concept, an organized way to develop and carry out projects, large or small, using a program development model which the Planned Environment Therapy Trust Archive and Study Centre promotes at the international level. See: www.pettarchiv.org.uk/pubs-dbriggs-inschool4.pdf for his 2004 *Youth Action Teams* guidebook.

OTHER ACTIVITIES: 1950-2008

Youth who challenged America to live up to its promises

As well as adults, youth, particularly in the 20th century, have been strongly involved in civil rights, student and gay rights, and environmental activism.

Barbara Johns: Teens help initiate US civil rights movement (“Barbara Rose Johns,” 2008)

Barbara Rose Johns was born in 1935. She lived in Prince Edward County, Virginia, on a farm. Barbara’s uncle was the prominent civil rights activist Reverend Vernon Johns whose outspokenness influenced her.

In 1951, 16 year-old Barbara was in the 10th grade at the all-black Moton High School in Farmville, VA. Across town was another school open exclusively to white schoolchildren. Barbara’s school was designed and built to hold roughly 200 students, but in 1951 400 were enrolled. Frustrated with the separate and highly unequal facilities, Barbara decided to do something.

Organizing against “separate and equal”

Ms. Johns met with several classmates and they all agreed to help organize a student strike. The principal of the school was tricked into leaving by being told that some students were downtown causing

trouble. Meanwhile, she forged a memo from Moton's principal telling all teachers to bring their classes to a special assembly. Here, she delivered a speech revealing her plans for a student strike. The students agreed to participate, and on that day they marched down to the county courthouse to make officials aware of the large difference in quality between the white and black schools.

While the strike was being carried out, the students sought legal counsel from the NAACP which filed against the school district; but, that case failed. The NAACP's appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court in *Davis v. Prince Edward County*, along with four others cases, became part of *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Youth Activism Overlooked

As *Davis* was the only case in *Brown* initiated by student protest, it is seen by some as the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement. Barbara Johns' contribution to civil rights is often overlooked due to the fact that she was a teenager when she made a difference.

Other student protests: Walk outs, boycotts, strikes, sit-in's, demonstrations, and rallies

The history of student voice and student political/social activism, which is encouraged by a climate of democracy, is as old as America's public schools. Students of the history may have to infer the many individual and group writings, publications, and actions that may not have made the news as the following small event did. On September 23, 1922 many students at Mineola (Long Island, NY) High School walked out of school to show support for their senior class president who was suspended over a disagreement concerning her absence from that day's study hall (*Mineola High School Students Strike, 1922*).

African American young people led boycotts, freedom rides, voter registration drives and rallies across the south. African American high school students sacrificed their safety and often disobeyed their parent's wishes as they engaged in civil disobedience, filling the jails with their young bodies (Cohen, 2006).

A review of the events reveals that most student civic action was a product of efforts by students to make America live up to its promises of equal opportunity and equality under the law centering around faculty, textbooks, curriculum, dress codes/arm bans, funding, and facilities of the civil right era.

In 1966 students at Northern High in Detroit called a general strike to protest the future of urban schools and demand better learning opportunities (Bernard & Mondale, 2001).

In the fall of 1968 approximately 30,000 African American and Latino/a students started sustained boycotts to protest the quality of education (Bernard & Mondale, 2001). Protesting the lack of Black history courses, black teachers and administrators, and poor quality facilities, black high schools in Chicago walked out of school (Danns, 2003). High school student activism by Chicano students in the Los Angeles area in 1968 (Ochoa, 2008) led to subsequent rebellions and trials (Lopez, 2003). On Friday, April 5, 1968, the day following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 250 African American students at William Penn Senior High School, also known as "York High," in York, Pennsylvania, refused to attend class. Instead the

students quietly barricaded themselves in the auditorium of the school to commence Black Pride Day (Wright, 2003). See the film *Walkout: Reading. Writing. Revolution.* (www.hbo.com/films/walkout/) based on the East L.A. student protests of 1968.

The famous 1969 Crystal City, TX student boycott over lack of Mexican-American teachers, culturally relevant textbooks, and excessive pressure on students to “Americanize” grew to over 200 walk-outs across the nation. This led to the community organizing and winning 4 seats on the Crystal City school board in 1970 (Bernard & Mondale, 2001).

Youth activism today: The legacy continues: MySpace, blogging, “buycotting,” text messaging

But no matter how important young African Americans proved to be to the Civil Rights Movement, they have been equally active and instrumental in other movements and politics. Whether it is the Black Power movement, the Anti-apartheid movement, or the organized mobilization against mass incarceration, African American youth have been and continue to be at the center of these efforts, providing leadership, analysis, and energy (Cohen, 2006).

On May 15, 1994 San Francisco Bay Area High School Students held a strike in support of Chicano Studies. See www.rwor.org/a/rwindex/text/rw1994.htm

At the RadFest 2003 Midwest Social Forum in the workshop “High School Student Activism” 6 students covered their efforts organizing for social and political change in Wisconsin involving rallies, teach-ins, debates, vigils, walkouts, and student strikes. See www.radfest.org/archives/radfest03/program03.htm

June 6, 2003 was the day Portland Oregon high school students took to the streets, occupying City Hall. The strike was a response to the failure of the legislature to pass Measure 28 which promised significant money for public schools. This strike resulted from a walk-out in December of 2002, a sleep-in at Lincoln High School in January of ‘03, and their recent visit to the state capitol of Salem to lobby the legislature. See portland.indymedia.org/en/feature/archive68.shtml

For an all-over review of student voice see *Young Activists* (Graham, 2006), a look back at the social unrest and reform movements of the 1960s. The book specifically examines high schools in America and how they were shaped by these turbulent times. Graham also explores how students of this era actively helped further the change with their involvement in issues such as the Civil Rights Movement, racial segregation/integration, Black power/Brown power, anti-war, dress codes, arm bans, student rights, and underground newspapers.

Today’s student protesters rally against high stakes testing, locker/personal searches, and the war in Iraq. Youth activism with respect to the environment (Buffett, n.d.) or global alternative energy sources (www.solaryouth.com), student unions (www.phillystudentunion.org), and protests against restrictive dress codes (Pesa, 2006) are notable.

Recent high school student walk outs on immigration used “MySpace” and text messaging to self-organize. Students are also engaging in new forms of politics: blogging, “buycotting” (not buying certain items to protest i.e. child labor), or making purchases because one agrees with the politics and social values of the company producing the good (Cohen, 2006).

The contributions of the Alternative Education Movement to democratic education in public schools

In the early late 60’s to early 70’s, in an effort to improve public education, some public school educators began to try smaller schools, learning options, individualization, and having students and parents share in creating their school’s vision and in other decision-making processes (MAEO, 1995; Barr & Parrott, 1997; Smink, 1998). In many ways this is what made them so different from the traditional public schools.

These schools (along with the ideas and philosophy from the Southern freedom schools, Black independent schools, private free schools, and urban storefront street academies) were studied and promoted as “alternative” schools. As a result of this challenge to the “one best system” professional educators learned that children and their parents were capable of making decisions about how and what they learned, and other important school decisions when given the respect and opportunity. The concepts of magnet schools, charters schools, and the current small schools movement are the legacy of these courageous innovators and their non-traditional school climates (Neumann, 2003).

The 70s alternative education movement also gave new impetus to the Thomas Jefferson/John Dewey inspired democratic purposes of public education. Many of today’s educators, classrooms, schools, and civic education curricula, as well as democratic education and civic education organizations and programs are influenced by the re-birth of democratic practices involving all stakeholders—practices originally initiated and promoted by alternative public schools of choice.

Alternative school checklists that endorse school/classroom democracy

Currently there are four national-class alternative school checklists that endorse shared decision-making with students as a factor in determining the authenticity and the effectiveness of public alternatives of choice. These checklists infer the inherent limitations of the current non-democratic “soft jails” (Raywid, 1994) alternatives where “at-risk” students attend involuntarily:

1. John Harris Loflin’s “Pseudo-alternative School Checklist” www.educationrevolution.org/pseudo.html
2. Dr. Ray Morley’s “Checklist of Quality Indicators” www.learningalternatives.net/Quality_Indicators.pdf
3. Seattle’s “Quality Indicators for Alternative Schools” from Elaine Packard’s alternative education study committee www.learningalternatives.net/Seattle_alt_ed_survey.pdf
4. National Dropout Prevention Center’s “Essential Elements of Effective Alternative Schools: Type I” <http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/dayart/PDF/NDPCReportFinal.pdf>.

PART TWO: YOUTH AND CIVIC EDUCATION IN THEIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- High school Civics: A 20th century concept irrelevant to the needs of a 21st century democracy 31
- Civics: 1922 31
 - Civics 2005: Is Civics any different? A course description, Londonderry, NH High School 31
- What does a national-level civics assessment study comparing 1998 & 2006 reveal? 32
- Urban youth's negative view of civic education 32
- Disengagement or a rationale response to hypocrisy in an American society that purports equality, but delivers injustice? 32
 - A proposal: New directions for school-based civic education 32
- The effect of social class culture on American conceptions of democratic practices: Rethinking democratic education with working-class students 33
- A brief history of social class in America 33
 - Parenting practices: Characteristics of middle/working-class culture in America 33
 - John Dewey vs. Saul Alinsky: Discursive democracy vs. democratic solidarity 34
 - Social class democratic empowerment and public schools 34
- A common interest, but no common ground: Rethinking youth's civic engagement 34
- Civic participation vs. political participation: New ways to view youth engagement 35
 - Civic knowledge vs. civic competence: Does service learning help engagement? 35
 - Can bad schooling inhibit desire for civic engagement? 35
 - Misunderstanding of urban youth engagement 36
- There is common interest, but no common ground: Lack of agreement by youth advocates on the means to engage youth 36
- Reinterpreting *e pluribus unum*: Combining Civics and multicultural education by teaching mutual Respect 36
- Multicultural education must expand politically 36
 - Is simply teaching tolerance enough to help students face individual differences? 37
 - Morally-informed deliberation: Practicing multicultural education 37
 - Limitations of civic education 37
 - Limitations of multicultural education: Appreciating diversity is not enough 37
- Edging closer to reciprocity 38
- Democratic education: Inspiring a curriculum that unites Civics with multicultural education 38
- Summary: Civics + multicultural education (based on mutual respect + morally informed deliberation) = Democratic Education 38

High school Civics: A 20th century concept irrelevant to the needs of a 21st century democracy

According to the Center for Civic Education, civic education as a discreet curriculum began between 1900 and 1920 in efforts to Americanize the waves of immigrants. Sometimes referred to as "pressure cooker" civics, these early initiatives tended to be intricate and dull, but they carried on, sustained by the patriotism of WW I and II and the "us against them" mentality of the early years of the Cold War (Quigley, 1999).

The report of the 1916 Social Studies Committee of the National Education Association's Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education (Evans, 2004) attempted to recast American social education by addressing students' immediate concerns and needs. Courses such as Community Civics and Problems of Democracy, both integrating various social science disciplines and stressing contemporary issues, were implemented.

The 1918 Cardinal Principal of Secondary Education stressed civic oriented goals such as citizenship and ethical character. The depression of the 1930s and the growth in the number of teenagers and high schools in the 1940s came to influence Civics. These economic and social changes of the 40s and 50s pushed civic education away from an emphasis on the individual to that individual's place in society.

From a 1960s anti-establishment's critique of America's traditional values, arose the respect for diversity and multiculturalism. With more immigration, the US now has a diverse society which is out of synch with the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant Straight Male values that once dominated civic education. Quigley (1999) notes, "*Redefining civic education in this polyglot world is the overriding challenge for civic educators today.*"

Civics: 1922

In the early 1920s, J. Montgomery Gambrill (1922) described civic education as preoccupied with small-group relations and personal conduct and manners while teaching a patriotic belief that "...the United States is in every respect the greatest and best country in the world, and particularly that it is morally superior to any other nation and is the natural mentor of mankind."

Civics 2005: Is Civics any different? A course description, Londonderry, NH High School

The current course is concerned with the organization and operation of government on the local, state, and national levels (Londonderry High School Civics Curriculum, 2005):

- Students will be exposed to the major ideas, protections, privileges, and economic systems that affect the life of a citizen in the US political system.
- Students will be able to identify national and US foreign policy issues facing Americans, and understand their role (rights and responsibilities) as citizens at all levels of government and in the world today.

A review of the curriculum saw no more than academic understanding through memorization, essays, and projects. This limitation falls within the critique of Gutmann (1995) that school Civics courses tends to be too patriotic-- discouraging critique of the United States, and repressive when it fails to teach respect and appreciation for the positive contributions by minorities to America's common culture.

Requiring students to help run Londonderry High School (help write school rules, budgets, assessment rubrics, or hire teachers) so they will know how to run America was not within the spirit of the curriculum.

What does a national-level civics assessment study comparing 1998 and 2006 reveal?

The 2006 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) civics assessment study (Lutkus & Weiss, 2007) evaluated 25,000 students at grades 4, 8, and, 12 for their understanding of the democratic institutions and ideals necessary to become informed citizens in shaping America's future. The results are compared with those of the 1998 civics assessment.

- About 69% of American students at grades 4, 8, and 12 have at least a basic knowledge of civics. Average scores improved from 1998 to 2006 only at grade 4.
- Overall, knowledge of civics by students in grade 8 has not changed since the 1998 assessment. White and Hispanic students showed score gains.
- Twelfth-graders, tomorrow's voters, performed at about the same level in 2006 as they did in 1998. No student group showed a statistically significant increase.

Urban youth's negative view of civic education (Rubin, 2007)

Why do urban students and students of color tend to lag behind their suburban and white middle-class peers in such measures of civic knowledge and engagement? To understand young people's development of civic identity (their sense of connection to and participation in a civic community), Beth Rubin took the meaning youth, from a variety of socioeconomic contexts, make of their daily experiences with civic institutions and their agents (e.g., teachers, police, social workers).

Disengagement or a rational response to hypocrisy in an American society that purports equality, but delivers injustice?

What some see as "disengagement" for minorities and poor in the civic education in schools and civic activities before/after graduation may actually be a rational response to the "dis-junctures" they experience in an American society that purports equality but delivers injustice.

With suburban/middle class, affluent, and often white students, there is such a common congruence between daily experiences and societal ideals (combined with a lack of exposure to the existing dis-junctures) that a complacency develops that appears to fuel a limited view of civic engagement. Although these students have no personal negative experiences, those who have learned about injustice in school or from family, recognize their privilege, and become aware that disjunctures exist for others. They see civic involvement as necessary for equality and fairness.

A proposal: New directions for school-based civic education

Most civics and government classes are not structured to build upon both positive and negative "civic" experiences, instead emphasizing content coverage and traditional pedagogies. Although many educators choose to avoid controversial social and civic issues in their classrooms, they must realize identification and

explorations of problems—disjunctures—are the very practices that students cited when describing a shift to a more active civic identity. Civic and government teachers might consider adopting an “attitude” of critical consciousness when teaching today’s students. See Recommendation 7, p. 66.

The effect of social class culture on American conceptions of democratic practices: Rethinking democratic education with working-class students via “democratic solidarity” (Schutz, 2008)

Although this paper intends to show that most attempts by public schools at democratic empowerment and citizenship skills in the US are an academic “civics” that lacks practice and real world engagement, Aaron Schutz argues that past and current progressive attempts may also be lacking.

Progressive curricula/teachers value the more middle-class forms (the active ideas put forth by progressive John Dewey) which foster practices enhancing individuality within informal collaborations; however, are they best for all students? Do middle-class teachers often misapply perspectives derived from their own life-world to the very different experiences of the poor?

Schutz sees current forms of democratic engagement as quite limited when compared to practices of “*democratic solidarity*” developed by the working class that emphasize tradition, hierarchy, and the pragmatic importance of speaking in a collective voice. Many progressive middle-class teachers tend to ignore the potential resources of the “democratic solidarity” concept, limiting their ability to foster effective practices of social action among working-class children.

A brief history of social class in America

Schutz explores the clear distinction between how the middle and working classes emerged in America after 1850 during rapid urbanization and industrialization. Well educated and using professional certifications and credentials, the emerging middle class had to learn to act as relatively independent and mobile individuals to obtain and keep their status. A new character ideal emerged in this impersonal world: the “team player” able to constantly shift relational ties and work closely with relative strangers.

Industrialization molded the new working class. In factories, the holistic skills of artisans were broken down into separate operations, reducing worker control and holding wages down. In response, workers developed pragmatic strategies of collective solidarity very different from the individualism of the more privileged. They stressed the importance of “mutualism” and “reciprocity,” depending on their long-term relationships and closely knit communities for survival.

Parenting practices: Key characteristics of middle and working class culture in America

Schutz also explores parenting styles. Middle-class children learn at an early age to monitor themselves and make their own judgments. They pick up their parents’ preferences for relatively abstract forms of reasoning. Independent and individualistic, they learn to interact with a shifting cast of characters and form mainly “weak” social ties. This prepares them well for the kind of information-driven, symbolic management contexts they will face at the corporation or as employers.

Working-class parents, in contrast, tend not to focus on encouraging individual expression with their children, emphasizing the importance of tradition, authority, and membership in a strong network of community and family ties—practices and attitudes that fit well with the demands of working-class jobs.

John Dewey vs. Saul Alinsky: Discursive democracy vs. democratic solidarity

Schultz points out two distinct approaches to democratic social action are associated with these class cultures: “Discursive democracy” and John Dewey, and the working-class approach, “democratic solidarity,” represented Saul Alinsky.

In Dewey’s essentially middle-class vision, authentic democratic practices were those that nurtured individual distinctiveness amidst collective action—reasoned dialogue leading to consensus. Alinsky developed an approach to community organizing that focused on the enhancement of the *collective* power and voice of the impoverished—strategies for democratic collective empowerment that seem much more relevant to the socially and economically oppressed than the time-intensive and often culturally alien forms of discursive democracy preferred by the middle class.

Social class democratic empowerment and public schools

Public schools are environments dominated by middle-class practices and values, ignoring working-class ways of being and rarely acknowledging this exclusion. Because abilities in discursive practices are general requirements of middle-class advancement, John Dewey’s form of democratic education has become so dominant that it is rarely challenged.

According to Schutz, democratic education that intends to empower the urban working class must acknowledge the limitations of deeply held and largely class-based commitments to discursive democracy and give new regard for grassroots approaches to collective empowerment.

Although this paper recommends a direct democracy and an even more inclusive “democratic anarchy” (See Appendix G, p. 127) for today’s politically savvy global youth culture, both may not be appropriate to all students. More research is needed to see the effects of a form of representational school democracy—a situation that takes the traditional student council concept and transforms it into one enabling a working-class oriented student council based on the “democratic solidarity” concept.

A common interest, but no common ground: Rethinking youth’s civic engagement (Celestine, n.d.)

Jamila Celestine is concerned with America’s civic life. She worries that people and communities are becoming less inclined to pursue shared goals, thus solidifying bonds of social trust and overcoming dilemmas of collective action. She believes this political apathy leads to even less civic participation which correlates to plummeting levels of social trust and neighborliness, which directly affects the quality of public life and the functioning of representative government.

This concern inspired her to issue a “Memo on Youth & Civic Engagement” she titled “African-American Youth and Civic Engagement: A Brief Review of the Literature.” The memo revealed that very few scholars within the field of youth engagement comprehensively consider influences and implications relevant to youth civic engagement.

The primary purpose of her memo is to provide an accurate portrait of the state of research on youth civic engagement, while paying special attention to the place African American youth occupy in current research agendas.

The influence of this thesis of civic decline, according to Celestine, is particularly pertinent to research regarding youth. She cites data to show youth are less involved and lists the traditional causes. As well, she notes that the “DotNets” generation (15-25 years of age) *may not be less engaged in civic life, but simply engaging in new and different ways traditional causal theories overlook.*

Celestine’s main concern is that while current research often includes descriptive references to racial subgroups, on the whole, social scientists who explore civic engagement are generally not interested in detailed evaluations of youth civic life along racial lines.

Civic participation vs. political participation: New ways to view youth engagement

She distinguishes civic participation and political participation both of which are seen as “civic engagement.” Civic engagement includes any activity, individual or collective, devoted to influencing the collective life. Thus political voice can mean participation in formal government institutions, being a part of a group or organization, volunteering at a soup kitchen, protesting or boycotting, voting/running for office, or even simply talking to a neighbor.

Civic knowledge vs. civic competence: Does service learning increase engagement?

To Celestine, there is a growing distinction between civic knowledge and civic competence--namely between learning facts about democratic citizenship and being inspired toward and equipped for it.

She notes that service learning is an attempt to bridge this difference. This suggests a need for research, along demographic lines, to see if service learning does lead to more civic engagement after graduation.

What is particularly relevant here is Celestine’s assertion that service-learning initiatives are more effective among black adolescents whose group history and life experiences have engendered sensitivity to community needs or that service-learning approaches face unique obstacles in minority communities and must take a novel form in order to achieve successful outcomes. Also see Recommendation 12, p. 71.

Can bad schooling inhibit desire for civic engagement?

She also suggest more research on specifically charting the ways that bad or ineffective schooling can act as a barrier to civic participation by reproducing and exacerbating existing social inequities that disadvantage poor and minority youth.

Misunderstanding of urban youth engagement

Celestine points out research in two areas where urban youth engagement is being misunderstood and thus misrepresented: (1) Although urban youth appear disengaged, it is not because they are satisfied or blasé, but rather because they are alienated from the institutions and processes of civic life and lack the motivation, opportunity, and ability to overcome this alienation. This reflects the distrust youth have of public institutions due to the legacy of government not responding to minority concerns, and (2) Celestine notes research that suggests broadening the current limited definition of civic engagement. Traditional terms such as “cynical” or “alienated” to categorize broad demographic groups misrepresent the complexity of youth’s attitudes. Instead of this limited view, she insists that urban youth, growing up in neighborhoods and schools with insufficient resources, are actively partaking in civic life via “critical analysis of structural forces and power.” *Black urban youth*, participating in a complex process of “critical” civic engagement in which their civic activism is motivated by their personal experiences of social problems, *are engaged*.

There is common interest, but no common ground: Lack of agreement by youth advocates on the means to engage youth

In conclusion, Celestine acknowledges the variety of ways to frame youth civic engagement—from perspectives that include educational, political, economical, cultural, etc. Although this adds to the richness of the literature, it also “engenders conflicting prognoses of how to cure America’s civic ills.” In short, there is common interest, but no common ground. This leads to little agreement across or even within disciplines on the means to engage and help youth.

She suggests interested adults draw on inter- and intra-disciplinary discourses in order to produce work that provides wide-reaching yet detailed explanations of the dynamic of civic engagement among the various youth populations in the United States.

Reinterpreting *e pluribus unum*: Combining Civics and multicultural education by teaching mutual respect

Many contemporary controversies about public schooling turn on the “clash” of two apparently competing educational aims: securing civic unity against respecting cultural differences.

Amy Gutman in her essay, “Challenges of Multiculturalism in Democratic Education” (1995) argues that democratic education, through the use of mutual respect, will integrate both the unifying aims of civic education and diversifying aims of multicultural education. In her attempt to reconcile these two competing impulses, characteristic of a country of immigrants, she reinterprets America’s motto, *e pluribus unum*.

Multicultural education must expand politically

Gutman insists multiculturalism must expand politically through teaching students the civic virtue of mutual respect and its understanding through practice. This can be accomplished by involving students in classroom decisions and the day-to-day activities of school governance—teaching students how to engage

together in respectful discussions in which they strive to understand, appreciate, and, if possible, resolve disagreements, including those that may be partly rooted in cultural differences.

Is simply teaching tolerance enough to help students face individual differences?

Gutman sees the "to live and let live" essence of toleration as an essential democratic virtue, yet not a sufficient condition. Mutual respect, unlike tolerance, expresses the equal standing of every person as an individual and citizen. This makes it both a public and a private good.

Mutual respect also enables democratic citizens to discuss their political differences in a productive way by first understanding one another's perspectives and then by trying to find fair ways of resolving their disagreements.

Morally-informed deliberation: Practicing multicultural education

The other foundation of Gutman's idea of democratic education is the practice of morally-informed deliberation. This literal practice of multicultural education engages students in according each other the mutual respect and moral understanding that is too often lacking in contemporary politics.

A multicultural curriculum dedicated to teaching a morally-informed deliberation would encourage students to respect each other as equal citizens, regardless of the accomplishments of their ancestors, and to take different points of view seriously when thinking about politics.

Limitations of civic education

The problem for Gutman is that traditional Civics I & II curricula, intending to unify society with a common civic language, is too concerned with making sure all students have essential background knowledge of the constitution, the 3 branches of government, and relevant history. The practice of civics in schools and/or the community, through an action-oriented curriculum, is minimal.

Limitations of multicultural education: An appreciation of cultural diversity is not enough

However, Gutman's main concern is current multicultural curricula. Like the emphasis of civic education on facts, expanding the knowledge of students meets only half the intellectual and moral challenge of the democratic role/responsibility of public education. An appreciation of cultural diversity (including cultural and gender identity and ethnic and religious heritage) is not enough.

Bolstering self-esteem/-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) by group identification is also not enough. This is true not because self-efficacy is unimportant or insupportable by education, but because the self-efficacy that is compatible with mutual respect among citizens cannot be acquired merely by means of group identification.

Mutual respect that rests only on a student's cognition of cultural diversity is an incomplete democratic virtue. Recognition needs to be accompanied by a *willingness*, which is enabled by an ability to deliberate about politically relevant disagreements.

Edging closer to reciprocity

Gutman believes a school, with a culturally diverse student body, that is dedicated to morally-informed deliberation will strive for reciprocity in relationships: fair exchange--the same equal responsibilities and rights shared by all. This climate will enable agreement on relational disagreements, as well as classroom, and school policies that are (as far as possible) mutually acceptable to all who are bound by them.

Democratic education: Inspiring a curriculum that unites Civics with multicultural education

What is important for Gutman is that democratic education can inspire a curriculum that unites Civics and multicultural education. Such a curriculum:

- teaches mutual respect among citizens, reinforcing the unifying aim of civic education in a multicultural democracy.
- puts multicultural education in service to democratic values (the curricular goals of Civics), not in opposition.
- supports rather than subverts one of the most basic lessons of democratic education: that all individuals, regardless of their cultural identifications, have equal civic standing, and are honored or dishonored by their own acts, not by the acts of their ancestors.

Summary: Civics + multicultural education (based on mutual respect + morally informed deliberation) = Democratic Education

In conclusion, Amy Gutman states that just as a citizenship education, unmodified by multiculturalism, represses cultural differences, multiculturalism, uninformed by civic values, discriminates among citizens on the basis of their group identities. Schools can meet this challenge of multiculturalism by allying common civic values with uncommon cultural appreciations through democratic education.

For another interpretation of *e pluibus unum* see Walter Parker's idea of an Advanced Democracy in Recommendation 3 on p. 61.

PART THREE: DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION TODAY

- Legitimizing the role of public schools in expanding the democratic way of life 40
- Democratic school reform: A powerful and positive force for the revitalization of public schools 40
- Four school “micro-democracies” 40
- Apple & Beane’s guideline for democratic structures and processes in public schools 41
- Apple & Beane’s concept of a democratic curriculum in public schools 41
- League of Democratic Schools 42
- No Child left behind 42
 - A “don’t think and just do” educational system: Achieving vs. learning in NCLB 43
- Education for public or private purposes: Both democracy and corporatocracy value student learning, but define what is to be learned, how, and for what purpose quite differently 43
- Consequently, Americans must demand a space for democracy in the standards movement 43
- “Paper” democracy vs. “living” democracy: We the People 44; Restoring the Balance between Academics and Civic Engagement in Public Schools 44; Liberty’s Apprentice 45
 - The vast difference between teaching for democracy and enabling its actual practice by students 46
- The Struggle for Control of Public Education: Market oriented policies vs. democratic values 46
 - The basic issue is values: What do Americans think of their young people? 47
- Parents who see no value in school democracy: Conservative national “authoritarian populist” groups 48
 - A democratic response to “Official Knowledge” may not be acceptable to some 49
- How do social, economic, and political conditions help or inhibit civic engagement of black youth? 49
 - Are the wrong questions being asked about the civic and political behavior among black youth? 49
 - What constitutes civic behavior for African American youth in urban communities? 49
- Understanding barriers to black youth activism: Including the most alienated and resistant students 50
 - Two factors that continue to threaten political activism among African American youth 50
 - The consistent attack on black youth and their families through hostile school policy 50
 - Black youth activism threatened by situations where generational political ideas are in conflict. 50
- Key points in understanding of black youth civic and political behavior 51
 - Civil Rights generation vs. hip hop generation: “Afrocentric” vs. “Ghetto-centric” politics 51
 - Race and political identity: To be black, young, and poor was also to be criminal 51
 - Oppositional resistance and transformative resistance 52
 - Linking transformative resistance to social change 52
 - Hip-Hop culture and the politics of relevance: Hip-hop culture as transformative resistance 53
- In conclusion: Representing uncharted political territory in our understanding of democracy: Respect for black youth cultural forms of civic behavior will benefit all Americans 54

TODAY

Legitimizing the role of public schools in expanding the democratic way of life

Despite the rhetoric of democracy in our society and the common sense idea that the democratic way of life is learned through democratic experiences, our public schools have been remarkably undemocratic.

Democratic school reform: A powerful and positive force for the revitalization of public schools

Easily, the most important and timely American-oriented research and publication of information on the possibilities of a democratic climate in public schools are the efforts of educators Michael Apple and James Beane in *Democratic Schools* (1995) and *Democratic Schools Lessons in Powerful Education* (2007).

Building on the core curriculum movement (Faunce & Bossing, 1952) in which the standard curriculum is largely replaced by interdisciplinary study of persistent societal and personal issues of life in a democracy, Apple and Beane argue that the foundations of a democratic way of life must extend to all US citizens, including the young. Consequently, and thus obviously, in American democracy it is actually a *moral duty* of public schools to prepare children and youth--through study and actual practice--to become members of the public, experiencing and playing an articulate role in determining the common good in this public space that is everyday American society.

They also do a great service to the global discussion (see www.idec2000 through www.idec2007) by attempting to answer, "What is a democratic school?" Emphasizing that these schools do not happen by themselves, Apple and Beane note that educators must put into place "arrangements and opportunities that will bring democracy to life."

Four school "micro-democracies"

As examples of democratic schools Apple and Beane picked 4 schools whose leadership provided learning situations that promote the democratic way of life through what John Dewey believed characterize education in a democratic society: shared interests, freedom in interaction, participation, and social relationships.

Tracing the stories of the schools over a 10 year period, they give a needed legitimate rationale for democratic schools as the major institution and place for students, as future citizens, to learn and experience the democratic way of life.

Rindge School of Technical Arts (Boston, MA) teachers were challenged to re-invent vocational education by teaching knowledge/skills they knew from their experiences were important, not just what the state curriculum required. This encouraged them to view their teaching in light of social justice and globalization. Along with students, they designed the "City Works" program which saw all concerned as active citizens enabled to make important decisions about the institutions in which they live and work.

La Escuela Fratney School (Milwaukee, WI) concentrated on school climate and governance. Recently students participated in the 2006 immigration marches, and joined the Urban Ecology Center.

Marquette Middle School (Madison, WI) focuses on social and environmental issues and co-constructed a socially aware curriculum.

Central Park East Secondary School (New York, NY) co-created "serious questions" which enabled staff/students to learn to use their minds well, preparing them for life after high school. These intellectual processes or "Habits of Mind" were also used to organize curriculum, staffing, and evaluations.

Perhaps the main reason/push for such ideas is because *democratic school reforms can be a powerful and positive force for the revitalization of public schools*. The 4 schools prove that using the idea of democracy as a guide to the purposes and programs of the public schools is essential to building American democratic society. They represent citizenship in action where students learn and actually practice the knowledge and skills necessary to maintaining a democracy.

Apple and Beane's guideline for democratic structures and processes in public schools

- Young people, have the right to participate in the process of decision making through widespread participation in issues of school governance and policy making. Committees, councils, and other school-wide decision-making groups include not only teachers and students, but their parents and other members of the school community.
- In classrooms, young people and teachers engage in collaborative planning, reaching decisions that respond to the concerns, aspirations, and interests of both.
- Democratic schools see themselves as a part of the larger community, thus as participants in "communities of learning" with a diversity of members with respect to age, culture, ethnicity, class, tastes, and abilities.
- Since many problems exist outside of the school, democratic educators seek not simply to lessen the harshness of social inequities in school, but to change the conditions that create them. This requires the school to help correct racism, injustice, centralized power, poverty, and other gross inequities in society.

Apple and Beane's concept of a democratic curriculum in public schools

- Since democracy involves the informed consent of people, a democratic curriculum emphasizes access to a wide range of information and the right of those of varied opinion to have their viewpoints heard. Educators in a democratic society have an obligation to help young people seek out a range of ideas and to voice their own.
- A democratic curriculum is directed toward intelligent and reflective consideration of problems, events, and issues that arise in the course of our collective lives and involves continuous opportunities to explore such issues, to imagine responses to problems, and to act upon those responses.
- While challenging the anti-democratic conditions of the status quo, a democratic curriculum must make sure students do not ignore the dominant skills and knowledge expected by powerful educational forces whose interests are anything but democratic. Such a curriculum is acutely aware of such anti-

democratic circumstances, and the obstacles to larger socio-economic access, must be reckoned with until they are changed. Also see Appendix B, pp. 103.

The League of Democratic Schools

The League of Democratic Schools (http://ieiseattle.org/Brief_Discription_LODS_Oct2007.pdf) is a part of The Institute for Educational Inquiry (IEI), Seattle, WA. The group works to advance The Agenda for Education in a Democracy (<http://ieiseattle.org/AED.htm>). Part of the Agenda covers fostering the skills, attitudes, and knowledge necessary for effective participation in a social and political democracy.

The league arose from IEI's Dr. John I. Goodlad's 2000 paper "Education and Democracy: Advancing the Agenda" (depts.washington.edu/cedren/Publications/education_and_democracy.pdf). To push the initiative, the Center for Education Renewal and a national Network for Educational Renewal seek a renovation of schools and the education of educators by putting in place the conditions necessary to renewing America's schools and its democracy. As public schools strive to produce literate, socially and vocationally competent people, these organizations believe schools in a democracy must also ready the young for a social and political environment. That is, they must help to develop "democratic character" in students. This involves sharing classroom and school decisions with students. See Goodlad's new book *Education and the Making of a Democratic People* (Goodlad, 2008).

Is No Child Left Behind leaving democracy behind? (Busack, 2007)

Democracy Left Behind, a DVD by Prof. Bob Gliner (2007) of San Jose State University, questions the effectiveness of our public schools in preparing students for active participation in democratic society.

In seeking answers to the question, Gliner critiques No Child Left Behind (NCLB). He portrays what he calls the "test-score NCLB mania," with its tunnel-vision focused on the 3 Rs, as competing with class time to teach what used to be called Civics. He believes this has affected the ability of the public school system to serve its democratic mission by developing informed citizens primed to participate in a democracy.

The DVD shows teachers being criticized for taking time away from NCLB mandates. These educators have students analyzing Bush's 2006 State of the Union address, the South African Truth and Reconciliation commission, or trying to inform their grade-school-age students about democracy and its requirements.

The consensus in *Democracy Left Behind* is that some kind of critical thinking has to be introduced into every discipline, from kindergarten up. The dull rote learning encouraged by standardized tests is alienating more students than it helps.

To complement NCLB, Gliner suggests relevant instruction that incorporates the 3 Rs with an application of what these skills mean in the larger context of the society and world students inhabit. With respect to

democratic education, learning to become an active and knowledgeable citizen would be an integral part of learning basic educational skills such as reading and math.

A “don't think and just do” educational system: Achieving vs. learning in a NCLB climate

In an anonymous commentary on a Phyllis Schlafly blog, the person responding to *Democracy Left Behind*, noted:

I think a point that is missed by many of the reviews that I have read is the type of instruction the documentary is advocating for. There are far too many kids in schools that are "achieving" vs. "learning." You can jump through the educational hoops, which is what our educational system is, and you are considered "well educated." The documentary is saying that how we are teaching our students is not producing a thinking population. We have a "don't think and just do" educational system. (schlafly.blogspot.com/2007/10/democracy-left-behind.html)

Education for public or private purposes: Both democracy and corporatocracy value student learning, but define what is to be learned, how, and for what purpose quite differently

In the mind of educator Christine Sleeter (2008), the present U.S. standards movement (No Child Left Behind) limits the already limited practice of democracy in the classroom/school. In fact she used the term “corporatocracy” (American government under control of global capitalism) to show how the needs of business have created the standards movement, thus a classroom climate that has little time and use for democratic education.

Contrasting two views of the purpose of education as serving private or public interests, *both democracy and corporatocracy are seen as valuing student learning, but define what is to be learned, how, and for what purpose quite differently.*

Consequently, Americans must demand a space for democracy in the standards movement

NCLB and the broader accountability movement reflect structures and processes of corporatocracy more than those of democracy--making use of many of its business-oriented tools and assumptions, and facilitating the move toward privatization of schooling and other public services. This limits public schools' ability to enact democratic teaching and is particularly worrisome in urban schools which presently are the ones not meeting test score targets—and which historically represent communities with a sense of political powerlessness. The U.S. today is facing a crisis in the erosion of democracy and widening gaps between rich and poor. Standards and tests will not raise political consciousness--as Sleeter argues—***because they are designed not to.***

If U.S. public schools are to prepare students for a participatory democracy for a diverse public life, while sharpening their political analysis of the U.S., its institutions, and its place in the world, *teachers need training and support in finding spaces to teach for democracy.*

“Paper” democracy vs. “living” democracy: Critiques of civics programs: We the People, Restoring the Balance between Academics and Civic Engagement in Public Schools, and Liberty’s Apprentice

Some parents in America are concerned that their children are learning about a “paper version” of democracy, but not living it (Elaine, personal communication, February 6, 2008). These parents are moving their children to democratic schools, private schools where the students and staff each have one vote. Here the students really help run the schools. Parents from these schools say students emerge knowing what it means to have a voice, and proceeding as if their voice counts as is the case in the UK (Huddleston, 2007).

Anyone who thinks children are the leaders of tomorrow is only procrastinating.
-- Concern for Working Children Annual Report 2003

1. We the People: The Center for Civic Education (www.civiced.org) Started in 1964 in Los Angeles, CA, the Center promotes an enlightened, responsible citizenry committed to democratic principles actively engaged in the practice of democracy. The goals of programs are to help students develop (1) an increased understanding of the institutions of American constitutional democracy and the fundamental principles and values upon which they are founded, (2) the skills necessary to participate as effective and responsible citizens, and (3) the willingness to use democratic procedures for making decisions and managing conflict.

We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution is an instructional program to promote civic competence and responsibility. It culminates in a *simulated* congressional hearing where students “testify” before a panel of judges demonstrating knowledge and understanding of constitutional principles as they evaluate, take, and defend positions on relevant past and current issues.

We the People: Project Citizen is a curricular program for students (elementary-college) in and out of school, and civic-minded adult groups. The program helps participants learn how to monitor and influence public policy. Community problems are researched, alternative solutions evaluated and developed, public policy and political action plans enlist local/state authorities to adopt their proposed policy which is presented in a public “hearing showcase” before a panel of civic-minded community members.

Truly, students involved in We the People activities come to know how their constitutional democracy works, the three branches of government, and they can study a community problem and display to the community their ideas for a solution. *Yet, due to the program’s emphasis on the government outside of school (and not the governance inside the classroom or school), they lack the reality this paper argues is needed to gain the respect of today’s urban youth.* We the People must complement/supplement their study of democracy orientation (the “paper” democracy) with enabling students to practice democracy, via shared decision-making (the “living” democracy), in their very own public schools and classrooms.

2. Restoring the Balance between Academics and Civic Engagement in Public Schools is a 2005 report from the American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum (ASCD). The report questions the No Child Left Behind Act’s focus on core academic subjects at the

expense of the public school's equally important role: preparing students to be engaged and effective citizens. See <http://helpfrom.nea.org/takenote/citiz050316.html>

The report is the product of a year of discussion with policymakers, education practitioners, community groups, parents, and youth from across the nation. It offers seven proposals to help schools refocus on the goal of creating both academically proficient and civically engaged students.

The report states that the business of public education in America is, and should be, to teach young people to take charge of their own learning and to become responsible, informed, and engaged citizens.

What is also good is the report's suggestion that the community must sharpen the mission of public schools to make sure it includes the knowledge, dispositions, virtues, and skills of responsible citizenship.

Yet, all this is done in light of and through programs, including school-community partnerships that promote both quality academics and civic engagement.

Unfortunately, this limits "civic education" to service-learning and character education. Although the report wants civic knowledge (learning how the community works) and civic engagement (practicing citizenship) to become integral to a broadened "core" of learning in each subject, *the "learning" and "practice" are only outside of school, not in school governance, classroom decisions, or learning and assessment choices.*

Consequently, in light of the recommendations of this paper, the ideas in *Restoring the Balance Between Academics and Civic Engagement* seem educationally unsound, politically naïve, and limited socially to the mainstream—attempting to tinker with and improve on 20th century concepts, instead of exploring 21st century orientations presented in this paper. As stated and restated in *A History of Democratic Education in American Public Schools*, urban students want more than service, they want student voice, social justice, and community change. (See pp. 71-75) As well, the so-called civic education orientation of American public schools must be expanded to include the diversity and variety of students' cultures, lifestyles, and politics. See *Democratic Anarchy*, Appendix G, p. 127.

3. Liberty's Apprenticeship: Does this idea have potential or is it just another form of traditional civics?

The DVD *Liberty's Apprenticeship* (Winter, 2008) presents a concept that contends it will take America's school children and their public schools into the 21st century. But, disappointingly, a lot of "paper" democracy is involved. Subtitled, "Public Schools: The Bedrock of Democracy," the program seemingly keeps students at the "apprentice" level—always studying, being examined, "playing" at democracy, never actually doing and living democracy. The program provides no practical examples of shared decision-making and school governance concepts or models which schools and students can follow.

Nonetheless it has great promise

"Liberty's Apprenticeship," due to its high profile sponsorship from Farmer's Insurance Group of Companies and national support from distinguished leaders like Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, has the potential of promoting genuine student voice.

Although the initiative conflates democratic education (as defined in this paper, pp. 15-17) with service to the community, and a movement from access for all to academic proficiency for all, the program is supported by those associated with the 1st Amendment Schools. (See Recommendation 11, p. 70) This organization believes students are capable of playing a larger role in school decisions. Schools and classroom that practice 1st Amendment freedoms enable students to learn about and practice fairness, equality, and inclusion as they live out the common daily activities of the classroom and school.

The initiative is also supported by John Goodlad of the League of Democratic Schools (See p. 42) and democratic entrepreneur Benjamin Barber. *These democratic educators want schools that not only teach about democracy, but are democracies*--schools where students are taught about their rights/responsibilities as citizens, investing them with the authority to help shape the school climate--providing them with a chance to practice the citizenship skills they are acquiring. Goodlad and Barber see civic-learning as experiential--as well as cognitive--compelling public schools to be as democratic as the civics they wish to teach.

Although "Liberty's Apprentice" also recommends increasing civic learning by encouraging participation in student governance programs, it lacks any examples. Thus, the initiative may be limiting student voice to a more traditional representational democracy. These are student councils that involve only a few students and staff in classroom and school decisions, and not the direct democracy (See p. 129) that this paper argues is more viable and most appealing to America's 21st century students. See the report, Stand Up for Public Education™: A Campaign of the American Association of School Administrators at www.aasa.org/standup/index.cfm.

The vast difference between teaching for democracy and enabling its actual practice by students

There is a vast difference in these 3 initiatives between teaching/being taught and mandating the practice (allowing mistakes) of democracy. This is pure irony since the United States presents itself to the world as truly democratic, yet it has not the insight to see the value of having students practice democracy in schools.

The Struggle for Control of Public Education: Market oriented policies vs. democratic values

According to Michael Engel (2000), the ideology of the marketplace promotes educational policies and practices that are narrowly tied to broad economic goals, and not individual self-actualization and community self-government.

Advocates of a corporate reform model of education have succeeded in imposing their definition of school reform via federal (NCLB) and state policy makers. The debate about choice, vouchers, privatization, and corporate control *is an ideological war between democratic and market values*.

America has moved away from democratic citizenship revealed in action. It has substituted instead economic competitiveness which undermines democratic values as a bulwark against the "corrosive elements of market ideology."

Engel points out 3 limitations of market-oriented education: (1) school choice policies as ruining the concept of public education as a community enterprise, forcing families and schools to compete in a winners and losers educational world; (2) market-based aspects of educational technology as unduly focused on increasing human capital in service of corporate interests; and, (3) market-ideology fails America's youth by constructing an educational system where students become objects--commodities to be controlled and manipulated toward the ends dictated by the market economy's definition of their value in terms of a return on investment.

Market ideology gained prominence in the 1950s when the progressive education movement collapsed and the politics of education began a conservative course. The progressives could not survive the conservative/Cold War/anti-communist post-WW II climate where the language of free market reigned: individual achievement, competition (with the Russians), choice, economic growth, and national security.

As well, Engel points out the 1960s alternative education movement, underscored by an individualistic and Libertarian orientation, indirectly reinforced market ideology. This school choice orientation deprives students, parents, and teachers of their right to work as a community to control their schools.

Engel believes America must have a convincing ideological framework for democratic schools that provides a rationale for maintaining a socially owned, controlled, and financed school system. Following Jefferson's concept of public schools as places that produce a citizenry capable of defending its right to govern and using that right constructively, Engel's ideas of a democratic school enables citizens to take an active and positive role in shaping their society, owning such educational institutions for their own benefit. This is Engel's democratic "values-based" challenge to market ideology. But, what values?

The basic issue is values: What do Americans think of their young people? What does American society believe about their capacities and potentials and what they would like them to be?

Market models make sense if society sees students as antisocial persons who must be formed into productive members of a consumer society. Here the purpose of school is providing training/skills and molding behavior appropriate for a system over which they have no control, and one they cannot change because they will not know how.

But if we believe that young people need to see themselves as part of something constructive and positive that requires their full participation, then the purpose of schooling becomes how to learn to share in making decisions for themselves and for society.

A democratic school is one, that above all, tries to enable people to create their own world collectively rather than to fit into one that is created for them. A democratic school operates on the principle that people can live together democratically--that they have the ability and capacity to be free and govern themselves. For Engel, older Americans must care about the future generation enough to give them the ability to shape

their future, collectively and democratically, whether they approve of their direction or not. This is the essence of a democratic value system in education.

Engel concludes that if the market prevails as a way of organizing U.S. education, possibilities for creating a democratic society and developing a democratic citizenry are ended. Wow!

Some parents may not see the value in classroom and school democracy: Influences of conservative national "authoritarian populist" groups (Apple & Oliver, 1996)

Fears about a declining economy and their child's ability to compete, or concerns about what values are taught to one's children have brought parents/community members into conflict with public schools. Courses as basic as sex education have become an issue with many parents, reaching across class lines to question the values taught in these classes. In some instances national conservative groups such as Citizens for Excellence in Education, the Eagle Forum, or Focus on the Family have helped parents, who would normally not respond to conservative politics, but who became angry when their public schools failed to recognize their concerns.

In "Becoming Right" Apple and Oliver point out a barrier to democratic education, as defined in this paper, presented by American citizens who believe public schools are created to:

- foster citizenship,
- promote understanding of the essentials and benefits of the free enterprise system,
- emphasize patriotism,
- teach respect for recognized authority, and
- ensure respect for individual rights.

Those, more conservative-oriented, do not want textbooks/lessons that include selections or works which encourage or condone peaceful civil protest, social strife, or disregard of law or contain material which serves to undermine authority all of which, in their view, promotes socialism, immorality, and disobedience. Thus, they seek to promote their version of the "Official Knowledge" schools model and pass on to students.

Apple and Oliver blame central school district administrations with their: (1) large top-heavy bureaucracy which may not realize that they are out of touch with the values and anxieties of many community members; (2) preference for the professional and the technical in making educational decisions; and, (3) general suspicion and stereotypes of parental and community concerns about curriculum—if it is controversial.

Apple and Oliver encourage groups of teachers and administrators, as a group, to:

- open up the discussion of curricula and pedagogy to the multiple voices with a stake in the school, including parents, community activists, and students--an ongoing and genuine attempt to relate both the content of the curriculum and the decisions over it to the lives of the people involved.

- publicly justify what they think is best for students and why, in words and in a style that can not be interpreted as arrogant, elitist, or distant, and to listen sympathetically and carefully to the fears, concerns, and hopes of the various voices in the community.
- base community relationships and decisions on a non-hierarchical orientation about what happens both within the school and between the school and the wider community.

The widespread effects of national "authoritarian populist" groups can be limited only if the larger number of the public, who have populist concerns about schools, are not pushed to the Conservative Right.

Apple and Oliver warn public school advocates that it is crucial that public schools focus their critical gaze on themselves and on how they may participate in creating the conditions in which ordinary citizens become more conservative, thus undermining the democratic basis of public schooling.

A democratic response to “Official Knowledge” may not be acceptable to some

Apple and Oliver have presented evidence that a democratic response to the politics of “Official Knowledge” may not be appropriate to all families. Democratic educators must respect this when applying democratic education in their classrooms and schools.

How do social, economic, and political conditions help or inhibit civic engagement of urban African American youth? (Ginwright, 2006)

Many organizations mentioned in this paper on democratic education in American public schools are concerned with how to get urban youth more involved in activism. “More involved” is used because according to Prof. Shawn Ginwright, in his article, “Toward a Politics of Relevance: Race, Resistance and African American Youth Activism,” compared to 1960s Civil Rights or Black Power movements, today’s urban youth seem less involved. Yet, Ginwright believes otherwise. His article provides numerous examples of vibrant forms of youth involvement in political and civic life.

Are the wrong questions being asked about the civic and political behavior among black youth?

In recent years, social science research about African American youth has narrowly focused on understanding various causes of problem behavior: violence, school failure, substance abuse and crime. To Ginwright, this ignores the complex ways and explanations of how youth engage in civic and political behavior--responding, challenging, and sometimes transforming the conditions in their schools and communities.

What constitutes civic behavior for African American youth in urban communities?

In order understand today’s urban youth, Ginwright goes outside the traditional definition of civic/political engagement and asks new questions:

1. How do community conditions and social settings shape the contours of political behavior?
2. How do factors such as racism, poverty, and violence influence political ideas?

Understanding barriers to black youth activism: Including the most alienated and resistant students

Prof. Ginwright exemplifies a new generation of youth advocating sociologists trained in the post-Civil Rights era who respect and are comfortable with the attitudes and behaviors of today's urban youth. These activists rely on a strength-based orientation (Brendtro & Seita, 2002) not a deficit model. His work on the streets have uncovered youth who have traditionally been excluded from mainstream civic activities, such as participation in student government or citywide youth councils, but who have strategies for engagement that often are overlooked. Examples are actions that address quality of life issues in their family, community, and their own lives such as police harassment when coming/going from school, encouraging their school to have heaters for their classrooms, or advocating for free bus passes for students on public assistance.

Two factors that continue to threaten political activism among African American youth

A. The consistent attack on black youth and their families through hostile school policy.

Ginwright believes young people need support from institutions such as American public schools. To him, schools have a tremendous opportunity, through the curriculum, to support students by challenging the social and economic problems students face daily in their community.

Unfortunately, this nurturing approach has been replaced by the idea that youth are becoming more violent and therefore need more discipline and tougher punishment. These negative perceptions have influenced school districts to create hostile zero tolerance policies that attempt to ensure school safety.

However, Ginwright presents evidence that these policies often have the opposite effect since schools take on the appearance and function of juvenile detention centers. Implementing a variety of punitive measures enforced by zero tolerance can actually increase classroom disruptions, hostilities between students, and tensions between youth and school police.

B. African American youth activism is threatened by a "politics of relevance" in which generational political ideas are in conflict.

The Civil Rights generation (adults who came of age during the Civil Rights movement) and the hip-hop generation (youth born after 1965) Ginwright argues, have divergent political ideas about poverty, race, public education, and incarceration.

The loss of blue collar jobs, increased surveillance of urban schools, coercive policing practices, as well as corporate deception such as the Enron scandal, Ginwright argues, have made black youth suspicious. As a result, many youth of the hip-hop generation have little or no faith in a system that seems to only protect the wealthy at the expense of their communities.

Civil rights generation adults often cannot fully understand black youth culture, and this disconnects them from the political issues most important to youth (Boyd, 2004). Their view is that poverty, unemployment, and limited job options are simply obstacles many of them overcame. Thus, they take the position of: Why can't your generation do the same? Or why does your generation use poverty as an excuse?

Older folks expect black youth to benefit from the advances they made in the 1960s and are confused and disillusioned when youth seemingly ignore and even resist the opportunities. This is especially true with respect to schooling where older citizens spend time trying to persuade youth to “Get an education,” but they remain “The Unconvinced Generation” (Evans, J., 2006).

Ginwright shows concern that African American youth are increasingly isolated from “old guard” civil rights political organizations that do not share the same worldview, political identities, and economic realities. For example Ginwright notes in 2000 the NAACP publicly opposed the South Carolina Legislature’s decision to retain the state’s confederate flag while at the same time seemingly ignoring the complex issues of juvenile justice, education, and guns that were more relevant to urban youth: black youth in South Carolina comprised 73% of incarcerated juveniles, were twice as likely to drop out of school, and experienced more instances of gun violence than any other group.

Prof. Ginwright sees this generational disconnection as leading youth to look to other organizations such as The Nation of Islam, the Hip Hop Action Summit Network, the Malcolm X Grassroots movement as new spaces for their political discourse about racial injustice, resisting failed public policy, and generational tensions.

Key points in understanding the civic and political behavior of black urban youth

1. *Civil Rights generation vs. hip hop generation: “Afrocentric” vs. “Ghetto-centric” politics*

Ginwright discusses another way to understand the present inter-generational disconnect. “Afrocentric” vs. “Ghetto-centric” politics within black youth culture, represent two ways race and political identities are shaped in urban communities.

From the Afrocentric perspective, race and political identity are reconstituted in ways that acknowledge and celebrate Africa, representing changes in political consciousness. African culture, names, school curricula, styles of dress and hairstyle that celebrate African standards of beauty each challenge and transform white stereotypes of black racial inferiority.

The Ghetto-centric perspective also reflects racial and political identities. Rather than focusing on Africa, however, Ghetto-centric culture calls attention to the political and racial realities of “life in the hood.” Ghetto-centric identities embrace economic struggles, celebrate “the block” or particular neighborhoods, and exposes racist police practices.

2. *Race and political identity: To be black, young, and poor was also to be criminal*

Ginwright notes that during the 1990s crack cocaine epidemic, the term “black youth” became synonymous with “predator.” To be Black, young, and poor was also to be criminal.

These “xenophobic” type notions of youth, as well as fear of crime, shaped public policy hostile to African American youth and their communities, increasing repression through institutions such as schools, law enforcement, and juvenile justice systems.

Ginwright points to Los Angeles County, CA in 1996, where African American youth were 6 times more likely to be incarcerated and received longer sentences than their white counterparts. When charged with the same violent crime, blacks were 9 times more likely to be sentenced; for drug offenses they were sent to prison 48 times more often than whites charged with the same crimes.

To “not get caught up” in complex systems of control and containment, black identities were constructed in resistance to racist stereotypes and unjust public policies intended to criminalize black identity. Youth’s struggle for a genuine identity was played out through the expression of new cultural forms, such as hip-hop, that redefined, reasserted, and constantly reestablished what it meant to be urban and black.

3. *Oppositional resistance and transformative resistance: Behaviors that make it difficult to achieve vs. resistance as strategy for achievement*

Since the common theme between all these expressions of black identity is that they all define blackness as a form of resistance to negative black images, according to Ginwright, the term “oppositional resistance” has been used extensively to explain various aspects of African American youth behavior.

Oppositional resistance is a set of shared values, beliefs, and attitudes that reject dominant social norms and contribute to behaviors that make it difficult to achieve. Scholars use the term to explain school failure, delinquent behavior, and violence.

Ginwright gives an example of resistance as a useful strategy for achievement. In one study (Akom, 2003), black youth, tutored by Nation of Islam (NOI) members, were able to be “oppositional” and do well academically at the same time, getting the respect of school staff. More significant was the fact that their student peers respected them because they were able to be oppositional (academically “debate” teachers especially with respect to American and world history--which influence all subject areas—as well as resist obeying some of the more dubious school/classroom rules) and get good grades.

Dr. Ginwright calls this *transformative resistance*--development of a black achievement ideology where academic success supports their notions of what it means to be black.

When urban public schools offer certain urban students nothing but assimilationism while marginalizing those who resist this type of schooling, these students are compelled to be oppositional, with respect to traditional social and economic success, even to their own detriment. Yet, if schools see the oppositional behavior as a healthy/logical reaction to assimilationism, encouraging students to be critical thinkers, to critique the school, the curriculum and/or teachers, they will enable the “transformative resistance” of which Ginwright speaks. But, this will not happen. Historically, in traditional urban schools, teachers are seen as, and in many cases are, agents of social control. This pits teachers against the students; and, this is the rub.

3a. *Linking transformative resistance to social change: Allowing African American youth to reject self blame for personal and group problems*

To enable more transformative resistance, Ginwright suggests discussions and activities that develop a political understanding about juvenile justice, racism, poverty and how these social issues shape their lives

and communities. This, he believes, will push young people to understand systemic and root causes of social inequality and create new forms of political consciousness that allow black youth to identify injustice in their everyday lives and to advocate for themselves.

Ginwright suggests educators and youth advocates must work with youth through a transformative resistance process where they take advantage of black youth's oppositional stance and link it to political struggles for equity and justice in their lives and in their communities.

This links transformative resistance to social change and allows black youth to reject self blame for personal problems and fosters a critical worldview that is informed by their particular social, economic, and political position.

4. *Hip-Hop culture and the politics of relevance: Hip-hop culture as transformative resistance*

Ginwright points out the Black Panther Party's ability to relate politically to disenfranchised black youth during the late 60s-early 70s. Rooted in new articulations of black identity and new forms of politics, these anti-establishment activists linked racial inequality to larger economic and political issues of justice

In many ways, Ginwright views progressive hip-hop as representing a new "politics of relevance" as it calls attention to critical issues that confront black youth.

Today's African American youth have new and vibrant forms of civic and political activities including organizing local political hip-hop entertainment combined with political education. In 2004, the first National Political Hip Hop Convention (<http://hiphopconvention.org>) took place in an effort to create a platform relevant to the needs of millions of disenfranchised youth and young adults.

Hip-hop culture gives youth a platform for their political voice and a place to organize and build their own base of support, a forum the Democrats and Republicans political parties have ignored (Goff, 2008). In addition, Ginwright explains, the traditional parties are not as real to urban youth because of their old ways of campaigning and organizing. Hip-hop brings new tools by which to organize young people through graffiti art, hip-hop concerts, rap videos, and spoken word events.

According to Ginwright, hip-hop culture can influence black youth to change their thinking about community problems, and act toward creating a more equitable world. *While progressive hip-hop culture functions as the voice of resistance for America's black youth, it also provides a blueprint for the possibilities of social change and has been utilized as a politicizing tool to inform youth about significant social problems.*

Hip-hop groups today provide black youth with an analysis of racism, poverty, sexism, and other forms of oppression. For many black youth, hip-hop culture is a vehicle for expressing pain, anger, and the frustration of oppression through rap music, style of dress, language, and poetry.

Because of hip-hop artists' ability to boldly criticize and reveal serious contradictions in American democracy, hip-hop culture is also used to organize, to inform, and to politicize youth about local and national issues (Potter, 1995).

Also with respect to the Internet and globalization, American youth can easily view the actions of young people in countries around the world who are also committed to an ideology of social equality. Prof. Ginwright sees this kind of globalization leading black youth to the sense of actually being "somebody" able to change the course of world events.

I believe the promise of hip-hop culture is that it will do what the 60s generation could or did not do and advance national civil rights to global human rights.

-- John Harris Loflin

The key, according to Ginwright, is to acknowledge the politicizing potential that global hip-hop culture has on disenfranchised youth and how it carries the possibility to unite youth around the world (Kelly, 2006) through common experiences of suffering and common struggles of resistance.

In conclusion: Representing uncharted political territory in our understanding of democracy: Respect for black youth cultural forms of civic behavior will benefit all Americans

As a sociologist, Dr. Ginwright, suggests social science research must consider how economic, social and political realities intimately shape the civic and political engagement among black youth. A deeper understanding of these forces will yield greater insight into new forms of politics among African American youth.

These "ghetto" and hip-hop-oriented cultural forms of civic behavior represent uncharted political territory in our understanding of democracy. Thus, the extent to which social science can identify these practices and uncover how they inhibit or contribute to new forms of political behavior, Ginwright asserts, will expand America's understanding of its democratic potential, benefiting all Americans.

PART FOUR: RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendation 1 Have high expectations for students: Democratic education 56
- Recommendation 2 Advance multicultural education to include democratic education 56
- Recommendation 3 Move to an advanced democracy 60
- Recommendation 4 Look deeper into Amy Gutman's emphasis on "mutual respect" 62
- Recommendation 5 Have many school councils, not one school board 63
- Recommendation 6 Teacher education: Teach teachers democratically 64
- Recommendation 7 Ensure democracy: Prepare teachers with an attitude so they will have one also 66
- Recommendation 8 Appreciate collectivist family culture when practicing democratic education in American public schools and classrooms 67
- Recommendation 9 Use a pedagogy of democracy 68
- Recommendation 10 Promote student self-assessment: Practicing democracy at the individual level 68
- Recommendation 11 Model the Constitution for students: Make public schools First Amendment schools 70
- Recommendation 12 Advance service learning to "action civics" in all classes: Going from serving the community to shaping the community 71
- Recommendation 13 Have 1-3 student representatives on local urban school boards 75
- Recommendation 14 Democratize intelligence: Expand what it means to be smart and provide the corresponding assessment alternatives: Intelligence, testing and the politics of one-size-fits-all 76
- Recommendation 15 Move beyond traditional frameworks for understanding civic engagement by urban youth 78
- Recommendation 16 Realize the future of urban school reforms is democratic public schools and classrooms 80
- Recommendation 17 Advance culturally relevant teaching to politically relevant teaching 84
- Recommendation 18 Reinvent adolescence: Puberty, rites of passage, and student voice: Introducing students to adulthood and citizenship at the same time 84
- Recommendation 19 Follow England's lead: Democratic values and competencies cannot be acquired through formal teaching alone, but need to be practiced by students in classrooms and schools 88
- Recommendation 20 When reforming civic education, don't criticize...co-opt! 89

RECOMMENDATION 1

HAVE HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS: DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION

High expectations? Let us have very high expectations for students: Democratic education

The basis of understanding school success in the last part of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st is built upon idea that all children can learn (Loflin, 1995) and achieve at high levels. Expecting high achievement is seen as a way to get students to live up to their potential.

Benard (1995) describes the value of high expectations in the schools:

Schools that establish high expectations for all students--and provide the support necessary to achieve these expectations--have high rates of academic success.

Bernard also reported on research which found that high expectations and a school-wide ethos that values student participation actually mitigate powerful risk factors that influence adolescents' well being.

Some educators see the perceptions and expectations of a child's teacher as the most important factors in determining that student's school success; without caring and demanding teachers it is almost impossible to overcome negative perceptions by teachers and school administrators (Barr & Parrot, 1995).

If demanding high expectation is a viable plan, let school officials, teachers, parents, and the community have very high expectations: students learning to be self-directed learners, thinkers, and evaluators involved in classroom and school decisions that affect them in a democratic "school-wide ethos that values student participation," and that also expects students to help solve problems in their community.

This is a valuable and wise use of high expectations. This is preparation for citizenship in America's democracy, a democracy based on the value of self-determination (Deci et al., 2006). This makes sense!

RECOMMENDATION 2

ADVANCE MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION TO INCLUDE DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION

Since the early 1970s, multicultural education has been a part of the foundation of American public schools. It opened the classroom door to cultural respect among students, as well as adults in the community. It did this by providing the academic/political foundation that legitimized Afrocentric questions and the goals of multiculturalism, shinning the light of science (both social and biological) on the illusions of stereotypes and the shadows of prejudice, exposing discrimination in American society and its public schools. Interestingly, in the early 1990s, multicultural education began to loose some of the gravitas it once had.

Attacks on multiculturalism from cultural conservatives and doubts about its viability raised by its own contemporaries (See pp. 36-38) beg many questions.

- Where does multicultural education stand in the overview of the history of democratic education in America's public schools?
- Is this 20th century concept still influential or has it reached its limits?
- Has it been able to relate to the African American urban working class global hip-hop culture?

- Is democratic education multicultural education's logical extension into the 21st century?
- Where does multicultural education fit in current urban school reform?

Multiculturalism: Its roots

Afrocentrism emerged as a response to the Eurocentric bias pervasive in America's urban schools. An outgrowth of the Civil Rights movement, the goal was to gain power to define how education for children of oppressed racial groups should be conducted. This was tied to a larger struggle for economic and political equality, and public schools became one site where this struggle was carried out. This perspective assumes that ethnic and cultural identity is inherently linked to school performance.

Multicultural education

Multicultural education describes a system of instruction that attempts to foster cultural pluralism and acknowledges cultural differences. The goal is to help students understand and appreciate cultural differences and similarities and to recognize the accomplishments of diverse ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups, not just the mainstream culture. Various cultures in a society merit equal respect, status, scholarly interest, and preservation. Different cultures or cultural identities can coexist peacefully and equitably in a unified society. Activities supporting the curriculum such as Black History Month, U.N. Day, guest speakers, or multicultural fairs intend to teach familiarity, understanding, and acceptance of others.

Influence on school performance

Multicultural educators, in particular those concerned with urban youth, argue that the inclusion of African and African American history, personalities, and contributions in schooling and curricula will enhance students' cultural and self-esteem and contribute positively to their academic performance.

Multicultural education, as it presently stands, has not worked

Nonetheless, although past and present multicultural reform efforts that integrate race, ethnicity, and culture in urban school reform were and are indeed still necessary, *if one of the main goals of this reform is keeping African American students in school and graduating, the reform has not worked!*

United States Graduation Rates for 2001

National rate 68%; Native 51.1%, Blacks 50% (Males 42.8%), Latino 53%, Whites 75%, Asian 76.8% (Orfield, Losen, Wald & Swanson, 2004).

United States Graduation Rates for 2003/2004

National rate 69.9%; Native 47.3%, Black 52.9 % (Males 46.2%), Latino 57.6 % (Males 52.3%), White 75.1%, Asian 78.9% (Diplomas Count, 2007).

One urban district: Indianapolis (Indiana) Public Schools (IPS)

The IPS 2003/2004 graduation rates for males--the worst in the nation--were: White 22% and Black 21%. Indiana's Black male graduation rate was 38% (Holzman, 2006).

Multicultural education: “...an increasingly mainstream, stale, and ineffective practice”

This statement by Nadine Dolby (2000) is provocative. Not only has multicultural education not kept blacks in school, according to Shawn Ginwright (2004) today’s students do not always see the relevance of multicultural/Afrocentric education to their day-to-day lives. Ultimately, for black urban working class students and parents alike, multicultural education is simply irrelevant outside of the school context. It seemingly does little to address real-life concerns such as employment, child and health care, school climate, housing, police brutality, empty storefronts, or neighborhood crime. See Recommendation 16 p. 80.

The middle-class-backed notion that achievement could be attained by students’ reclamation of ancient African ideologies failed to take into account students’ lived experience, ignoring more important social and economic issues that also influence what happens in school--privileging the middle-class interests of black professionals over the concerns of the local working-class community.

Ginwright also exposes a generational divide: pre-1980s educators have not been able to keep up with post-1990 multicultural developments, undermining the necessity of building a bridge to the 21st century working class urban global hip hop culture, one where students use more than race to form identity. *In summary, multicultural education had lost ability to relate.*

Multicultural education, as it is now situated, is passé: Appreciating diversity is not enough

As it now stands, multicultural education describes a system of instruction that attempts to foster cultural pluralism and acknowledges the differences between races and cultures. The goals are:

- to help students understand and appreciate cultural differences and similarities
- to recognize the accomplishments of diverse ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups
- to show various cultures in a society merit equal respect, status, scholarly interest, and preservation
- to show different cultures or cultural identities can coexist peacefully and equitably in a unified society

This paper calls for a new century of “democracy” orientations where students continue to be exposed to the academic side of multicultural education, but there is also a movement to matters that “are relevant to the problems of living together” (Parker, 2003) *where this ethos is realized in practice in public schools.*

Multicultural education reform is democratic education

Amy Gutmann in her essay, “Challenges of Multiculturalism in Democratic Education” (1995) argues that justifying multiculturalism is no longer one of the toughest tasks now facing American public schools because *an appreciation of cultural diversity* (including cultural/ethnic/religious heritage/gender identity/) *is not enough.* Multicultural education meets only half the intellectual and moral challenge of the democratic role and responsibility of public education.

Consequently, she suggests *multiculturalism expand politically*, not just pedagogically, by teaching students the civic virtue of mutual respect and its understanding through practice--teaching students how to

engage together in respectful discussions in which they strive to understand, appreciate, and, if possible, resolve political disagreements, including those that may be partly rooted in cultural differences.

Mutual respect resting only on knowledge of cultural diversity is an incomplete democratic virtue

Recognition needs to be accompanied by a *willingness* which is enabled by an ability to deliberate about politically relevant disagreements.

This evolves by practicing classroom and school democracy, where students must, along with others, ask and act on the answer to the democratic question: How do different people/groups share the same space? This is much different than studying Chinese American history and taking a test, playing a djembe (*jen bay*) at a school cultural fair, dressing up like Indians for Thanksgiving, or learning one of the songs by Jimmy Rogers, the father of country music.

This is authentic multiculturalism: the practice of democracy in classrooms and schools

In a democratic school culture, it will be necessary for students to apply what they have acquired through study, projects, reports, and testing especially to the goal of "...showing how different cultures or cultural identities can coexist peacefully and equitably in a unified society."

The arts of democracy are also the arts of multicultural education (McDermott, 1999)

Students studying the importance of various cultures and students actually attempting to "coexist peacefully and equitably" in school bathrooms, hallways, and classrooms are too different things. In a democratic school culture individuals/groups have to directly take into account culture and cultural differences in considering what is fair for everyone.

To enable a "just society" in schools, the following democratic habits of mind and heart (this "culture of common responsibility") must be taught:

- Decision making
- Active listening
- Negotiation
- Mediation
- Evaluation/taking stock
- Creative conflict resolution
- Explaining
- Consideration
- Deliberation

These democratic "arts" can expand to involve students in classroom and/or school decisions regarding curriculum, teaching styles, behavior, project rubrics, textbooks, lunch menus, hiring teachers, or simply responding to the question: "What can students do to help run the school?"

These activities will complement and expand current multicultural education, evolving with its many 20th century accomplishments to a 21st century global-oriented democracy paradigm of study and actual application through students/staff practicing the democratic habits of mind and heart in classrooms, hallways, and playgrounds.

RECOMMENDATION 3

MOVE TO AN ADVANCED DEMOCRACY

The future: An advanced democracy

From his research and experiences, Walter Parker (2003) concludes that there is a democratic education problem in the United States. The young are not learning properly to care for the “body politic” and the “body politic” is not adequately caring for the young.

This is ironic in light of the present effort of American foreign policy to support pro-democracy movements and to “instigate” democracy globally. *Parker critiques what he sees as the double failure of America’s institutionalized democracy to address its own shortcomings while at the same time believing itself to be fully developed*—the rationale for its action as global democratic power house and broker of democracy. Parker exposes these shortcomings: (1) the failure of democratic education, (2) the marginalization of cultural minorities, and (3) the stifling routines of big-party politics.

Democracy: Not a destination, but a pathway—a continually evolving form of human relations

Parker asks several questions:

- Can citizenship education in the United States continue to roll along as it has for a century, relying on rituals and slogans that belie the double failure at home?
- Can citizenship education, both as a curricular program and as a school mission, continue to ignore the need for a kind of democracy that is seriously more advanced?
- Can there be an advanced democracy that is less narrow, less defensive, less exclusive, and more fitted for the 21st century where a globalized societies experiment with self-government?
- Does not this call for a deepening and widening of the democratic revolution beyond the claims of American-style democracy?

An advanced democracy

Parker says “Yes” to these questions and presents advanced solutions to 3 traditional concerns and issues in American democracy.

Concern 1: The kind of civic participation for which citizens need to be educated

Issue: *The meaning of popular sovereignty*--expressed in the tension between direct involvement in public life vs. spectatorship. The issue concerns forms of public agency beyond voting and requires, in turn, a kind of democratic education that would form, or at least inform, such activity.

Parker's advanced idea retains representatives, but asks citizens to do more than merely elect them and then lapse into dependency for another four years. It opens up a new civic space for direct and cooperative involvement in public life—for participatory democracy.

Concern 2: The citizen's outlook on (or stance toward) democracy

Issue: *The meaning of public life and the person(s) that compose it*—expressed in the tension between viewing democracy as an attainment needing only protection vs. a way of life that a people try to undertake together. The issue concerns democracy as an ongoing way of shared living rather than an achievement that needs only protection and celebration.

Parker's advanced idea is that citizens regard themselves as having a public life in which they are challenged to manifest as members of a democracy. This requires them to reflect on public life and to form it anew, again and again, in community service, social action, and deliberation. Here lies the possibility of a popular sovereignty in which “average citizens” participate at all levels.

Concern 3: The critical juncture of democracy and diversity

Issue: The meaning of *e pluribus unum* or the tension between pluralism and assimilation.

The most important concern for American democracy for Parker is what he calls the “standing confusion” in the United States over the meaning of the motto: *e pluribus unum*.

Parker suggests a deepened and expanded meaning for this key idea. He is worried that much is excluded by the conventional conception of pluralism (the social and cultural dimensions of citizenship) and the central tension of modern social life—*the tension between unity and diversity*.

To explain the basis of this confusion, Parker reminds Americans that initially, when only white male landowners could vote, difference/diversity to America's founding fathers pertained exclusively to just one kind of difference: difference of opinion among insiders on matters of mutual concern (e.g., taxation, representation, property law). *This promoted political diversity but not social and cultural diversity*.

Ironically, this is the meaning of the actual motto, *e pluribus unum*: Contain political diversity; constrain social and cultural diversity. Thus, the phrase is interpreted generally to mean “from manyness, oneness.” This interpretation means transcending difference, conquering and overcoming it.

However, Parker does not see it this way. He argues “along side the many, the one” is what the motto means. On this broader conception, *diversity does not need to be conquered or colonized, nor even transcended. It can be fostered rather than only, at best, be tolerated*.

Uniqueness needs democracy

Parker's advanced idea is that this motto means something other than shying away from difference in the name of a defensive unity. It means the political one alongside the cultural many. *With this meaning, difference ceases to be a threat to community*.

RECOMMENDATION 4

LOOK DEEPER IN GUTMAN'S EMPHASIS ON MUTUAL RESPECT: INTEGRATING THE AIMS OF MULTICULTURAL AND DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION

Mutual respect: An integrative, analytical and generative principle for democratic education

In a response to Gutman's question, "How can a multicultural society educate its members for democracy?" Shirley Pendlebury (1995) expands Gutman's ideas by exploring the role of mutual respect as an integrative, analytical, and generative principle for democratic education.

Viewing mutual respect as an integrative principle and a civic virtue, Pendlebury *integrates multicultural and democratic educational aims in a principled combination that attends to the truths of each.*

According to Pendlebury, given America's commitment to sustaining or building democracy, mutual respect is a principle which operates within the domain of practical reasoning. *It is a guide in answering the questions of: "What should we do?" and "How should we do it?"*

A way of dealing with the tension between cultural diversity and the project of civic unity

Pendlebury's mutual respect incorporates non-repression and non-discrimination, thus serving as a:

- principle for integrating the concern for a common citizenship with a proper acknowledgement of cultural diversity;
- guideline both for the selection of curriculum content and for the selection of pedagogical styles appropriate to democratic education;
- principle for developing and evaluating such educational policy and practice;
- principle of arbitration in conflicts about the display of cultural or religious difference;
- way to disqualify a monopoly of the two extreme positions of "transcendental universalism" and "separatist particularism"--the rights and needs of the group/the society vs. the rights and needs of the individual/individual groups.

The adequate accomplishment of so many kinds of democratic responsibilities, Pendlebury says, requires a concept of mutual respect that is both robust and flexible.

- Mutual respect is a proper regard for the dignity of person or position.
- Mutual respect expresses the equal standing of every person as an individual and a citizen, and it enables democratic citizens to discuss their political differences in a productive way, first by understanding one another's perspectives and then by trying to find fair ways of resolving their disagreements.

Mutual respect also requires a willingness and ability to deliberate

Finally, Pendlebury views mutual respect as a core civic virtue. It is constituted by complete and incomplete versions:

- Incomplete--mutual respect rests only on the recognition of diversity, and
- Complete--as a civic virtue, mutual respect also requires a willingness and ability to deliberate.

RECOMMENDATION 5

HAVE MANY LOCAL SCHOOL COUNCILS, NOT ONE SCHOOL BOARD

Many Local School Councils, not one school board: An even better American democracy

The more public institutions can be the direct responsibility of the community, the more democratic America becomes. In the case of public schools, it is compelling to imagine the success of each school directly accountable to teachers, parents, community, and students.

Is this suggestion of local control of each public school an improved democracy?

The current and dominant education policy model is democratic. Yet, could it be improved? Board members are not appointed, they each run in elections and are voted in/out of office. They select a superintendent who proposes policy which the board either rejects or accepts.

During the late 1980s, the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) had major problems. Capturing a moment of widespread disgust following a teachers strike, a broad coalition outside conventional politics (business leaders together with parent and community groups and representatives of minority organizations) formulated a demand for radical school reform and persuaded the legislature to meet its demands. The Chicago School Reform Act was born (Katz, 1995).

In March 1988, members of a school improvement summit adopted a tentative agreement to expand early childhood programs, establish school-based management councils at every school, and pursue ways to enhance teacher professionalism. Later, amendments were adopted to strengthen the powers of councils, reduce the size of bureaucracy, and reallocate funds to schools with the heaviest concentrations of disadvantaged students. In October 1989, 313,000 people voted to elect 5,420 members of Local School Councils (LSC) to begin school-based management at 542 Chicago public schools (North Central Educational Laboratory, 1993).

LSC: Composition and selection

Each school establishes an LSC. The reform act is based on the power/flexibility of the school principal to shape the composition of the faculty and allocate resources. The LSC is composed of 6 parents, 2 community residents, 2 teachers and, in high schools, 1 student. Also included is the principal who is hired/fired by LSC members. Parents and community members get five votes to divide among parent and community candidates; teachers and students are appointed by the School Board following advisory elections among their peers (Lenz, 2007).

School reform or a social movement?

Michael Katz (1995) thinks the efforts to influence CPS fit the model of an urban social movement. The Chicago School Reform Act:

- holds the bureaucratic and centralized structure of schooling in large urban districts partially responsible for educational failure;

- attacks the authority of school professionals and the school district's experts;
- redistributes the power to parents and representatives; and,
- asserts the capacity of ordinary citizens to reach the intelligent decisions about education policy.

In conclusion

In the process, says Katz, school reform has become an historic experiment in adult education, as roughly 6000 local school council members have confronted and often mastered issues of management, finance and, educational policy.

As of the spring of 2008, although Chicago school's central office has usurped the authority of schools they put "on probation," which is maybe a third of all schools, the initiative is working (L. Lenz, personal communication, January 3, 2008).

RECOMMENDATION 6

TEACHER EDUCATION: TEACH TEACHERS DEMOCRATICALLY

This makes sense: If Americans want democratic public schools and classrooms, teacher education must be democratic education. This implies that the professors who are teaching education students have themselves experienced democratic education.

From "Teacher as Decision Maker" to "Teacher as Participant in Shared Decision-Making"

Along with teaching methods and in-depth coverage of their major teaching area, education students take general education foundations courses drawing on multiple disciplines--history, philosophy, and sociology of education. Each addresses the moral, civic, and social dimensions of education such as community, trust, equity, and justice.

Research by educator Nancy Beadie (1996) reveals these social foundation courses are viewed by former students, as the "least worthwhile component" of their teacher preparation. They saw no link between (1) the civic and moral dimensions of education such as democracy, human dignity, and pluralism and (2) being more effective teachers in schools and/or helping "construct meaning" in daily curricular and classroom decisions.

She suggests teacher educators emphasize a pedagogy that uses group processes and shared decision-making--renewing and regenerating a culture of critical dialogue--to prepare future teachers to do the same democratic activities as they work together with students, other teachers, and community groups.

One example of democratic teacher education: But, do American public school teachers have the courage and confidence to teach in a truly democratic climate?

Professor Judith Gray (1997) created "Engaged & Responsible Students: Democratic & Caring Classrooms" for Antioch University-Seattle and education students. The course, she conducts democratically, enables teachers to:

- Affirm the democratic principles that apply in their classrooms,

- Understand the value and rewards of a democratic classroom,
- Be able to design and implement democratic structures,
- Know the current research and literature, and
- Evaluate the efficacy of applying democratic principles and structures.

Though many of her students instituted democratic classrooms, she sees most teachers lacking the courage and confidence to teach in a truly democratic climate (J. Gray, personal communication, November, 28, 2007).

What are schools for? Teacher education in a democratic society (Fraser, 1992)

In 1986 two publications (combined and referred to as the Holmes and Carnegie Reports) proposing solutions to the issues of U.S. global economic competitiveness raised in the 1983 *A Nation at Risk* report, announced a need for significant restructuring of teacher education programs. While the authors of the reports talk of competition, of “securing America’s place in the world,” James W. Fraser argues that *there needs to be a quite different vision of the purposes of public education in a democratic society, a vision which will require a different kind of teacher education.*

Fraser insists the debate about the future course of teacher preparation must focus on the fundamental questions regarding the aims of education. Different purposes imply different goals and the methods.

If the aim is nurturing and expanding “human resources” (preparing students) for the maintenance of a competitive advantage in the world’s market economy and military primacy global politics then school will be places where students are seen as objects for these aims--developing “a skilled elite of managers and engineers and a pool of low-level workers for the computer and service industries who are only relatively better off” according to Fraser, “than their counterparts in the Third World.”

Yet, in Fraser’s vision, there is much more to be accomplished by education in a democratic society than using children as a means to expand political, military, and economic power. *Education should be fundamentally a matter of sustaining and expanding democratic institutions for a more humane, more just, more democratic society. The education of teachers should focus on this goal.*

The benefits of teaching teachers democratically for classroom management

Urban schools are where the legacy of mis-education and under-education, along with the large minority populations taught by middle-class teachers, meet the anti-authority of the students’ culture. To many, this requires schools where control is maintained by police using mace, hand guns, and metal detectors.

It is an argument of this document that many students who resist schooling and are “difficult” do so exactly because they have little say over what happens to them in school. Where public education is synonymous with assimilationism and not democracy, certain students will resist. This makes it imperative that teacher educators, who teach democratically, begin to reason by example with urban teachers about the advantages of a democratic approach with respect to so-called “discipline” or “control” issues.

Is black youth identity constructed in resistance to public school education?

If what Ginwright says is true that “resistance” is a common theme of expressions of American blackness (See pp. 49-54 and Recommendation 16, pp. 80), then school leaders must realize that sharing decisions (and thus authority with all students--which include “resistant” students) is the obvious approach, as well as the most American, to a school climate respected by all.

See Appendix A, p. 99 for a list of reasons why teachers and students may resist democratic education.

Teachers: The biggest stumbling block to school reform?

A review of American public education brought educators Tyack and Cuban (1995) to question why school reform is so difficult. Their answer: *School reform is unlikely to succeed without involving educators.*

Although they pointed to traditional conceptions of “proper” schooling fixed in the public’s mind, an even more important factor was the teachers who work in schools.

They noted that such reform as greater curricular freedom can mean more work for teachers, as did such previous innovations as open classrooms and “new” math. Without changes in the ways teachers work or are compensated, many reforms place great burdens on the very people who are responsible for making innovation successful.

The challenge to teacher educators: Help teachers see the advantages of a democratic classroom

To iterate, the challenge to teacher educators is to reason with and show regular classroom teachers, through teaching them democratically, (and supported by the moral imperative that is the basis for democratic education), the advantages of democratic classrooms in the public schools of the globe’s strongest democratic society. See *Educational Leaderships* articles list under “Magazines” on p. 150.

RECOMMENDATION 7

ENSURE DEMOCRACY: PREPARE TEACHERS WITH AN ATTITUDE SO THEY WILL HAVE ONE ALSO

Teacher education: Prepare teachers with an attitude so they will have one also (Cohen, 2007)

Teacher education with an attitude (Finn & Finn, 2007) explores collaborative, democratic ways of preparing teachers to educate urban, working-class students.

By preparing teachers to strengthen democracy through education, teachers develop “critical consciousness”—the “attitude” needed to address American society’s injustices and inequalities. Using a social justice approach to teacher education by university professors of education who have “an attitude” prepares teachers to understand the way social class, race, and culture impact their efforts to educate working-class students.

Teaching for social justice is teaching for democracy is democratic education

When teachers teach for social justice, they ensure that what is fair for everyone and the problems of living together (Parker, 2003) will guide their teaching.

Teachers, who work actively with students, their families, and others, such as community and labor organizations, challenge the economic and educational policies that keep the hierarchal structures in place, thus developing their own education in political power alongside their students. Schools are now sites where students can learn to direct their attitude toward results that will benefit their collective self-interests.

Teachers with “an attitude” create classrooms that serve as agents for social change. Contending that urban education will fail without public engagement and the commitment to social justice, teacher education with an attitude challenges soon-to-be educators to become accountable to the communities they serve and their students’ own interests, and not the interests of another person or group.

RECOMMENDATION 8

APPRECIATE COLLECTIVIST FAMILY CULTURE WHEN PRACTICING DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION IN AMERICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND CLASSROOMS

Collectivist family culture and democratic education

For educator Elsie Turnbull (personal communication, January 28, 2008) democracy, with its notion of one-person, one-vote is an individualistic concept. Collectivistic societies are often hierarchical. However, there are certainly societies that are both more collectivistic than the U.S. and democratic. Think of Mexico, Israel, or Peru (actually, a republic like the U.S. is technically). One difference across societies and cultures may be the way democracy is exercised. So, for example, sub-groups of people may collaborate to come to a decision about what candidate(s) to support. They may regard it as a process of shared decision-making within their reference group (family or larger social group). Classrooms of students from a range of backgrounds can indeed engage in democratic decision-making, however, they may be more comfortable with whole-group consensus building. They may want to talk about how to take the needs of the minority (those who don't agree with a decision) into account and satisfy them in some way.

There are many factors that push people either toward more collectivistic or more individualistic patterns of living and thinking. However, Turnbull believes that Latinos (of any socioeconomic level) are likely to maintain a stronger "group" orientation than European-Americans in general. This is just a starting point for exploration, she notes, and not a prescription. Thus, American educators must consider how students are socialized in their homes in understanding how to engage students in decision-making or problem-solving:

- Are they likely to have been taught to solve problems on their own or to help each other solve problems?
- Have they perhaps been taught to do their own work, or have they been encouraged to help others do their work as well?

As people become more educated they tend to become more individualistic, but that has to do partly with the individualistic nature of our school systems. To succeed, the way things are organized now, students

almost have to become individualistic. The advantages and disadvantages of this reality must be considered.

Another thought from Turnbull is to simply recognize that students will be coming to the notion of "democracy" from different perspectives. They are all capable of learning how democracy is typically carried out, but their orientations ought to be considered as well. Educators can ask them what they think is "fair," what they think is the "right" way to solve a dispute.

RECOMMENDATION 9

USE A PEDAGOGY OF DEMOCRACY

Use a pedagogy of democracy throughout classrooms (Glickman, 2008)

At Federal Hocking High (www.federalhocking.k12.oh.us) students graduate by exhibition. One part of the three exhibition requirements is *readiness to be an active citizen*. The directions to students are as follows: Include explanations or two ways in which you have been involved in the political processes of the school or greater community. To help students prepare, the school uses a "pedagogy of democracy" which includes:

- Students and teachers work together to make students' learning a contribution to their larger communities;
- Students demonstrate their learning in public settings and receiving public feedback; and
- Students have escalating degrees of choice, both as individuals and as groups, within the parameters provided by the teacher and school.

At Federal Hocking, the pedagogy of democracy is not the responsibility of only social studies teachers, but is the responsibility of each course curriculum and the course's teacher.

RECOMMENDATION 10

PROMOTE STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT: PRACTICING DEMOCRACY AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

Perhaps there is nothing more democratic than self-assessment. Why? Look at it this way:

- if democracy is self-government,
- if a goal of maturity is self-sufficiency,
- if progressive education enables self-directed learning,
- if the body instinctually self-regulates (homeostasis: literally "to stand equally") to keep a stable constant condition, or
- if what many groups and individuals seek most is self-determination,

then self-assessment, the ability to evaluate one's "place" with respect to self-determined and/or group standards, must be seen as democracy practiced at the individual level and thus imperative to a democratic society.

Educator and researcher Heidi Andrade (2003) wants to help students create their own knowledge and understanding, both independently and with others. As proponents of student-centered pedagogy,

democratic educators assume that students share responsibility for judging and revising what they know and what they do not know. Andrade notes both perspectives emphasize the role of the student in their own learning, and student self-assessment (SSA) shares that emphasis.

The result of this emphasis, under the right conditions, can be an increase in students' tendencies to monitor and regulate their own thought processes, and to judge and improve the quality of their work. In short, Andrade believes SSA can promote the kind of meta-cognition, self regulation, and reflection that leads to academic achievement.

Andrade argues that SSA can increase mindfulness, motivation, and academic achievement and names the necessary conditions to effective self-assessment.

Perhaps there is nothing more democratic than self-assessment. Why?

Publisher Houghton Mifflin offers "Education Place" a resource for K-8 teachers, students, and parents which include ideas about the importance of student self-assessment. The following are statements from the Houghton Mifflin concept called "Student Self-Assessment: Students as Active Partners" (www.eduplace.com/rdg/res/assess/index.html).

Involving students in their own assessment and evaluation process is an essential part of balanced assessment in school.

When students become partners in the learning process, they gain a better sense of themselves as readers, writers, and thinkers. As students reflect on what they have learned and how they learn, they develop the tools to become more effective learners.

Students need to examine their work and think about what they do well and in which areas they still need help.

Once students have reflected on their learning, they are ready to set new goals for themselves. As they work toward these goals, they should be encouraged to reflect on their learning journey at regular intervals.

With practice, students who self-assess become more conscious learners, able to apply knowledge of their learning needs and styles to new areas of study.

As students become more active participants in the assessment process, they will begin to evaluate their strengths and attitudes, analyze their progress in a particular area, and set goals for future learning.

To illustrate why there may be no more democratic activity than self-assessment, and why enabling SSA in American public schools is a necessary part of democratic education, the word (*citizen*) is added to the word "student" in these same sentences. Why student self-assessment (*and self-evaluating citizens in a democracy*) are important is compared.

Student (*Citizen*) Self- assessment: Students (*Citizens*) as Active Partners

Involving students (*citizens*) in their own assessment and evaluation process (*of their government*) is an essential part of balanced assessment in school (*in a democracy*).

When students (*citizens*) become partners (*self-determining agents*) in the learning (*governing*) process, they gain a better sense of themselves as readers, writers, and thinkers (*citizens*). As students (*citizens*) reflect on what they have learned (*what the community, state, nation they govern has done*), and on how

they learn (*how they make self- government work*) they develop the tools to become more effective learners (*citizens*).

Students (*citizens*) need to examine their work (*government*) and think about what they (*their government*) do (*does*) well and in which areas they (*their government*) still need(s) help.

Once students (*citizens*) have reflected on their learning (*government actions they initiated*), they are ready to set new goals for themselves. As they (*their government*) work(s) toward these goals, they should be encouraged to reflect on their learning (*citizenship*) journey at regular intervals (*i.e. elections*).

With practice, students (*citizens*) who self-assess (*self-govern*) become more conscious learners (*citizens*), able to apply knowledge of their learning (*personal, community, state, national*) needs and styles to new areas of study (*public policy*).

As students (*citizens*) become more active participants in the assessment (*self-governing*) process, they will begin to evaluate their (*government's*) strengths and attitudes, analyze their (*government's*) progress in a particular area, and set goals for future learning (*self-governing actions*).

Conclusions: Self-efficacy, self-determination, self assessment increase academic performance

Democracy is essentially self-government. Citizens in a democracy are responsible for themselves, i.e. "...of, by, and for the people." Democracies self-govern, self-direct, self-determine, and of course, in doing so, must self-evaluate and self-regulate. The evidence is compelling that self-efficacy, self-determination, and self-assessment are intertwined, increasing academic performance (Schunk, 1991; Deci, et al., 2006).

The value of self-assessment to students' overall school performance and post-graduate success (Rolheiser & Ross, 2000; Bruce, 2001) is illustrated by the relationship between SSA skills and the much-needed building of resiliency (Wolin & Wolin, n.d.) and internal locus of control in students ("Locus of control," 2008) in urban situations.

Enabling student self-assessment contributes to a future behavior of self-evaluating by self-directed citizens participating in the self-government of their own lives, schools, community, economy, and nation.

RECOMMENDATION 11

MAKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS FIRST AMENDMENT SCHOOLS

Model America's Constitution for students: Make public schools First Amendment schools

Presently, representing the educational mainstream is the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and its "First Amendment Schools" initiative. See: www.firstamendmentschools.org. 1st Amendment schools around the country are exploring ways for students to better understand their roles as citizens in a democracy as they learn a deeper practical appreciation of the five freedoms of the 1st Amendment: freedom of religion, speech, and press, and the right to assembly and petition for grievances.

To the ASCD, schools need to reclaim the purpose of public education and the notion that one's education is part of a larger good and so can contribute to the betterment of society.

First Amendment Schools are dedicated to educating for citizenship by teaching and modeling the democratic principles of the Constitution of the United States. Schools take this mission seriously by providing all members of the school community with daily opportunities to exercise their constitutional rights with responsibility. Here are the basics for creating democratic schools:

- Find as many ways as possible for students to take responsibility for the daily life of their school.
- Find ways for students to apply the critical thinking skills that are essential to citizenship.
- Practice the rights and the responsibilities of the U.S. Constitution within the school.

RECOMMENDATION 12

ADVANCE SERVICE LEARNING TO "ACTION CIVICS" IN ALL CLASSES: GOING FROM SERVING THE COMMUNITY TO CHANGING THE COMMUNITY

Advancing service learning to "action civics" in all courses from gym to math to English to shop class by requiring students to actually use what they are learning in the classroom to help others--and not just to pass an exam--promotes the intrinsic value of democracy.

In the early 1970s, alternative schools of choice began using the community to teach. Service learning and internships became a part of these programs. From helping out at the Humane Society, reading to children at grade schools, or renovating neighborhood playgrounds, students helped organizations, groups, and individuals, while learning about society and themselves. See *Alternative Education Movement*, p. 29.

Nationally, some schools are giving students a voice in school matters such as gathering input to help them design school climate, create courses, or even advise lunch menus. Also, many schools, courses, or programs such as IB (International Baccalaureate), encourage or require community service to make classes more relevant and to teach skills and sentiments students cannot learn from books.

Recent concern for the relationship between poverty and school success (Educational Leadership, 2008) provide reasons for urban schools to expand traditional definitions of service learning and the role of students in school governance. Do traditional methods and rationale for shared decision-making and community service actually limit the good these activities can do while also giving students the wrong sense of responsibility and helping? Can moving from student voice to student action inside schools, as well as enabling students to shape their community, counter the negative influences of poverty, creating quality education and better societies?

Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity, or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.

-- Paulo Freire

Connect Student Action, Participation, and Community: From passivity to “action” civics

As a supporter of student participation, democratic education advocate Roger Holdsworth (Lofln, 2006b) is particularly concerned with issues surrounding student voice and community service. Why?

To Holdsworth, modern schooling provides little opportunity for action and experiencing consequences—valuing a more passive role for students. Thus, he is not concerned, as much with what students will become tomorrow, as he is with student action and what they can do today. Students put into passive roles in urban schools, supposedly for disciplinary reasons, have little opportunity to develop a strong self-concept that comes from a sense of:

- *Control* (capability, competence, power to change one's self and the environment)
- *Bonding* (need to belong, wanted, have basic needs met)
- *Meaning* (feel relevant, sense of esteem, able to accomplish tasks)

This begs the question: Can strong self-concepts result from having a say in school and community affairs?

First, however, two related questions concerning how student participation is framed must be asked:

Question 1: Student voice or student action?

Are the current efforts to create student voice enough? In most instances, or even when students have a say, they have no or little control over such areas as:

Student Voice

- Who gets involved?
- Who is allowed to speak?
- About what?
- For how long?

Listening

- Who is listening?
- What are they hearing?

Spaces for dialogue

- What action results?
- Who controls them?
- Where are the spaces for dialogue and negotiating?

In many instances, according to Holdsworth, traditional student councils are ineffective, and controlled or micro-managed by the adults. To eliminate these pseudo-student councils, each student must be involved in school governance decisions/negotiations in the following areas:

- *Purpose*: Why are we doing/learning this?
- *Goals*: What do we want to achieve?
- *Content*: What will we do/learn?
- *Methods*: How will we do/learn this?

- *Assessment*: How do we know what we have done/learnt?
- *Reporting*: How can we show what we have done/learnt?
- *Evaluation*: How has this approach worked?

Question 2: Serve the community or shape the community?

Holdsworth's work emphasizes *shaping* the community, not community service or service learning. He points out some students see community service as slavery/bondage issue: Thus they do not want to do community service because it is required.

Even when framing the discussion in the form of volunteering, or as a personal, class, or school project of choice that students want to do, *community service/service learning still puts students in the role of servant--It's as though it is not their community; that they are an outsider; they serve it as though they are doing for/providing a service for.*

This type of "service" makes students feel disconnected from their community as opposed to being a part of their own community that they could shape.

Educators need to consider helping students shape their community: Give back, not provide a service

This shift in perspective gives students a sense that they can take control of and change a community problem.

Student Action Teams as an answer (www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/mys/engagement/)

Roger Holdsworth suggests the idea of Student Action Teams (SAT).

Student Action Teams are about supporting young people to question, construct, and develop the multiple communities in which they live and wish to live.

-- *Connect*, 2004

SATs involve a group of students who work on a real identified issue of community interest. The students carry out research on the problem and develop solutions--either proposals for others or actions they then take. SAT Principles are:

- An active role for the young people as part of their community
- Young people as community investigators
- Young people doing something that makes a difference or brings about change
- Programs that involve learning and meet academic goals

The "3-Way Test of Value" is used to determine the usefulness of a proposal.

- *Value to the participants*: student choice; active commitment; makes sense to them
- *Community Value*: active; hands-on; audience beyond the classroom; seen to be of value by the community
- *Academic Value*: involves learning; meets or exceeds mandated curriculum goals; shared knowledge of what these goals are

Holdsworth believes an awareness of the progression of student participation is needed to understand the SAT process:

1. *Teacher-Centered Learning*: teacher action and provision of information
2. *Student-Centered Learning*: student investigation and discovery of information
3. *Active Student Participation*: productive outcomes and learning by students

To give a student council/government power, he encourages the creation of Student Action Teams formed out of issues/concerns from council (and/or class discussions) whose members would then go about dealing with the idea, problem, etc.

Previous Student Action Team proposals and actions have involved community and traffic safety, the environment, police relations, truancy, intergenerational conflict/dialogue, bullying, and personal values/relationship initiatives.

Action as a way of building a strong self-concept

What is obvious is: The basis of the Student Action Teams concept is action, not passivity. It is through involvement in these SAT activities that students get to do, get to act. In doing and acting, students learn about themselves: theorizing, testing, succeeding/failing, learning, adjusting, acquiring self-knowledge and confidence along the way in order to gain the sense of Control, Bonding, and Meaning, according to Holdsworth, that is needed to build a strong self-concept--all in efforts, not just for themselves, but for others and the community.

Relevance/Application

The shift from voice to action, from service to shaping: It is all about attitude!

Many urban minorities and working-class youth who traditionally do not do well in school, and who may be rebellious, confrontational, resistant or oppositional in attitude due to an assimilationist, colonizing, and undemocratic climate in urban schools, would be empowered by the new and sharper attitude implied in the shift from voice to action, and from service-oriented to change-oriented school/community activities.

This "attitude adjustment" on the part of the school system (not the students) would attract students to a public school where their voice is heard and where they are seen as an asset in shaping the community, and not as something that needs to be changed, repressed, or removed from classrooms or the school.

Is this all about power?

Yes. This is a political issue. Taking power away from urban schools and sharing it with urban students is threatening to some teachers and administrators because they have little say in school affairs themselves. (See Appendix A, p. 98) They feel powerless in the bureaucracy of large urban school systems. Nonetheless, taking power away from educators to define "service" (as in service learning or community service) and sharing power with students so as to re-define service as changing or shaping the student's community is necessary if schools are to reach all students.

Giving students “permission” to act through their voices as change and shaping agents could be difficult because the status quo will see the students as “troublemakers.” It will be ironic if by simply re-defining service as change or shaping, a school’s more difficult students, who have been labeled troublemakers by school staff, become gadflies, shapers, and agents of change for a better world.

With over 150 years of public education, the current low graduation rates of urban school districts prove the adults cannot solve the problem alone (Holzman, 2006). When the Student Action Teams concept is taken seriously, all students will be able to share power and help make sure their school works for them.

Conclusion

The Student Action Teams concept fits perfectly under the umbrella of self-determination: Direct involvement in the responsibility that is freedom—a freedom that is reflected in the opportunity provided by the Student Action Teams to survey, investigate, speak, decide, take action, and change their society.

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Student Action Teams booklets

Australian Youth Resource Center. (2003). *Student Action Teams: Learning in the Community: A “How To” Manual*. Melbourne, VIC, Australia: Department of Education and Training.

Holdsworth, R. (Ed.). (2005). *Student Councils and Beyond: Students as Effective Participants in Education and Decision-making*. Northcote, VIC, Australia: Connect.

Holdsworth, R. (Ed.). (2006). *Student Action Teams: Implementing Productive Practices in Primary and Secondary School Classrooms*. Northcote, VIC, Australia: Connect.

www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/curricman/middleyear/StudentActionTeamsManual2003.pdf

RECOMMENDATION 13

HAVE 1-3 STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL URBAN SCHOOL BOARDS

Often missing from school board meetings is the very person school district policies affect most exclaims writer Lottie Joiner (2003) in her *American School Board Journal* article “Student’s Voice.”

Historically, a school’s student body is not actively represented in school governance. Joiner notes a 2001 survey of districts by the National School Board Association where 85% had no student representatives on their district’s board. However, the trend is changing. Why?

Many board members, Joiner says, realize the social issues in today’s schools and society are unlike those they experienced as students. This brings a new respect for students who can bring an understanding and a perspective that many adults do not have. School boards are beginning to understand how differently students and adults look at issues and want to bring these differences into account

According to Joiner’s report, today approximately 200 students sit on school boards across the nation. Many student board member serve in an advisory capacity, with their roles limited to providing reports on special events and day-to-day activities at the school. But, some are involved especially on policy issues.

Trying to bring students' perspectives into the decision-making process is enlightening: Students are the ultimate consumers of education not parents or teachers. It is common sense to have students at the tables.

Giving student school board members the right to vote in district decisions

Although an increasing number of boards recognize the importance of having student representatives, few are in favor of giving students the right to vote on budget issues, student discipline, or personal matters. Only a handful of district boards, says Joiner, such as those in California, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Tennessee, give even partial power to student board members.

Some board members, in her article, questioned whether students are mature enough or have the practical experiences to make proper decisions on personnel or finance.

Yet, other members stated the board must respect students enough to give them authority. They believe young people can make significant contributions and can do more than give information and make reports.

Their rationale is that it does no good just to listen to the voices of students if the students do not have the authority to make some changes. Having youth on the school board in a non-voting position does not have the same impact. Because the environment where they should have the most influence is the school and the operation of the school, they should actually be caring some weight in the decision making process.

Student concerns

Joiner also points out that students do indeed find themselves in an awkward position with respect to decisions on discipline and expulsions. Some board members agree. Allowing students to participate in executive sessions where they could learn private and intimate details about others is a conflict of interest.

Districts considering having a student on their school board might consider the checklist provided in, *The Power of an Untapped Resource: Exploring Youth Representation on Your Board or Committee*. See the full document at [aasb pdf hansb bklt pdf](#) or www.aasb.org/PDF%27s/AASBPubs/HansB_bklt.pdf

Joiner summarizes her arguments by emphasizing it is easy for school boards to forget about why they exist and that a student board member can bring the board members back on track.

Board members can lose sight of the actions that they take. Student board members know adult school board members cannot understand what they do not experience. Since they are in hallways/classrooms daily, they know their input will help the adults stay aware of the issues that students really care about.

RECOMMENDATION 14

EXPAND WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SMART AND PROVIDE THE CORRESPONDING ASSESSMENT ALTERNATIVES

Intelligence and testing: The politics of one-size-fits-all vs. one-size-fits-few

Of all the components of schools that we may wish to revise, none is more visible, controversial, or as far reaching as the meaning of intelligence and its measurement (Smith, 1997). In a word, *politics prevents many open discussions seriously considering multiple assessments*.

Democratizing the concept of human intelligence

Williams (1998) suggest we democratize the concept of human intelligence including more and different types of abilities and talents. If IQ tests provide a meaningful measure of a person's innate intelligence, why she asks, are so many individuals with low or mediocre IQs so successful in their daily lives? An answer can be found, she believes, in recent research that broadens the concept of intelligence:

Researcher today are demonstrating empirically the importance of many abilities that are not measured on I Q. tests (p. 4).

Expanding what it means to be smart

Robert Sternberg (1997) believes that a pluralistic society like America cannot afford to have a monolithic concept of intelligence. The more American public schools teach and assess students based on a broader set of abilities, the more racially, ethnically , socially, and economically diverse student achievement will be. Public schools must take a more balanced approach and reach all students.

When we expand the range of abilities we test for, we also expand the range of those we identify as smart (p. 11).

This makes a lot of sense, and Skromme's *7-Ability Plan* (1998) intends to expand the range of abilities even more to include: Academic, Creativity, Dexterity, Empathy, Judgment, Motivation, and Personality.

To expand this closed system Sternberg suggests expanding what it means to be smart. Public schools must teach all four possible abilities: along with memory and analysis, practical and creative abilities are added. This will create a need for a variety of assessments.

Multiple assessments momentum: Providing options for student and school success

Currently, many groups seek a variety of ways to assess student and program achievement besides the standardized test scores (Sternberg, 1997b; Darling-Hammond, et al., 2005; IALA, 2007; NEA 2007).

The politics of assessment

Joye Smith (1997) states bluntly: Alternative assessment implies reform and changes. A variety of ways to judge the value of a student's performance challenges the *status quo* because assessment options:

1. support and modulate the *redistribution of power*,
2. *increase participation* through practice at democratic decision-making and greater access to standards,
3. *provide greater equity* through community consensus about standards, open discussion of hidden assumptions, and a virtual presence of other readers (other teachers beside the main teacher).

But, is this too controversial, thus too political?

To many, certain people/groups have too much to lose or gain from a concern for power, participation, and equity and the changes these concerns imply. For those who have a stake in the traditional definition of intelligence, "Memory IQ" (Skromme, 1998), and the one-size-fits-all/bell curve style of assessment, Smith's ideas will challenge their desire to protect that status and the power that goes with it.

Are social, practical, emotional, or creative “intelligences” mere facets of a “greater” academic IQ or distinct forms? Need there be just one bell curve (academic) or 7 bell curves for each student? Must America’s public schools recognize, nurture, and test for all of a student’s abilities so they use all of their brain? Williams (1998) answers these questions:

We owe our next generation a broader, more relevant battery of tests designed to measure the many varieties of abilities that contribute to real world success. Better tests lead to the admission of applicants with a wider variety of skills, thus diversifying further the pool of talent which is available in a society.

A mediocracy or an aristocracy for everyone

Opponents of Williams, Sternberg, Skromme, and Smith’s concept will portray them as leading America down the path of mediocrity. But this is not about comparisons/competition, and winners/losers. This is about America and the meaning of diversity and community. New ways of looking at human intelligence, learning and, evaluation open the door of opportunity and invite an *aristocracy for everyone* (Barber, 1992).

RECOMMENDATION 15

MOVE BEYOND TRADITIONAL FRAMEWORKS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT BY URBAN YOUTH

Moving beyond traditional frameworks of both civic engagement and electoral participation to build an expanded framework for understanding, studying and supporting the politics and activism of youth, especially African American young people: The ideas of Dr. Cathy Cohen (Cohen, 2006)

Political scientist, Prof. Cathy Cohen, is in the forefront of emphasizing the importance of understanding and exploring the politics, activism, and political attitudes of African American youth, in all of their complexity, and what this means about American democracy.

She bases this emphasis on the argument that, with respect to any other subgroup of Americans, black youth reflect the challenges of inclusion and empowerment in the post-civil rights (Boyd, 2004) period.

In contrast to the centrality of African American youth to the politics and policies of America, Cohen argues that their perspectives and voices have generally been absent from not only public policy debates, but also academic research. Tending to detail and measure the behavior and negative outcomes of black youth, researchers and policy-makers have shown little concern for measuring and analyzing their attitudes, ideas, wants, desires and politics. Based on these issues, Cohen makes the following recommendations:

1. Expand the surprisingly thin systematic data on the politics of young African Americans and challenge the methods of how it is collected and analyzed

Cohen believes social scientists have not realized they must broaden what constitutes civic knowledge and civic engagement especially if they are to genuinely understand how it is practiced among young African Americans. Her focus is on research which contends that groups that have experienced racial exclusion will focus their civic engagement on helping their own group, and thus their “knowledge about civic engagement is centered on their group’s interest.” *Thus, engaging in activities that help the larger society is a sign that the individual is abdicating his or her responsibilities to their group.* This inward focus might also

result in members of racially excluded groups of youth, scoring lower on traditional measures of civic knowledge even though they have a demonstrated commitment to group-based civic participation.

2. Expand the notion of what counts as politics, paying attention to the multiple and sometimes new ways that young African Americans engage in politics and participate politically

Traditional ideas of civic engagement have led scholars to ignore young people as political agents before they are legally eligible to engage in traditional forms of political participation such as voting.

Of course, to Cohen, the truth is young people today, in particular marginal and racialized youth such as many African American young people, find themselves at the center of many national political struggles and are, therefore, politicized at a much earlier age than more privileged youth. Increased access to information through the internet, television, and popular culture, as well as the constant presence of the state in the lives of vulnerable populations, means that the age of significant political engagement is lowering. When teachers and youth advocates work through Cohen's broader conceptions of "the political" they might better understand how young people, whom they may view as blasé, actually interact with and influence the political environment and the public sphere.

Moreover, Cohen believes many black youth engage with the state on a regular basis through their experiences with state run health care policies such as Medicaid, the public schools, the payment of taxes, and encounters with the police. Thus, researchers make a mistake if they proceed as if young people (who are often the targets of institutional and state campaigns, programs and policies) do not have strong opinions about and take action to better their position in society, their life chances, and the distribution of power in their communities and the country.

3. Use hip-hop culture to expand an understanding of when and where politics happens and what is political and what counts as politics for young African Americans

Cohen goes beyond questions of whether young people vote and if they are engaged in standard forms of civic activity by suggesting hip-hop as a cultural vehicle of politics for African American youth.

She notes how youth feel hip-hop culture brings them together and gives them a forum where they can talk to each other about all the things done wrong to them. The global use of hip-hop as a cultural form of rebellion, evident in England, Brazil, Cuba, India, Australia, Japan, and South Africa (Loflin, 2007), verifies and supports the political/social justice potential of American hip-hop (Kelly, 2006).

Researchers, Cohen suggests, would be negligent if they did not fully explore the connections being made by young African Americans between hip-hop culture and politics. Simply viewing "MOSH" the freely distributed political video (video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-4210319561759729677) released by artist Eminem on the eve of the 2004 elections, show the influence of rap music on the politics and activism of young African Americans and their alienation from Democrats and Republicans (Goff, 2008). Citizen Change Campaign" (www.citizenchange.com) and Russell Simmons' Hip Hop Summit Action Network which can be found at www.hiphopsummitactionnetwork.org.

Cohen reminds Americans that whether it is measured or not, young people are using old and new ways to not only survive politically, but re-create and improve upon their lived existence. Sometimes these forms are easily recognized, such as when they register to vote and show up at the polls. Other times their politics may be less visible, but no less profound—raising consciousness and disseminating oppositional ideologies through cultural vehicles such as hip-hop, blogging, “boycotting” (Not buying certain products), or making purchases because one agrees with the politics and social values of the company producing the good.

4. Realize the continuing and disproportionate social, political and economic marginalization of African American youth also necessitates questioning what normal political/civic engagement is

Living with constrained opportunities, fewer resources, and systematic racism impacts political behaviors as well as consciousness. Poverty, disease, unemployment, infant mortality, incarceration, teenage pregnancy, and violent crime affect hope and meaning, leading to despair and dread.

The politics of invisibility

What this leads to, Cohen has found, is the idea that black youth are developing strategies of survival that dictate, at times, a less visible profile—engaged in a political strategy of survival that Cohen calls the “*politics of invisibility*.” Black youth, especially those most vulnerably positioned, engage in a strategy of invisibility, making themselves invisible to authority figures like the police, teachers, and correction officers—representatives of a regulatory state that often takes them as its target.

The unintended consequence of this *politics of hiding* is that it silences their discontent, obscuring their lived reality from those in society who are to respond to such difficulties.

Summary

Researcher Cohen emphasizes Americans, especially her peers in political science, must recognize the value of understanding the politics of black youth because their lives pose critical questions for the future.

If Americans are to facilitate the inclusion and empowerment of these often vulnerable and alienated voices, as well as those of all youth, Dr. Cohen recommends they begin to understand and attend to the ideas, attitudes, and needs of post-civil rights youth (from any community)—especially how they think about the political world, their status in it, and how they choose to act in the current political environment.

See the work coming out of the Cesar Chaves Institute at San Francisco State by professors Antwi Akom, Jeffery Duncan-Andrade, and Shawn Ginwright (see next recommendation) at <http://cci.sfsu.edu/>

RECOMMENDATION 16

REALIZE THE FUTURE OF URBAN SCHOOL REFORM IS DEMOCRATIC PUBLIC SCHOOLS: HIP-HOP CULTURE MEETS SCHOOL DEMOCRACY

One of the best ways to promote the evolution of urban school reform is democratic education

Advocates of democratic education believe that students, if they are to acquire the skills, knowledge, and values they need to perform their roles as citizens in a democracy, should receive a type of education that

actively engages them as citizens in their own schools and communities. For example, advocates believe that students should participate in the governance of the school and engage in community change activities in their local neighborhoods (ASCD, 2002).

Historically, one of the primary missions of the public schools in the United States has been to prepare children to perpetuate American democracy. Schools are expected to ensure that all children, regardless of culture, family economic status, or future occupation, acquire the skills, knowledge, and civic values they need to perform their roles as citizens in a democracy. So, what about urban hip-hop culture?

Progressive hip-hop culture functions as the voice of resistance

In, *Black in School*, educator and urban youth advocate Dr. Shawn Ginwright (2004) maintains that urban educators must realize forms of urban youth identification with hip-hop culture are organic expressions of racial meaning that emerge out of a context of struggle within urban environments. Historically, there is a common theme among all these expressions of Black identity and that theme is they all define blackness as a form of resistance.

"I failed your class 'cause I ain't with your reasoning. You tryin' to make me you..."
-- Boogie Down Productions, 1989

Black youth identity is constructed in resistance to public school education

American educators must see that resistance to schooling by certain groups is not a quirk or isolated phenomenon. School disaffection is a global reaction (Smith, 2003; Beresford, 2004) by youth to public education (Sewell, 1997) and school authority (Willis, 1977) that seeks to educate them not in their own self-interests, but in the interests of the dominate culture.

The idea of urban democratic schools fits perfectly in with the suggestions from Ginwright's reform initiatives and the characteristics of the hip-hop generation to critique the mainstream (Potter, 1995).

Therefore Ginwright's challenge to urban educators is to tap into the oppositional culture of hip-hop so that it might revive new and more inclusive forms of schooling and democratic possibilities.

Democratic schools

Democratic schools will create a climate where urban black working-class youth, as well as adults, are totally involved in the problem solving process. Since by definition students will share in decision-making, democratic classrooms and schools will guarantee the focus will be on the tangible day-to-day problems students' face in their schools and neighborhoods, thus developing strategies that are more connected to students' experiences (Cooks & Epstein, 2000).

Youth in urban areas deserve democratic schools

Armed with the deep understanding of inequality and a passion to achieve social justice, Ginwright notes that black youth around the country are demanding that they have a voice in decisions that impact their

lives. Indeed, urban youth involvement in politics is increasing. (See: www.2006hiphopconvention.com and en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vote_or_Die)

Democratic education fits perfectly in with Ginwright's suggestions for Afrocentric and multicultural reform initiatives and the characteristics of black urban youth to resist educational assimilationism.

Starting with Ginwright's assumption that black youth should be understood in the context of neighborhoods rather than the confines of institutions such as schools, democratic education can evolve by exploring the ways that some black youth are transforming their schools and communities (Cooks & Epstein, 2000).

Ginwright's two strategies for working with today's youth

Dr. Ginwright (2004) suggests two promising strategies for educators and urban school districts working with today's urban youth.

1. Validate and affirm black youth identity

Ginwright wants educators to place a greater emphasis on existing hip-hop culture which can strengthen youth's openness to reform efforts because such an emphasis affirms youth culture rather than criticizing or trying to change it.

He reminds urban educators hip-hop culture emerged from the tremendous economic, social, and cultural pressures black urban youth must learn to navigate. By validating hip-hop culture, the struggle of youth for racial and economic justice is also affirmed. This affirmation is a key starting point for building and strengthening other aspects of urban youth identity.

Some educators are critical of students who see being black as speaking slang, braided hair, sagging pants and skewed hats. They say that blackness is knowing black history and appreciating African values, not dressing like a gangster. Right or wrong, this disconnects urban educators from hip-hop youth.

2. Think of urban youth culture as an asset, not a liability

Viewing urban culture as an asset, according to Ginwright, requires a bold and courageous paradigm shift on the part of educators and reformers to conceptualize urban black youth culture as an asset rather than a liability in educational change efforts.

Urban black students arrive at school as critical thinkers

This year, as in the past two presidential elections, hip-hop oriented urban youth are involved politically. (See: www.hiphopcongress.com/national-townhall-meetings-to-explore-the-hip-hop-generations-stake-in-the-2008-presidential-election-rap-sessions/)

As a result of hip-hop culture, many urban minorities (as well as urban working-class whites) come to school politically conscious, and thus knowing where they stand in the American social hierarchy and why. Thus they find urban schools to be a climate where they are more likely to be seen as oppositional—troublemakers who interfere with learning and need to be removed.

Ginwright wants educators to see black urban students as natural critical thinkers due to their opposition to the mainstream. Due to their every-day experiences, they easily make connections between local concrete conditions in their schools/communities, and how larger social systems can be transformed to better meet their needs. Seeing hip-hop culture as an asset can strengthen reform by engaging youth, developing their capacities for greater civic engagement. By providing chances to act on their critiques, the school will begin to solve the very neighborhood problems, students face everyday, that influence school success.

Are democratic schools and hip-hop culture made for each other?

Democratic schools can provide the model toward creating a more equitable world. In that progressive hip-hop culture functions as the voice of resistance, along with democratic education, the culture can be utilized as a politicizing tool to inform youth about social problems and how to solve them, while democratic practices provide the structure or blueprint for the possibilities of social change.

Democratic schools are viable options to traditional school climate because of hip-hop's natural ability to boldly criticize and reveal the serious contradictions in American democracy. Rap lyrics about police violence, expansion of prisons, or repressive foreign policies provide the forum for black youth to think about issues that impact them and shape their lives.

Ginwright suggests youth input into solving classroom, school, and community problems is necessary because those closest to the problem are often in the best position to solve it.

By including black urban youth in education policy decisions, democratic schools can be the “connector” Ginwright claims multicultural reform needs to evolve—to connect to the everyday problems youth face.

Thus, both the Afrocentric/multicultural reform movement and students will be transformed because they are empowered through democratic school decision-making to challenge and affect the problems of poverty that impact their schools and communities. Also, this makes American public institutions, like public schools, more accountable for meeting the needs of a community.

When youth organize for racial and economic justice, they are practicing democracy

When youth make connections between local concrete conditions in their schools and communities and how larger social systems can be transformed to better meet their needs they are practicing democracy. These strategies can strengthen public schools by engaging youth and developing their capacities for greater civic engagement.

Rethinking urban educational strategies through democratic education opens new and exciting possibilities for reaching black (Perry, 2006) and other urban students (Hoppe, 2005). Ginwright's experiences working with black youth tells him that the conditions they face on a daily basis need much greater attention on the part of educational reformers.

Black youth in urban schools want and deserve a better education, and if scholars, educators, and policy makers would simply listen to what they have to say, they would learn that they have analytical capacity,

creative energy, and the desire to make good things happen in their schools and neighborhoods. *This is the democratic potential of American public schools. **This is why democratic public schools are authentic urban school reform.***

RECOMMENDATION 17

ADVANCE CULTURALLY RELEVANT TEACHING TO POLITICALLY RELEVANT TEACHING

Enabling political clarity in urban public school teachers

The concept of teaching teachers who may work in an urban setting to have an “attitude” (critical consciousness: See Recommendation 7, p. 66) is reinforced by the insight of researcher Tamara Beauboeuf-LaFontantas (1999) who views this pedagogy as political.

She attempts to persuade American educators to examine culturally relevant teaching as a political pedagogy and a contemporary manifestation of what was considered “good” teaching in many African American communities served by segregated schools. What made these all-black schools successful hinged not simply on the cultural similarities between teachers and students, but more importantly on the political clarity of the teachers. It is this “political clarity” which produces a critical consciousness that can make middle-class teachers--of all skin tones--viable, relevant, and respected urban educators.

To Beauboeuf-LaFontantas, those educators who taught in all-black schools recognized the existence of oppression in their students' lives and sought to use their personal, professional, and social power to encourage children to understand and undermine their subordination.

This was “teaching with an attitude” and why she argues that culturally relevant teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1995) is more accurately viewed as politically relevant teaching.

RECOMMENDATION 18

REINVENT ADOLESCENCE: COMBINE RITES OF PASSAGE AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Puberty, rites of passage, and student voice: Introducing students to adulthood and citizenship

A rite of passage is a ritual that marks a change in a person's social or sexual status. Rites of passage are often ceremonies surrounding events such as childbirth, menarche or other physical changes of puberty, coming of age, weddings, and death (“Rite of passage,” 2008).

Idiocy or puberty?

Walter Parker in *Teaching Democracy* (2003) notes the Greek’s definition of “idiocy” was a state of being overly concerned with one’s own self-interests, ignoring the needs of the community, and declining to take part in public life.

To the Greeks, puberty was not limited to the process of physical changes by which a child’s body becomes an adult body capable of reproduction. *Puberty was the transition to public life.* It was a process of bringing youth into and through “puberty”—that is, to introduce them to public life, cultivating citizenship and concern for the *polis*.

Public schools: Our introduction to society and the problems of living together

Parker goes on to assert that public schools could be the first place the variety of Americans comes into contact with society in the public arena, *sharing the same space*. Schools are not private places like homes, he writes. The diversity of children in public schools runs the gamut: language, religion, ability, intelligence, color, class, gender, sexual orientation, or so-called disability. These are places where multiple perspectives and personal values are brought into face-to-face contact around matters that “are relevant to the problems of living together.” In Parker’s mind, these are mutual collective concerns, not yours or someone else’s, but “ours.” These arise in public places—places such as schools. *This*, he asserts, *is why public schools can, like no other place in society, nurture “puberty.”*

Introducing students to adulthood and citizenship at the same time

In “Walkabout” Maurice Gibbons (1974) explains how schools can provide the experiences needed in rites of passage from childhood to initial adulthood by a curriculum built on 5 challenge areas:

- *Adventure*: a challenge to the student’s daring, endurance, and skill in unfamiliar environments
- *Creativity*: a challenge to explore, cultivate and express imagination in some aesthetically pleasing form
- *Service*: a challenge to identify a human need for assistance and provide it; to express caring without expectation of reward
- *Practical Skill*: a challenge to explore a utilitarian activity, to learn the knowledge and skills necessary to work in that field, and to produce something of use
- *Logical Inquiry*: a challenge to one’s curiosity, to formulate a question of personal importance, and to explore an answer or solution systematically

Also, students advance through 6 stages in developing their challenge areas: (1) Teacher directed learning, (2) Incidental self-direction, (3) Independent thinking, (4) Self-managed learning, (5) Self-planned learning, and finally, (6) Self-directed learning (Gibbons, 2002).

Beginning at grade 6

At around 11 years of age, students are also introduced to both traditional and non-traditional rites of passage concepts: identity formation, the opposite sex, marriage and the family, the rights and responsibilities of adulthood, and in areas regarding religious, spiritual, and philosophical questions. Ideas and plans fulfilling the 5 challenge areas, guided by the 6 development stages, would begin (Isenberg, 1997; Beem, Crispin & Metzger, 2003).

Such activities as understanding the progressive stages of development with respect to the body, dealing with fear or pain, along with scenarios that are a part of the physical, psychological, and social challenges associated with the Outward Bound concept are implemented.

Along the way forward to 7th and 8th grade, students learn and practice the democratic habits of mind and heart such as how to listen, deliberate, research, determine what’s fair, run meetings, and partake in actual classroom/school decision-making processes. See Appendix G, H, I, and K.

Student government could be based on direct democracy. (See Appendix H, p. 129) Students would also learn citizenship and politics: governmental processes, political parties, community service and change, and social justice issues through study and an actual civic engagement projects.

Finishing 8th grade would represent entering high school, adulthood, and civic life

Eighth grade graduation would signify a student passed all courses, progressively became more independent in meeting the demands of their challenges areas, more comfortable with their body and its feelings/emotions, and learned and successfully practiced the language and habits of democracy inside and outside of school. This “initiation” would introduce them to the community (*polis*) as “novice” citizens.

Reinventing adolescence for the 21st century

The adolescent is a European social construct indirectly created when James Watt's 1760s invention of the steam engine (Musgrove, 1964) made it economically and socially necessary (Gillis, 1974).

G. Stanley Hall Americanized the concept of adolescence in the early 1900s. His middle-class concept seeking to throttle precociousness, while protecting children from adults, was based on middle-class fear of immigrants and urbanization (Kett, 1977). It was no coincidence that adolescence and high school, which Hine (1999) describes as “custodial institutions for the young” were created at the same time.

After WW II, came the phenomenon of the “teenager” and a teen subculture with its own behavior, music, language, dress, and values. Young people became teenagers because we had nothing better for them to do. In the 50s, America began seeing them not as productive persons, but as gullible consumers.

Thus adolescence, this “...structurally induced period of enforced leisure...” (Sullivan, 1990), has widened to age 10 and up to 30 (Unte, 1996). Younger individuals are now acting older, while those physically grown wish to extend adolescence, thus postponing adulthood (Bly, 1996).

If adolescence was invented, it can be reinvented (Loflin, 1993)

Indeed, many youth may need an extended period of dependence and leaving home later to prepare for a career. While an affluent society can afford an artificially prolonged (Psychology Today, 1980) adolescence, there is no reason why it should (Sowell, 1987). Most youth seem “stuck” in adolescence, vacillating between dependence and independence. Others must assume adult roles at home: helping the family survive by taking on jobs or doing housework, and/or parenting siblings.

Rites of passage get rid of adolescence: Moving on to adulthood--one way or the other

Socially sanctioned rites in America such as Bar/Mat Mitzvah, confirmation, Quinceañera, acquiring a driver's license, paying adult admission fees, or marriage signify the beginning of adult freedoms and responsibilities.

Yet, for most youth, society does not provide socially approved ceremonies and consequently youth, who must show themselves and others they are not children anymore, create their own. Unsanctioned “rites” such as consuming alcohol/nicotine/drugs, shoplifting, dropping out of school, having sexual intercourse,

becoming a teen mother or father, joining a gang/getting jumped, taking death-defying chances, or going to jail and making it through may not bring official/legal adult status, but do signify the end of childhood on the street. The issue is these acts are anti-social and dangerous for the person and everyone else—and *would not be necessary if America provided, at the minimum, the same opportunity so-called primitive societies do for their coming-of-age youth through their rites of passage ordeals and ceremonies.*

From a dysfunctional to a democratic adolescence

Robert Epstein in his book, *The Case against Adolescence: Rediscovering the Adult in Every Teen* (2007), believes that adolescence as it is known is dysfunctional. American teenagers are highly capable—in some way more so than adults—but are “infantilized” by how they are portrayed in the media and treated by public institutions, especially high school. He suggests society can “rediscover the adult in every teen” by giving young people adult authority and responsibility as soon as they can demonstrate readiness.

This implies society must provide a variety of ways youth can do this “demonstrating.” After puberty, America must offer a variety of socially sanctioned ways to adulthood beyond traditional ceremonies. Having very well thought out pathways that regard all the physical, psychological, social, political and spiritual questions, needs, and experiences youth have, allowing them to assume adult status at 14, 15, 16, or 17 would eliminate the necessity of a prolonged adolescence and anti-social rites of passage.

Epstein’s research provides criteria for adult readiness in 14 domains. See the Epstein-Dumas Test of Adulthood at drrobertepstein.com/EDTA-unabridged or www.howadultareyou.com.

Lower the voting age to 16 would help. Those 16 can work, pay taxes, drive, and be charged for adult crimes and even be sentenced to death (Ferguson, 2004; Weiser, 2004; Kamenetz, 2008). Abolishing high school as we know it (Will, 1998) or cutting the time one has to spend in high school helps (Sowell, 1998).

At the Roots Activity Center in Washington, DC, after 8th grade graduation, youth are put into apprenticeship programs for those Director Dr. Bernida Thompson says “...who don’t have the patience, interest, temperament, or circumstances to stay in high school for 4 years” (B. Thompson, personal communication, July 13, 1998). One year later, at the end of what would traditionally be 9th grade, if students pass their apprenticeship and GED, they are graduated. They may go into entry-level positions or pursue further education.

The current Middle-College High School concept provides another avenue to post-high school status while being in high school. See www.middlecollege.org

In conclusion: Adolescence is not for everybody

Epstein (2007) argues that adolescence is an unnecessary period of life that society is better off without. His theory shows that teen turmoil is caused by outmoded systems put into place a century ago which destroyed the continuum between childhood and adulthood—leaving youth isolated from adults, while learning everything from their media-dominated peers.

America must lead the industrialized nations, where the social invention of adolescence is the most relevant, in showing all of its youth that society cares. We cannot continue to let youth, by default, grow up alone in their self-developed, self-regulated subculture menagerie which was situated over 100 years ago.

What is problematic, currently, American society treats adolescence as though it has always existed, written in stone, and natural. The adolescent is not natural. *Adolescence is not for everyone.*

The alienation, horrible peer pressure, bullying, depression, suicide, and the appeal of gang initiation alone are enough reasons to abandon this well meaning, but misguided invention. Puberty is natural, but what happens after this biology depends on society—a society that has the power to re-invent the current one-size-fits-all transitions and “personalize” adolescence.

Dr. Epstein (p. 375) puts it this way, “The teen years need to be what they used to be: a time not just of learning, but of learning to be responsible adults.”

RECOMMENDATION 19

FOLLOW ENGLAND'S LEAD:

DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND COMPETENCIES CANNOT BE ACQUIRED THROUGH FORMAL TEACHING ALONE, BUT NEED TO BE PRACTICED BY STUDENTS IN CLASSROOMS AND SCHOOLS

In 2002, Section 176 of The Education Act of 2002 was passed by the British government. Inspired by the work of Bernard Crick (1998) and Article 12 of the UN Convention the Rights of the Child, a 2-year (2000-2001) study was done comparing traditional and democratic high schools (Hannam, 2005).

The “Citizenship Order” requires all UK high schools to take into account students’ opinions when making decisions and that this be done in ways that are transparent, regular, and accessible. This legal mandate is carried out by requiring each school to have a strong student council (Tafford, 2003).

The idea that schools should give children a say in the running of the school is widely supported by educationalists and is at the heart of citizenship education (Holmes, 2006).

Ted Huddleston (2007) notes the ideas of participation rooted in children’s human and democratic rights sit alongside claims about the impact of school improvement, personal well being, and general educational attainment. Central to the idea of education for democratic citizenship is the understanding that democratic values and competencies cannot be acquired through formal teaching alone, but need to be practiced. For another current review of the status of student voice in European public school see Maitles & Deuchar’s (2006) report, “We don’t learn democracy, we live it!”

Outcomes of student participation (Hannam, 2001; Trafford, 2003)

In UK secondary schools that took into account students’ opinions when making decisions in ways that were transparent, regular, and accessible compared to similar schools that did not, for a significant number of students their involvement in school and classroom decisions:

- Enhanced learning across the curriculum and the full range of academic abilities--sometimes in

unexpected and unpredictable ways

- Helped students gain organizational and time management skills
- Supported the learning of communication and collaboration skills
- Facilitated quality outcomes, which both intrinsically and through recognition from others, led to enhanced self-esteem
- Fostered an allover sense of personal and social efficacy
- Brought a greater sense of ownership, and personal empowerment leading to greater motivation to engage in school activities
- Helped both females and males feel more independent, trusted, and responsible--making them feel a part of the school and the surrounding community

As well, in UK schools that practiced these democratic values, compared to those that did not:

- Students were required to take the initiative and make decisions
- Disruptive behaviors in classes and hallways were significantly lower
- Attendance improved for all students, but significantly for the less academic and potentially alienated
- Suspensions and expulsions were significantly lower
- School climate became more positive
- The attitudes of teachers and staff improved
- School violence was down significantly
- Real-life benefits enhanced the relationships between students and teachers
- Little anxiety was experienced by parents and teachers

Democratic schools: America's moral duty

Currently, on the global stage, the wise and enlightened must embarrassingly look the other way when the United States pushes its rhetoric about the potential of democracy. They know democracy is not realized by its youth in its public schools on an every-day basis. And, they know what this means.

Mother England has invented the public school democracy "wheel" for America's educators and government leaders. All the United States has to do is watch and learn, apply an American twist to the concept, and then put it into law. This will move America from the 20th to the 21st century. America has a moral duty to do so, and it will.

RECOMMENDATION 20

WHEN REFORMING CIVIC EDUCATION, DON'T CRITICIZE CO-0PT

Civic lessons for reforming civic education (Cooley, 2007)

The issue: The dominance of conservative forces in civic education. Progressive minded educational reforms have either neglected or attacked Civics curricula when calling for educational change. A more politically savvy strategy for reforming civic education is needed.

What not to do: The possibilities for democratic action, change, and progress are possible which have wider appeal to the rest of the country's citizens. However, valuing diversity via a curriculum that focuses on the ways in which people of different backgrounds have contributed to the development and success of the United States will not challenge conservative's latent resistance to progress.

Thus, what to do: Use levers of power/existing support structures that are already active in schools by working off of and co-opting the dominant values of the elite policymakers who guide policy and curriculum. Examples of main-line American political thought/dominant values are:

- Frame Civics curriculum as that which strives for *egalitarianism* and *civic mindedness*. (Political rhetoric of curriculum matters immensely) re-centering education and schooling towards the development of civic community.
 - Create a Civics curriculum and schools guided by an ethic to reduce inequality on social, economic, and political fronts.
- Many schools claim to have civic mindedness in their mission.
- Countless service programs and community groups seek school support via student participation.

Additionally, appeals must be made to the voters who put the policymakers in office.

What Cooley wants Americans to remember: The U.S. is a center-to-right leaning country, yet in re-conceiving Civics *one must remember that this country's legacy is not simply one of exploitation; it is one of exploitation and redemption.*

FINAL THOUGHTS: IS DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION IN AMERICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS ENOUGH?

Education and the democratic person: Towards a political conception of democratic education for 21st century American society (Biesta, 2007)

Thinker and educator Gert Biesta offers democratic educators a critique of the current views of democratic education as has been presented in this paper. His critique is based on these questions:

- Are Americans asking too much of American public schools?
- Are public schools capable of such responsibilities?
- What if schools are not the place for democratic education?

In American public schools there is strong tendency in educational theory and practice to think of education as the “production” of a person with particular qualities, most notably the quality of rationality--the ability to reason.

Throughout his essay, Biesta uses the term “subject,” and “subjectivity,” but “person” and “personhood” are being substituted. Personhood (the quality/property of being a person) refers to the individual as a person who is able to act, who is in control of his or her own life, and who is able to take responsibility for his or her own perceptions, experiences, interpretations, deeds, and actions. See Glossary, p. 96.

Hence, the theory and practice of democratic education sees education as the instrument for the production of the “democratic person” who is an isolated individual with a pre-defined set of characteristics. This is manifested in the ways in which democratic education is commonly conceived: The preparation of children for their future participation in democratic life through the cultivation of a particular set of characteristics: knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions. The two associated common views of how best to engender the democratic person are:

1. that democracy should simply be taught using educational strategies directed at this individual so as to produce a democratic individual; or,
2. through creating opportunities for individuals to experience democratic life by participation in democratic structures and processes—thus one is preparing them for future democratic action.

Since the way in which we understand democratic education has everything to do with our conception of the democratic person, Biesta reviews past, current, and new potential answers to the question: What does it mean to be a democratic person? Each answer provides a different rationale for democratic education.

What does it mean to be a democratic person?

1. *An individualistic conception of democratic personhood*--becoming a democratic person is an individual process of unfolding innate rational capacities

Biesta cites an answer Immanuel Kant developed in order to make clear what kind of person was necessary in the new, emerging democracies of the European Enlightenment. The kind of qualities a person needs in a democracy is the individual human capacity for independent rational thought--when a person is able to make up their own mind and think for themselves without direction from another. Education, in Kant's

view, will release the rational potential to think and reflect so a person would be a rational autonomous being.

2. *A social conception of democratic personhood*—becoming a democratic person is a social process

John Dewey sees the democratic person as one who possesses “social intelligence,” which is acquired through participation in social interaction and cooperative problem solving, shaping and being shaped by the democratic form of life.

Thus, the capacity or ability to think and reflect is not an innate quality that is “released,” but is something that is required from living with others—and can therefore be said to have a *social* origin. We only become who we are through social interactions, forming our habits, including the habits of thought and reflection.

Biesta sees several problems with these two views

- Education is seen as an instrument for bringing about democracy, maneuvering public schools into a position in which they seem to have to carry the whole responsibility for the future of democracy.
- Hence, they can conveniently be blamed if it fails to do so.
- The idea of education as the “production” of the democratic person does not ask questions about individuals’ relationships with others nor about the social-political context in which they learn and act.
- The implication is that democracy is only possible if all citizens are “democratic persons” who are willing to act accordingly. This assumes that democracy can only exist if it is founded on a common identity.

Here, Biesta asserts the basic question those who support democratic education must ponder: *Does not the challenge of democracy lie precisely in our ability to live together with those who are not like us?*

3. *A political conception of a democratic personhood*—since person/personhood is understood as a quality of human action, which is always interaction, becoming a democratic person is a political process

Here, Biesta shares philosopher and politician Hannah Arendt’s (1906-1975) answer which is rooted in her understanding of human activities. Our capacity to be a person does not lie in our individual attribute and capacity for reflection, thinking, rationality, and contemplation, but where what it means to be human has everything to do with what one does—*thus in the quality of human interaction*.

For Arendt the question of being a person is the question of action. To be a person means to act—to begin and to bring one’s beginnings into the world. This reveals that which make us unique—our potential to do something that has not been done before. Through our words and deeds we “begin,” bringing something new, especially in the form of ourselves (our uniqueness), into the world. Although action is about invention and creation, it is not something exceptional or spectacular. Actions (new beginnings) are words and deeds that are visible to hidden, great and common, good or bad, and as common as saying “yes” to saying “no.”

But there’s more: We cannot act in isolation

Biesta explains Arendt’s ideas further: Everything depends on how others will respond to our acts. A person is one who begins an action and the one who is subjected to its consequences. If I speak/write but no one listens/reads, have I spoken or written? So, beginning is only half of what action is about.

“Beginnings” become action when others become involved. In order to act, in order, therefore, to be someone, to be a person, we need others who respond to/take up our “beginnings.”

And still more: Our beginnings manifest as others respond to our initiatives in ways that are not predictable

We act upon others who are capable of their own actions. Although this always frustrates our beginnings, Arendt emphasizes that this frustration is the very condition that makes our disclosure, our action and hence our personhood possible.

Oddly, Biesta points out, the chance that we may not remain in charge/control of what we do and what happens after we act is at the very same time the only way our action can come into the world.

We may try to control the ways in which others respond so we can remove frustrations, but in doing so we would deprive others of their chance to begin/to act, to come into the world, to be a person—the same person we depend upon to allow us to truly act since we need their response, good or bad, to exist.

To be isolated is to be deprived of the capacity to act

In Biesta’s theory, another way to look at it is that action is never possible in isolation. Action is not something we can do on our own. Since in order to act and thus to be someone, we need others who respond to our act(s)/actions. To be isolated is to be deprived of the capacity to act. So, action is never possible without plurality. It is the condition of human action. As soon as we erase plurality (the “otherness” of others) by attempting to control how they respond to our initiatives, we deprive others of their actions, and as a result we deprive ourselves of our possibility to act, and hence to be a person.

Summary: The key question is not what actions are, but how action is possible

The key question is not what actions are, but how is action possible? And actions (being a person) are not possible in those situations in which we try to manipulate the potential unpredictable and uncontrollable responses of others or deprive others of the opportunity to begin. Situations where intimidation silences or marginalizes others limits everyone involved.

To Ardent democracy can precisely be understood as the situation of the public sphere where we live/have to live, with others who are not like us in which everyone has the opportunity to be a person, everyone has the opportunity to act and, through their actions, bring their beginnings and initiatives into the world of difference and plurality. Individuals may have democratic knowledge, skills, and dispositions; *but it is only in action that the individual can be a democratic person.*

What do Biesta’s interpretations of Arendt’s ideas mean for America’s public schools?

Biesta argues that it is important to challenge the individualist or social conception of democratic personhood and the democratic education associated with it, not only because of the unrealistic expectations they

each raise about what schools can actually achieve, but also because of the fact that *it puts the burden for the future of democracy too much on schools and too little on society at large.*

Action schools: Schools in which democracy is a real possibility

If democratic subjectivity is a quality of human interaction and not a set of characteristics individuals can “possess,” then it follows that the educational task is no longer that of equipping individuals with such characteristics.

It should instead focus on what can be learnt from those transient situations in which democratic subjectivity was achieved.

New questions for democratic education: Thinking differently about public education and democracy

By locating “personhood” in the sphere of *human interaction* instead of “inside” the individual, the questions are not: “How can public schools make students into democratic citizens?” or “How can we make schools (more) democratic so that children and students will become democratic persons?”

The new questions are:

1. Is a democratic “way of being”/personhood actually possible in schools?
2. Can students actually *be* democratic persons there?

What would being places where students could actually be democratic persons ask from schools?

1. The curriculum would be more than subject matter to be put into each student’s mind and testing for outcomes, but that which provides real opportunity for students to begin, to take initiative, responding in their own, unique ways to the learning opportunities provided by the curriculum.
2. Teachers would show an interest in what students think and feel, and in the initiatives and beginnings, creating real chances for students to undertake something new and unforeseen by others.
3. The climate would be about listening and waiting, creating spaces for others to begin, and thus creating opportunities for others to be a person. This is about doing and saying and bringing oneself into the world, enabling the plurality and difference in which democratic action is only possible.

Action-centered and/or student-centered?

Since plurality and difference are the conditions under which action (democratic personhood) is only possible, the school would not be centered around students per se, but would enable students to act in the complex school/global social fabric, subjecting their beginnings to the beginnings of others who are not like them.

Are schools the environment with the least opportunities for action and being a subject?

In a range of settings (family, schools, clubs, leisure time, consumption) according to Bieta, many young people single-out the school as the place with the least opportunities for taking initiative, having a say and being heard—*the environment with the least opportunities for action and being a subject.* This is unfortunate

since to Biesta it is in the routines of everyday school life that the experience of democracy is “lived” and becomes real.

More than student councils and democratic habits of mind

The kinds of schools Biesta’s article suggests are not necessarily schools that are “democratic” in the more formal sense—schools with a student council/parliament and democratic deliberation. There may be no blueprint of what a democratic “action” school might look like.

Regardless, the question as to how much action is possible in schools needs to be asked again and again and requires our constant attention. This makes the issue of action and the democratic person not just relevant to public schools—it extends the idea to society at large and becomes a lifelong process.

From the point of view of democratic education

- What kind of society do we need so that people can act?
- How much action is actually possible in society?

Indeed, individuals do behave in anti-social/anti-democratic ways, but Americans cannot simply blame education for the failure of democracy. In a society or social setting in which individuals are not allowed to act—or in which only certain groups are allowed to act—we cannot expect that everyone will still behave in a “proper,” democratic manner. *The only way to improve the democratic quality of society is by providing more opportunities for action*—which is always action in a world of plurality and difference.

What else can public schools and teachers do?

If democratic personhood only exists *in* action, then the question of democratic education is not about how to become a person, but about learning from being and having been a person (someone in action in a plurality).

Thus, to Biesta, what democratic educators must do is observe, process, discuss, and share with the school community the answers to the questions: *What can be learned from being/having been a person?* What can be learned from those situations in which one has experienced for oneself what it means to act and especially *not* to be able to act?

If to be a person, to *come into the world*, is only possible if our beginnings are taken up by others in unprecedented, unpredictable, and uncontrollable ways, thus being subjected to what is contrary, different, and “other,” what can be learned from the frustration that may arise?

Remember, according to Biesta in Arendt’s terms, to begin and the reluctance to begin (or the frustration experienced from the reaction of others) are perhaps unintended, yet are necessary consequences of “the paradoxical condition” by which personhood can appear and under which democracy can become possible.

Biesta emphasizes that by creating a school climate that invites and supports reflection on those situations, teachers can foster an understanding of the fragile personal, inter-personal, and structural conditions under which human beings can act and can *be* a person. More importantly, it can foster an

understanding of the fragile conditions of democracy as a situation in which all individuals can be persons, in which they can all act, in which they can all *come into the world*.

Conclusion: Putting the responsibility for democratic education back where it actually belongs, namely, in society at large

Such an approach no longer focuses on the production of democratic individuals and no longer thinks of itself as having to prepare individuals for future democratic action.

What schools can do—or at least must try to do—is *to make action possible*, and hence create conditions for children and students to *be* persons, to experience what it is and means to be a “person.” The learning related to this is not something that comes *before* democratic personhood, it is not a kind of learning that produces democratic citizens. This learning follows from having been or, as Biesta, via Arendt, also suggests, from having *not* been a subject. It is learning about the fragile conditions under which action and subjectivity are possible—one’s personhood as much as the personhood of *all* others.

Because personhood is no longer something that only occurs or is created in schools, the approach to democratic education that follows *puts the question about the responsibility for democratic education back where it actually belongs, namely, in society at large*.

It is an illusion, Biesta is certain, to think that America’s public schools alone can produce democratic citizens. In so far as action and personhood are possible in schools *and* society, schools can perform the more modest and more realistic task of helping students to learn about and reflect upon the fragile conditions under which all people can act, under which all people can be a person in action in a plurality.

A society in which individuals are not able or not allowed to act, cannot expect from its public schools to produce its democratic citizens for it

To Biesta, the ultimate task for democratic education therefore lies in society itself, and *not* in its educational institutions. Schools can neither create nor save democracy—they can only support societies in which action and personhood are real possibilities.

Glossary

Subject One who is able to initiate their own activities

Act To be a person means to act—to begin and to bring one’s beginnings into the world.

Begin Through our words and deeds we “begin,” bringing something new, especially in the form of ourselves (our uniqueness), into the world.

Beginnings Plural form of that which we when we act

Action “Beginnings” become action when others become involved. In order to act, in order, therefore, to be someone, to be a person, we need others who respond to/take up our “beginnings.”

Person Someone in action in a plurality

Personhood The characteristic of a person, the quality/property of being a person

Democracy Understood as action-in-plurality

APPENDIXES: SUPPLEMENTING IMPLICATIONS OF CURRENT RESEARCH

- Appendix A Why America's public schools need democratic classrooms and schools, and why most teachers and students resist 98
- Appendix B Barriers to democratic education for African American children 103
- Appendix C Four critiques of democracy 112
- Appendix D Discipline revisited: Discipleship not discipline, moral development vs. behavior modification—The influence of school democracy on school and classroom discipline 114
- Appendix E A sustainable world needs sustainable schools; sustainable schools need democratic education: Student voices in decisions for a world they will inherit 117
- Appendix F How democratic education can bring peace and justice to society 120
- Appendix G Democratic Anarchy: School democracy for today's youth 126
- Appendix H Student councils or direct democracy: Involving a few students and staff or all students and staff in school decisions 129
- Appendix I Iroquois Democracy: A genuinely American democracy for public schools 130
- Appendix J A living democracy vs. a thin democracy: The ideas of Francis Moore Lappé 133
- Appendix K Democracy in the classroom: Three examples 138
- Appendix L A Learner's Bill of Rights: Empowering students to develop the assertiveness necessary to desire and require a share in classroom and school decision-making 142

APPENDIX A

WHY AMERICA NEEDS DEMOCRATIC CLASSROOMS AND SCHOOLS, AND WHY MOST TEACHERS AND STUDENTS RESIST

Barriers to democratic education

Summing up the history of democratic education in American public schools shows that it has always been a part of the underlying purposes of public education. Through a Civics curriculum, it continues in a general fashion yet limited form in many schools. However, compared to America's global legacy of democracy and consequently the importance of a more "enlightened" Civics in the various forms of actual practice by students in their public schools, this can be viewed as lip service.

We must remove the contradictions in our culture that embrace democratic ends for its schools, but resists the actual practice in schools of democratic means from which the ends cannot be separated.

-- The Institute for Democracy in Education

America wanted democracy in Russia, the Balkans, and South Africa. Now America wants it in North Korea, Cuba, Hong Kong, and Iraq. Yes, Americans want democracy in China; the problem is they just do not want it in their public schools. Youth know this—and see this as another act of adult hypocrisy: "Do as we say, not as we do."

Part A: Why we need shared decision-making in the classroom

Most teachers are aware of the phenomenon known as **burnout**—there are days when it seems that all of a teacher's normally bright enthusiastic light bulbs have gone out. Many times, dealing with student behavior is an issue. Most behavioral interventions involve some sort of punishment or negative consequences or some manipulation designed to correct disruptive actions (Gathercoal, 1991).

Yet, experience tells us that punishment does not work at all with many students, particularly those with low self-esteem. The repeat "offenders" in local school detention/suspension rooms are a daily confirmation of the failure of punishment. So, who is really being penalized? Who's really in distress here? **It is the teachers—they are burning out from trying to coerce students into obedience** (Kohn, 1993).

What about students? Does "burnout" lead to disengagement, apathy, or conversely, thoughtlessness or aggression? The fact is students often act this way (Kohn, 1993). But, now let us ask what America has learned from the workplace about **what causes burnout**: the best predictor, it turns out, is not too much work or overtime, bad supervisors, too little pay or problems with co-workers, rather **it is powerlessness**—a lack of control over what one is doing (Kohn, 1993). Even an amateur psychologist knows feelings of impotence lead to stress.

- Instead of writing names on the board, using group punishments and rewards, corporeal exercises, escalating detention time, or threatening suspension why not use something that will strengthen student empowerment and responsibility while affecting the factors that contribute to stress and burnout? Many educators suggest a proven strategy: shared decision-making with students into creating classroom

climate (Aust & Vine 2003; Barr & Parrett, 1995; Beadi, 1996; Bolmeier, 1995; Douglas, 1995; Dugger & Dugger, 1998; Duke & Ganseder, 1990; Freiberg, 1996; Gathercoal, 1991; Gerzon, 1997; Griffin, 1995; Leachman & Victor 2003; King, Silvey, Holliday & Johnston, 1998; Kohn, 1993; Panico, 1998; Parker, 1997; Schneider, 1996; Slater, 1994; Smink, 1997; Vorrath & Brendtro, 1985; Wood, 1989; Zachlod, 1996).

- Consider William Glasser's (1998), "The needs that drive us all" (love and belonging, survival, power, freedom/choice, and fun). Involving students in classroom/school decisions meets the needs of belonging, power, and choices. This is very important. Its potential is powerful.
- Shared decision making with children and youth takes time—time to listen to what they have say and to thoughtfully respond to student's ideas, suggestions, and especially their questions (Zachlod, 1996).
- Creating caring classrooms and supportive schools through shared decision-making with students gives students opportunities to become citizens in the classroom rather than tourists (Frieberg, 1996).
- Everyday ought to include one block of time in which students can decide what to do (Kohn, 1993).

Part B: Why teachers are reluctant to share (what little) power they have

Historically, although teachers are given and express authority as the head of their classroom, with respect to the bottom line of overall educational authority, they have little power themselves. They must do what local and state school boards and superintendents (and parents) tell them to do--and now (under No Child Left Behind) federal officials--with little power over these decisions. Consequently, many teachers rightly quip, "Are you telling me you want me to share power with students when I have none myself?"

Part C: Community members and teachers do not see value of democratic schools to civic society

Fortunately, for democratic education (and America) a review also shows that since 1990, there has been and continues to be an expansion of more authentic democratic organizations, schools, and individual classrooms contributing to a sense of student voice that is truly unprecedented and making the 21st century democracy's century. See "The public high school: Democracy's 'finishing school'" (Quindlen, 2003). *Yet the point still remains: Why is not a majority of America's schools and classroom genuinely democratic?*

Is it because it has been very hard to convince adults, especially, that creating democratic classrooms and schools is beneficial? In fact, the benefits multiply on down the line. America worries about voter turnout and the lack of involvement in politics by the populace. Democratic schools can help (Stepp, 2003; Loflin, 2004). Groups debate and suggest ways to do this--keep polls open later, crack down on gerrymandering, promote third parties, and a better election-day date--none of which suggest democratic schools and classrooms (How to turn no-shows at polls into real voters, 2008).

Part D-1: Why we don't have it, or "Six excuses used by teachers"

1. *The absolute freedom excuse*: If we let kids decide, chaos will follow or "We run this school, the students don't." (Kohn, 1993).

2. *The time excuse*: If students were entitled to make decisions about school and had to agree on everything they did, there wouldn't be time to do anything else (Kohn, 1993).
3. *The children need limits and structure excuse*: This issue is a red herring. The real issue is however, not whether limits and rules are needed, but rather who sets them—the adults alone or the adults and students together (Kohn, 1993).
4. *The administration won't let me excuse*: But, what else is a teacher to do when school districts pay poorly, their union is weak, and while society blames everything on the schools, highly controlling districts/administrations leave teachers very little discretion about either curricular or disciplinary issues. Thus, are powerless teachers feeling, "If I am not a part of important decisions that affect me, why should I let kids decide anything?" (Duke & Gansneder, 1990; Kohn, 1993).
5. *Not an excuse, but a reality*: Teachers like what power they do have. Teachers only see control or chaos. They like control. Thus, teachers often simply lack the gumption, courage, and confidence, (Gray, 1997) to give kids choices. Parting with power is not easy, if only the results are less predictable than in a situation where they have complete control. Asking students to decide even about the simplest thing can be scary. Unfortunately, teachers do not realize that shared decision-making with students is a gradual process with tremendous opportunities to teach students authentic responsibility and skills in respect, listening, deliberation, and compromise (Beck, 1998; Kohn, 1993; Parker, 1997).
6. *The "What they really need is a return to a paternal dictatorship" excuse*: or they are not mature enough, they can't handle freedom; they don't understand democracy yet; they can't handle these kinds of decisions and responsibilities; and, listen for yourself, they want us to make the decisions for them.

Part D-2: England's experiences: Addressing the fears of school staff (Trafford, 2003)

What have England's educators (Also see Recommendation 19, p. 88) learned from their experiences in democratic schools with respect to issues involving the following:

- **Criticism of teachers**
In practice, empowered students do not set out to be vindictive. In fact, the more students are empowered, the less they get personal about teaching styles and the better they get at expressing themselves courteously and sensibly.
- **Rights without responsibilities**
It is not empowered young people who are likely to seek confrontation or to "stand up for their rights," but those who feel powerless. Besides, a harsh and mean "demanding" of rights is not a part of the democratic process.
- **Complaints about teachers**
In a democratic climate of mutual respect there is less likelihood of malicious complaints.
- **Unreasonable demands**
These types of assertions have not been a feature of democratic schools. If anything, empowered students tend to be conservative and to expect too much of themselves, not their schools. Students become "over punitive" of their peers when given opportunities to help enforce their own rules.
- **Isn't it just more work for teachers?**
It should not be. Empowered students help teachers find and implement solutions, rather than create more work for them. In fact students are very good at pointing out things that schools waste time on.
- **Two things that democratic schools are not**
Democracy in schools is not a free-for-all or "Lord of the Flies," nor is it anti-uniforms or against giving teachers respect.

Part E: Actual resistance from students

So, this is not surprising, given that most students have been conditioned to accept a posture of passivity at school. It is disconcerting to be asked (by adults)—much less be expected—to take responsibility for the way things are in schools and classrooms. In general, most resistance from students comes in these forms:

- **They refuse**—it's your job as adults to decide. This is another great teachable moment teachers miss to discuss power/control and what make school/learning exciting;
- **They test adults**—if given the chance to help make decisions, students will make outlandish suggestion to see if the adults really mean what they say; and,
- **They parrot**—students say what they think adults want to hear (Kohn, 1993)

Part F: Escape from freedom: Eric Fromm revisited

Oddly surrounding the implementation of democratic education is the phenomenon of resistance to it. As has been the case in many instances in the former Soviet Union, citizens used to communism continue to oppose freedom and desire to return to a state controlled society. Around the globe, those accustomed to a dictatorship are made uneasy with choices and responsibility. Eric Fromm (1941) predicted this over 65 years ago in his book *Escape from Freedom*.

“If humanity cannot live with the dangers and responsibilities inherent in freedom, it will probably turn to authoritarianism.”

Summary

The key question here is how teachers and other adults respond to these issues and how they face themselves in the mirror as citizens in “The land of the free and the home of the brave.” In attempting to conclude that students are unable to handle the responsibility of making and sharing decisions or being unworthy of having it, or that they cannot think for themselves (adults must think for them), **educators must realize it is not naive or Utopian to think that students can make responsible decisions about their school, classroom, and their own learning.**

In fact, it is quite "American" to wish that American students (America's future citizens) not become parrots, or are people who never take risks, never question authority, or never desire to be a part of the decision-making process that affects their lives. American society does not want to create adults who never vote or who are not responsible citizens due to the fact that in the classroom and school they were treated in such a way as to feel powerless, burned out, compliant, controlled, and silenced (Kohn, 1993).

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APPENDIX B

BARRIERS TO DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN

Potential barriers to democratic education (as defined in this paper) for African American children: A discussion of various general aspects of African American culture and experiences; and, the critical concerns of African American teachers about progressive forms of education

This appendix intends to review 5 possible general areas/factors that this paper argues inhibit or do not encourage African Americans to embrace democratic education practices with respect to their children and their public schools.

1. Lack of democratic experiences (J. Rosario, personal communication, May 2, 2007)

The poor/disenfranchised are typically not the recipients of democratic practice, especially at work where they must follow orders. They tend to be manipulated by others and treat each other in an authoritarian way. Power is what counts, and the more power you have the more you can manipulate the other.

Child rearing practices (J. Rosario, personal communication, May 2, 2007)

The conservatism typically tied to child rearing practices among the poor/disenfranchised is based on the belief that children's role in the family is mostly to listen, do what they are told, and respect their elders. Having been raised that way, parents tend to do likewise--choosing more authoritarian approaches.

2. Democracy and the Black church

How democratic is the institution of the church? Does this influence family/school practices? How much power do/should members have in church decisions? How much does the Bible (i.e., "Spare the rod, spoil the child") play in the child-rearing practices? What about the gender politics of the church? Do both men and women proscribe to the subordination of women in the household and so the body of the church?

When do the sheep lead the shepherd? (Lewis, 2007)

The pastor answers to the will of God, not the opinions of church members. Ephesians 4:11 explains church protocols/order of influence: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and then teachers. Bishops, elders, deacons are elected/ ordained by council of apostles/prophets who are instructed directly by the Holy Ghost (Acts 6:1-8). Congregational involvement (voting/ deliberating misconduct of a pastor, church decisions) is not necessary since the oversight of officers, by a properly established protocol, does this.

Democracy in the church (Perry, 2007)

There is a history of top-down decision making in the black church. "Dictator pastors" run their church as a personal enterprise. Although deacons/trustees have Biblical power, it has been scaled back by "rubberstamp cliques" with personal loyalty to pastor. Churches need "New England town meetings" where congregations would have a say in all major decisions.

3. General conjectures from black educators

In June of 2007, Dr. Eugene White, superintendent of the Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) and supported by a majority of the IPS school board, mandated that all students (K-12) wear school uniforms (Gammill,

2007) and enforced the requirement with a zero tolerance policy enforced by the creation of 21 alternative schools (Tailoring teaching sites, 2007) for the refugees of the policy. Some of the reasons (Hendricks & Loflin, 2007) for the policies were:

- Urban minority children lack discipline, self-control, self-respect, and regard for others.
- Many come from one parent families and have little supervision. The atmosphere at home is not strict enough. There are either no guidelines or children/youth do not follow the ones set up for them.
- Today's "Hip Hop" generation have never been told, "No!" They have been given too much freedom—freedom to fail, do wrong, or ruin their lives. Thus, it is up to the school to provide the "missing" structure students need, and even cry out for.
- Also, the school/classroom control, sternness, serious, zero tolerance/no nonsense approach is necessary to show children/youth/families and the world how serious they (the IPS school leaders) are about education
- The more strict relations with children associated with control and discipline at school are necessary to insure the safety of all concerned.

Although some educators disagree (Mercogliano, 1998; Mintz, 2000; Meegan, 2003), *this orientation implies a fear that a democratic classroom/school climate, especially during the early grades and in an urban setting, is too permissive, and would be nothing but chaos.* Also review Appendix A, p. 98.

4. Democratic education from an African American cultural-political perspective

The aspects of democratic education concerning "Democratic processes, classroom/school governance, civic education" as well as "Freedom to choose, learning without compulsion" (See definitions of Democratic Education, p. 16) can be interpreted/viewed differently depending on culture, political-economic power, and/or minority status.

Discussions over the last 20 years inspired by Dr. Lisa Delpit (1995) have been critical of the more liberal educational concepts of holistic education. Democratic climates where student rights, choices, and power over "what, when, how, where, and with whom they learn," along with the "freedom to fail" are not seen as empowering, but that which have the potential to hamper or prevent the success of black children in public schools.

Literacy as a part of a larger political entity

Delpit's critical concern with democratic practices (as defined in the paper on p. 16) is based on her view of literacy which she sees as much more than reading and writing, but a part of a larger political entity or "discourse." All discourses are not equal in status, she notes, some are more socially dominate, carrying with them social power and access to economic success.

Primary discourses are learned at home. Secondary discourses, learned at school, are attached to institutions or groups outside the home.

Due to the culture of those who have power in America, the culture of the public school system is based on the culture and discourse of the upper and middle classes. There are codes or rules for participating in

the culture of power around concepts relating to linguistic forms and communicative strategies such as ways of talking, writing, dressing, and interacting.

Both middle-class white and working-class black homes teach (a) culture to their children. The issue with Delpit is that the culture middle-class homes teach happens to be the same as the school's culture, which is the culture of power (book smarts) and its language (standard English) reinforced by teachers who are themselves middle-class.

The culture black children learn is not only their home culture and its language, (i.e. Black English) but that which is needed to survive in their community (street smarts). Neither is reinforced at school by middle-class teachers.

Consequently, certain children do well in school automatically because they grow up with the culture of power. Black children do perfectly well in learning their home culture, but may have problems, (for various reasons which will be discussed) with the school's culture that carries the codes or rules of power.

Is it better to be illiterate and white than illiterate and black?

For these reasons Delpit is concerned with public schools which are not able to teach minorities how to read, write and cipher. And, she is especially critical of progressive methods that, through giving students choices over learning options, can set black children up for failure. Following Stephanie Patterson's concerns (see above), African Americans cannot afford to have the liberty to fail because of the devastating consequences associated with not having the language of power. It is common knowledge that many prison inmates are illiterate or have no high school diploma.

Delpit argues that popular "progressive" and "child-centered" methods, unintended or not, seem to leave some children of color unable to read/write--not acquiring the "codes of power" of the mainstream which are necessary for economic success in this society. She implies the following characteristics of progressive education may be detrimental to African Americans:

- "Unstructured" open classrooms with too much freedom
- Children, not teachers, in control of their own learning
- Waiting for children to read when they are ready
- Holistic processes emphasizing expression and not correctness, which tend to postpone teaching black students the basics of communication

Well-meaning, but misguided liberalism: Literacy as a political necessity for African Americans

Part of Lisa Delpit's rationale for being wary of giving black children "freedom" is the concept of liberalism which she defines as beliefs that include striving for a society based on maximum individual freedom and autonomy. Although it is not with these beliefs per se that she is concerned, it is their application in the classroom: Many liberal educators hold that the primary goal of education is to become autonomous, to develop fully who we are in the classroom setting without arbitrary, outside standards forced on students.

Child-centered classrooms are needed, progressives maintain, in order to allow a democratic state of free, autonomous, empowered adults who--by practicing choice/responsibility in school--are prepared for American-style self-government.

Of course, Delpit says, this is a reasonable goal for people whose children are already participants in the culture of power, who have already internalized its codes and bring this "cultural capital" to school assuring their success.

The view of black students and white teachers toward power and authority in the classroom

According to Dr. Delpit, black children expect an authority figure to act with authority. When teachers act like "chums" the message is sent that this adult has no authority and children act accordingly.

Authority is earned by personal efforts and exhibited by personal characteristics. The "authoritative" person gets to be a teacher because they are authoritative. Thus teachers must consistently prove the characteristics that give them authority. African American teachers who are strict do well in "controlling" urban students and students are proud of their teacher's "meanness" Delpit says.

On the other hand, many middle-class, in particular, white teachers expect respect/compliance simply because they are teachers; it comes with the role. They view a display of power or authority, or exhibiting one's personal power as an expert source is disempowering students. To make any rules or expectations explicit is to act against liberal principles and thus limiting the freedom and autonomy of students.

Does this imply urban students will view teachers who ask, "What do you think?" "What shall we do?" or "Let's vote on it!" as "weak" and without the authority they need respect? What does this imply?

Classroom cultural misunderstandings hurt everyone, especially black males students in special education

To Delpit, this creates a situation where asking students their opinion or having them decide/vote an issue or curricular question may be seen as a weakness. As well, if teachers give directions without an authoritative stance and voice, Black students may not obey. These students are deemed uncooperative or rebellious and may suffer labeling or put in special education. In this scenario, both the teacher and the student can suffer.

Considering teaching Standard English and involving urban Black students in democratic processes: Threats to traditional family hierarchy?

To the extent that the language taught at school (Standard English) is different from and may challenge the language black working class families/students (Black English) use at home, to the same extent the language of democracy may challenge the traditional more authoritarian child-rearing practices or parent/child relations of these same working-class families.

Unlike middle-class homes, both black and white, which may be more naturally democratic, having students from black working-class homes control their learning can represent a clash of cultures/climates with respect to attitudes toward adult authority (Turnball, 2007).

One of Delpit's issues with liberals: Learning to read at grade level by the end of the 3rd grade

The progressive idea of letting children learn to read when they are ready scares many African Americans. The fact that the policy state officials use to forecast the number of beds needed in future prisons is based on the number of children who cannot read at grade level at the end of the 3rd grade (Barr and Parrett, 2001) concerns everyone.

Black children reading at grade level becomes a political necessity for black Americans

Delpit wants to ensure that public schools provide black children with discourse patterns, interactional styles, and spoken and written language codes that allow them to succeed in the "white man's" larger society. What may be more important, minorities can not affect the change which allows them to truly progress without the skills which enable a critique of the status quo in the mainstream's own terms and worldview. *Delpit's points make sense.*

Conclusion: Rationale for adult authority in the classroom

If African American families and educators decline/resist having their children practice certain aspects of democratic education (as defined in this paper, p. 16), it would not be a critique of Civics/citizenship education or even traditional student councils/government, where only particular students are involved. It does imply a concern over the direct input of black children into rules of conduct, curriculum, and assessing.

This view of black urban children, due to the reason listed above (unstructured home life, personal discipline) maintains they may lack the qualities to handle freedom. This implies black children will choose the easy way out or innocently disregard the importance of education, to their own detriment, if given the opportunity, because they do not realize what is at stake. This provides the reason for traditional strict guidance and direction from adults whose role/responsibility is seen as one that gives direction/guidance, sometimes through the use of rewards/punishments, to children whose role/responsibility it is to do as they are told. Is this the rationale behind the disciplinary climate at the various KIPP schools? See www.kipp.org.

Recommendations

1. Expand the language of power to include the language of democracy

Delpit's point that African Americans must have the language of power to access the culture of power and that progressive school climates may be a barrier to the acquiring this language and other key characteristics is solid. Yet, there may be aspects of progressive democratic education ideas--namely, schools exposing black children and youth, as future citizens, to experiences addressing the democratic habits of mind which expand the language of power to include skills and abilities regarding "how the American political system (of power) works" and "how to work the system."

Aspects of democratic education that involve shared decision-making regarding classroom/school as a community can model for students what happens in the larger community outside of school. This prepares

them for the democratic life after graduation, using the civic engagement skills honed in school (Beatty, 2004) to make sure they are treated fairly and get equal opportunities (Cooks & Epstein, 2000).

Public schools seem the logical place to acquire the aspects of both the language and the politics of (mainstream) power. This discussion begs many questions and compels obvious answers concerning American democratic society:

- Need schools take into account the less democratic home culture of minorities and working-class students when being student centered or democratic?
- Can democratic schools motivate black children to learn Standard English, the language of power?
- How do we fight the class bias some educators might have to not provide students with the empowering experiences of democracy?
- How do we separate the well-meaning, but potentially disempowering educational experiences of student controlled learning experiences from those that have the potential to help these same students learn the language of power and what this paper argues, includes the language of democracy—the democratic habits of mind, a willingness to deliberate, an attitude of mutual respect (McDermott, 1999)?
- So, when and how do public schools provide democratic experiences for children with more collectivist (see p. 67) cultures?
 - What is the balance?
 - What does a culturally competent democratic classroom and school look like?

2. Challenge Delpit's worldview: Re-thinking living and learning in a global era

A lot has happened since Prof. Delpit's 1995 book, *Other People's Children*. The explosion of the Internet and the democratic (open to anyone) global youth-oriented culture of You Tube, Face Book, and My Space are profoundly challenging the status quo . Global hip-hop culture (McBride, 2007; Ogbar, 2007) with a global co-identity, language, and economy hark to a non-traditional future. The world has virtual "Google" classrooms where children in Guatemalan or Nigerian villages can turn on their little green plastic self-powered laptops to learn about most anything or establish E-mail correspondence with local or world-class experts. The point is, due to the *possible ramifications* of 6 plus billion people who are connected instantly via a very democratic Internet "culture" have not only challenged the *status quo*, but these ramifications are actually competing with the traditional hegemony of Delpit's American "culture (and language) of power."

Not only are there challenges to the hegemony of Standard English (Mahiri, 2004), but due to current global culture even the power of the written word itself is being questioned as the only way of communicating. What is called "New Literacy Studies" (DeBose, 2007) and the idea of media literacy seek to complement and supplement "text-centric" communications (Loflin, 2005).

For example, Delpit's warns, "To imply that it doesn't matter how you talk or how you write is to ensure ultimate failure" would be legitimate if African Americans were "stuck" in America—but they are not. They are world citizens in/of a global cyber world.

Simply put, there are other “languages” as well as cultures of power--namely Indian or Chinese--which are challenging American dominance. As well there are, due to the opportunity via the Internet, multiple, multiple ways to make a living or being of influence without “an education” and limited only by one’s imagination and initiative.

The global availability of other skills, experiences, ideas, and worldviews allow conceiving, perhaps for the first time in human history, a self-created life/community on its own terms, thus an expansion of non-traditional definitions and/or ways of success. From an opportunity to (a) self-publish a story, book, melody, album, movie, idea, or (b) maintain a blog professing a whole new global philosophy to (c) marketing a homemade fruitcake to over 4,000,000,000 potential customers* (all without the need of permission from a gatekeeper) simply neutralizes the power of traditional American gatekeeper criteria Delpit fears. *(All one needs is .000025% of 4 billion to have 100,000 possible responses. The world population is 6.60222 billion.)

It may no longer matter *how* you talk or *how* you write, but that you act

In a global village, it may no longer matter *how* you talk or *how* you write, but that you *act* (be a player). Inaction, not a failure to assimilate and learn protocol, will ensure ultimate failure. It can be as easy as turning on a computer at home and connecting to the world...wide web where there is a world of choices; *this is freedom*.

This is not to disrespect the American culture/language of power (after all, English is the language of global commerce), but it is to assert that this culture/language is no longer the “acquire or else” endgame that Delpit so dreads—a situation that sets up the socio-economic suicide for African Americans who reject traditional public schooling.

Perhaps the 20th century world that Delpit inherited (1900-1940) and experienced (1940-1995) and was so concerned with, where being “uneducated” limited access to status and economic rewards, is not longer the only world, the only gateway. African Americans can simply go over or around, or through enhancing the present by building a globally-linked community on their terms; *this is self-determination*.

A democratic school is one that above all, tries to enable people to create their own world collectively rather than to fit into one that is created for them.

-- Michael Engel

This is why it may now be “assuring ultimate failure” to assimilate and accept things the way they are. In fact, if and when African Americans, or any minority, face traditional barriers, they may now meet these challenges by creating alternatives (both local and global) or find others (global minorities) who have established new paradigms and seek collaboration or co-opt these new forms.

Globalization oriented and education professor Dr. Suarez-Orozco (2005, p. 211) puts it this way:

Children growing up today are more likely than in any other generation to face a life of working, networking, loving, and living with others from various national, linguistic, religious, and racial background.

The Tensta classroom (a multi-class/multi-national student school in Sweden) is a microcosm of tomorrow. Students are challenged to engage and work through competing and contrasting cultural models and social practices, adjusting to and accommodating differences in such areas as kinship, gender, language, and the complicated interrelationship of race, ethnicity, and inequality. Trans-cultural communication, understanding, empathy, collaboration are no longer ideals.

It is not as simple as the one-way assimilation accommodation of ethnic, racial, linguistic, and religious minorities learning the codes of the majority society in order to get along and get ahead. (Italics mine)

3. Challenge teachers/policy makers to support a group's right to maintain its own language style

Delpit wants to influence many gatekeepers to open their doors, pushing for a variety of codes. Consequently, Delpit argues the liberation of poor students and linguistic minorities starts with accepting their culture and language and helping them to build on it. Educators must view Black English not as a vernacular, or a sub-English, not a dialect, slang, or ungrammatical, but a variety of English—a systematic rule-governed variety of English (DeBose, 2007). As well, Alim (2007) suggests educators use hip-hop “language” and culture to teach regular cannons.

4. Challenge progressives to take seriously that African American educators see child-centered and holistic approaches as excuses for not teaching any skills, setting up for minorities for failure

With respect to what is defined in this paper as an aspect of democratic education--student controlled learning choices about what, where, when, how, and with whom they learn--the possible negative social-political consequences to black children Delpit points out have the potential to discourage this type of democratic climate in public schools. This is also based on the historical distrust of the public schools to misuse the education of American blacks (Kunjufu, 1985; Woodson, 1990; Watkins, 2001) and concerns about recent graduation rates.

For example, according to the Schott Foundation, the 2004 graduation rate for black males was 42%. (The Indianapolis Public Schools rate was an astonishing 21%--a national low!) Blacks make up 17% of students, yet they are 41% of special education placements, 85% of which are males (Holzman, 2006).

5. Contemplate the 3 real issues: How to communicate across cultures, the fundamentals of power, and whose voice gets heard in determining what is best for children of color (Delpit, 1995)

As America's public schools and classrooms become more democratic, America's democratic promise will demand that the issues of cross-cultural communication, power, and whose voice(s) gets heard be faced openly and fairly. Public schools must honestly look at the implications of Dr. Delpit's concerns.

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APPENDIX C
FOUR CRITIQUES OF DEMOCRACY

Democracy is a flawed system for African Americans (Evans, 2006)

To social critic Mari Evans, democracy is a flawed system. It is based on a tenet where an identifiable minority, clearly distinguishable from the majority population, is not supposed to be in control of itself.

As an African American, Evans writes about skin color being a visible and ever present referent which is not supposed to be able to overturn or impede the controls applied to it. She frames democracy (majority rule) as a concept of systemic powerlessness and a paradigm for colonization—which she defines as suppression and exploitation designed to keep a people “powerless, mystified, dependent and subordinate.”

The question for Evans is: How does an identifiable minority population survive a political system based on a commitment to the controls/processes it has in place to ensure its own survival? Mari Evans suggests:

- Envision a peaceful world of acknowledged, cherished differences.
- Demand governments be flexible, balanced, and creative in ways for diverse groups to share controls.
- Realize the inability to affect power is a lack of cohesiveness, consensus, focus, and direction.
- Leverage to achieve goals through courage, intellectual freedom, energy, and focus.
 - Blacks also organize, monitor elections, deliver the vote, and form coalitions with other minorities

The principle of democracy is bad enough in itself (Sobran, 2002)

Like Evans, Joseph Sobran believes Americans seem to take for granted that democracy is an ideal form of government. He states Americans make fervent appeals to democracy, which they equate with freedom; but, what is so great about majority rule which can be just as tyrannical, denying minority rights?

Assuming America, freedom, and democracy are all the same thing, Sorban believes Americans consequently assume government may do almost anything, provided it does so with majority support.

He exclaims, “No wonder democracy has been defined as two wolves and a lamb voting on what to have for lunch.” To him this disproves the idea that voting is a fundamental freedom or that it protects freedom.

The world does not need more democracies; it needs more freedom. He suggests Hans Hoppe’s 2001 book, *Democracy: The God That Failed*. Hoppe interprets history and accounts for the dramatic rise in exploitation observed in the democratic age, while asserting the moral and economic superiority of a system he calls “natural order”—a stateless society of private property anarchy (Lord Chimp, 2003).

The challenge for the 21st century is to make democracy safe for the world, not the world safe for democracy: Understanding the pitfalls of overplaying principles of self-determination (Bin, 2007)

Yu Bin criticizes the “democracy-peace” ideal. The theory goes that democracies are the most peace-loving because they have not fought among themselves since 1700. Therefore, more democracies must lead to more peace. A democratic Iraq will set off a chain of reaction transforming the entire region. Bin points out that the argument for “democracy-peace” ignores another discourse: There is no clear negative correlation between democracy and war. Bin argues that historically democracies actually start more wars against non-democracies. Many scholars characterize democracy as aggressive as any other system.

Professor Bin believes he sees the full picture of democracy/peace discourse, and thus understands the pitfalls of overplaying principles of self-determination. To Bin, the challenge for the 21st century is to make democracy safe for the world, not the world safe for democracy. He recommends limits on the seemingly endless partition, or balkanization of the world in the name of war by democracies.

Yu Bin concludes his essay by suggesting there is perhaps nothing wrong with democracy as a political system, however indiscriminately imposing and supporting democracies everywhere and anytime may not be in America's long-term interests.

Does every government want America's liberal democracy? No!

Robert Kagan (2008), questions the idea that after the end of the Cold War (1985-1991) debate over how to organize society was decided and liberal or "enlightened" democracy had won. This "victory" was possible because all men are created with certain rights that they want and if given a chance they will choose freedom. Liberal democracy and democratic capitalism, like no other system, is responsive to our basic needs. Thus when countries became richer, developing a middle class, they inevitably become democratic.

Some do not believe that democracy is the best system

Yet, much to America's surprise, Kagan notes, China and Russia do not believe that democracy is the best form. They believe an improved form of government, surpassing democracy, is autocracy. Both nations have a good blending of economic modernization and economic growth, but autocratic government. Some Chinese feel that democracy would be the worst thing for China. China would break up into a million pieces bringing total chaos. Many Russians feel the democracy experienced in the 90s led to chaos, a bad economy, and loss of world prestige. Russia has moved towards what they call a "sovereign democracy."

Autocracy: Trading certain freedoms in exchange for power, stability, and order

An autocracy is a rule by one person or a group with complete control of all the levers of power. *These are not totalitarian societies.* They do not try to control what citizens do. Citizens get a fair amount of freedom, except political freedom. They may make money; live their lives, but as long as they do not get out of line politically. This system is fine with many who are willing to exchange certain freedoms for stability.

Kagan: "The dream of the ultimate global triumph of American liberal democracy is ended."

But as Kagan asserts, we have a world where America is dominant, but cannot dominate. The struggle for power and prestige goes on as always--power and ideas: ideas about power: democracy and autocracy.

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APPENDIX D

DISCIPLINE REVISITED: DISCIPLESHIP NOT DISCIPLINE, MORAL DEVELOPMENT AND BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION--THE INFLUENCE OF DEMOCRACY ON SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Democracy and discipline: Student disciple's voices

In public school, discipline is a dutiful word usually associated with being told what to do and not what to do in classrooms—but this is not what it means. It is not the use of threats, fear, rewards, and punishments in order to direct or control behavior or the self-control resulting from such positive/negative reinforcements.

Psychologist Marion Woodman (1991) notes discipline comes from the word “disciple.” It is a *loving response to a teacher* in that you see yourself in the eyes of the teacher. As a student, you see yourself in the pupil* of the eye of the teacher so that you can begin to see yourself as a person who is treasured for the best that is in you and loved (not for performance, not in order to please anyone) by the single sole person who can look at you and *see you as you potentially are*. Thus the “discipline” comes through that love so that you are willing to put the time and energy into that potential.

The onus is on the adult to be such as to inspire the student to be a disciple. This is not the student reacting to fear (punishment) or rewards (points or candy) and just acting the part. This is not students taking blame for lacking self-control when they fail to do what it takes to meet school behavioral and academic standards. As a student, you see yourself, your potential in the eye of your classroom teacher and you respond to it lovingly by doing what it takes to reach your potential. This is true “self-discipline.”

The ordinary definition of discipline is a less enlightened word for authority, hierarchy, and control. Woodman’s connotation is more democratic, more communitarian, and simply more loving.

Democracy and classroom discipline: Moving from behavioral models to cognitive models

Building a democratic learning society is a task in schools where students have very little in common with each other, may even dislike one another, or fear one another.

Although there is compelling evidence in the literature to suggest using democratic practices in schools teaches children the values of respect and responsibility, most teachers use authoritarian discipline approaches. In a society where significant value is placed on democratic principles, it is relevant and important to investigate democratic-oriented discipline approaches. *The challenge to public school educators is not to control students through external rewards, punishment or intimidations, but to create that democratic society in which individuals make choices good for the whole group* (Colville-Hall, 2000).

Models of discipline based on fear and coercion operate at lowest levels of ethical reasoning

Three initiatives stand out:

- (1) school climate,
- (2) class meetings, and
- (3) student discipline without stress, rewards, or punishments.

Richard Grandmont's (2002) study of 5 public schools revealed that implementing democratic discipline on a school-wide basis and in classroom management improved student behavior, and encouraged autonomy and responsibility. Students felt respected and staff were more prepared to deal with discipline issues which also helped reduce their level of stress.

In the process Gathercoal (2000) calls Judicious Discipline, the use of Democratic Class Meetings provides students with a sense of value and belonging. These meetings work to share power, thus avoiding power struggles by providing every student with a school-supported opportunity to express concerns and satisfactions in a fair and equitable manner (Styles, 2001). Feeling they have some power in the organization and operation of their class, students are less likely to "act out" and more likely to support actions derived from shared decisions.

Feelings of powerlessness and students "at-risk"

Behavior modification does little to instill responsibility because they make students feel "powerless." Gathercoal (1999) believes that this feeling of impotence has contributed to the large number of "at-risk" in public schools. (See Appendix A, p. 98) He argues Glasser's genetically determined intrinsic "basic needs" (freedom, love, belonging, power and fun) are best met when students share in school/classroom decisions that affect them.

Discipline without stress punishments or rewards

Combining theories of Steven Covey, Abraham Maslow, Douglas McGregor, William Glasser, and W. Edward Deming educator Marvin Marshall (2001) attempts to promote both self-regulated behavior and higher order thinking skills through self-reflection and a self-managed "levels hierarchy" ranging from Anarchy, Bossing/Bullying, and Cooperation/Conformity on to Democracy.

There is also strong research supporting student voice programs as a means for teacher development (Flutter, 2007), increasing political awareness and civic participation of students (Feldman, et al., 2007), for situations involving youth in educational evaluations (Cooksy, 2007) and, the positive influence of autonomy and choices for students whom educators have difficulty making comfortable in school (Harper, 2007).

*Pupil: a small image, from L. *pupilla*, the "little girl-doll" so-called from the tiny image one sees of him/herself reflected in the eye of another.

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APPENDIX E

A SUSTAINABLE WORLD NEEDS SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS; SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS NEED DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION: STUDENT VOICES IN DECISIONS FOR A WORLD THEY WILL INHERIT

A Conversation between Sustainability Education and Democratic Education (Loflin, 2006)

At the 14th Annual International Democratic Education Conference in Sydney, Australia, Mr. Smith and Ms. Burton asked a group attending their workshop to list the characteristics of a democratic school. The group listed these ideas:

- Freedom (to think, associate, express, choose, self-regulation)
- Open (clear about what constitutes learning, how it takes place)
- Diversity
- Inclusion
- A philosophy that reflects international human rights laws
- Individualization/customization (respect the uniqueness of each person, enable self-actualization)
- High expectations (being in charge of one's learning, protecting excellence, enabling continuous empowerment)

Burton and Smith then noted that these characteristics could also be used to describe that which enables sustainability. They discussed the UN's Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2014 (DESD)—a global effort to ensure the future for “every one, every where, every when.”

They went on to explain “sustainable schools” which they defined as a means to carry out the DESD initiative. These schools:

- Require changing the way we think, live, and work
- Are about:
 1. Learning for change
 2. Learning to make informed decisions
 3. Widening our capacity to take action and make practical change

They listed the values for sustainable schools:

- Care
- Excellence
- Responsibility
- Collaboration
- Participation
- Critical thinking
- Future thinking
- Visioning
- Values clarification
- Cross-cultural connections
- Multi-stakeholder dialogue
- Action and reflection
- Organizational change
- Holistic thinking
- Integrating thinking and action
- Exploring the process of change

- Participation and the knowledge and skills for participation
- More on social and structural change than personal
- Local action in workplace and community
- Local community orientated action and learning
- Facilitating the growth of leadership qualities in everyone
- Recognizing local knowledge and capacity
- Education that questions our thinking, our assumptions, practices, and education

That made the point that sustainable schools ask:

- How do we democratize the public school system so students have a voice?
- Once students have a voice, how are students involved with decisions?
- What qualifies a teacher to teach in a sustainable school?

They discussed the term “environmental citizenship” as the duty of citizens to take a voice in environmental issues and decisions. As well as encouraging students to take on their duty to vote and be a part of their political community, *schools must encourage students to take on their environmental responsibilities.*

The relationship between Sustainability Education and Democratic Education was made

- Students must be informed and given the opportunity to share in classroom and school decisions that directly/indirectly involve the values, practices, and goals of global DESD efforts.

This would involve them in the process of:

- Deciding what issue, problem, or task that they, the class, school, or community wants to study, research, solve, or carry out
 - How, where, when they want to study/research/solve it
 - How their DESD efforts will be evaluated

Funding possibilities for democratic public schools

Burton and Smith finally noted that although there is no funding for Democratic Education per se, there is for Sustainable Education. Since the two are very similar, those interested in democratic education could get funding under the DESD orientation.

They suggested contacting the North American Association for Environmental Education (www.naaee.org) for funding opportunities.

In conclusion:

If America wants sustainability, Americans have to have democracy. Environmentally sustainable schools/classrooms need student voices. Sustainability Education needs Democratic Education.

Relevance/Application to American urban schools

The argument that there is a relationship between sustainable education (SE) and democratic education (DE) is a solid one. It makes sense that not only must American urban public schools prepare students (America’s future generation) to create and maintain a sustainable world, but that students must be an

integral and equal partner in the decision-making process covering all aspects of America's sustainability efforts.

Characteristics of both sustainable education and democratic education require the use of lower, middle, and higher order thinking skills. They also require application processes that rank from the simple task of distributing information to applying solutions to real world situations, and on to the complexities of public policy formation.

Inherent in both SE and DE is teaching for social justice—having students list, research, and solve social/economic issues that affect urban students on an everyday basis. (See Recommendation 16, p. 80) To some urban minorities and working class youth, schools represent the power structure (Polite, 1994; Watkins, 2001; Duncan-Andrade, 2005; Hayes, 2008). When educators enable students to use their time in school to do something about the injustices they experience, the school will seem less of an obstacle. Respect for teachers and administration will come when students see that staff are on their side and want to educate them in the own interests, not the interests of some other entity. *Why would the urban poor want to be assimilated into a socio-economic system where they are at the bottom?*

Sustainable schools/democratic schools collaboration would be all encompassing, fundamental, and powerful. As well as being relevant and urgent, it has emotion, challenge, and it is filled with hope. To top it off, this is not just a local or national concept, but also a global initiative. With world communications available for students to talk and collaborate across borders and oceans, the possibilities are remarkable.

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Website of Education for Sustainable Development: UN's Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2014 (DESD). www.EducationForSustainableDevelopment.com.

APPENDIX F

HOW DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION CAN BRING JUSTICE AND PEACE TO SOCIETY

If we all agreed with each other we would not need democracy.

-- Deborah Meier

JUSTICE: WHAT IS FAIR FOR EVERYONE: A FUNDAMENTAL QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY

The simple yet profound quote from Deb Meier sets the stage for understanding the nature of democracy and its value to society, particularly a very diverse American society. Consequently, different individuals and groups need a system that answers the question: *How do different people share the same space?*

Diversity needs democracy because it enables justice: Difference as no longer threatening

It is one of the main themes of this paper that the purpose/outcome of the democratic process is justice. What is fair for everyone in a situation where each is different from the other and occupying the same space is what Parker (2003) calls “the problem of living together.”

On this broader conception of the relationship between diversity and democracy, *diversity does not need to be conquered or colonized, nor even transcended; it can be fostered*. Rather than shying away from difference in the name of a defensive group or national unity, in a democracy *difference ceases to be a threat to community*. Consequently, democracy encourages difference: it is enlivened by it; without difference(s) democracy would not be needed. This is Parker’s “Advanced Democracy.” (See Recommendation 3, p. 60)

Democratic Education: Discussing, teaching, and modeling fairness--ensuring justice in society

Therefore, “A history of democracy education in America’s public schools” argues that Democratic Education will bring about a more democratic society. Citizens, who due to their experiences in their public democratic classrooms and schools, will be more “civic minded,” politically involved, and aware of their community and neighborhood.

There is no higher concern of children and youth in schools than, “That’s not fair!”

-- John Harris Loflin

Citizens from democratic classrooms and schools will be more able to solve “the problems of living together” (what is fair; what is justice) because they will have the natural and fundamental sense of justice and fair play--with which they were so concerned in school and which was fostered by enlightened educators and experienced daily in classrooms--to guide them.

PEACE: DEMOCRACY AND SELF-ACTUALIZATION: REDUCING THE AGGRESSIVE IMPULSE

Democratic Education—Its roots and present directions

Educator and democracy entrepreneur Yaacov Hecht’s (2003) review of the past 100 years of educational reform suggests 3 waves, the first being the Progressive era of the 1920s. Next came the 1960s with open

and free schools. The 1990s began an era of democratic education—the freeing-up of learning, teaching, school climate, and assessment.

A respect for diversity and human rights are at the center of democratic schools. For these schools to work, the spirit of democracy must be inside the school: freedom to think, speak, associate, and question.

The goal of democratic schools is respecting human rights in schools
-- Yaacov Hecht

One-size-fits-all: The source of problems in society

Hecht sees the source of problems in society is the one-size-fits-all “square” we all must fit into and reinforced by schools where we are told, if you want to learn, you have to come inside the square (Davis, 1997). We judge everyone by the square: “Why are you outside of the square?” This is the danger of school.

In traditional approaches to learning and testing are standardized:

- Learning disabilities are seen as a deficit
- Every grade level has a fixed standard of achievement for all students

In Democratic self-managed learning approaches, testing is not standardized:

- Unique learning abilities are recognized
- Each person has unique areas of strengths and growth

Who does not know for him- or herself the savage tyranny of the "norm"? Being different, standing out, feeling differently from others, experiencing oneself as conspicuous in some way...are at the very core of much of what gets called "psychiatric disorder" and indeed of the everyday terrors of us all.

-- David Small, psychologist, in his 1987 book *Taking Care*, p. 55

Democratic schools enable a democratic culture: A new vision of education for a sustainable world

Hecht predicted that the democratic school movement of the late 90s and early 21st century would create a democratic culture in society.

A democratic culture is one that guards the equal right of every individual for self-actualization.
-- Yaacov Hecht

To have a democratic culture we must realize we do not know how to deal with difference

Hecht sees the issue as people/groups/nations wanting others to be like, act like, and think like them. To counter our inability to deal with variety, Hecht suggests educators must:

1. Recognize the fact of "the different"--difference is beautiful
2. Accept the fact that we do not own the truth
3. Recognize that "the different" is also a part of the establishment
4. Recognize the importance of self-criticism as a constructive tool for growth
5. Disburse democratic education outside school borders--to businesses, government agencies, social/community, and civic organizations.

Democratic education can counter the weaknesses of the one size-fits-all-paradigm

Indeed there are many commonalities people must know/share to have “community.” Yet, if commonalities are seen as most important and suppress variety (individuality), this creates a misguided emphasis on assimilation and also threatens “community.”

According to Hecht, the issue of the “needs of society vs. individual needs” can be overcome by:

- a democratic culture in schools--this would foster closer relationships between adults and children;
- looking for the uniqueness of every child;
- providing a place for it to develop; and,
- bringing this to the attention of the community and celebrating the individualization.

This is accomplished through 3 ideas:

1. Pluralistic Learning

Hecht suggests his concept of Pluralistic Learning: a type of learning that acknowledges and fosters uniqueness--each person is different with both weak and strong attributes, talents, and abilities.

2. Excellent Centers

Pluralistic Learning will be assisted by Excellent Centers--a collaboration among private, government, labor, and education organizations providing centers outside of school that would represent a variety of intelligences and subjects, interests, occupations/careers, etc. Here, students could see what they are passionate about learning and doing. They could begin intense personal study and/or hook-up with adults who have the skills, careers, interests, talents they wish to have. This would be the first of many steps to self-managed learning needed for self-actualization.

Democratic education is self-managed learning.

-- Yaacov Hecht

3. Self-actualization

Self-actualization is the instinctual need of humans to make the most of their unique abilities and to strive to be the best they can. Abraham Maslow describes self-actualization as follows (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs--Self-actualization, 2006):

Self Actualization is the intrinsic growth of what is already in the organism, or more accurately, of what the organism is.

From a society based on democratic procedures to one that fosters a democratic culture

These concepts will provide an opportunity to move from a society based on democratic procedures to one that fosters a democratic culture—a culture, Hecht reveals, abides by the following principles:

- Every person has a right to know and express their uniqueness
- Every person is capable of recognizing the uniqueness of every other member of society
- Every person is capable of understanding that difference/uniqueness do not pose a threat, but are rather an opportunity for the individual and the community as a whole

- Every person is capable of understanding the importance of supporting others in their quest to find uniqueness
- Every person is capable of recognizing that the integration of differences guarantees a world that chooses construction over destruction
- All mechanisms of our society are responsible for the integration of these differences

The idea that excellence is achieved through competition is misguided and belongs in the 20th century. Excellence does not come through attempting to outperforming others, but from self-actualization

Although a lot of people are not presently excellent, everyone can be excellent, especially if we let a child in school choose the area they wish to develop. *What is your uniqueness? What do you bring?* These are the questions democratic educators ask children to encourage self-actualization.

The final aim is not to know, but to be. There never was a more risky motto than: Know thyself. You've got to know yourself as far as possible. But, not for the sake of knowing. You've got to know yourself so that you can at least be yourself. "Be yourself" that is the last motto.

-- John Edwards "What We Steal from Children" quoted from D. H. Lawrence

RELEVANCE/APPLICATION

Can self-actualization reduce the human aggressive impulse?

Yaacov Hecht is significantly close to answering this question in the affirmative. Expanding on his use of the concept of self-actualization in this area will help us to understand his reasoning.

According to Maslow, we all have a need for recognition--a sense of significance and fulfillment that is innately self-satisfying, and is appreciated by others. If these needs cannot be obtained legitimately, they will be obtained...somehow, in whatever form and degree even if it is negative or anti-social.

In *Power and Innocence: A Search for the Source of Violence*, Rollo May (1972) argues that when our need for recognition/significance is blocked, we become assertive. This is natural and healthy. If our assertiveness is blocked and we still do not get the recognition and sense of significance we are seeking, we may become aggressive. If others continue to ignore us no matter what we do, or if our need to fulfill our possibilities is blocked, the soil is made ready for the seeds of alienation, uselessness, and hopelessness--and we may be inclined to violence.

Violence is the expression of impotence.
-- Jerome Bronowski, *The Face of Violence*

Rollo May notes, *power corrupts, but so does powerlessness*. The problem is: In order to decrease the potential of "the human aggressive impulse," *we must recognize the underlying causes of the social disease of impotence*. When a person's need for recognition is stifled; when their sense of justice is ignored; when they feel they have little influence over events; when they are kept from realizing dreams, ambitions, longings, ideas--fulfilling their potential and actualizing who they are--they can become apathetic. *Violence is not the child of power, but of powerlessness*. Apathy is the stage before violence. We can only imagine

the complete lack of significance, or sense of fulfillment and influence, feeding the feelings of nothingness that are inside the mind and heart of each of society's most violent. Look at it this way:

The opposite of art is not ugliness, it's indifference.
The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference.
The opposite of life is not death, it's indifference.
-- Elie Wiesel

Now, add: The opposite of peace is not war or violence, its indifference. The opposite of peace is nothingness, in-authenticity, anomie, and unfulfilled potential/actualization (Loflin, 2005).

Self-actualized people will not be aggressive or violent

Communities that provide opportunities and encourage its members to fulfill "...the instinctual need of humans to make the most of their unique abilities and to strive to be the best they can be" bringing each person's uniqueness to (self-) actualization--reducing the human aggressive impulse.

If these ideas have truth, Hecht has proposed one important way society can

- empower citizens,
- challenge indifference,
- enable the actualizing of our potential,
- give people a basic sense of recognition and significance, and
- enable the individuality/variety/uniqueness which democracy protects and even encourages since the more diversity the more rich the quality of justice/fairness

Countering the causes of violence: Self-actualization via democratic education

People have voices. And they want to be heard. They want to be involved. They have a sense of history, of what others have done, and what needs to be done. They want to feel important, to have a sense of power that is more personal, that is psychologically or socially powerful—the power to be able to assert oneself, to exercise influence on the world, to make a difference. When they cannot express themselves or do not know what else to do, problems arise.

Violence is, essentially, a confession of ultimate inarticulatedness.
-- *Time Magazine*

Are those individuals or groups performing the deeds of violence in society the ones who are trying to establish their affirmation, defending their sense of esteem, and demonstrating they too are significant (and need/deserve recognition)--even in infamy? These needs of esteem and importance, by themselves, are potentially constructive. Our human aggressive impulse arises not out of the excesses of power, but out of powerlessness--the feeling of insignificance that leads to the sense that nothing matters and that there is no other way to express or articulate it than through violence (May, 1972).

Summary: The goal of education for sustainability must be to reduce our aggressive impulse

Rollo May discusses five levels of power's potential in each of us: (1) the infant's *power to be*--instincts to exist and live; (2) *self-affirmation*, the ability to survive with (self-) esteem; (3) *self-assertion*, which develops when self-affirmation is blocked; (4) *aggression*, a reaction to thwarted assertion; and, finally,

(5) *violence*, when reason and persuasion are ineffective and all avenues for establishing significance are blocked. By enabling self-actualization, self-affirmation will not be blocked, nor will self-assertion be “thwarted.” When basic levels of power are respected and given expression, and our basic psycho-social needs are met, the reason and potential for the human aggressive impulses will no be necessary.

Actualizing one’s uniqueness is the ultimate self-affirmation, neutralizing the purpose of the aggressive impulse

When schools think democratically by following the advice of Yaacov Hecht; and, so enable students to articulate and follow their abilities, goals, dreams, career interests, so as to reach their potential and self-actualize, there will be little or no need to be aggressive in order to have the sense of significance human beings seek.

The goal of Democratic Education is to self-actualization.
-- Yaacov Hecht

CONCLUSIONS: THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG DEMOCRACY, SELF-ACTUALIZATION, AND VIOLENCE: HOW DEMOCRATIC CAN BRING JUSTICE AND PEACE TO SOCIETY

Uniqueness loves democracy. Democracy protects uniqueness because democracy strives for justice. Democracy also enables uniqueness; it exists because of it and the innate need of each person to have their uniqueness recognized. Self-actualization is uniqueness realized. The goal of Democratic Education is to self-actualization. Self-actualization reduces the aggressive impulse. Citizens who are self-governing, and feel empowered, recognized, and treated fairly, have less reason to be aggressive. Democratic public schools and classrooms will help bring justice and peace to society.

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Yaacov Hecht was founder and principal of the Democratic School of Hadera 1987-1997. He established The Institute for Democratic Education (www.democratic-edu.org) in 1995 and has since served as chairman. He also lectures around the world, and along with the staff of IDE has helped start 25 democratic schools and enable hundreds of mainstream schools in Israel to introduce democratic processes. He was adviser to Israeli Minister of Education--Mr. Yosi Sarid in 1999. Yaacov was recently named as one of the 10 most influential people in the social and educational areas in Israel. See www.idec2006.org

APPENDIX G

DEMOCRATIC ANARCHY: SCHOOL DEMOCRACY FOR TODAY'S YOUTH CULTURE

A school democracy that reflects the diversity of national and global youth culture (Loflin, 2006)

What are the limits of school democracy concepts like school elected student councils? Is there a concept of school democracy that reflects the culture of alternative and hip-hop students? Calling Dr. Adrienne Huber's concept "democratic anarchy" would not be far fetched. This freewheeling orientation may be just what American public schools need to create a climate that will make our high schools work for many youth alienated by the passivity required from the traditional definition of the role of students.

After democracy, what's next...freedom!

Dr. Huber's school democracy concept "distributive decision-making" is refreshing. To her, democracy is traditionally reduced to some form of voting as in consensus or majority rule. Ideas, proposals, issues are brought forth and discussion, deliberation, negotiation takes place--followed by a vote. This seems to leave some "out in the cold," keeping them from needs they have to develop as human beings. In some situations, due to various factors (more people of one persuasion than another) it takes a while to reach consensus.

Huber's concept is a way to "distribute" democracy to each member of a school community. The three main parts of the concept are the Community Council (CC), the Whole Community Meeting (WCM)—an intentional community, and the Learning Cluster (LC).

The WCM meets weekly and is made up of the school's students, staff, parents, and other members from the larger community outside the school, including the CC.

The CC is a small group formed from and elected by WCM participants. The CC is the legally constituted body of the school-community. It is responsible for any and all legal aspects of the school and the whole community: Articles of Incorporation, by-laws, and non-profit status issues. Budget and finances are the prerogative of the CC and ratified by the WCM. The CC meets monthly.

If a student or students want to bring up an idea, a proposal, an issue, a project, or an event, the WCM listens. It acknowledges and records it. The WCM cannot say yes or no; it's an enabling body. For example, it cannot say there is no money, or it cannot be done, or they do not like it. Thus normal group discussions as to the pros/cons of an idea/proposal are not necessary at the CC meeting. There is no need to make decisions or to vote. The WCM recognizes what is proposed and those involved. The WCM may ask what it can do to help. An individual or group may ask the WCM for advice, suggestions, or help.

There are no rules in Huber's model

Everything is negotiated or dealt with on a one-to-one basis with other support sought if and when needed. Rules predispose people to cease thinking and begin complying. Without rules we have to go deeper, Huber maintains, and talk to each other. Negotiating with each WCM issue and/or LC proposal, as

it happens, promotes ways to be more thoughtful and compassionate rather than compliant--causing us to find out how things impact on individuals and others.

Unless the CC sees the proposal as illegal, it is up to the student or students to form a Learning Cluster around the topic, issue, project, etc. and undertake the details of the proposal. And, since this is a distributive, not a collective model, individual/groups of students must represent themselves. They cannot do something or create something and put the school's name on it.

LCs must have a reason to exist. If the LC cannot eventually accomplish the details of their proposal, or the concept is not supported enough by others in the school or larger community (outside of school) so the proposal can be completed, the idea, project, etc., dies out and the LC no longer exists since it can only exist as an active entity. This is seen as a learning opportunity for those involved and not seen as having failed. There is no need to have any proof of the viability or success of the proposal such as in its actual accomplishment and/or its ability to be sustained through to completion or the end of a phase at a point in time. The process involved and the outcome of that process is where the learning takes place and this is valued equally with learning that occurs in completed endeavors.

Relevance and application to today's youth culture: Including those normally left out

In Dr. Huber's distributive democracy, the rights of individuals or small groups to have their ideas given respect and a chance to develop are protected. An Individual or group who have good workable ideas, but who would not be recognized and given a chance in a "majority rules" climate, find this form of governance equitable. This creates a positive, enabling culture: Go for it! Prove yourself! These are the exciting and enlightened challenges of this form of student government.

Students in urban schools with a diverse student body would especially like the openness, the true sense of equality and equal opportunity the distributive model provides.

Diversity needs democracy

Parker (2003) defines democracy with the question: How do different people share the same space? What is fair for everyone? Meier (2003) notes, "If we all agreed with each other we wouldn't need democracy." The point is: Diversity needs democracy. Difference is good. America is land of diverse peoples, and Huber's distributive democracy model epitomizes this characteristic.

Many students in public schools feel left out and marginalized. They feel no one listens to their complaints and ideas, and that they have no voice in classroom and school decisions that affect them. Thus, they must go along with the majority. This is particularly true for African-American or Latino groups in schools where they are in the minority with respect to student population and/or teaching and administrative staff.

This would all change under a distributive model. Along with supporting the right for minority groups to be heard, this model would also be very attractive to students involved in the life-styles of so-called "fringe"

groups or attitudes represented by characteristics of dress, hair style; or, philosophy such as Gothic, anarchist, or vegan; or, musical genre' such as punk, alternative, reggae, techno, grunge, and hip-hop.

Although much of the identity of these groups come from opposition to the mainstream, school government with a distributive democracy approach would give them regard—a chance to be involved in classroom and/or school decisions they deem are important and/or go ahead and attempt and carryout ideas in which others seem to not have an interest. This more inclusive approach would create a positive effect on school climate. These experiences would make all students more open to mainstream ideas (or creating their own “mainstream”), thus preparing them for real-world politics, before and after graduation, where they can join with others to have a voice in local, national, and global decisions.

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APPENDIX H

STUDENT COUNCILS OR DIRECT DEMOCRACY: INVOLVING A FEW STUDENTS AND STAFF OR ALL STUDENTS AND STAFF IN SCHOOL DECISIONS

How can urban schools be democratic? This concept reveals a reform of traditional student councils, providing the means to ask and answer the question: *What can students do to help run the school?*

Each homeroom/advisory elects 2 representatives. They will be the school's Senate. Senators have no power. Initially they meet to learn the democratic habits of mind for themselves and are enabled to pass them on to both teachers and peers. Habits include how to listen, deliberate, run meetings, collaborate, compromise, and deciding what is fair. Also see pp. 137-138. Other than that, they run or help decide who runs class meetings, deal with wording proposals, carry out tasks requested by teacher/students, take and distribute class meeting minutes, and if applicable, help plan and/or run whole school meetings.

Perhaps the most important role of the Senators is to meet with school staff/administration and discuss what can be proposed and voted upon and what cannot. School district rules, as well as city, state, and national laws provide some of the topics, ideas, issue that will be off limits to student proposals. Once the students/adults decide the parameters concerning what can/cannot be discussed, challenged, proposed, or changed the stage is set for school governance procedures. Since this aspect of the concept must be very respected and final, it is encouraged that the Senators and school adults take their time.

The rest of the students (as well as the Senate) and teachers are the House of Representatives. Each person in the school votes with each having 1 vote. All the adults in the school (maintenance, cafeteria, secretaries, etc.) can also be a part of the House of Representatives.

Weekly homeroom/advisory meetings are held. Students/adults may bring up a suggestion, idea, proposal, complaint, or issue. The 2 Senators record the meeting and take the notes back to the "Senate" and put in the best form. This is taken back to the class meeting and when necessary more discussion takes place. Once the motion is made, the whole class votes. If the issue/idea needs a school-wide decision, each person in the school-community votes. Of course, each person does *not* have to vote.

This way school governance is not a matter of a student council deciding. Traditionally, student council members are the more popular students or the better academic or favorites of teachers. This unfortunately, perpetuates a status quo that leaves out the more disenfranchised. Consequently the more marginalized, as well as the so-called "defiant" who are also traditionally less likely to be involved, are brought into the circle of proposals and decisions; this is what enlightened educators have been wanting. Now all staff, and more importantly, each student, *regardless of age, grade level, or grade average*, becomes a part of the process.

Although school size is a factor in many education situations, not just school decision-making, it is suggested this concept be used in schools with 500 students or less.

This concept was reviewed and endorsed by world-class democratic education advocate Jerry Mintz of the Alternative Education Resource Organization (AERO). His e-mail is: jerryaero@aol.com

APPENDIX I

IROQUOIS DEMOCRACY: A GENUINELY AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

Iroquois Democracy: A genuinely American democratic governance process for schools

Governance of schools is becoming an increasingly important issue, as educators begin to realize how crucial it is to empower the participants in any educational process.

There are currently many hundreds of schools in the United States and other countries, both private and public, which operate with varying degrees of student self-government. The more popular and traditional form is the student council.

Student councils: Is this representative style of student voice a “sham”?

What is thought provoking is that internationally acclaimed democratic education advocate Jerry Mintz (2003) is against this representative school governance style. He prefers a direct democracy orientation.

To Mintz, student councils are nothing more than a sham and have very little decision making power. His contention is the more the student learner can be empowered, involved in making decisions about his or her education, the more powerful that force can be toward helping students take true responsibility for their own education. See “Overview” for a reminder of representative vs. direct democracy orientations, p. 10.

Iroquois Democracy: Consensus and majority rule combined to protect the minority

Mintz prefers a democratic process that combines decision making by the majority and decision by consensus of the group. He learned the process from the Mohawk Indians of the Iroquois Confederacy—a process that influenced Benjamin Franklin, among others, who applied it to his work with the 13 colonies.

According to Mintz, the Mohawks make their decisions at a council by having each member express their opinion. They vote on proposals after discussions, but then ask the minority to explain why they voted the way they did. If a minority opinion is indicated they then listen very carefully to that minority opinion, and allow it to be fully expressed, perhaps then changing the decision of the whole group. The onus is on the minority to come up with a better proposal. But ultimately, if they feel that the minority opinion is fully explored and that there are no alternative proposals offered, the decision of the majority becomes the decision of the tribes.

“Stand aside”

Mintz mentions that this approach is somewhat similar to those used by the Quakers in which a person or persons may wish to “stand aside.” They may not agree with the decision, but are willing to let the decision of the rest of the members stand.

An example of a meeting

The chairperson starts the meeting, usually with the words “Who called this meeting and why?” if it is a special meeting, or they call for topics to be put on the agenda if it is a regular meeting.

After the topics are listed on the agenda, the chairperson asks who put it on and why. Then a discussion of that topic ensues. The chairperson leads the discussion, making sure everyone is heard. Eventually, people can move to have a vote taken. This “calling of the question” (a motion to end debate and bring what is being discussed to an immediate vote) needs to be seconded to go forward to a vote.

Rather than have a decision be made strictly by majority vote, if 5 people are opposed to the question being “called” (debate stopped and a vote taken) then that is a sufficient number for the discussion to continue. With respect to "calling of the question" Mintz notes that the number 5 just seems to be agreeable to most—but can be changed by vote to fit the circumstances.

Characteristics and rules of the meeting system process

- Decisions are made by using all the creative forces and all the authority of the many participants who are involved in making those decisions.
- Special groups have no veto power--this can erode the authority and the creative power of the total group.
- New items can be added to the agenda during the meeting.
- Attendance at the meetings is not compulsory.
 - Yet, if a group of people at a regular school meeting feel a particular issue so important everybody in the school needs to know about it and its consequences, a "super-meeting" where all must attend, could be proposed.

Iroquois concept utilized

Decisions are technically based on majority vote. However, following the Iroquois method, the chairperson can ask students who voted negatively to say why they did. Thus, anybody in the meeting can then ask for a re-vote. The re-vote automatically reopens discussion. If a person or minority faction feels so strongly about a proposal that they just could not live with it, they can continuously call for re-votes at the meeting, effectively "filibustering," causing people to come up with a better or more comprehensive or more universally acceptable proposal.

When the vote is finally taken, it will be OK if the decision is made by 25 votes to 23. If nobody in the field of 23 feels they need to say why they voted the way they did, or if nobody feels they need to call for a re-vote, then what it really means is that those 23 are “standing aside.” They can live with the majority’s decision and do not feel the need to continue the discussion. But it also means that the 23 did not have to pretend that they agreed with the 25. Although minority members are obliged to stand by the consequences of the decision of the majority, they can eventually say, “I told you so” if what ever the majority decided does not work out well

Still more protection for minority opinion

Even after the meeting is over, if anyone still feels like the decision did not sit well with them, they can call another meeting by ringing the meeting bell or putting it on a succeeding agenda. On the other hand, if

people dissented on a particular decision, even if it was a fairly large number, but nobody called for a re-vote or another meeting, that decision would then stand.

Urban students will like Iroquois democracy that protects the minority faction

The Iroquois method of decision-making will be attractive to urban students who by nature see themselves politically as a minority based on class, color, culture, or language in the larger society. This method is built on respecting minority opinion because it is what is fair for everyone, any of whom may be in a “minority” at some time or another.

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Also see “Democratic School Governance” at www.educationrevolution.org/demschoolgov.html.
Contact Mr. Mintz at jerryAERO@aol.com or 1-800-769-417.

APPENDIX J

A LIVING DEMOCRACY VS. A THIN DEMOCRACY: THE IDEAS OF FRANCES MOORE LAPPE'

A “living” democracy, not a “thin” democracy

Frances Moore Lappé is a democracy entrepreneur. In her book *Democracy's Edge: Choosing to Save Our Country by Bringing Democracy to Life* (2006) she argues that democracy is strong, not weak; Americans need more, not less. Lappé confronts the current assault on democratic values and identifies changes in contemporary culture that make possible the emergence of a “living democracy.”

A Living Democracy is the evolving practice of citizens reframing democracy’s meaning--from something done to citizens or for citizens to democracy as an engaging, life-enhancing, everyday practice.

Below is a chart explaining Lappé ideas from Small Planet Institute (Match the chart, OVERVIEW, p. 10):

	THIN DEMOCRACY: A Structure of Government + a Market Economy	LIVING DEMOCRACY: A Values-Driven Way of Living
What is it?	<p>Thin Democracy means elected government plus a market economy.</p> <p>We are lucky to be born into an already established democracy. It is complete – the culmination of human history.</p>	<p>Living Democracy is a dynamic culture grounded in the values of inclusion, fairness, & mutual accountability. As voters, workers, students, employers, parents, community members & clients, we all shape its norms & expectations.</p> <p>Living Democracy is never finished.</p>
How does it work?	<p>The free market, along with better-qualified government & corporate officials & experts, determines what happens.</p> <p>The only job of citizens is to vote, work, & shop.</p> <p>The market is driven by a single-rule – highest return to existing wealth — which concentrates wealth & power to the point that it infects & twists the political process. Up to 61 lobbyists operate in Washington for every elected official. This economic concentration also destroys an open, fair market.</p>	<p>The market can remain open & fair only in a democracy where wealth is kept widely dispersed. To establish such democratic governance, the power of money cannot influence political decisions.</p> <p>Citizens work to remove the influence of wealth from public decision making. They view the market as a tool, not an automatic device beyond human reach. They use their polities to decide what should be a market commodity (& what is too precious to be allocated by the market) & to create “values boundaries” (from environmental protections to anti-trust laws) around the market’s functioning.</p>

Who gets involved?	Only officials & celebrities have public lives.	All citizens have public lives. As consumers, savers, investors, voters, advocates, clients, students, employers, workers, & members of social-benefit organizations, our actions (<i>conscious or not</i>) shape our communities & nation.
What is required for effectiveness?	Public life is ugly & alienating. No special learning is needed, just thick skins & big egos!	Citizens enjoy getting involved in learning the Arts of Democracy: active listening, the creative use of conflict, negotiation, mediation, mentoring, & other relational skills.
What motivates human beings to engage?	Self-defense. Getting involved in public affairs is a necessary evil to protect our private lives—a way for people to get what they want. For others, it is the burden that must be borne in order to earn civil liberties & other protections.	Human beings are social by nature, so our individual well-being depends on creating healthy communities. Getting involved develops distinctly human capacities & meets deep needs: to connect with others in a common purpose, to make a difference, to express our values, and to fully respect ourselves. <i>It is the essence of the good life</i>

A Thin Democracy: Making sense of the apparent contradiction between the stated potential of democracy and recent disillusionment with this form of community

Lappé and her Small Planet Institute know that the years 2000-2099 is the century of democracy. In “Why Thin Democracy is failing” (www.democracysedge.org/whythindemocracyisfailing.pdf) she notes from the Ukraine to Iraq, people are willing to risk their lives for the right to vote in fair elections. Indeed, the right to choose one’s governors is now widely embraced, or at least paid increasing lip service.

Yet, she claims, a 2005 survey of Latin Americans found confidence in democracy dwindling: Fewer than half of those polled believed democracy was preferable to any other kind of government.

In the U.S. the share of Americans who feel government is run by a few big interests looking out only for themselves more than doubled from the mid-1960s to reach 76 percent by the mid-1990s she says.

Why Thin Democracy is failing

Disillusionment with democratic government flows inevitably from a weak concept of democracy: *Once democracy is reduced to elections plus a market economy driven by a single rule--highest return to existing*

wealth--it leads to such extreme concentration of wealth that it overwhelms elected governments and destroys open markets.

Little wonder that disillusionment follows as citizens see that this “Thin” and weak democracy cannot address the planet’s interlinked crises.

1. Today’s problems, by their very nature, do not yield to top-down strategies

From violence against women to pollution, from the decimation of species to climate change, Lappé sees today’s problems as complex, deep, and diffuse. They are decentralized yet interconnected. Their solutions therefore require invention and widespread changes in behavior—both of which depend on the experience, ingenuity, and “buy-in” of citizens closest to the problems. *Yet Thin Democracy’s concentrated power excludes precisely such broad-based engagement.*

2. Thin Democracy denies deep human needs, stifling the expression of needed human capacities

Lappé stresses “Thin Democracy” cannot create a healthy American society because it reduces all citizens to a shabby caricature of American complexity—one of narrowly self-seeking materialists. This weak democracy denies human need for community, for basic fairness, and for efficacy in contributing to something grander than our own survival. Forcing us to bury these deep needs, “Thin Democracy” contributes to feelings of alienation and powerlessness.

3. Thin Democracy can not compete with morally certain extremisms

Finally, because of its demeaning materialist premise and dismissal of citizens’ voices, “Thin Democracy” can never inspire the passion and loyalty necessary to compete with extremist ideologies—both religious and secular—that claim high moral ground and offer transcendent visions. In face of such soul-serving calls for allegiance, *Thin Democracy is frighteningly weak and vulnerable.*

Consequently, Americans must rethink power, self-interest, and public life to put themselves at the center of problem solving.

Growing numbers of Americans, she argues, recognize that today’s problems are too pervasive, deep and complex to be solved by experts from above. This creates a strong democracy with principles of inclusivity, transparency, and mutual accountability, which prove democracy works not just in political life, but in economic and cultural life as well.

America is doomed if it accepts its current form of American democracy as the end-of-history culmination of human experience

Fortunately, though, Francis Lappé’s conceptualization of democracy is not a stagnant or completed democracy. Her democracy is always emerging. Her democracy is strong, complex, and vital enough to meet today’s challenges. It may be just the uniting civic vision Americans need and rich enough to embrace.

Four global changes making possible Living Democracy’s emergence

- **A revolution in human dignity** as more and more cultures awaken to innate human rights.
- **Ecological consciousness** revealing the interconnectedness of all life.

- **Awareness of global ecocide** to which Thin Democracy contributes and cannot reverse.
- **A communications revolution** empowering global citizen movements and democratizing knowledge and enhancing transparency in decision making.

Living Democracy: Five Characteristics (democracysedge.org/livingdemocracyfivecharacters.pdf)

Living Democracy: Not a *set system*, but as a *dynamic set of 5 system characteristics*.

Dynamic: Not a new “ism,” blueprint, or utopian end-state vision, but an

- evolving ethos enabling more inclusive ways of making decisions.
- continually incorporating new experience, in a synergistic, generative work in progress.
- idea to be best understood as the *social analogue of ecology itself*.

Values-driven: Life-enhancing values guide this dynamic unfolding.

- Inclusion
- Mutual accountability and fairness
- A culture of attitudes, expectations, and norms that enhance life in society and the environment

Comprehensive: Democracy’s core values are effective in economic and cultural life

- The market ceases to be an absolute that *supersedes* values.
 - The market becomes a tool for *realizing* our values by creating healthy societies.
- Businesses respond to market cues, but with formal accountability for consequences of their actions.
- Citizens assume responsibility for deciding what is and is not allocated by the market--
 - and, the impact of their marketplace choices on the health of communities and the planet.

Skills-based: Democracy is a learned art that must be practiced.

- Humans are innately social beings but lack skills of *effective* participation, i.e. Arts of Democracy.
- Schools, businesses, and community institutions attend to the teaching of such Arts of Democracy.

Power-creating: More than dispersing power, Living Democracy *creates power*:

- Enables more people to act on their values and interests;
- Widens the circle of problem solvers;
- Engages those most directly affected;
- Expands problem-solving--taps the experience and insight of people closest to the problem;
- Enables creativity engendered when diverse perspectives meet;
- Solidifies commitments to action people make when they “own” and are a valued part of the plan;
- Keeps the goal of equal voice foremost as citizens counter the power of concentrated wealth from controlling governance; and,
- Infuses the power of citizens’ voices into governance and economic life.

Doing Democracy: The 10 Practical Arts

In *Doing Democracy: The 10 Practical Arts*, Lappé provides a workbook with worksheets and activities for individuals and/or groups to discover, investigate, and acquire the skills she deems necessary for a workable and practical democracy. Download the workbook free at www.democracysedge.org/arts.php

The Arts of Democracy: One-on-one skills

1. Active listening--encouraging the speaker and searching for meaning
2. Creative conflict--confronting others in ways that produce growth
3. Mediation--facilitating interaction to help people in conflict hear each other
4. Negotiation--problem solving that meets some key interests of all involved

The Arts of Democracy: Group skills

5. Political imagination--re-imagining our futures according to our values
6. Public dialogue--public talk on matters that concern us all
7. Public judgment--decision making allowing citizens to make choices they are willing to help implement
8. Celebration/appreciation--expressing joy and appreciation for what is learned as well as achieved
9. Evaluation and reflection--assessing and incorporating the lessons learned through action
10. Mentoring--supportively guiding others in learning these arts of public life

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For a copy of *The Guide for Educators* go to: thegreatturning.net/PDF/DemedgeCurricularSupplement.pdf
or see www.democracysedge.org/5.25.06demedgecurricularsupplement.pdf

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APPENDIX K

WHAT DOES A DEMOCRATIC CLASSROOM LOOK LIKE? THREE EXAMPLES

Example one: What is a democratic classroom? (McDermott, 1999)

Through her interest in the possibilities of democratic education, educator J. Cynthia McDermott asks the question: What does a democratic classroom look like? *She define a democratic classroom as a place where all of the participants—students, teachers, and paraprofessionals—have a voice in the decisions that are made.* It is not a place of chaos, nor is it a place where authority figures dictate and govern classroom life. It is where deliberate, conscious, caring, and ethical decisions are made for the well being of all.

Behaviorism, the psychological model of external control, is antithetical to democracy.

-- J. Cynthia McDermott

McDermott believes America must change the goals and objectives of public education: A democratic paradigm is what is needed. Unfortunately, the “culture of responsibility” she supports goes counter to America’s present industrial-based school system which demands students follow directions, be punctual, and never question authority. This can causes resistance. See pp. 49-54 or Recommendation 16, pp. 80.

A democratic classroom is known for the following essentials:

- Creating trust
- Reflection
- Self-evaluation
- Counseling
- Building community
- Building consensus
- Authentic projects
- Intrinsic practices
- The curriculum is covered but in agreement with all the shareholders

The goals of a democratic classroom and its democratic style of teaching:

- Getting along
- Working together
- Thinking critically
- Engaging one’s passion
- Using time wisely
- Being an active citizen who votes, reads, recycles
- Generally understand the inter-connectiveness to the world

Example two: How can a people govern themselves if they have not had the experience of governing? Living democracy in a classroom (Hitchinson & Hunt, 2001)

When asked what exactly democratic education is, professors Jaylyne Hutchinson and Jean Hunt believe it is hard to say. Yet, they do attempt to frame this living concept:

- A. *Democratic education is a process not a product.*
- B. *A democratic classroom implies trust and respect for all and the inclusion of all at the table.*

- The development of a democratic learning community must begin with who its participant members are; if it does not, it is simply not a democracy. Participant members include students, teachers, administrators, staff, parents and community members.
 - Thus, democratic education will look slightly or even significantly different from traditional education because democracy must take into account both of context and the people
- C. *Classroom democracy creates a space for failure.*
- Those who would engage in democratic teaching we must be open to the notion of failure because if adults truly respect students for the contributions they have to make to the democratic classroom, it must follow that they must allow for the possibility students will choose not to contribute or to contribute in a way that is less than productive.
 - Thus, students must have significant choice. Students must feel a part of the process; democratic education *cannot be forced*.
- D. *A democratic classroom has a great deal of flexibility and a depth of respect between all persons involved.*
- The democratic classroom does not mean that every one always engages in cooperative learning or does projects every day. As well, it does not mean that students get to choose everything, regardless of what the teacher has to offer.
- E. *Democratic education is an educational environment and pedagogy that allows students of every age to walk forward having strengthened the following three understandings:*
1. I can make a difference in my world.
 2. I know how to make a difference in my world.
 3. I care enough to make a difference in my world.
- F. *For democracy to be sustaining, it must:*
- Become part of the bone and blood of people in daily conduct
 - Promote democratic habits of thought and action which must become part of the fiber of a people
- G. *How can a people govern themselves if they have not had the experience of governing?*
- This happens through experience.
 - It happens by doing.
 - It is made a part of the self through practice.

Example three: Whose rules? (Brady, Forton, Porter, & Wood, 2003)

In *Rules in Schools* democratic educators Katherine Brady, Mary Beth Forton, Deborah Porter, and Chip Wood point out that in most cases in American public school classrooms, the teacher is the sole creator and enforcer of rules, announcing them on the first days of school with little or no discussion of their meaning. The message is clear: follow these rules or else.

It's not rules per se that is the problem in public schools in a democracy,
but who makes them: the adults alone or the adults and the students together.

While this approach to rule setting can be effective in establishing a sense of order in the classroom (which the authors very much believe classrooms need), it does little to help children develop self-discipline, ethical thinking, or an under-standing of how to be contributing members of a democratic community during school

and after graduation. At its worst, it invites tension, blind obedience, or a constant battle of wills between adults and children in schools. See Paley's (1992) fantastic model for moral discourse for kindergarteners.

I don't care about your stupid rules!

-- A comment heard in the principal's office of an elementary school

Rules suck!

-- Graffiti fountain bathroom stalls of elementary and middle schools

Children are far more invested in following rules they help to create. It's that simple.

-- Gail Zimmerman, 2nd grade teacher

Rules in Schools offer a different approach to school and classroom climate. It is an approach to discipline that has helped teachers, in a wide range of K-8 settings, to establish a calm and safe learning environment while helping children develop self-discipline and a sense of responsibility.

It reflects the beliefs that (1) discipline is a subject that can be taught, just as are reading, writing, and math; and, that (2) children learn best when they are actively engaged and invested in constructing their own understanding. The primary purposes/goals of this approach are:

- Establish a calm, orderly, and safe environment for learning;
- Foster an appreciation for the role of rules in school;
- Help children develop self-control and self-discipline;
- Teach children to be responsible, contributing members of the democratic community; and
- Promote respectful, kind, and healthy teacher-student and student-student interactions.

Rather than being "handed down from above," the authors point out that rules in these classrooms and schools are created collaboratively with students and teachers during the early weeks of school. Not only are students more motivated to follow rules that they have helped to create, but in the process of creating new rules students learn much about the role of rules in a democratic society.

Rules in Schools provides a step by step process for creating "a few good rules" with the students and for teaching them to live by these rules daily both in the classroom and on a school-wide basis. The book also provides teachers with practical strategies for modeling and practicing their roles as adult leaders. What is just as important, the book provides tools and techniques for how to respond when the rules are broken.

Authors Brady, Forton, Porter, and Wood offer a truly American alternative to the 3 traditional approaches to discipline:

1. *An autocratic approach to rules*: "Because I said so!"
2. *A permissive approach to rules*: "Can you please cooperate for now, please?"
3. *A flip-flop approach to rules*: "I said 'No.' Well, maybe one more chance. Now, that's it. I mean 'No.'"

The enlightened alternative is the Responsive Classroom Approach where:

- the teacher helps children develop self-control;
- behavior standards are high and are developmentally appropriate;

- students help create the rules;
 - the teacher and students practice to rules; and
- the teacher uses logical consequences to help students learn from mistakes.

Steps in creating rules for students: Making hopes and dreams an every day reality

Rule creation takes place early in the school year and takes very little time. All concerned find over and over the payoffs in increased student responsibility and decreased problem behaviors. What makes this so ingenious and practical (and non-authoritarian) is each student benefits from using what is most important and valuable to them (hopes/dreams) to get along with others. The process involves the following steps:

1. Articulate hopes and dreams

The teacher asks students to share their goals for the school year, often beginning the conversation by sharing his or her own goals for the year. Families are invited to share their goals for their children.

2. Generating rules

The teacher/children leverage to generate rules that will allow everyone to achieve their hopes and dreams.

3. Framing the rules in the positive

The teacher works with students to turn the rules into positive statements.

4. Condensing the list down to a few global rules

The teacher and students work together to consolidate their long list of specific rules so they end up with three to five local classroom rules.

Conclusion: The importance of underlying beliefs about children

To Brady, Forton, Porter, and Wood in order to use their approach successfully, teachers must believe in children's intrinsic desire to "do the right thing." They must remember children's needs to be engaged in their learning and to fill a sense of belonging and significance.

Instead of believing that children need to be controlled by adults through the use of external motivators such as punishment or rewards, teachers must see themselves as helping children learn to be in control of themselves. That means that when children ignore, forget, or intensely break the rules that they have created, the teacher seizes this moment as an opportunity for learning and responds in this spirit.

It is this last way of thinking that Brady, Forton, Porter, and Wood see as most likely to lead the teacher to effective ways of handling the situation--ways that preserve the dignity of the children and ways for the children to consider the effects of their actions. This enables students eventually to become self-disciplined citizens in a self-governing society.

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APPENDIX L

EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO DEVELOP THE ASSERTIVENESS NECESSARY TO REQUIRE A SHARE IN CLASSROOM AND SCHOOL DECISION-MAKING

In early 1994, as a member of Action Team #12 (The Joy and Passion for Learning) of Indianapolis (Indiana) Public Schools, I was one of many responsible for developing innovative learning experiences designed to create the joy and passion for learning in students.

Gradually my beliefs about innate curiosity and the joy and passion for learning clashed with insinuations to the contrary. Realizing it might be hard to convince the team, my research led me to the idea that I must provide students a way to make sure their teachers realize they were born curious with the natural ability and motivation to learn. Teachers do not have to create what is innate; they have to keep it going.

Thus, the aim of my efforts became *to preserve the child's integrity, self-worth, and innate curiosity, providing a format to address the needs of the child by enabling the child to develop the assertiveness necessary to desire the best and to require the best from those involved in the education process*. Due to research, I came to feel I could not trust adults. I realized the responsibility must be given to the students.

Research

I went on to research the issues/factors inhibiting or enabling this natural curiosity, this innate motivation to learn and the joy and passion associated with it. Ideas from John Holt's *How Children Learn* (1967), a "Math Anxiety Bill of Rights" by Sandra Davis (1978) were mixed with characteristics of good learners from *Teaching as a Subversive Activity* (Postman & Weingartner, 1969) and *Eager to Learn* (Jaynes & Wlodkowski, 1990). Also, Janusz Korczak's *Declaration of Children's Rights* (1924; 1959) were reviewed.

These ideas became the concept: A Learner's Bill of Rights (LBR). The issues reviewed intended to counter any negative self-talk that comes to children's minds as they learn. It also covered school and classroom climate factors that would interfere with the natural learning processes.

What is a Learner's Bill of Rights?

- Deals with learning and the processes involved with acquiring knowledge in a way so as to reduce anxiety and promote the joy and passion for learning.
- Tries to investigate the issues/factors involved motivation, joy, and passion.
- Attempts to address the student's relationship with "self", the teacher, and learning—how the student views learning, "self", and how the learner is viewed by the teacher/school.

The LBR "Preamble" is: *I am a human being. I have an innate ability to learn. I was born full of wonder, curiosity, and motivated to learn. I view myself and I expect others to view me as capable of learning.*

Rights are not something given, but more of something that can not be taken away

There is another Learner's Bill of Rights. Rathbone (2005) suggests many "intellectual" rights of students progressive teachers must acknowledge, embrace, and protect. Appealing to teachers to view students as deserving of such rights, he implies these rights will influence school climate, relationships, and learning.

The benefits to students/staff of shared decision-making pronounced throughout this paper. Having students in positions of passively waiting for teachers/adults to view them as future citizens who should receive a type of education that actively engages them as citizens in their own schools and communities is quiet different from self-empowered students asserting the idea that they have a right to have a voice.

LBR number 15: Providing students a chance to, on their own, assertively seek responsibility

There are 15 rights in the LBR. Since number 15 pertains to this discussion, it will be presented:

I have a right to be a part of the decision making process that concerns my education, classroom, and school—with my involvement determined progressively by my age and grade.

The LBR's discussion of right 15 is:

Freedom and responsibility are the two sides of a coin. I am accountable only to the extent that I am free to choose. As I grow and progress through school and life, more choice and thus responsibility is my inherent right. It is the duty of the education system to gradually prepare me for participation in a democratic society. Providing me with experiences to share in decisions about my education, classroom, and school can do this.

This is self-determination and self-efficacy (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Bandura, 1997) at its best. Providing students a chance to assertively seek participation (thus responsibility) themselves is not only the right thing for a democracy to do, but it respects the child in such an enlightened a way, all of society will benefit.

Research on the brain reinforce the LBR concept

Recent Brain/Minds Principles (Scherer, 1997), resulting from MRI research, support the LBR orientation, proving the brain: (1) is essentially curious, it must be to survive; (2) does not have to be taught how to learn; and (3) innately searches for meaning through patterning.

Who is *Homo curaos*?

To epitomize the natural curiosity of humans, I created *Homo curaos* (koo-rah-ohs). We have descriptions of humans including *Homo habilis*, the handy person, *Homo erectus*, and *Homo sapiens sapiens*, the wisest of the wise. Now we have *Homo curaos*, the curious one, and the learner. Now educators know why, "All children can learn"—because we humans are "the learners."

For more information on A Learner's Bill of Rights and *Homo curaos*, contact johnharrisloflin@yahoo.com

See LBR at www.youtube.com/watch?v=SqlNL-vk5Ntl and www.myspace.com/learnersbillofrights

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RESOURCES

SCHOOLS, ORGANIZATIONS, BOOKS, JOURNALS, MAGAZINES, ARTICLES, ENCYCLOPEDIAS, BLOGS, VIDEOS, STUDIES, AND REPORTS

Public Schools

In the **Academic Community for Educational Success** Bedford Hills, NY students take ownership of their environment by extensive student participation in school government. www.bedford.k12.ny.us/flhs/aces

The **Avalon Charter School's** (St. Paul, MN) student congress meets each week, providing an opportunity for student input and decision-making. The school-made constitution gives students a major role in planning, hiring, finance, and governance. Congress has organized students to take on custodial duties. Advisories rotate the work of washing tables, putting chairs on desks, emptying trash. www.avalonschool.org

Blue Mountain School Charter School in Cottage Grove, OR is a place where children are given freedom and encouraged to take responsibility for their own education. In democratically structured group meetings, every child of every age has a vote. www.bluemountainschool.com

Community High School (Ann Arbor, MI) is a public alternative school. Opened in 1972, CHS was one of the first public magnet schools in America. Students participate in school governance, hiring staff, and design their own courses for credit through experiential learning projects. www.communityhigh.org/about

Federal Hocking H.S. Stewart, OH. Principal George Wood and staff find as many ways as possible for students to take responsibility for the daily life of the school. Through a bicameral legislature of 20 student trustees and a student council of 60, youth help determine class scheduling, curriculum, student activities, and school related decision. <http://federalhocking.k12.oh.us/extra/hs/studentlife/government/index.htm>

Fenway (Boston, MA) **High School**. Through school town meetings or delegate assemblies students' voices are heard. www.fenwayhs.org See Student Handbook www.ceschangelab.org/cs/clpub/view/clr/768

Hudson (MA) High School builds participatory democracy and give students direct ways to effect change in their community and school. Hudson combines citizenship instruction in the academic curriculum with practicing citizenship in the classroom and community. www.mass.info/hudson.ma/schools.htm

At the **Jefferson County Open School**, Lakewood, CO, the PreK-12 school community is committed to the development of the unique potential in each person through experiences that promote self-directed learning, self-reliance, responsibility, and shared decision making. www.jeffcweb.jeffco.k12.co.us/high/jcos

Lehman Alternative Community School, Ithaca, NY Students are an integral part of running the school. Each week, students meet twice during different committees to enhance ACS. Once a week, the entire school gathers to discuss student/staff proposals. Everyone votes on the proposals. www.icsd.k12.ny.us/acs

One of the Essential Elements of School Culture at **The MET School**, Providence, RI is democratic governance. Students help run The MET through discussions and decisions on school-related issue and problems at whole-school Town Meetings. www.bigpicture.org

The Nova Project (Seattle, WA) is a public alternative school created in 1970 by parents, students, and teachers. Committees govern the school through consensus based decision-making. Membership is voluntary and includes both staff and students, each of whom have an equal vote. www.novaproj.org/

The **Ridge and Valley Charter School** (northwestern NJ) is a free and democratic K-8 public school based on Earth Literacy--learning about the natural world and living in a sustainable manner. Students follow their interests and learning styles and share in decision-making at school meetings. www.ridgeandvalley.org

The **Rochester, NY School Without Walls** stated in 1971. SWW's democratic vision of community, teaching, and learning enables students to participate in the management and operation of the school. www.schoolwithoutwalls.org

For over 30 years Tallahassee's (FL) **S.A.I.L.** has offered individualization in a non-traditional climate. Students help create SAIL by playing a pivotal role in governance and policy making. www.sail.leon.k12.fl.us

Scarsdale (NY) Alternative School This grades 10-12 high school was created and designed to establish a workable, democratic school governance system. www.scaresdaleschools.k12.ny.us/hs/aschool

The **School Within a School at Brookline (MA) H.S.** has democratic ethos. Teachers share power and responsibility equally with students in shaping curriculum and school climate. bhs.brookline.mec.edu

Students at the **School Within a School at East Anchorage (AK) H.S.** have a student council and set in on staff meetings to help with school decisions. The school meets as a whole community at intervals. www.asdk.12.org/schools/east/pages/SWS.site.SWSHome.htm

Students at the small K-12 **Second Foundation School**, Minneapolis, MN decide their own schedule and learn what they want to learn. Students chair weekly school meetings and they all become accustomed to taking responsibility for basic functions like cleaning, planning, and budgeting. www.sfs.pvt.k12.mn.us

Stellar Secondary School Anchorage (AK). A 7-12 school with just over 300 students, the students are involved in school decisions via weekly class meeting and a monthly whole school meeting. www.asdk12.org/schools/stellar/pages

The mission of the K-12 **Trillium Charter School**, Portland, OR is a democratically-structured climate. Students learn to take initiative and assume responsibility for their own learning. The school uses the following tools: pluralistic learning that allows each person to choose areas of learning and acknowledges the uniqueness of the student; equal relationships between adults and children; and the use of democratic processes in discussions and decision-making through All School Meetings, Judicial Committee, student run committees and groups, and student representatives on School Board. www.trilliumcharter.org

Since 1985, New York City's **Urban Academy** has urged its students to tackle challenging topics, ask hard questions, and make their voices heard at the school and community. www.urbanacademy.org

Major Organizations

Coalition of Essential Schools. One of the 10 Common Principles is Democracy and Equity: School should model democratic practices that involve all who are directly affected by the school. There are over 190, mostly public schools, in the coalition. Many of the coalition's K-12 schools have classrooms where students share in decision-making and learn/practice democratic habits of mind. www.essentialschool.org

Democracy's Edge. Democracy advocate Francis Moore Lappé *Democracy's Edge* (2005) is a grassroots movement to revive democracy. She fears the danger of letting a closed, narrow group of business and government officials concentrate power over the lives of citizens. Using the experience of highly effective, democratic public schools, she argues effective education and educating for democracy are one and the same. She sees that students must practice democracy, not just study it thus creating a living democracy. Here students will understand democracy not as something done to them or for them, but as an engaging, life-enhancing, everyday practice. To Lappé, democracy is not a *set system* but as a *dynamic set of system characteristics*. Her *Doing Democracy Handbook* with its "Mastering the 10 Practical Arts of Democracy" and the "Living Democracy's 5 Characteristics" prove her point. www.democracysedge.org See p. 136.

First Amendment Schools: Educating for Freedom and Responsibility is a national reform initiative designed to transform how schools teach and practice the rights and responsibilities of citizenship that

frame civic life. It intends to establish schools and curriculum reforms in every region of the nation where First Amendment principles (the 5 freedoms) are understood and applied throughout the school and larger community. It has around 30 K-6 and over 50 7-12 schools affiliates. www.firstamendmentschools.org

Forum for Democracy in Education is committed to the public, democratic role of public education--the preparation of engaged and thoughtful democratic citizens. www.forumforeducation.org

Nationally, the **League of Democratic Schools** (a part of The Institute for Educational Inquiry, Seattle, WA), works to advance the Agenda for Education in a Democracy (<http://ieiseattle.org/AED.htm>). Part of the Agenda covers: Fostering the skills, attitudes, and knowledge necessary for effective participation in a social and political democracy. See p. 42.

The league arose from IEI's Dr. John I. Goodlad's 2000 paper "Education and Democracy: Advancing the Agenda" (depts.washington.edu/cedren/Publications/education_and_democracy.pdf). To push the Agenda the Center for Education Renewal and a national Network for Educational Renewal seek a change by putting in place the conditions necessary to renewing the nation's schools and its democracy. As public schools strive to produce literate, socially and vocationally competent people, schools in a democracy must also ready the young for a social and political environment by helping to develop "democratic character" through student participation in decision-making. http://ieiseattle.org/Brief_Description_LODS_Oct2007.pdf

Project 540. Gives students nationwide the opportunity to talk about issues that matter to them and to turn these conversations into real school and community change. www.project540.org

SoundOut partners with more than 75 K-12 schools/districts. The organization provides programs, training and technical assistance on student voice from the classroom to the boardroom. www.soundout.org

We the People: The Center for Civic Education (www.civiced.org) Started in 1964 in Los Angeles, CA, the Center promotes an enlightened and responsible citizenry committed to democratic principles actively engaged in the practice of democracy. The goals of programs are to help students develop (1) an increased understanding of the institutions of American constitutional democracy and the fundamental principles and values upon which they are founded, (2) the skills necessary to participate as effective and responsible citizens, and (3) the willingness to use democratic procedures for making decisions and managing conflict.

We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution is an instructional program to promote civic competence and responsibility. It culminates in a simulated congressional hearing where students "testify" before a panel of judges demonstrating knowledge and understanding of constitutional principles as they evaluate, take, and defend positions on relevant past and current issues. See p. 44.

We the People: Project Citizen is a curricular program for students (elementary-college) in and out of school, and civic-minded adult groups. The program helps participants learn how to monitor and influence public policy. Community problems are researched, alternative solutions evaluated and developed, public policy and political action plans enlist local/state authorities to adopt their proposed policy which is presented in a public "hearing showcase" before a panel of civic-minded community members. See p. 44.

Other organizations

Active Citizenship is devoted to helping teachers: This curriculum teaches the rights, responsibilities and civic values of U.S. citizenship, and includes a service learning group project in which student's research and develop a solution for a real problem in their community. www.activecitizenship.org

Agenda for Education in a Democracy seeks to support young people's participation in a social and political democracy through research and programs that promote democratic citizenship. Includes Institute for Educational Inquiry and Center for Educational Renewal. <http://depts.washington.edu/cedren/AED.htm>

The **Center for Civic Education** specializes in civic/citizenship education and participation, law-related education, and international educational exchange programs for developing democracies. www.civiced.org

The **Center for Collaborative Education** seeks to influence and support change that fosters democratic and equitable schools. Democratic values are nurtured and modeled with students. www.ccebos.org

Center for Democracy and Citizenship is a part of the University of Minnesota. It trains and educates youth and adults through bridging democratic theory and practical processes. www.publicwork.org

Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE). Funds and disseminates research on the civic and political engagement of Americans between the ages of 15 and 25. www.civicyouth.org

The Center for Learning & Citizenship. This is a project of the Education Commission of the States and runs several citizenship and civics education programs. <http://www.ecs.org/html/projectsPartners/clc/CLCCivicMissionSchools.htm>.

Choices for the 21st Century Education Program. Choices, based at Brown University, Providence, RI, develops curriculum materials and holds workshops for high school social studies teachers on civic education. <http://www.choices.edu>

The Civic Mind. This web site features directories and other online resources on civic education. <http://www.civicism.com>.

Close-Up Foundation. Works to promote responsible and informed participation in the democratic process through a variety of educational programs for middle and high school students, teachers, and adults. The website describes programs and provides a range of links to resources and organizations. www.closeup.org

Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF) and the Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago (CRFC). Both offer civic education curricula, activities for students, and professional development for teachers. www.crfusa.org and www.crfc.org

Democracy.org is a clearinghouse of information on civics and character education. <http://www.democracy.org>.

Democratic Education Consortium. Formed in 2004 in Indianapolis, the DEC is an independent group of adults and youth dedicated to promoting democratic practices in public education. Through a forum for public voice on education it seeks to forge future civic engagement by students through encouraging school/classroom shared governance that empowers teachers and students. johnharrisloflin@yahoo.com

Educators for Social Responsibility. Helps educators create safe, caring, respectful, and productive learning environments that foster democratic participation and change. www.esrnational.org

The Education Revolution. The website of The Alternative Education Resource Center (AERO), this group helps sponsor the International Democratic Education Conference (IDEC) and is the main national resource for what is going on internationally with democratic schools. <http://www.educationrevolution.org> Click on "Democratic Schools and IDEC."

e.thePeople. Digital town hall that "promotes intelligent and diverse discussion and political action." www.e-people.org

The **Freechild Project** believes it is completely unethical to exclude young people from participating in the decisions that affect them most. They work to engage young people in critical democratic action centered on growing community, culture, and society. www.freechild.org

The **Green Party of Indiana** and its Marion County (Indianapolis) affiliate support democratic education in American public classrooms and schools. www.indianagreenparty.org/education

IEA Civic Education Study. Survey research report of nearly 90,000 14-year-old students in 28 countries on democracy, national identity, social cohesion, and diversity. www.wam.umd.edu/~iea

iNet is the student voice gateway to personalizing learning, developing leadership skills and involving them in their own education. Although this site is out of Europe, it is an example of possibilities for US educators. www.ssat-inet.net/whatwedo/personalisinglearning/personalisinglearninggateway/studentvoice.aspx

Institute for Democracy, Education, & Access promotes learning choices based on students' interests and the unique strengths/opportunities in their communities. Placing civic responsibility as the core concept, every pathway intends to prepare students for both college and careers. www.idea.gseis.ucla.edu

Institute for Democracy in Education, it is committed to creating and sustaining democratic learning environments and empowering the young to play articulate roles in the public space. www.lclark.edu/org/journal/ www.ohiou.edu/ide

Kids Can Make A Difference. School program and detailed curriculum to inspire young people to realize that it is within their power to help eliminate hunger and poverty in their communities, their country, and their world. www.kidscanmakeadifference.org

KIDS Consortium views students as vital community members in training to become active citizens in a democracy. It supports student decision-making opportunities. www.kidsconsortium.org

National Alliance for Civic Education. Selected resources and guidelines for civic education. www.cived.net

The **Northwest Regional Education Laboratory** has created the **Onward to Excellence** process which involves all school and community stakeholders in enhancing school climate, teaching quality, and student performance. Shared decision-making is incorporated throughout the schools. www.nwrel.org

PEW Charitable Trust. This organization encourage youth voter turnout. www.pewtrusts.com

Project Vote Smart. Project Vote Smart (PVS) is dedicated to providing all Americans with accurate and unbiased information for electoral decision making. www.votesmart.org/index.htm

Public Achievement is a youth civic engagement initiative focused on the most basic concepts of citizenship, democracy and public work. www.publicachievement.org

Rethinking Schools. Writing, resources, and advocacy for public education reform in the pursuit of equity and social justice. www.rethinkingschools.org

Rouge Forum. Meetings and resources for educators, students, and parents interested in teaching and learning for a democratic society. www.pipeline.com/~rgibson/rouge_forum

Street Law Inc. Practical, participatory education about law, democracy and human rights. Street Law features the curriculum "Street Law" and many other curricular resources for teachers and students. www.streetlaw.org

WireTap web portal provides a new generation of writers, artists, and activists a space to network, organize, and mobilize. This Webby-winning news and culture magazine informs youth about social change and political issues in their own voices, creates a space for reflection and discussion, attracts young readers alienated from politics, connects information to action, and inserts the perspective of young people into the crowded media landscape that often lacks the youth perspective. <http://www.wiretapmag.org/about/>

Books

Beyond Discipline: From Compliance to Community (2000) Alfie Kohn makes a lot of people upset, especially disciplinarians. Alexandria, VA: Association for the Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Beyond the Silence: Listening for Democracy (1999) McDermott believes a democratic paradigm is what is needed in US schools. A democratic classroom is where all participants have a voice in the decisions made for the well-being of all. It is not a place of chaos, nor a place where authority figures dictate and govern classroom life. Both teacher and student speak out. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

A Democratic Classroom (1998) Wolk's vision nurtures democracy as a way of life, embracing community, empathy, the common good, responsibility, freedom, equality, and critical consciousness. Students learn democracy by living it. He confronts the issues of freedom, control, and "discipline" knowing well the difficulties and complexities that democratic schooling can create. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Classroom Discipline in American Schools: Problems and Possibilities for Democratic Education (1998) Ron Butchart breaks the silence regarding modes of classroom control, explicitly bringing democratic, moral, and political perspectives to bear on the issues. Albany, NY: University of New York.

The Democratic Differentiated Classroom (2007) Sheryn Waterman unifies instruction aligned to the needs of individuals with giving students chances to make choices. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

Democratic Education (1987) Amy Gutmann's benchmark book explores the role of mutual respect as an integrative, analytical and generative principle for democratic education. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University.

Roger Soder edits ***Democracy, Education, and the Schools*** (1996) a collection essays concerned with what a democracy requires of its schools. The several meanings of democracy, democracy and the nurturance of the self, and democracy and ecology are addressed. Curricula for democracy are reviewed and the school classroom as an arena for democratic practice is considered. The question of what is the main function of schools—preparing students for active and alert citizenship in democracy, or the production workers cable of gaining and sustaining primacy in international economic competition—is debated.

Democratic Learning: The Challenge to School Effectiveness (2004) Macbeath and Moos see democracy as the theme of the public schooling engine that should drive and equip democratic society. They present and debate definitions of democratic principles and of democracy itself when applied to schooling content, teaching processes, and institutional management. New York, NY: Routledge/Falmer.

The Dictionary of Democratic Education (2006) Authors Bennis & Graves offer articles on democratic education and a full review of global private and public democratic schools. Roslyn Heights, NY: AERO

According to John Goodlad's ***Education and the Making of a Democratic People*** (2008) the American people are being taught by political and business leaders that the purpose of our schools is to prepare workers who will ensure the nation's leadership in the global economy. A closely related but more important purpose is the public democratic one of sustaining a wise populace. The renewal of our democracy and the role of our schools and communities in sustaining renewal are what this book is about.

Freedom to Learn: A View of What Education Might Become (1969) is Carl Rodger's ideas about building discipline and classroom management with the learner. Columbus, OH: C. E. Merrill Publishers. In ***Holding Sacred Ground*** (2003), Carl Glickman helps school leaders think about an education that will equip each student with the knowledge, skills, and application to become wise, caring participatory citizens in improving democratic society. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

The Local Politics of Global Sustainability (2000) authors Prugh, Costanza, and Daly not only *make one of the more powerful argument for direct democracy, but convince readers that this is what is needed for*

sustainability. Recognizing the political implications of ecological economics, they envision a re-energized political system based on a type of self-governance called “strong democracy.” Here citizens participate directly in community action and decision making rather than consigning decisions to officials—creating a world of their choice, not one imposed by external factors.

Meaningful Student Involvement: Guide to Inclusive School Change (2003) by Adam Fletcher and presented by SoundOut gives students the chance to experience, analyze, and challenge democracy from their earliest years” through inclusive and active student engagement. Olympia, WA: The Freechild Project.

One Size Fits Few (1999) Susan Ohanian speaks to and for all the mavericks. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

The Power of Their Ideas (1995) Deb Meier’s book sets the benchmark for small school democracy. Boston: Beacon Press.

Releasing the Imagination: Education, the Arts, and Social Change (1995) Maxine Greene defines the democratic role of imagination in education. Schools can be places where students reach out for meanings and where the previously silenced or unheard may have a voice—enhancing and cultivating their own visions through their imagination and the arts not by assimilating into the mainstream. San Francisco: Josey-Bass Publishers.

Rules in School (2003) Educators (Kathryn Brady, et al.) help K-8 teachers learn ways for helping students become invested in creating and living by classroom rules. Greenfield, MA: Northeast Foundation.

Schools that Work (1992) Geo. Woods’ outstanding book on public school democracy. New York: Dutton.

The Sudbury Valley School Experience (1992) Although most Sudbury schools are private, Greenburg’s book is important reading for public school leaders and staff. Farmingham, MA: The Sudbury Valley Press.

Teaching Democracy (2003) Walter Parker bridges gap between multi-cultural and civic education. He provides a model for deliberation in high school. New York City: Teachers College Press.

Teaching to Transgress (1994) The way bell hooks writes her name shows her pro-democracy orientation with students and learning. New York: Routledge.

Journals

Democracy & Education, perhaps the best democratic education journal oriented to public schools and classrooms. The journal celebrates, enhances, and reflects upon the teaching and learning of democracy. It is a community colloquium bringing to light the successes and struggles of educators as they work to merge democratic teachings and principles with real-world practices. www.lclark.edu/org/journal

Issues of Democracy is an electronic journal of the US Department of State. The section on Human Rights Education provides a global benchmark for national human rights initiatives as well as papers on human rights education in the USA. <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itdhr/0302/ijde/ijde0302.htm>

Magazines

Educational Leadership www.ascd.org

“Creating Climates for Learning” September, 1996: Students Voices in the Classroom by E. Schneider; From Tourists to Citizens in the Classroom by H. Freiberg; Turning Conflicts into Learning Experiences by D. Briggs, and Giving Children a Sense of Ownership in Their Classroom by M. Zachlod.

"Education for Democratic Life" February, 1997: Teaching Democracy by Doing It by M. Gerson; Educating for Citizenship by H. Boyte and N. Skelton; The Art of Deliberation by W. Parker; Civic Education by D. Tyack and, The New Village Commons—Improving Schools Together by Tony Wagner.

"Creating Caring Schools" March 2003: Democratic Aims of Service Learning by R. Allen, and Student-Led Class Meetings by G. Leachman and D. Victor.

"Building Classroom Relationships" September, 2003: Practicing Democracy in High School by S. H. Berman, and When Children Make Rules by R. DeVries and B. Zan.

Phi Delta Kappan www.pdkintl.org

"Democracy and Civic Engagement" September, 2003: Reconnecting Education to Democracy by J. Westheimer and J. Khane; So What Does It Take to Build a School for Democracy? By D. Meier; Education for Liberation Democracy by C. Payne; Civic Education and Political Participation by W. Galston; and, Teaching Democracy: What Schools Need to Do by J. Khane and J. Westheimer.

Articles

"**Choices for Children: Why and How to Let Students Decide**" (September, 1993) Alfie Khon's well thought out argument for student shared decision-making in the classroom is a must read. *Phi Delta Kappan*.

"**Sound, Presence, and Power: 'Student Voice' in Educational Research and Reform**" (Winter 2006). Dr. Cook-Sather explores the emergence of the term "student voice" and looks across discussions of work that advocates, enacts, and critically analyzes the term. *Curriculum Inquiry* Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing

"**How to run a democratic meeting**" (2006). Jerry Mintz describes a simple yet very effective outline of how to run a school or classroom meeting. *Dictionary of Democratic Education*. Roslyn Heights, NY: AERO.

Encyclopedia

The **Student Voice** entry in *Wikipedia* may be the best and perpetually current definition with the most perpetually current references. Defined as the individual/collective perspective and actions of young people within the context of learning and education, the definition covers the convictions by which it's practiced, what has been accomplished, approaches schools use to enable it, global examples, a critique, and great references. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Student_voice Also see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Youth_voice

Blogs

Generation YES (Blog: Student Voice) believes efforts to integrate technology and education have failed because student involvement, student voice, and student ownership of the process were missing. The blog intends to be a forum to prepare global citizens of the tomorrow by empower students to be agents of change, not objects of change. blog.genyes.com/index.php/category/student-voice/ www.genyes.com.

Videos

Books Not Bars is an example of peer activism, youth organizing, and mobilization around education and prison issues--young California activists convince the Board of Corrections to deny pre-approved state funding for Alameda County's effort to build the biggest per capita juvenile hall in the state. <http://hrw.org/iff/2006/classroom/books.html>

Conducting Democratic Class Meetings. With no "right way" to meet, this video shows some things that can be done to better facilitate and democratize class meetings. www.dock.net/gathercoal/video.html

Democracy Left Behind, by filmmaker Bob Gliner, questions how effectively public schools prepare students for active participation in democratic society in light of the demands of No Child Left Behind on the ability of schools to serve their civic mission. www.docmakeronline.com/democracy-left-behind.html

In ***Democratic Meetings*** the AERO group shows various democratic meetings: England's Summerhill school, Russian students in the Crimea, Long Island NY homeschoolers (ages 4-13), a meeting setting up a democratic system for an "at-risk" public high school alternative, and a democratic meeting at a public "choice" high school. www.educationrevolution.org

Liberty's Apprentice: Public schools, the bedrock of democracy is a 2008 documentary about public education as the cornerstone of democracy. Support by John Goodlad (League of Democratic Schools) lends credence to the latent potential of this effort to move from an academic democracy to a practiced democracy by staff and students in public schools. Available from American Association of School Administrators, Center for System Leadership. www.aasa.org/content.cfm?ItemNumber=9580

Preschool Democracy. Although not a public school, the Wellsprings in New Jersey school provides AERO director Jerry Mintz a chance to demonstrate the democratic process with their students, the oldest of whom was five years old. www.educationrevolution.org

Studies

America's 2007 Civic Health Index, Renewed Engagement: Building on America's Civic Core. In this second survey, the data suggest that there has been no recovery in 2007. Evidence of further decline and some of the few hopeful signs emerging after 9/11 have now fallen back to earlier levels. America's civic stocks are low, which is unusual in a time of war. www.civicenterprises.net/pdfs/2007civicindex.pdf

The 2006 Civic Health Index. Comprised of 40 key civic indicators measuring levels of political activity, civic knowledge, volunteering, trust, and philanthropy, the National Conference of Citizenship index attempts to measure civic progress over time. www.civicenterprises.net/pdfs/2006civicindex.pdf

The Eight Year Study (1930-42) followed students through experimental high schools and college graduation. Many of the high schools deliberately moved toward more individualized learning, organizing it around themes of significance to their students instead of organizing it by subjects. This is now often referred to as Curriculum Integration. The comparison showed a slightly better college performance for those students from experimental high schools. What brought the study attention were the students' higher scores on less commonly measured and more original goals, such as reading habits, participation in social and political life, cultural events, and political leadership (Kridel & Bullough, 2007). <http://www.8yearstudy.org/index.html>

Reports

The Nation's Report Card: Civics 2006. This is a report by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) showing an increase in the average civics score since 1998 at grade 4, but no significant change in average scores at grades 8 and 12. http://nationsreportcard.gov/civics_2006/

Restoring the Balance between Academics and Civic Engagement in Public Schools is a 2005 report from the American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum (ASCD). The report questions the No Child Left Behind Act's focus on core academic subjects at the expense of the public school's equally important role: preparing students to be engaged and effective citizens. <http://helpfrom.nea.org/takenote/citiz050316.html>

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