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Democratic civic education: preparing the students of today for the society of the future

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**DEMOCRATIC CIVIC EDUCATION:
PREPARING THE STUDENTS OF TODAY
FOR THE SOCIETY OF THE FUTURE**

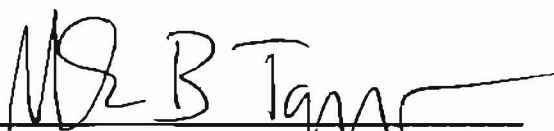
by

Andrew A. Carlson

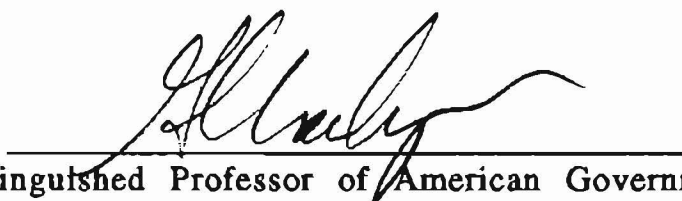
**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the
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**COLBY COLLEGE
1994**

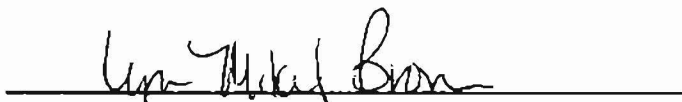
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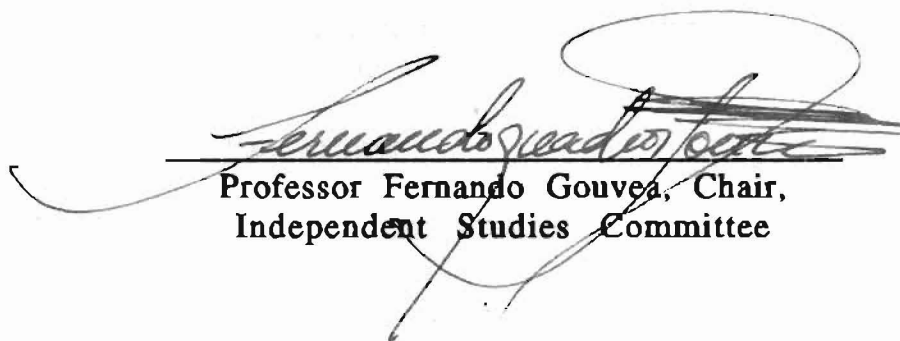
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ABSTRACT

"Democratic Civic Education: Preparing the Students of Today for the Society of the Future" investigates a way in which the traditional education system can be structured to address the need for, and benefit to be gained from, helping students to understand the commonality of human experience. It argues that by encouraging students to examine and challenge beliefs, ideals, and power structures, institutions of education can provide individuals with a better critical understanding of their own experiences in relationship to the community. Finally, this paper discusses the role education plays in identifying and developing the give-and-take relationship that exists between individuals and a democratic community.

The paper is divided into two parts. Part One is theoretical in nature, while Part Two is practical in application. Part One is presented in the form of a discussion and critique of the themes, contributions, and arguments put forth by leading democratic educators John Dewey, Lawrence Kohlberg, Amy Gutmann, and Henry Giroux. Chapter Two, "John Dewey's Vision of Educating the Individual," deals with issues of individual development. Chapter Three, "Lawrence Kohlberg's Negotiation of Self and Society," looks at the tension that exists between an individual and her community. Chapter Four, "Amy Gutmann's and Henry Giroux's Views of Freedom, Authority, and Citizenship," highlights the roles freedom, authority, and citizenship fill in a democracy. Chapter Five, "What Does This All Mean?: My Perspective," outlines the author's approach to democratic civic education.

Part Two discusses the course "Individual Rights and Social Responsibilities." A half-year eleventh and twelfth grade civics course, it is designed to cover not only the traditional activities of learning about the Constitution, branches of government, citizenship, and legal rights and responsibilities, but also to introduce a way of learning about the mutual responsibilities that students and their communities hold. Material covered in the course includes the fundamentals of American democracy, the three branches of government, community service, and civil rights. The goal of "Individual Rights and Social Responsibilities" is to relate individual growth to public life, through developing strong interpersonal skills, academic knowledge, habits of critical inquiry, and curiosity about society, power, inequality, and change.

This paper provides a general overview of the concepts of individualism, community, freedom, authority, and citizenship as

they relate to the topics of democracy and education. Each element of "Democratic Civic Education: Preparing the Students of Today for the Society of the Future" constructs an approach to education that strives to teach children to be critical citizens who can think, challenge, take risks, and believe their actions will make a difference in the larger society.

Preface

"Education is . . . hanging around until you've caught on."

--Robert Frost

Informally, I started working on the foundations of "Democratic Civic Education: Preparing the Students of Today for the Society of the Future" several years ago. When I first arrived on Mayflower Hill as a wide-eyed and energetic nineteen year old freshman, I thought I had all the answers to the world's problems, but quickly I came to see that the world is filled with more conflicts, problems, and inconsistencies than one individual could ever hope to solve. However, at the same time, I began to realize that working to identify, tackle, and negotiate these issues was what I wanted to do with my life. As daunting and frustrating as it is, society must continually work to combat problems of violence, discrimination, hatred, selfishness, and disregard for personal and community well-being. To this end, I decided that for me education was the most interesting way to pursue these ambitions. Therefore, what is contained within the following pages constitutes one step in the process of transforming teaching and learning into my vision of the role that education must play in making a better community for future generations of students.

In the course of completing this project, I have had tremendous help and support from many people. In some way, what I have written is a direct product of the thoughts, ideas, suggestions, arguments, questions, and comments of these individuals. In other ways, what follows is an indirect result of the experiences and discussions that I have had both inside and outside the classroom. To every person I have talked with about the work contained within these pages, I offer my heartfelt thanks and gratitude.

In particular, I would like to mention the following individuals:

First, I thank my parents, Jane and Russ Carlson, who have always been supportive of my many endeavors. They unceasingly have worked mentally, emotionally, and financially to allow me to pursue my dreams. To a large degree, all that I have become as a person, a friend, a student, and an educator is a result of my parents. You have taught me the value of education, and I hope to pass this

lesson on to future generations of children. I could never have asked for more love from two individuals.

I thank my brothers Allen and Ned Carlson. In their own special and unique ways, they have pushed me to go beyond what I thought was possible, praised me for what I have accomplished, and questioned what I have done. In addition, they have reminded me that if I get too big a head, they will always be there to keep it all in perspective.

I thank Professor Mark B. Tappan for all his guidance and support over the last three years. In particular, I thank him for being my advisor and allowing me to pursue this project. In addition, I thank Mark for being there when I didn't think I had an inkling of what was going on, and for showing me that education can be an uplifting, empowering, and enlightening experience for the youth of today.

I thank Professor Pam Blake, who in her political theory course gave me the opportunity to consider how education related to democracy.

I thank Professor Lyn M. Brown and Professor G. Calvin Mackenzie, who taught me to be a more insightful, reflective, and critical individual. You have constantly stirred my intellectual curiosity.

I thank Professor Fernando Gouvea and the Independent Study Committee, for allowing me to combine in this project my interest in government with my passion for education.

I thank Professor Karen Kusiak, Professor Marilyn S. Mavrinac, and Colby College's Class of 1994 student teachers. All of you have helped to cultivate my love of teaching and interest in education.

I thank Brooke D. Coleman and Karen Wu. For my first two years on Mayflower Hill, you taught me the value of diligent study and the joy of learning. I could not have come this far from the basement of the library without your wit and humor.

I thank Emily Chapman for her meticulous editorial expertise, and Jenn Wolff for her creative ideas and inventive teaching.

I thank Marinel Mateo, Andrea Stairs, Kim Kessler, Ali Meyer, and D.C. Gagnon for always being there to listen to my complaints and thoughts. In some way, you all have made it into this project.

Finally, I would like to thank Dean Mark R. Serdjenian and Colby College's 1993 Men's Soccer Team. You provided me with a healthy outlet during the most trying times of this project. You kept me from going crazy, and for that we will be "together" forever!

Chapter One:
Democratic Civic Education

INTRODUCTION

Why do violence, hatred, and conflict seem to dominate the activities of our community? Why can't individuals accept each other for what they are, instead of focusing on what they are not? Why is it that students seem not to care about the world unless it affects them personally? Why are people not more willing to change their actions and beliefs before they end up doing more harm than good? Although none of these questions has an easy answer, they may all have a common solution: education.

In "Democratic Civic Education: Preparing the Students of Today for the Society of the Future," I propose a way in which the educational system can address these issues.¹ Society has both an interest in, and an obligation to, the way students are educated.² Therefore, an important responsibility of any society is to provide its children with the most comprehensive and empowering educational experiences possible. For this reason, education is not a neutral enterprise. In my view, education is meant to equip students with the skills and knowledge to become responsible citizens capable of adapting to and succeeding in a changing world. The goal is to provide students with the experience and ability to make informed and critical choices in the present and future. Educational systems should prepare students for the conflicts, problems, and decisions they will encounter in life. Schools need to play an active role in the social development of future members of society. By encouraging students to address, challenge, and examine traditional values, beliefs, ideals, and power structures, schools can provide them with a

¹. The ideas I discuss in the course of this paper are a combination of theory, philosophy, and curriculum. The evidence for this line of thinking comes from my own experiences in the classroom as a student and teacher, a broad cross-section of analytical research, and discussions with other students and teachers. Although not highlighted by overwhelming empirical evidence, my ideas offer one person's view of the weaknesses of present education, and the changes that must take place to remedy these problems.

². In this project, the term "society" will be used to identify the ideas, beliefs, and activities that constitute the environment--social, political, and physical--in which an individual lives.

better critical understanding of their own experiences in relationship to the community.

In our present system of secondary education, advancement, success, and achievement have been determined by the grades students receive in specific content areas--reading and writing in English, computation in math, balancing an equation in chemistry. Not reaching pre-established standards of performance has meant failure. How, however, does this benefit the student when she is in the community? Do these skills better enable her to contribute to changing circumstances in the world?³ In most cases, the answer to this question is no! Social development--sensitivity and awareness of the needs of others--has rarely been seen as a part of the traditional curriculum. The educational system views social values--morals, ethics, and concern for human beings--as detrimental, subjective interference with the more important objective mastery of skills.⁴ There is a need for, and benefit to be gained from, encouraging and helping students to understand the commonality of human experience. Ignorance of human decency, respect, and responsibility should no longer be acceptable in our democratic community.⁵

The purpose of this project is not only to prepare students for later in life by helping them to understand better themselves in relationship to the world around them, but also to show students how, why, and in what ways they can and must take part in and direct their own individual decision-making and activities in relationship to the community. I want students to see they have

3. When appropriate, I have chosen to use gender neutral language in the writing of this project. I do this by using where ever possible alternating paragraphs of male and female references.

4. In most cases, morals and ethics have been in the domain of the family. However, today the nuclear family is not as prevalent as in the past. Therefore, schools need to have more explicit support of these characteristics, and develop better implicit strategies to reach these goals.

5. For more detailed information see John I. Goodlad, "A Study of Schooling: Some Findings and Hypotheses," 132-141, and National Commission on Excellence in Education, "A Nation At Risk," 224-234; both in Kevin Ryan and James M. Cooper, eds., Kaleidoscope: Readings in Education (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1992).

responsibilities to each other and to the community.⁶ In addition, I hope students learn that not only are they integral components of society, but that the community is an important part of their lives. These goals reflect my argument that education should be utilized to change the world, not adapt to it. To this end, I agree with Ira Shor. He illustrates the distinction between the knowing of facts for their own value, and the application of this information to elicit change: "Knowledge is the power to know, to understand, but not necessarily the power to do or change. . . . Knowledge is power only for those who can use it to change their conditions."⁷ Therefore, in education, information is used not only to inform students of a particular way of thinking, but it also should help to provide them with the opportunity to bring about improvements in their immediate and extended communities.

Furthermore, the over-arching goal of this project is to illustrate the role education plays in identifying, developing, and enhancing the give-and-take relationship that exists between individuals and a democratic community.⁸ My argument in a nutshell is as follows:

6. One of the many issues that will be discussed in this project is the conflict between "education as life," as espoused by John Dewey, and "education as a preparation for living," as espoused by more traditional educators. The debate essentially deals with the ideas of "pro-active" versus re-active" education. In my view, Dewey seeks a more pro-active role for schools; while traditionally schools have been re-active in their position in society. In addition, this relates to a discussion based on Dewey's distinction between "education as a function of society" (i.e. schools reproduce and teach what the community sees as important) or "society as a function of education" (i.e. society reflects what schools have decided as being important). In the first case, education acts as an institution that maintains the statusquo, while in the second case education acts as an apparatus of change. I have combined these ideas into my own perspective on democratic civic education. Wherever possible I have discussed the arguments for and benefits of each theory. In Chapter Five, I discuss how these ideas influence my own thinking, and in Part Two, I illustrate the types of activities that can be included in this line of thinking. See Frank Lentricchia, Criticism and Social Change (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1983) and Kenneth Burke, Attitudes Towards History (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961) 331-332.

7. Ira Shor, Empowering Education. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) 6.

8. For a somewhat different discussion of the relationship between individualism and community commitment, see Robert Bellah, Richard Madsen,

Education and society are as essential to each other as the individual is to the community. Neither the individual nor the community can exist apart from the other. In the same way, neither the school nor society can do so. For this reason, education should help to form a society in which individuals see the shared value of the community, and the community sees the individual as equally important.

This introductory chapter serves as a brief overview of the direction and scope of my investigation into democratic civic education. Here, I discuss the organization of the project, and mention the theorists whose work I consider. Furthermore, I also define the term "multiculturalism," and describe my use of it as an analytical issue throughout the course of this project. I have chosen to utilize the topic of multiculturalism in this way because, in my opinion, it incorporates many of the issues that are at the heart of any discussion involving democracy, citizenship, respect, rights, and responsibilities. In addition, because it is broad and expansive in its definition, multiculturalism offers me the opportunity to enter into a conversation with ideas and arguments put forth by the educational theorists I investigate. From here, I mention the historical roots and present meaning of "democratic civic" education. Finally, I outline how this theory of education is typically constructed to overcome the inherent weaknesses of "traditional" education.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PROJECT

This project is divided into two parts. Part One is theoretical in nature, while Part Two is practical in application. Part One consists of an investigation into how the democratic principles on which our society is based can be utilized to shape an educational system.⁹ The

William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton, Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

⁹. The term "democratic principles" refers to: liberty, freedom, equality, tolerance, fairness, justice, equal rights, civility, and self-restraint.

information acquired through this analysis is then interpreted and applied, in Part Two, to an updated civics curriculum for high school students.

PART ONE

Part One consists of rather straightforward, analytical research, and is presented in the form of a discussion and critique of the themes highlighted by several leading proponents of democratic education. These theories illustrate how teaching and learning can be utilized to encourage the growth and development of more capable future generations. Chapters Two, Three, and Four, therefore, focus on the contributions and arguments put forth by democratic civic educators John Dewey, Lawrence Kohlberg, Amy Gutmann, and Henry Giroux, respectively.

Chapter Two, "John Dewey's Vision of Educating the Individual," deals with issues of individual development. In it, I look specifically at Dewey's discussion of the conflict between individualism and commitment to the community. Chapter Three, "Lawrence Kohlberg's Negotiation of Self and Society," further investigates the tension that exists between an individual and her community. In it, I look at whether the creation of individual moral development is a prerequisite for community growth. Chapter Four, "Amy Gutmann's and Henry Giroux's Views of Freedom, Authority, and Citizenship," concludes the discussion of the self and society, and individual and community tensions inherent in democratic civic education. I look at issues of empowerment, voice, and difference in the course of this chapter.

Drawing on what I have learned from these theorists, Chapter Five, "What Does This All Mean?: My Perspective," outlines my own approach to democratic civic education. Focused on high school, and rather broad in scope, it pertains to methods of teaching and modes of learning that need to be developed and implemented to ensure the establishment of more civically minded and socially acting students. It addresses my concerns with the present system, while providing an alternative form of education that takes into consideration the needs and demands of a democratic society as articulated by Dewey,

Kohlberg, Gutmann, and Giroux. This form of democratic civic education negotiates the conflict between individual and community commitment, the necessity for authority and freedom, and the desired goal of civic responsibility and social awareness. The aim of this chapter is to help nurture a society in which people are better able to work and live together, to co-exist, and to improve the present and future state of their individual and common lives.

PART TWO

The second part of this project entails the creation of a curriculum unit that puts my previously developed approach to democratic civic education into action. It represents an updated, half-year eleventh and twelfth grade high school civics course. This social studies course is designed to cover not only the traditional civics activities of learning about the Constitution, branches of the government, citizenship, and legal rights and responsibilities; but also to introduce an alternative way of learning about the mutual responsibilities that students and their communities hold. The focus of the class is the development of self-confidence in the individual and mutual respect within the community. Its goal is to relate individual growth to public life, through developing strong impersonal skills, academic knowledge, habits of critical inquiry, and curiosity about society, power, inequality, and change.

After explaining why I selected the content, schedule, and materials for the course, and for what purpose I developed lesson plans, classroom activities, methods of measuring achievement, and forms of self-evaluation, I present a unit by unit summary of the topics that will be covered. In the process, I list explicitly the goals and objectives of the specific material covered, provide details of the activities utilized in each unit, and discuss the rationale for the presentation of this particular information. As a result, I present a clear picture of how theory can be put into practice to achieve my vision democratic education.

THE USE OF MULTICULTURALISM

As mentioned above, I have chosen to use the topic of multiculturalism as a theme through which I discuss various issues

that will be raised throughout the course of this project. The reason for this is that the term "multiculturalism" denotes different things to different people. Depending on the field of study and personal experience, it can be utilized as a positive and empowering term, or as a negative and subordinating practice. In either case, because of the powerful position it fills in the contemporary world, I think it is essential to define "multiculturalism." In today's society, and in present educational theory and practice, it is impossible to interpret and evaluate the tensions between individual and community, self and society, without at the same time engaging in a discussion of multiculturalism.¹⁰

Here multiculturalism is defined in broad and inclusive terms. Adopting a combination of the "globalism" (promoting public awareness of human diversity that gives no priority to any single culture or experience) and "ethnic preservation" (efforts by minority groups not only to recover and preserve, but also gain recognition for, their own distinct identity) perspectives,¹¹ I have come to identify multiculturalism with the discovery, study, understanding, appreciation, and respect of difference. Difference here is understood in terms of seeing, acting, thinking, feeling, and participating in society through various modes of activity. Not only are cultural diversity and ethnic identity included in this definition, but also an

¹⁰. The topic of "multiculturalism" is controversial in terms of the general public and the field of education. There is disagreement over the usefulness and possible effects of this movement. In general, critics feel multiculturalism will lead to confusion and conflict in society. Supporters feel multiculturalism will create a more equitable and productive community. I support the latter argument. I argue that as the community becomes more diverse, individuals will need to have a better understanding of difference. Therefore, I support the idea that multiculturalism needs to teach about this difference. To gain a better understanding of this discussion see: Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1993); Diane Ravitch, "Multicultural: E Pluribus Plures," 442-448, and American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, Commission on Multicultural Education, "No One Model American: A Statement on Multicultural Education," 440-441; both in Kevin Ryan and James M. Cooper, eds., Kaleidoscope: Readings in Education (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1992).

¹¹. See Betty Jean Craige, "Multiculturalism and the Vietnam Syndrome," The Chronicle of Higher Education, 12 Jan. 1994: B3.

awareness of human diversity and the commonality of individuals. For this reason, issues of power, "politically correct speech," gender equality, voice, and justice are central to this discussion.

The reason for defining multiculturalism in such a broad and expansive way is because, in essence, multiculturalism as an idea is inherently inclusive. In saying this, I believe every individual deserves (has a right, and is thus obligated) to share her experiences with the "larger" community. This is because the "community"¹² as a collective only exists because of its citizens. They are the building materials of society, while the society is the framework of the community. Individuals provide the commonality and difference in society. No community can exist as a community without both common references and difference. Multiculturalism precipitates this process.

Therefore, throughout the course of this project, I use the topic of multiculturalism as a means of illustrating and evaluating the arguments for democratic civic education that are put forth by Dewey, Kohlberg, Giroux, and Gutmann. In each chapter, I utilize this theme to point out the strengths and weaknesses of each one of these theorists' ideas. Finally, in the curriculum unit, I illustrate how the topic of multiculturalism can be implemented to develop a better understanding of the variety of people in the world. It is my belief that if students come to see that other people have experiences, values, and ideas worthy of respect, they will develop bonds--social, intellectual, and economic--that will help to foster civic and social awareness and responsibility.

WHAT IS DEMOCRATIC CIVIC EDUCATION?

Although the United States was formed as a democracy in the late eighteenth century, it was not until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that educational theorists dealt directly with how

¹². Although "community" entails more than an aggregation of individuals, for the time being this definition will provide the framework from which to work. In the course of this project, I develop a more elaborate definition that includes social, political, and economic factors.

schools must play a role in shaping democratic ideals.¹³ Once this issue was recognized, the theory of democratic education was created to deal better with the problems brought on by the Industrial Revolution. Issues involving the direction that society was headed, and the role that individual citizens and groups were to play in this transformation of the community convinced some educators of the need to transform the methods and purpose of traditional education. Universal, free, public education was created during this time as a means of bringing democracy to the masses. In this way, education became a means of assisting all citizens to reach the "American Dream."

Recognizing the need for diversity, personal control, empowerment, and the ability of students to think and act critically in shaping the world, progressive, democratically oriented educators organized schools around democratic values and principles. To compensate for the inequalities, power struggles, failed observations, and lack of comprehension of society, democratic education renews a positive way of life through a commitment to freedom, justice, and fellowship. By opening students' eyes to diverse experiences and alternative explanations, democratic education forces society to challenge traditional values, beliefs, and ideals in order to establish a better understanding of the world and its problems. It analyzes and redefines the relationship between self and society, authority and freedom, individualism and citizenship.

In contrast to what might be called traditional education, which thinks of persons as abstract, isolated, independent, and unattached to the world, democratic education seeks to re-establish the bond of obligation that should exist among individuals.¹⁴ Theorists such as Dewey, Kohlberg, Gutmann, and Giroux establish an educational

¹³. Before this time, no explicit effort had been made to link "democratic principles" to the mission of schools. Therefore, any discussion of these issues was utilized as a means of strengthening the status-quo, not as a means of individual empowerment and advancement. See Lawrence Cremin, The Transformation of the School (New York: Praeger Books, 1964).

¹⁴. See Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner, Teaching as a Subversive Activity (New York: A Delta Book, 1969) xiii; and John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: The Free Press, 1916) 8.

system in which the individual, after being taught the necessary skills of reasoning and intelligent comprehension, and being exposed to a cross-section of views and opinions, is given the opportunity to decide for himself the right way to behave. By doing this, education according to Paulo Freire will serve as "the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transforming of their world."¹⁵ According to Gutmann, democratic education's goal is to get students to realize that the world and individuals do not exist apart from each other. This theory of education promotes the development and understanding of the world, while respecting the autonomy of the individual. It cultivates civic and social citizenship that is needed to foster a democratic society.

Democratic educators believe that only by allowing each individual to develop independently will self-esteem and mutual respect toward others evolve. Society can only be stronger and better if the individual parts--human beings--are first allowed to develop. The focus of democratic education is the development of the individual, with the result of creating a better society. This belief is clarified by Dewey:

A progressive society counts individual variations as precious since it finds in them the means of its own growth. Hence a democratic society must, in consistency with its ideal, allow for intellectual freedom and the play of diverse gifts and interests in its intellectual measures.¹⁶

In addition, Dewey argued that, "we only live at the time we live and not at some other time, and only by extracting at each present experience are we prepared for doing the same thing in the future."¹⁷ Thus, democratic education seeks to establish a system of

¹⁵ Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970) 15.

¹⁶ Dewey, Democracy and Education, 305.

¹⁷ John Dewey, Experience and Education (New York: Collier Books, 1935) 49.

schooling that helps to build a freer and more powerful individual citizen.

To do this, Freire believes every human being, no matter how blind or ignorant of her personal goals, is capable of looking critically at the world.¹⁸ He believes this capability enables citizens to construct more productive boundaries of behavior.¹⁹ This helps to create communitarianism, in which the importance of the community is stressed over the individual. Although this may seem to contradict Dewey's belief in the supremacy of the individual, in reality it illustrates the interdependence and tension that exist between the individual and society. As Kohlberg argues, neither entity can exist purely by itself. Each needs the existence of the other to reach its full potential. A student cannot develop fully unless he is able to work productively within the surrounding environment.²⁰ Similarly, society can not advance unless its inhabitants recognize the mutual benefit that comes from working together. In seeking the collective development of society, Dewey and Kohlberg believe education should be a "form of social life in which interests are mutually interpenetrating and where progress, or readjustment, is an important consideration."²¹

PROBLEMS OF TRADITIONAL EDUCATION

One of the goals of democratic education is a life structured in accord with self-determination and empowerment. Students should have the opportunity to play a role in the decisions in school and society that directly affect them. In addition, schools should open up areas for individual self-fulfillment. Unfortunately, this ideal has not been reached through traditional education. In school, students are taught to conform and to follow the rules of society. Overtly and

18. Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 13.

19. In this belief, Freire is including individuals with all levels of intellectual, psychological, and social capacities because their perspectives on society can be utilized to create a community this is more reflective of the "voices" and beliefs that constitute the demographics of that community.

20. See Lawrence Kohlberg, F. Clark Power, and Ann Higgins, Lawrence Kohlberg's Approach to Moral Education. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989) 43.

21. Dewey, Democracy and Education, 87.

covertly, they are in school to listen and learn, and not to question or investigate the information that is dictated to them. This is a broad but nonetheless accurate indictment of the system.²²

Traditional education is based on the "banking concept of education." In this process, because the teacher feeds as much information as possible to the student, who acts as a passive receptacle, he takes a passive role in the classroom, and creative reasoning risks being destroyed.²³ David Nyberg argues that this form of education is good, because it helps to establish order. He states, "In this milieu where obligation, duty, civic welfare, and political authority in general are eroded by private interest, Americans are losing their grasp on why they should obey anyone or anything."²⁴ Although traditional education does directly establish order in the classroom, and thus by extension in society, the type of order being reproduced needs to be evaluated.

Education in the U.S. takes place in a complex context. The cultural, social, political, and religious environment in which schools operate establishes for students an unequal quality of education. Students often do not receive equally enabling educational experiences.²⁵ Iris Marion Young believes,

In a liberal democratic society, education is understood as a means of providing equal opportunity for all groups.

²². It is an accurate indictment because presently the system does not live up to the democratic ideals on which society was formed. It is my contention that the purpose of a "democratic" society was to enable each individual citizen to reach his or her highest level of achievement. To do this, individuals have to question and challenge--evaluate--what is around them. To this end, they must be given the opportunity to develop the skills to do this; traditional education fails to offer students this opportunity. Therefore, it fails to further the ideals of democracy. See John I. Goodlad, A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1983); TheodoreSizer, Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1984); and National Commission on Excellence in Education, "A Nation At Risk," 1992.

²³. Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 57.

²⁴. David Nyberg and Paul Farber, "Authority in Education," Teachers College Record, Fall 1986: 6.

²⁵. For more information see Jonathan Kozol, Savage Inequalities: Children In America's Schools (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991).

But there is no evidence that education equalizes. Despite educators' bemoaning the fact for several decades, the system of education stubbornly reproduces class, race, and gender hierarchies.²⁶

One of my concerns with traditional education is that it has the tendency to produce this conformity and inequality.

According to Robert Young, "The modern educational crisis is a product of the one-sided development of our capacity for rational management of human affairs and rational problem solving."²⁷ A student is given one side of the story, one explanation, or one justification for what happens. In this regard, traditional education acts as a discriminator. A student can either conform to the accepted way of acting and succeed, or she can question the reasoning behind an argument and fail. In traditional education, the core curriculum consists of a white, middle-class, male perspective.²⁸ Herbert Kohl comments, "If the core reproduces the inequalities that exist in a society, it is simply another attempt to keep power relations from changing. In practice, the core curriculum enshrines the values of the people who determine it as universal standards of excellence."²⁹ This creates conformity and inequality, and prevents students from having a say in their education and lives.

THE PURPOSE OF DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION

Faced with similar problems of traditional education, about eighty years ago Dewey proposed a new theory of learning. Labeled as "progressive," Dewey advocated an experience-based, student centered style of education.³⁰ Students should be allowed to question the teacher and control some classroom activities. They also should be exposed to new and diverse experiences. He felt people who didn't know of diverse options and lifestyles would not be tolerant of those

26. Iris Marion Young, Justice and the Politics of Difference (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) 206.

27. Robert Young, A Critical Theory of Education: Habermas and Our Children's Future (New York: Teachers College Press, 1990) 23.

28. See Peter MacLaren, Life in Schools: An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the Foundations of Education (New York: Longman, 1989).

29. Herbert Kohl, "Rotten to the Core," The Nation, 6 April 1992: 460.

30. Cremin, Transformation of The School.

who chose differently from themselves. For this reason, Kohlberg points out, "In Dewey's view the school was a necessary bridge between family and the outside society in providing experiences of a democratic community."³¹ Dewey believed schools could promote civic preparation and participatory democracy. Because students are young members of the wider society, the community has both an interest in, and obligation to, the way they are educated.

The views that society holds concerning democracy have important implications for the way children are educated. However, in practice, there is a difference between what is claimed publicly, and what is taught both directly and indirectly in schools. This contradiction results in the limited rights and power students are granted in traditional education. Students are arbitrarily excluded from the decision making process, because they are viewed as not having the moral or intellectual capacities to think unselfishly. However, Rosemary Chamberlin points out

The freedom to control the circumstances of our lives should not be seen in purely individualistic terms. Joint decisions affect our lives as well as individual ones, and so participation in making these joint decisions should count as an exercise of freedom and restriction to participate should be recognized as restriction of freedom.³²

For this reason, in my opinion, the purpose of formal schooling should be to enable every individual to participate fully in making personal choices.

Democratic education is based on the idea that formal education should be "life rather than a preparation for living."³³ As a result, it strives to enable students to understand more critically their own experiences, and how these experiences relate to society.

³¹. Lawrence Kohlberg, "High School Democracy and Educating for a Just Society," Moral Education, ed. Ralph Mosher (New York: Praeger, 1980) 35.

³². Rosemary Chamberlin, Free Children and Domestic Schools: A Philosophical Study of Liberty and Education (New York: The Falmer Press, 1989) 4.

³³. John Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed," Dewey and Education, ed. M. Dworkin (New York: Teachers College Press, 1897).

This theory of education makes students aware of the delicate and powerful relationship that exists between individuals. Critical to this argument is the belief that, as people, students must learn to appreciate the positive and negative effects that can result from a misinterpretation of this relationship. For this reason, William Galston believes democratic education stands for, "Devotion to human dignity and freedom, to equal rights, to social and economic justice, to rule of law, to civility and truth, to tolerance of diversity, to mutual assistance, to personal and civic responsibility, to self-restraint and self-respect."³⁴

This theory says society is responsible for constructing a system of education in which tolerance and mutual respect for reasonable differences of diverse viewpoints and marginal groups is established and maintained. Gutmann believes the resulting effect is "conscious social reproduction."³⁵ Through democratic education, people are empowered to influence the society that shapes the political values, attitudes, and modes of behavior of future citizens.³⁶ Things which are socially fundamental and have to do with experiences of universal application are the essentials. Things that represent the needs of specialized groups should be examined in terms of how their unique characteristics help to establish a more stable society. Freire argues that, "There is no freedom without authority, but there is also no authority without freedom. . . . Freedom and authority cannot be isolated, but must be considered in relationship to each other."³⁷ Freedom entails acknowledging and critiquing the merit of difference.

There must be some restriction of individual freedom, because people cannot all be free to do as they want. Yet as Gutmann states, "A substantial realm of political authority is essential to both the

34. William Galston, "Civic Education in the Liberal State," Liberalism and the Moral Life, ed. Nancy Rosenblum (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1989) 92.

35. See Chapter Four of this project for a definition of this term.

36. Amy Gutmann, Democratic Education (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987) 14.

37. Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 179.

future freedom of children and their welfare as citizens."³⁸ If anything, democratic education provides people with a greater variety of future choices by exposing them to more information. Henry Giroux believes this is the purpose of questioning existing power structures and ways of doing things.³⁹ Through education, students can learn to be critical of their world. By assimilating more knowledge, students are freed from traditional group constraints. Thus, they have greater freedom to choose their actions and goals. As a result, each individual is given the opportunity to construct a better future community.

STRUCTURE OF DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION

Democratic schools--"Cluster Schools," "Just Community Schools," and "Alternative Schools"--establish a curriculum that acknowledges the social responsibilities of education by presenting situations where problems, observation, and information are calculated to develop social insight and interest. They advocate nonviolence, mutual respect, and religious tolerance. As a result, such schools do more than teach about democratic citizenship. They, themselves, are small-scale democratic societies. All aspects of school activities are governed by liberal democratic principles. According to Mary Hepburn, "Acting democratically means pursuing personal goals while remaining respectful of the goals of others, and tempering one's actions through considering the consequences to society if all acted in the same manner."⁴⁰ Democratic education provides the intellectual foundations upon which a liberal democracy can secure social and political freedom.⁴¹

38. Amy Gutmann, "Undemocratic Education," Liberalism and the Moral Life, ed. Nancy Rosenblum (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1989) 73.

39. See Henry Giroux, Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life: Critical Pedagogy in the Modern Age (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

40. Mary A. Hepburn, ed., Democratic Education (Washington D.C., 1983) i.

41. F. Clark Power, Ann Higgins, and Lawrence Kohlberg, Lawrence Kohlberg's Approach to Moral Education (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989) 25.

There are four unique results of this type of participatory and individually powerful style of education. First, since democratic education encourages the questioning of authority, it teaches the ability and will to question oneself to avoid the danger of slowing the progress of intellectual development. Democratic education teaches students a form of "intellectual disobedience," in which students learn how and when to resist and challenge aspects of their society.⁴² Second, it promotes the idea that rights are not an individual possession, but rather examples of what everybody should be allowed to do under similar circumstances. These rights deserve protection to ensure that they apply to you personally. This reinforces democratic education's belief that by respecting the welfare of other members of society, personal welfare will be mutually protected.

Third, democratic education reinforces the need for patient and reasonable thought before acting. It encourages the postponing of immediate action upon desire, until observation and judgment have intervened. As a result, schools take on the role of fostering conversation about directions in society. Education becomes a mode of assessing one's own interests and needs, listening to and trying to understand others, and balancing conflicting points of view in a fair and cooperative manner. Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, individuals in society begin to notice that the life of the nation never depends upon one factor alone, but upon the interpretation and combination of diverse components. Through experiences in school, individuals become more aware of the interdependent relationship that exists between their lives and the lives of others.

CONCLUSION

From the scope and direction of this introduction, one can easily see the complexity of the issues covered by a discussion of democratic civic education. In each subsequent chapter, I attempt to further identify and clarify the themes of self and society, individualism and community, and authority and citizenship that have been introduced here. Furthermore, I seek to explain and apply

42. Nyberg and Farber, "Authority and Education," 10.

some of the tenets of democratic civic education in an effort to cultivate civic and social awareness. As Shor states, "Education is more than facts and skills. It is a socializing experience that helps make the people who make society."⁴³ To gain a better understanding of these issues, let me turn to Chapter Two, which deals with John Dewey's explanation of the tension that exists between the individual and the community.

⁴³. Shor, Empowering Education, 15.

Chapter Two:
John Dewey's Vision of Educating the Individual

INTRODUCTION

John Dewey explores the role education plays in promoting the establishment and continuation of a democratic life. Dewey believes the growth and development of an individual is intrinsically and fundamentally linked to the evolution of society. Only after an individual identity is established that defines societal freedoms can a democratic community be created. Neither the individual nor society can effectively and efficiently exist apart from the other. Democracy will only emerge if a situation is created in which the relationship between a person and her community is stressed as being fundamental. He feels education can develop a powerful individual character, capable of social action and insight in relationship to other individuals in the community. Dewey's forward-looking vision focuses on nurturing an individual's social and civic development.

To this end, the interaction between school and society should enable students to deal with a diverse and changing world. In order for a person to be adequately prepared to participate in and contribute to this relationship, he must be educated to take responsibility for both self and society. Only through seeing oneself as part of a larger society will the creative link between the individual and the community come to life. Dewey sees the process of being socialized by other human beings, through communicated and shared experiences, as both necessary for and a condition of a democratic society.

In this chapter, I will examine Dewey's theory of democratic education. After discussing his definition of democracy and the role that education can play in instilling this vision of civic and social life in the community, I will voice my concerns about this philosophy by applying it to the issue of "multiculturalism." Dewey believes that individualism is the key ingredient in a democratic life. My reservation about this concerns whether and how this individualism steps over the boundaries of community behavior.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF DEWEY'S WORK

Dewey wrote about America and its educational system during the first part of the twentieth century. It was a period of rapid

industrialization and economic development in the United States. This increasingly urbanized society reflected the sophisticated, complex, and complicated way of life that dominated the daily activities of its citizens. In many ways, Dewey's theory of education represented a critique of the problems inherent in these communities. Through the course of industrialization, individuals were losing a sense of extended community. The individual as a member of society was coming to see herself in terms of a local, impersonal identity. Instead of being a member of a large group of diverse individuals, each citizen was becoming a single member of a large group of similar people.¹

Dewey's Democracy and Education (1916), Theory of Moral Life (1916), and Experience and Education (1938) all point out and give solutions to the growing sense of isolation present in society. Dewey's theory of democratic education can be seen as reconstructing the "American Dream" to overcome this sense of isolation and despair; he felt that an individual's only hope was to see himself as part of a larger community. By stressing the creative relationship and connections that exist between an individual and the community, Dewey believed personal growth and societal development could be achieved.

DEWEY'S VIEW OF DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION

The vision of democracy proposed by Dewey is neither easy to identify, nor straightforward in its construction. It does not have as its foundation steadfast postulates and assumptions. Conversely, his philosophy of a democratic life is not void of ideals and morals. Rather, Dewey's "democracy" is based on a faith in the possibilities of human nature. Democracy is more than a form of government. It is a way for humans to live together. Dewey places his trust in the abilities and decisions of individuals in society. No matter what mistakes are made, he feels the individual and the community as a whole will be better off in the long run. In his thinking, democracy is a statement of the kind of relationships that should exist in a

¹. See Lawrence Cremin, The Transformation of The School (New York: Vintage Books, 1961).

community. A democratic society will only exist if the characteristics of equality, opportunity, mutual respect, and self-esteem are pervasive in the contacts and interactions between human beings. The development of human decency, respect, and responsibility are prerequisites for a meaningful life.

The best way to cultivate an individual's ability to live and communicate with other human beings is through education. In Democracy and Education, Dewey points out that living things maintain their existence through a process of self-renewal. For humans, this process involves the transformation of life from its present situation to future applications. Life encompasses all customs, institutions, ideas, beliefs, activities, cultures, hopes, dreams, practices, suffering, happiness, and thinking possessed by members of society. The combination of these diverse factors creates a situation in which living in concert with other individuals produces a community.

This community is unique to, and a product of, the influences that shaped and now interact within its boundaries. To maintain and enhance the growth of individuals in the community and the community as a whole, a social apparatus is needed to act as a guide for discussion and examination. The school's role is to supply this forum for community life. Dewey states, "Education, in its broadest sense, is the means of this social continuity of life."² Education provides an opportunity for individuals to discuss and negotiate the differences and difficulties that will arise in a social relationship. It serves as a chance for students to interact with others as individuals. It also acts as a place where the individual can contribute to the structure and direction of the group. This situation contributes to the community's present state being given greater depth and meaning to its future existence. According to Dewey, a school's purpose is to "balance the various elements in the social environment, and to see to it that each individual gets the opportunity to escape from the limitations of the social group in which he was born."³ Education

². John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: The Free Press, 1916) 2.

³. Dewey, Democracy and Education, 20.

should enable children to translate and negotiate their personal interests and abilities into positive relationships with other citizens in society.

Dewey's belief that society is a function of education comes from the school's position in the community.⁴ Education's role is to provide for the very existence of society. In essence, Dewey argues that society should result from an education that promotes the recognition of individual interests in light of common goals. This characteristic of education needs to be utilized to develop the children of today into the adults of the future. As stated previously, Dewey views educating children as a process of transformation and self-renewal. He argues that society is constructed on,

Beings who are born not only unaware, but quite indifferent to, the aims and habits of the social group have rendered cognizant of them and actively interested. Education and education alone spans this gap.⁵

Through school, the young immature child acquires a level of self-recognition and awareness of others that allows him or her to contribute actively and productively to society. The result is a community that possesses the diverse inputs, constituted in its citizenry, to maintain its very existence.

The chief responsibility of society toward its young is to enable them to contribute to a shared life based on active participation.⁶ To this end, the community must be constructed along principles that ensure, on a private and public level, democracy. In this sense, democracy is defined by the degree of involvement and extent of participation of every individual in society. Cornel West states,

⁴. For a discussion of this issue see Frank Lentricchia, Criticism and Social Change (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1983); and Kenneth Burke, Attitudes Towards History (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961) 331-332.

⁵. Dewey, Democracy and Education, 2.

⁶. To gain a more postmodern and radical interpretation of the relationship between knowledge (education) and the ability and power to contribute to society; see Michel Foucault, "Two Lectures," in Power and Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, ed. C. Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980) 82-83.

For Dewey, the aim of political and social life is the cultural enrichment and moral development of self-begetting individuals and self-regulating communities by the means of the release of human powers provoked by novel circumstances and new experiences.⁷

Those people who are affected by the processes and decisions of that community must have the right and ability to make positive contributions to it. Thus, the community, which consists of individuals, is a cooperative enterprise. Neither the individual nor community can exist independently from the other. Rather, there must be a fundamental connection between the two.

INDIVIDUALISM AND COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

In Dewey's concept of democratic life, the connection between people is based on individualism and commitment to the community. He defines individualism in terms of every person having the right and ability to pursue her beliefs and activities within the confines of a commitment to the society. For example, a person who has an interest in developing a machine that will aid in the suicide of the terminally ill must keep in mind the consequences (personal and public) of such actions. An individual who has the skills and expertise to grow larger vegetables must consider how this will affect other farmers in society. Dewey believes individualism, based on human "uniqueness," is essential to the creation and preservation of a democratic society.

He also stresses the need for commitment in society. He defines commitment in terms of what an individual must sacrifice in order to remain a member of the community. This might mean stopping a certain action, or refraining from saying something harmful to

⁷.Cornel West, The Evasion of Philosophy: A General Genealogy of Pragmatism (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1989) 103.

Although West praises Dewey's efforts to solve problems of social, economic, and cultural conflict, he is somewhat critical of his methods of promoting change. Essentially Dewey adopts a gradual view towards change; he is a reformer and not a revolutionary. Because Dewey does not fully embrace confrontational politics and social struggle, West feels Dewey's efforts to establish creative democracy are weakened. (p. 102)

another. In either case, something is given up for common good of society. In addition, Dewey feels society has a commitment to preserve and protect the individual. The community must not only allow for the existence of individual difference, but it must also encourage and foster these variations in the individual. In some cases, this may threaten the existence of society. But only by managing the interest of its citizens in relationship to the community as a whole will a democratic society be created.

This is what Dewey means by a "democracy." A society in which the relationship of the individual and community--all other individuals in society are facets of the community--is such that the interplay between individualism and commitment coexist and promote each other: "We must realize the fact that regard for self and regard for others are both secondary phases of a more normal and complete interest, regard for the welfare and integrity of social groups of which we form a part."⁸ In this situation, the individual will, the commitment to society, and society's commitment to the individual do not conflict. If there is a conflict, the creation and maintenance of a democracy will not be attained.

However, this does not mean that no tension exists between individualism and a commitment to the community. Individual identity and the authority to act as one wishes is constantly being negotiated in light of collective goals and beliefs. The interplay between individual and community commitment is the foundation on which a democratic society is based. The individual, and the community, only exist because of the other. As Sandra Rosenthal points out, "Not only can selves exist only in relationship to other selves, but no absolute line can be drawn between our own selves and the selves of others."⁹ For this reason, a delicate balance between these competing characteristics must be reached to limit the destructive possibilities.

⁸. John Dewey, Theory of Moral Life (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1960) 163.

⁹. Sandra Rosenthal, "Democracy and Education: A Deweyan Approach," Educational Theory, Fall 1993: 377.

THE NEED FOR INTERDEPENDENCE

Individuals need to make a commitment to their communities. Here, communities are defined as the relationship that is created between a group of individuals. These groups are formed as a result of collective and individual action in shared experiences and activities, and common interests and goals.¹⁰ In every level of a person's life, he is a participant in a community. Examples of communities are husband and wife, family, neighborhood, town, state, cultural group, or religious affiliation. Some of these communities are of the individual's making. In other communities, the individual has little say in their formation. No matter what the circumstances, a social and civic bond is created. It is a bond built on the interplay between individualism and commitment.

When two people come together through shared experiences, both the individual and the community benefit. A dual purpose is served. Not only is the development of the individual enhanced, but the relationship is also strengthened. As a result, the future well-being of the community is ensured. Although people may not be born into a community of their making, they must have the right to use their abilities to cultivate it into a collective image. The image takes into consideration the interplay between individualism and commitment. This interplay, fostered by education, is the foundation of a democracy.

In Democracy in Education, Dewey criticizes the lack of democracy that exists in his society. Writing in the early part of the twentieth century, he had grown to adulthood during the peak of the industrial revolution. His world was based on specialization and the division of labor. In all facets of life, these characteristics dominated thinking and activities. It was believed the most productive and efficient way for individuals to contribute to society was through repetitively performing one task. The individual's relationship to society and society's relationship to the individual was based on

¹⁰. Here the identity of the individual helps to shape the identity of the group. How each person sees himself or herself determines how the group as a whole views itself. In addition, it helps to define how the individual as a result views himself or herself.

performing this one activity. The individual's obligation to her fellow human beings was to be fulfilled by becoming the very best at what she did. Conversely, society's obligation was to provide the social apparatus that allowed this to occur. In most cases, this meant maintaining law and order, or creating productive working environments. The goal was to allow these tasks to be performed with utmost efficiency.

Dewey does not reject this relationship out of hand. Rather, he questions the viability and vitality of a society based on specialization. He argues that this kind of society tends to become static and sedentary. It does not possess the creative and collective ability to react and adapt to changing circumstances. Because all individuals have highly developed abilities in specific skills areas, they lack a commitment to the society. Each person is only interested in his own situation. There is no common interest in the community. Conversely, society lacks a commitment to the individual. Because both the individual and society are obligated to the other group, the connecting bond in the relationship is based on dependency. Neither the individual nor society has the freedom to act or react to new variables. When problems occur, neither group has the necessary skills to adapt to and change with the alterations that arise in their community.

In essence, Dewey says, a society based on specialization is a good starting point, but it does not constitute a democratic life. Rather, society and education must be based on a "social environment that forms the mental and emotional disposition of behavior in individuals by engaging them in activities that arouse and strengthen certain purposes and enact certain consequences."¹¹ To this end, society must be organized around the principle of interdependency. Interdependency cultivates and promotes a connection between individuals.

DEMOCRATIC SCHOOLING

Interdependency, one of the basic principles of a democratic life, is grounded in Dewey's vision of education. He believes

¹¹. Dewey, Democracy and Education. 16.

education should be based on the cultivation of flexibility in the individual. By empowering the individual in relationship to others, the community, as the whole of its parts, will be strengthened. Through education, humans should develop critical and reflective skills in their thinking and actions. By fostering the "plasticity" of individuals, a system of education can promote the growth and development of society. "Plasticity" refers to an individual's "capacity to retain and carry over from prior experiences factors which modify subsequent activities."¹² By developing an individual's ability to see the relationship between past, present, and future experiences, a certain level of critical adaptability is created. This allows individuals, and for that matter their communities, to change in a reflex response to new experiences. It gives people a greater ability to participate actively in the decision-making processes of the community.

Education provides each individual with the opportunity to develop the associative life skills of social and civic responsibilities in the community. Each member of a democratic society gains the ability to negotiate the opportunities and difficulties encountered in life, in such a way that they do not become obstacles to the growth and development of the individual or society. For Dewey, "The idea of education advanced . . . is formally summed up in the idea of continuous reconstruction of experience."¹³ To attain this goal, education must encourage a variety of experiences. This will challenge individuals to think, adapt, and react to changing circumstances.

Dewey advocates a system of education based on the principles of interaction, continuity, and examination. The most obvious way to attain this aim is by creating an environment in schools that provides for a plethora of experiences. Dewey points out that, "These more numerous and more varied points of contact denote a greater diversity of stimuli to which an individual has to respond; they

¹². Dewey, Democracy and Education, 46.

¹³. Dewey, Democracy and Education, 80.

consequently put a premium on variation in his action."¹⁴ Thus, education stimulates and directs the responses that foster the evolution of the individual in society. This promotes a greater reliance on the recognition of mutual interests within the community. Only by strengthening this relationship will individualism and community commitment prevail.

The curriculum of a democratic school must provide for the presence and analysis of varied experiences. Because a democracy is a combination of diverse individuals, different experiences, and various view points, so must its system of education contain the same apparatus of discussion and interaction. In addition, it must provide opportunities and methods that foster its own growth and development. There are two ways in particular this growth happens. First, the experiences that occur are chosen based on a specific criteria. Second, the scientific method is utilized as a lens through which these experiences are viewed. Because it is constantly being used to improve future events by analyzing present activities, the scientific method, as a form of experimental education, is for Dewey fundamentally connected to the idea of democracy.

When choosing activities, educators must take into consideration studies and experiences that enhance the continuity and interaction of the individual. These experiences must improve the common life people presently live, and enhance their well-being in the future:

The curriculum must be planned with reference to placing the essentials first, and refinements second. Things which are socially fundamental, that is, which have to do with the experiences in which the widest groups share, are the essentials. The things which represent the needs of specialized groups and technical pursuits are secondary.¹⁵

As a result, the activities of a school need to promote and involve the process of inquiry, investigation, and experimentation. Individuals

¹⁴. Dewey, Democracy and Education, 86.

¹⁵. Dewey, Democracy and Education, 191.

will develop the ability to see the backward and forward connection that exists between what they do and what happens as a result.

The ability to see the cause-effect relationships present in society produces the other necessary component of a democratic form of education. The scientific method cultivates a detailed and straightforward form of inquiry for individuals. It provides them with a means of examining and evaluating the merits of an experience. When utilized by people on a universal basis to interpret experiences, the scientific method makes the various factors constituting the community clearer and more meaningful. It gives students the ability to find points of contact and mutual understanding between experiences in life. As Dewey states, "Men's [sic.] fundamental attitudes towards the world are fixed by the scope and qualities of the activities in which they are part."¹⁶ As a result, use of the scientific method provides for endless experimentation in and examination of life.

In essence, the curriculum of a democratic school needs to be as varied and diverse as the individuals that are taught. As a result, democratic education can not afford to be static. It must be constantly adjusting and re-adjusting to new experiences. Just as the individual is being shaped and changed, so also is the educational system: "A curriculum which acknowledges the social responsibilities of education must present situations where problems are relevant to the problems of living together, and where observation and information are calculated to develop social insight and interest."¹⁷ Any subject or experience that accomplishes this goal is fundamentally democratic. Training in science, math, art, history, social studies, and foreign language provides individuals with the methods of analysis and inquiry that are essential to communication and interchange between individuals in the community. In this way, the individual takes on a position of responsibility to both self and society.

¹⁶. Dewey, Democracy and Education, 135.

¹⁷. Dewey, Democracy and Education, 192.

In this same line of thinking, Dewey says a democratic society is one in which there is freedom from the constraints of authoritarian control. He believes a democracy based on individualism and commitment is just such a community. As I stated above, the tension that exists between the individual and the community, and between self and society provides the spark that fuels personal growth and societal development. Only when a delicate balance is maintained between these conflicting desires will democracy result. In this type of community, the social ideal is based on individual difference. Here people are allowed to make decisions for themselves, rather than having the decisions made for them by other individuals. "The two points selected by which to measure the worth of a form of social life are the extent in which interests of a group are shared by all its members, and the fullness of freedom with which it interacts with other groups."¹⁸ Thus a person's decision indicates a true commitment to the fundamental principles of society, and yet the decision-making process is a product of individuality. It stresses, therefore, the fundamental principle of democracy: the balance between individualism and a commitment to society.

This definition of democracy suggests that all members of society should have the freedom and ability to play a role in the essential activities that are fundamental to its existence.

A society which makes provision for the participation in its good for all its members on equal terms and which secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through interaction of the different forms of associated life is in so far democratic. Such society must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social change without introducing disorder.¹⁹

Dewey believes that individualism and a commitment to community are the key determinants in ensuring the change from

¹⁸. Dewey, Democracy and Education, 99.

¹⁹. Dewey, Democracy and Education, 99.

dependency to interdependency. He draws a delicate line, however, between specialization that results in dependency of individuals on each other and the development of social characteristics that encourage the growth of interdependency. He feels citizens in a democratic society must not only be able to perform their own duties to self and society effectively, but they also must be able to fulfill the responsibilities of other individuals with a similar degree of aptitude. This argument can be seen in Dewey's discussion of the role of science in education.

Students will not go so far, perhaps, in the "ground covered", but they will be sure and intelligent as far as they do go. And it is safe to say that the few who do go on to be expert will have a better preparation than if they were swamped with a large mass of purely technical and symbolic information.²⁰

Here, he points out the value and importance of students being exposed to a variety of experiences. Dewey feels it is better for individuals to start out being good at a few things than being great at one thing. As a result, it fosters individualism--it encourages the independent processing of information.

The way in which this information is processed is determined by the type of education present in society. If it is a system of democratic education, then a democratic society will be the product: "A progressive society counts individual variations as precious since it finds in them the means of its own growth. Hence a democratic society must, in consistency with its ideal, allow for intellectual freedom and the play of diverse gifts and talents in its educational measures."²¹ This is how Dewey believes the growth and development of a free and independent individual is accomplished. Only through a system of education that values diversity and difference in relationship to the community as a whole, will a

²⁰. Dewey, Democracy and Education, 221.

²¹. Dewey, Democracy and Education, 305.

democratic society be created. It will be a society in which neither the individual nor the community takes precedence.

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION

As mentioned above, Dewey argues that society should be a function of its educational system. In this regard, the structures and ideologies that are pervasive in society should result from the kind of education children receive in school.²² Therefore, the child is a product of his educational environment. The activities and subjects covered inside the classroom shape and direct development. They formulate the way people respond to the world. However, this is not to say that the system of education exists independently from society. Rather, the educational system and society exist in concert. Each provides the opportunities for, and conditions under which, growth and development of the other can occur. As with individualism and community commitment, school and society can not exist apart from each other. In Dewey's philosophy, education takes the leading role in this relationship.

But society is a function of education only where a democratic ideal already exists. A community can not have a form of democratic education without having some type of democracy present. A society can not have some form of democracy unless there is a democratic form of education.²³ In Dewey's words,

The aim of education is to enable individuals to continue their education--or that the object and reward of learning is continued capacity for growth. Now this idea cannot be applied to all the members of a society except where intercourse of man with man is mutual, and except where there is adequate provision for the reconstruction of social habits and institutions by means of wide

²². This is a clear change from the present situation in which the characteristics of society are instilled by television, peers, and family. Dewey is not saying this is wrong. Rather, he is saying schools need to take a more active role in the process.

²³. Which raises an interesting question: Where does the United States stand with respect to this question? Essentially, I see the principles that are needed for a democratic community already existing in our society. The problem now is to incorporate better them into the educational system so that education takes on a more progressive role in shaping society.

stimulation arising from equitably distributed interests. And this means a democratic society.²⁴

In essence, all members of a democratic society have the right to an education which enables them to make the best of their own abilities. Through participating actively in the community, this will occur. The individual develops by extending his or her range of experiences, and by entering into cooperative relationship with other individuals. The community grows through the advancement of its citizens. Thus, a social bond, based on interaction and shared experiences of the community, is created. This brings the individual closer to the community and the community closer to the individual.

Education fills the essential role of acting as an agent for democracy. It makes life for the individual and the community more meaningful. By providing certain types of experiences in the classroom, it enables a person to see that human nature is not fixed. Rather, these experiences provide individuals with the chance to negotiate the contradictions and conflicts of life. Thus, students are given the chance to develop the skills needed to live within the structures of society. Dewey states, "The one thing every individual must do is to live; the one thing that society must do is to secure from each individual his fair contribution to the general well being and see to it that a just return is made to him."²⁵ Schools permit individuals to use their abilities in such a way as to take control of their own actions, while adapting to a changing society. In addition, education grants people the power to initiate and direct these changes.

CRITIQUE

There are two areas in particular that concern me about the relationship between democracy and education articulated by Dewey. First, the basis of Dewey's idea of a democratic society is the interplay between individualism and community commitment. The delicate balance between these competing desires is to be negotiated

²⁴. Dewey, Democracy and Education, 100.

²⁵. Dewey, Democracy and Education, 215.

through a process of democratic education. How effective and efficient is this relationship going to be? If society is a function of a system of education that must foster a balance between self-gain and commitment to other individuals, what is the consequence if this condition does not exist? How realistic is his vision of a "democratic" life?

I think Dewey believes that democracy, in one form or another, is constantly present in society. Dewey is concerned with the extent to which this plays a role in directing the growth and development of society. He feels that only through a conscious and directed effort by all members of a community will the democratic relationship be pervasive in society. In some way, this is true. Democratic ideals of equality and participation are present in society. It is human nature to want to become part of a larger group, to join in and be involved. However, what needs to be kept in mind is that the transformation from these feelings to acting democratic is left up to the individual. In addition, these decisions are only democratic if all individuals stand on an equal footing, with similar power and influence. How do we predict what the response will be to these actions?

Second, I also question how inclusive is the society Dewey describes. If we take into consideration that he was writing during a time when society was dominated by white heterosexual males, we must be concerned with who exactly is included in the "democracy" Dewey wants to nurture and develop. When he talks of a society based on individualism and commitment, to whose individualism and commitment is he referring?

In my opinion, Dewey is including every individual in society within his vision of democracy equally. To this end, he is including all groups in the decision-making power structure. Today, he would welcome the involvement and contributions of all individuals in society. The diverse experiences, attitudes, and viewpoints of these individual are on what a democratic society is based. These differences, encountered in school, are what encourage students to become more reflective and analytical in their thinking. The ability to think and be active in society is part of what cultivates democracy.

WHAT ABOUT MULTICULTURALISM?

Perhaps more than any other issue, multiculturalism captures the tensions that develop when we try to negotiate the delicate balance that exists between self and society, between the individual and the community. In essence, a positive discussion of multiculturalism is based on the ability not only to draw and define a line that exists between individualism and a commitment to the community, but also how drawing this line helps promote further individual growth and societal development.

No matter what the issue--diversity, gender equity, or politically correct speech--Dewey would be a supporter of the discussion. He would believe that only by raising these issues, which hold meaning to both the individual and the community, would democratic society be created. As Hilary and Ruth Anna Putnam argue, "Dewey's view is that the more interests are shared and the freer the interaction with other groups, the better the society."²⁶ However, in each of these discussions, Dewey would stress the primary role played by the individual.

I suspect that Dewey would feel that only after the individual has established enough self-esteem and self-awareness to participate actively, with equal power and voice, would it be appropriate to discuss how individual diversity can be utilized to create a more dynamic community. Because a pluralistic society--which is in essence what multiculturalism is trying to create--entails not only the presence of different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups, but also respect for and understanding of diversity by every individual citizen of the community, a sense of self-confidence must first be established.

This is one of the motivating factors fueling the "politically correct" movement. Certain people's and groups' critical ability to question the power structures of society have convinced the community that certain language is destructive to the empowerment of individuals and groups. It is destructive to an individual's ability

²⁶. Hilary and Ruth Anna Putnam, "Educating for Democracy," Educational Theory, Fall 1993: 371.

to develop a powerful and unique sense of self. Derogatory words not only hurt the present position of citizens, but they also are deleterious to the individual's future ability to play an active role in shaping the community. From Dewey's perspective an effort to prevent this from happening is true democracy. Although I would not disagree with this argument, I would feel uneasy about restricting an individual's right and ability to express herself in the way she see fit.

This uneasiness arises out of a fundamental disagreement I have with Dewey's argument. It is my belief that an important characteristic of individuality is self-control--the ability to stop and think before taking action or speaking. I feel the only way someone will develop a minimum level of self control is by making mistakes--mistakes of saying or doing inappropriate things. Only through action, or interaction, will the individual understand and see where other people come from, and how they are similar to each other. To this end, what a person says--either correct or incorrect--holds value as a tool of learning. Here learning is defined in terms of discovering what is appropriate to say in the context of a shared community. Thus, the individual develops the skills to live in harmony with other citizens. By restricting what a person can say, we are restricting this process of individual development.

CONCLUSION

Dewey's philosophy of democratic life is based on the idea that neither the individual nor the community can exist apart from the other. In the same regard, education and society cannot exist independently from the other. He feels the interplay of both variables in these relationships are essential for the creation of a democracy. In Democracy and Education, Dewey puts forth a philosophy of democratic education that focuses on the growth and development of the individual in the community. In this way, he hopes to foster a more socially and civically aware citizenry. A society that not only recognizes its own interests as a collective community, but also honors the individual interests of its

contributors. "How can there be a society really worth serving, unless it is constituted of individuals of significant qualities?"²⁷

By focusing on the individual's development within the context of society, Dewey illustrates his tendency to view the individual as being of greater importance than the community. The individual is the building block of any civic and social relationship. Only by giving persons the ability and opportunity to grow and develop can a better society exist. The lack of this relationship is what Dewey saw as wrong with his society. West points out, "He [Dewey] thought that the crisis of American civilization was first and foremost a cultural crisis of distraught individuals, abject subjects, and ruptured communities alienated from their own powers, capacities, and potentials."²⁸ Dewey thought individual development empowered each citizen to take a more active and meaningful role in the community. He believes that only by adequately preparing students to take on the varied experiences, through a democratic form of education, will a democratic society result.

In spite of his strong focus on individual development, questions about the role that the community plays in fostering democracy and promoting democratic education remain. By examining the work of Lawrence Kohlberg, these questions can perhaps be addressed.

27. Dewey, Democracy and Education, 121.

28. West, Evasion of Philosophy: A General Genealogy of Pragmatism.

Chapter Three:
Lawrence Kohlberg's Negotiation of Self and Society

INTRODUCTION

Which is of primary importance, the individual or the community? Can either entity exist apart from the other? Must the growth of a person, or the group, be established before the other can start to develop? Is a person's maturity a pre-requisite for, or a product of, an advancing society? The relationship between individualism and a commitment to the community is a recurring theme in theoretical literature as the relationship between democracy and education. The negotiation of the conflicting forces of self and society in Lawrence Kohlberg's "just-community" approach to moral education is the focus of this chapter.

These struggles are not isolated to society in general. Rather, the give-and-take relationship between the individual and the community is also played out in the classroom. Kohlberg seeks to construct a form of education that rectifies some of these conflicts.¹ His philosophy of education is a variation of John Dewey's theory of democratic education. He believes the school plays a crucial role in shaping the growth and development of the individual in relationship to society. But more importantly, it also plays a leading role in negotiating society's relationship to the individual. While Dewey stressed the need for the evolution of a democratic spirit in the heart and mind of the individual, Kohlberg focuses on the need for the advancement of a democratic way of life in society. Dewey focuses on the individual, while Kohlberg stresses the community. The negotiation of the conflicts that arise over this tenuous balance lies at the foundation of any democratic way of life.

In this chapter, I will examine Kohlberg's contributions to the theory and practice of democratic civic education. Starting by identifying how and why Kohlberg argues the community takes precedence over the individual, and then by pointing out specifically how this differs from the ideas of Dewey, I will introduce the topic of moral growth and its significance to education. From there, I describe the structure and purpose of "just-community" schools and critique

¹ F. Clark Power, Ann Higgins, and Lawrence Kohlberg, Lawrence Kohlberg's Approach to Moral Education (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

Kohlberg's thinking. Finally, I conclude the chapter by revisiting the issues of multiculturalism introduced in the last chapter, and raise questions about the relationship between authority and citizenship in community life.

SOCIETY OVER SELF

Every day, when children go to school, they are learning. Both tacitly and explicitly, they are learning about themselves and society. In some cases, students learn from the facts and figures they memorize. In other cases, they learn from the different ways in which this information can be utilized. Sometimes, students learn from the people with whom they come in contact. Other times, they learn by participating actively in the experiences inherent in life. Within the four walls of the classroom, students learn in direct and indirect ways. To this end, the argument has been made that merely by going through the routines of daily school activities, children are acquiring the skills that are required for a positive and productive contribution to society.² How valid is this argument?

What role should schools play in society? Should the school be utilized as an institution of individual growth and development, or should the school be employed as an instrument of societal change? Should schools take a leading role in directing the course of personal advancement, or should the classroom be constructed to establish the community bonds of commitment? Should the school help to foster the development of individuals to their highest potential, or should the structure and activities of the school provide the ideals and structures on which a better society can be formed? Is the purpose of education to produce students with the highest individual intellectual achievement, or is the purpose of school to produce citizens who are good members of a community?

². This argument represents the belief that "education is a function of society" (i.e. education instills the beliefs, values, and practices that society sees as important). Both Dewey and Kohlberg adopt the theory that "society is a function of education" (i.e. society represents what education determines as being necessary for it to survive). As a result, they feel education should be more pro-active and less reactive than it has been historically. The debate revolves around whether education should act as a force of change in society, or as an institution that re-enforces what is already present in society.

Each of these questions is an off-shoot of the tension between self and society. For this reason, none of them is mutually exclusive. Rather, in all cases, these issues occur in concert with each other. They are variations of arguments that arise when the struggle between individuality and community is highlighted.

As I have argued above, Dewey believes schools should help to develop and enhance the individual's growth. The individual's learning, accomplishments, and advancement are the primary aim of society. In contrast, Kohlberg believes the function of education is to promote the development of the community as a whole. Although Kohlberg stresses the importance of individual development, this came only as a result of the development of society. Only after the community is established, can individualism be fostered. Kohlberg feels school should help provide individuals with the skills and opportunities that enhance the advancement of society.

Writing about the changing United States society during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, Kohlberg saw the school's role as constructing the characteristics and parameters of community life.³ In essence, Kohlberg's theory of democratic education stresses the need for schools to cultivate the student's natural interaction with a developing society. The school should provide experiences in which the individual can acquire the necessary skills to live actively and in harmony with his fellow citizens. Only by being exposed to the limits of behavior, boundaries of actions, and interests in community life, would a truly democratic society be created. In this way, the community takes on superior importance in relationship to the individual. Furthermore, as argued by Kohlberg, a democratic way of life must be established before the individual's development flourishes. The individual's position in life is determined by the growth of society.

³. In many ways, Kohlberg's writing reflects the conclusion of the conflicts that arose when 1950s conservatism came up against 1960s radicalism. The result was 1970s liberalism, which represented an altered and updated "American Dream." It was a vision of society that no longer represented hope and possibility for every citizen. Rather, society had become more exclusive and discriminating.

Kohlberg contributes to the evolution of "democratic education," by exploring the ideas of individualism and commitment, and of self and society, in an educational setting. His focus on moral development gives a theoretical basis for Dewey's philosophical arguments for active, experience-based education. Kohlberg's concept of participatory democracy in school is necessary for the advancement of a theory of education that stresses the inter-connectiveness of self and society. His work points out the relationship between the group and the individual. In essence, Kohlberg develops the idea that only within a stable and productive relationship with society will an individual be able to advance to his or her highest level of development.

There are two characteristics of human nature that Kohlberg claims are essential to the maintenance of a relationship that stresses the importance of the society over the rights and privileges of the individual. First is the concept of reciprocity. Kohlberg argues that the threat or perceived threat of how others will respond and react to an individual's actions is an effective deterrent against abusive or irrational behavior. "Reciprocity between the individual and others in his social environment"⁴ is sufficient to create a standard of community behavior.

The second characteristic that Kohlberg identifies is a commitment to collective life. In any society, there is tension between the individual and the community. It is a reality of group life that neither the individual nor the group can survive apart from the other. Therefore, limits exist on the community's authority over the individual, and on the individual's freedom to act within the confines of the community. As Emile Durkheim states, "In order to commit ourselves to collective ends, we must have above all a feeling and affection for the collectivity."⁵ Kohlberg uses these principles as

4. Lawrence Kohlberg and Rochelle Mayer, "Development as the Aim of Education," Harvard Education Review, 1972: 129.

5. Emile Durkheim, Moral Education: A Study in the Theory and Applications of Sociology of Education (New York: The Free Press, 1961) 239 in Lawrence Kohlberg's, "High School Democracy and Educating For A Just Society," Moral Education: A First Generation of Research and Development, ed., Ralph Mosher (New York: Praeger, 1980) 54..

the basis for his theory of democratic education. In it, he focuses on the need for the creation of norms, or boundaries, of societal behavior. Only after people have accepted the fundamental principles of society as the basis for their individual actions, will a democratic way of life be reached.

HOW DOES KOHLBERG DIFFER FROM DEWEY?

These two characteristics, reciprocity and a commitment to collective ends, illustrate the fundamental difference between Dewey's and Kohlberg's conceptions of democracy. Dewey believes democracy is a direct product of the individual. Only when an individual is given the chance to grow in accordance with her own wishes, talents, and desires, will democracy be a possibility. He stresses the unique and free evolution of the individual as the foundation of the community. In contrast, Kohlberg believes that only through establishing guidelines, or rules of behavior within society, will the individual be given the opportunity to develop to her full potential. The individual grows only within the confines of pre-established boundaries, which have been collectively accepted.

Before I proceed any further in discussing the ideas and practices of Kohlberg, I feel it is necessary to make a crucial statement about his view of democracy. Kohlberg is an ardent supporter of democracy, and argues that a democratic way of life is essential to the creation of caring and productive individuals. As Kohlberg states, "Dewey maintains that a concern for self and a concern for others are not mutually exclusive, but can and should be integrated into a larger concern for the community in which self and others are a part."⁶ To this end, Kohlberg sees the community as not a threat to individuality, but as the context in which the individual can develop. He argues that an individual's growth can only occur within the structure of society's development. Only after society was established, based on the principles of democracy, can productive individuals come to inhabit the community.

To reiterate, herein lies the fundamental difference between the thought of Dewey and Kohlberg. While Dewey feels individualism

6. Kohlberg, Lawrence Kohlberg's Approach to Moral Education, 49.

is the essential characteristic of society (if this was all that was achieved, then at the very least the source of development would be present), Kohlberg feels that a sense of community is essential (at least this provides a framework for growth). This is where Kohlberg makes his most powerful and lasting contribution to the idea of democratic civic education. His theory establishes the necessity and purpose of civic and social responsibility. Without developing these skills, Kohlberg believes there is no future for a democratic way of life.

EDUCATION'S ROLE IN THE NEGOTIATION OF SELF AND SOCIETY

Kohlberg believes the school serves as a crucial connection between the family and the outside world. It can provide experiences that are beneficial both to the individual's growth and to the development of society. Education can play a central role in children coming to see and accept some of the restrictions on behavior that are essential to the establishment of a democracy. To this end, he examines how the school can be constructed to promote the moral development of individuals in harmony with the advancement of society. "There is a great concern . . . to educate so free and just people emerge from school."⁷ Thus, Kohlberg focuses not only on the curriculum, activities, and issues of the classroom, but he also considers the atmosphere of the learning community. His goal is to establish a learning community where the moral development of individual students allows them to negotiate the difficult and complex relationship between self and society identified by Dewey.

Traditionally, schools have been institutions that are based on authoritarian control and autocratic decision-making. They are formed around an inferior-superior relationship between students and teachers. All the decisions about a student's learning are made by the teacher for the student. The student has little say over what transpires inside the classroom. For that matter, the individual student has even less say in the atmosphere of the school. Therefore, "students are left with the choice of passively obeying, actively

7. Kohlberg and Mayer, "Development As the Aim of Education," 147.

rejecting, or subtly undermining the staff's decisions. . . . Insofar as students stand outside the decision-making process, they will not feel responsible for the decisions that are made."⁸ Furthermore, these same students fail to recognize and appreciate the relationship to commitment that exists between individual students in the classroom and in the school at large.

To tackle this problem, Kohlberg formed "just-community" schools in an effort to increase the level of empathy, recognize the viewpoints of other students, and raise the moral awareness that exists between members of society: "Increasing students' moral awareness includes recognizing the rights and claims of others, as well as one's responsibilities and obligations to them."⁹ Participatory democracy is the primary way Kohlberg sought to persuade students to take a greater degree of responsibility for their actions. His schools are based on the idea that every member of the learning community needs, and has the right, take an active role in the decision-making process of the school. In addition, to get students to see how the decisions they make as individuals might affect the larger society, Kohlberg stresses the need for frequent evaluation and discussion of the school's activities. His philosophy of education highlights the need for students to gain a greater sense of equality and shared responsibility in the classroom and in the school.

Kohlberg is a supporter of Dewey's concept of development as the aim of education. Like Dewey, Kohlberg advocates students participating actively in their development. Therefore, he believes education should provide experiences in which students' must observe, think, analyze, react, and comprehend. Only by putting students in situations where they must negotiate new realities or ways of thinking, will they develop the skills and abilities necessary to participate in a democratic life. To this end, Kohlberg feels it is important for students to recognize the shared responsibility of their actions; not only how they affect their own lives, but also how they

⁸. Richard H. Hersb, Diane Pritchard Paolitto, Joseph Reimer, Promoting Moral Growth: From Piaget to Kohlberg (New York: Longman Press, 1979) 235.

⁹. Hersb, Paolitto, and Reimer, Promoting Moral Growth, 245.

may affect the lives of other individuals. Here is where he feels the birth of a community occurs. Kohlberg sees moral development as the key determinant in obtaining an understanding of the interconnected roles of the individual and society. Skills of moral reasoning and thinking are essential to a person's ability to navigate the conflicts of individualism and commitment to community.

WHAT IS MORAL GROWTH?

Kohlberg's theory of education is based on the importance of promoting students' moral development. It is his belief that a certain level of moral understanding is needed for an individual to make a positive contribution to society. The level of moral development that Kohlberg hopes students in high school will attain is one in which respect for law and order, authority, and the free enterprise system is valued as a necessity of democratic life.¹⁰ Thus, Kohlberg seeks to create a type of educational community that would allow moral development to be reached as a result of the social atmosphere present in school.

It is his contention that moral growth can only occur in the learning process if active problem-solving is utilized in conjunction with abstract reasoning. Therefore, Kohlberg argues for the presence of the "real life" situations of democratic and moral decision-making to permeate every aspect of the activities, curriculum, and atmosphere of the school community. He believes schools must "introduce the powerful appeal of the collective, while both protecting the rights of individual students and promoting moral growth."¹¹ In order to reach this dual goal of fostering moral growth and developing individualism within the confines of society, Kohlberg's "just-community" schools focus on the shaping of students into multifaceted human beings.

A democratic form of education should allow for the continuing evolution of all aspects of an individual's life. Intellectually, emotionally, socially, and morally, education must foster the growth

¹⁰. This is "Stage Four" of Kohlberg's six-stage taxonomy of moral development.

¹¹. Kohlberg, Lawrence Kohlberg's Approach to Moral Education, 53.

of an individual to her full potential. The goal is a "complete" person-complete in terms of attaining the highest levels of development they are capable of in all domains. Such a person is not only capable of actively contributing to society, but she can also help to shape and direct the advancement of the community. Kohlberg believes that the level of a person's moral development is essential to her ability to take on the added rights and responsibilities of a fully contributing member of society. Over the course of his career, Kohlberg adopted two ways to facilitate moral development.

Originally, Kohlberg utilized the work of Jean Piaget that focused on moral development.¹² Kohlberg came to view the movement of an individual from "heteronomy" to "autonomy" as the starting point of a democratic society. In "heteronomy," right was literal obedience to the rules that had been imposed by a higher authority. This external morality was based on a complete submission to an outside force. In contrast, "autonomy" was doing something because it was right based on one's self-directed feelings.

For autonomous individuals, the purpose and consequences of following rules in terms of how individual action affects the group are informed by considerations of reciprocity. The decision to act in a certain way is based on mutual respect. It is reached through mutual consent of action. Piaget points out, "As soon as we have cooperation [mutual consent], the rational notions of the just and the unjust become regulative custom, because they are implied in the actual functioning of social life among equals."¹³ Using this logic, Kohlberg originally assumed that the best way to create a moral democratic society was by raising the moral level of the citizenry. As with Dewey, the community would be a sum of its individual parts.

After experiences in an Israeli kibbutz, a Connecticut jail, and the original "just-community" schools, however, Kohlberg came to see the problem of primarily focusing on the individual as the key component in the creation of a democratic society. The problem arose over the difficulty of getting enough students to the level of moral

¹². Jean Piaget, The Moral Judgment of the Child (New York: The Free Press, 1964).

¹³. Piaget, The Moral Judgment of the Child, 74.

development that was needed to act democratically. As a result, Kohlberg revisited the work of Emile Durkheim.¹⁴

Originally, Kohlberg had rejected Durkheim's views on moral education, because they stressed the need for people to subordinate their individual needs and desires to the common good of the community. After his initial educational work, however, Kohlberg began to see the power of the community as being essential to individual development. Durkheim states,

Education must help the child understand at an early point that, beyond certain contrived boundaries, that constitute the historical framework of justice, there are limits based on the nature of things, that is to say, in the nature of each of us.¹⁵

On a basic level, the individual is the building block of the community. Nevertheless, the individual can only develop to maturity within the confines of the society of which he or she is part. Therefore, Kohlberg believes society must establish limits of behavior before an individual can grow as a result of societal influences.

THE STRUCTURE OF KOHLBERG'S SCHOOLS

To develop a sense of the restrictions which govern a person's actions in society, Kohlberg's theory of democratic education is based on participation. "Just-community" schools are almost completely governed by the student body. Either through advisory meetings, community meetings, or disciplinary meetings, students make most of the decisions. The democratic process is valued because it is a means of promoting an understanding of our political system, it secures order in the community, and it establishes a level of harmony and cooperation in the school. In addition, these forms of active involvement empower students in relationship to their learning. When adolescents are involved in democratic decision-

¹⁴. Emile Durkheim, Moral Education: A Study in the Theory and Applications of Sociology of Education.

¹⁵. Durkheim, Moral Education, 38.

making, they are being respected as capable and autonomous individuals.

Issues of stealing, drug use, student punishments, student activities, curriculum choices, and length of the school day are utilized as opportunities to discuss and reason in a moral fashion. These experiences help to determine why certain decisions are better for the community as a group and for students as individuals. In each case, the students are the final determinants of action. At these schools, participation in the process of democracy is paramount. Every student, teacher, and administrator works towards the goal of fostering moral development.

For Kohlberg that means educational democracy: schools in which everyone has a formal equal voice to make rules and in which the validity of the rules are judged by their fairness to the interests of all involved. If the best learning is learning by doing, then students can best learn justice not only by discussing its claims in the abstract, but also by acting on its claims in the here and now of the school day.¹⁶

This participation forces students constantly to be aware of how their actions will be perceived by or affect the group. Eventually, Kohlberg believes this will lead to a more democratic way of life.

The curriculum by itself is not powerful enough to enable students to negotiate the difficult issues of self and society. The subjects in the classroom are not sufficient to foster change. Rather, the atmosphere of the school is what is critical. Kohlberg states

We have attempted to establish schools that do more than teach about democratic citizenship, that are themselves democratic societies. Instead of relying on clubs, sports, and various extracurricular activities to promote student relationships of friendship and care, we have tried to build community through the entire school day.¹⁷

¹⁶. Kohlberg, Lawrence Kohlberg's Approach to Moral Education, 25.

¹⁷. Kohlberg, Lawrence Kohlberg's Approach to Moral Education, 1.

Thus, individualism and commitment are negotiated through active participation in the experiences of school.

Kohlberg does not simplify Dewey's concept of democracy to the act of voting on issues; his view is far more complex. Like Dewey, Kohlberg feels that "real" democratic life only emerges in a society in which individuals are able to see the relationship between self and society.

Democracy means more than giving everyone a vote. It is a process of moral communication that involves assessing one's own interests and needs, listening to and trying to understand other's, and balancing conflicting points of view in a fair and cooperative way.¹⁸

Only when a majority of people have the ability to reason and respond to experiences in a rational way, to consider how both the individual and society will be affected, will democracy emerge. The "just-community" concept of education is an attempt to open students' eyes to this process.

Kohlberg thinks a democratic society is furthered by two overarching principles: justice and care.¹⁹ His idea of education seeks to create situations in which the principles of justice and care are instilled in the student body. Remember, Kohlberg is a supporter of Dewey's claim that "education is a process of living, not a preparation for future living." Therefore, education provides students with a way to be citizens of a democracy right now. Kohlberg's theory forces students to play a self-directing role in their own education. The aim of this process is an education that is explicitly moral. He states,

The focus of our study is on the norms and values that regulate discipline and social relationships in schools--what is sometimes called the 'hidden-curriculum' of moral education. The democratic processes that we are aimed toward are making that curriculum more visible so that together students and staff can deliberate and

18. Kohlberg, Lawrence Kohlberg's Approach to Moral Education, 32.

19. Carol Gilligan, In A Different Voice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

change it to reflect more adequate principles of justice and care.²⁰

Here Kohlberg is referring to the capacity of individuals to value and evaluate characteristics of fairness, concern for others, empathy, shared responsibility, cooperation, mutual obligation, and democratic participation.

CRITIQUE

No matter how appealing the theories of Kohlberg's "just-community" are, there is one area of his teachings that provokes concern. His concept of education is founded on the principle of individual moral growth. Like Dewey, he believes that the advancement of an individual's ability to reason and think morally, within the confines of the community, is the basic ingredient for a democratic life. Only by fostering a person's moral skills and attitude will a school be fulfilling its role in society. However, in contrast to Dewey, who believes individualism helps to establish students' behavior, Kohlberg feels that the common boundaries of the community promote individual growth. This is the purpose of "just-community schools." They provide the arena and context in which an individual's moral development can take place.

What is interesting is how this process is carried out. Dewey says the best way for a democratic society to be created is through the development of each individual member in the community--by strengthening each person, the whole is made better. Only by giving people the opportunity to enhance their own unique skills and abilities, according to a self-directed and self-motivated plan, will a truly democratic ideal be created. Through inquiry, questioning, analysis, examination, and thought, brought together by being exposed to a diversity of experiences in school, individuals gain the necessary skills and abilities to participate and contribute to the growth of a democratic society.

Although Kohlberg stresses the importance of individual moral development, his "just community" schools focus on the community's

²⁰. Kohlberg, Lawrence Kohlberg's Approach to Moral Education, 3.

growth as being of primary importance. While Dewey puts forth the idea that the community can only exist after, and as result of, individual growth, Kohlberg puts forth the idea that the individual can only exist after, and as a result of, the growth of the community. Dewey stresses individual development over the community, while Kohlberg stresses the community's development over the individual.

Kohlberg's focus on defining democracy based on the society as being of greater importance than that based on the individual can be very dangerous. It can lead to indoctrination. It can lead to conformity and constraint of individual development. Instead of individuals developing on their own accord and acting in their own way, the community forces them to develop in compliance with societal norms. This form of thinking, which requires as a precondition for individual development, a pledge of commitment to the larger community, can be utilized for destructive means. Kohlberg recognized this risk, but felt it was overcome by the benefits. But there is, nevertheless, a distinct possibility that this line of reasoning could be manipulated for divisive behavior. What makes me uneasy about some of the ideas put forth by Kohlberg, is that this behavior can be not only deleterious to the community, but also is destructive to the individual.

MULTICULTURALISM REVISITED

If we turn our attention again to the topic of multiculturalism, we can gain a better understanding of where Kohlberg stands and what implications his theory has for the practice of democratic civic education.

I believe Kohlberg's focus on the community as a prerequisite for individual development would act as a barrier to the spread of diversity throughout the society. Inherent in multiculturalism is the importance of individuality. Before a person can become part of the community, she must be able to understand, respect, and articulate a clear and concise sense of self, a sense of self that may be viewed as a threat to the primary characteristics of the community. For this reason, Kohlberg would see multiculturalism as something that must wait until after the boundaries of the community are established,

instead of an instrument that could be utilized to establish these parameters in the first place. Although this is a valid argument, it contradicts the primary tenets of multiculturalism.

To this end, although teachers and schools have the responsibility to teach values, morality, and a commitment to society, they do not have the right to impose any way of thinking on their students. The problem with Kohlberg's argument is that individual democracy can only come after a democratic community is created. My concern is that this may never occur. People will enter into a relationship in which they sacrifice many of their individual rights for the collective responsibilities of the society. However, they may never see the community reach the level of development where individuality is allowed to foster and flourish. As Ann Higgins readily admits, "Given a conflict between the interests of the collective and the rights of the individual, students would probably be so over-committed to the collective's perspective that they would undervalue even the legitimate claims of the individual."²¹

However, Higgins also points out that this danger is not a result of conformity to values or norms of behavior imposed by an absolute authority figure. Rather, it arises because human are social and collective beings. They enjoy working and acting in groups. Furthermore, individuals take action and make decisions based on the principle of reciprocity. As Higgins states,

Kohlberg's position provides a way out of the bind of how to teach moral values without imposing them on children. By promoting the development of their native sense of fairness, the teacher is not imposing any value content on the students, but is preparing them to better comprehend and then appropriate the principle of justice.²²

²¹. Ann Higgins in Lawrence Kohlberg's Approach to Moral Education.

²². Ann Higgins in Lawrence Kohlberg's Approach to Moral Education.

People have a desire to be fair and just in their behavior to other individuals in the group. In general, people act in ways that benefit society, even if it means sacrificing some individuality.

This is one of dangers of multiculturalism. The conflicting feelings citizens have for self and society make it difficult for order and cohesion to be maintained. Kohlberg is correct in worrying about how new ideas may lead to personal disillusion and community confusion. However, he is not correct when he uses these concerns to override the benefits of individualism which result from multiculturalism. To this end, my reservations regarding Kohlberg's educational approach still stand.

CONCLUSION

The discussion of the conflicting priorities of self and society, and of individual and community, are essential to the theory of democratic education. Is society a composite of its inhabitants, a sum of its parts, or are individuals a product of their community? Are they a result of a common influence and experience? This debate is essential to Kohlberg's theory. The dichotomy between individual freedom and the demands of the community that was introduced by Dewey takes a central position in "just-community" thinking. Schools provide forums that facilitate the growth of moral reasoning. This growth, in combination with democratic experiences of the school community, foster a spirit of care and justice in student's minds. In the words of Ralph Mosher, "A democratic community will share many common interests which require the individual member to consider the views, wishes, and claims of others relative to these common concerns."²³

Kohlberg could not decide whether stressing individual or community development was the top priority in the creation of a more democratic society. Nevertheless, he did focus on the need for participation in the processes of education. He states,

The fundamental aim of education is development and development requires action or active experience. The

²³. Kohlberg, Lawrence Kohlberg's Approach to Moral Education, 236.

aim of civic education is the development of a person with structures of understanding and motivation to participate in society in the direction of making it better and a more just society. This requires experiences of active social participation as well as the learning of analytical understanding and moral discussions of legal and political issues.²⁴

Kohlberg sees this as being essential to the growth and development of the individual and society.

The way in which these concerns and issues are negotiated is what is important. If decisions are made on an individual basis without outside interference and pressure, then individuality is being stressed. If decisions are being made or imposed on individuals from above or without, then the community is being stressed. The interplay between self and society is central to any discussion of democratic education. The leading role of the individual or the community in this process is still being debated. As one student said about "just-community" schools, "Education should teach an individual how to make choices, not what choices should be made."²⁵ Because the school is the first institution that a child encounters in which he is an individual and not a member of a group or family, it represents the larger society to the child. By going to school, the child learns to fill the expected roles and fulfill the required responsibilities of a member of society.

The school provides society with the opportunity to direct the development of future generations. Educational institutions can help shape what society becomes. One primary way this responsibility is carried out is through the negotiation of self and society. By providing experiences of personal and social empowerment, schools give students the opportunity to balance the conflicting forces of individualism and community. However, there is the possible threat of one side dominating the agenda. This is the danger of Kohlberg's

24. Kohlberg, "High School Democracy and Educating For a Just Society," 32.

25. Kohlberg, Lawrence Kohlberg's Approach to Moral Education, 212.

approach, that it may stress the community disproportionately over the individual.

Democratic education should provide children with the social and intellectual skills to function as productive members of the community, as political participants, and as self-directed individuals. Schools need to teach students about the way the world works and to prepare them to influence it. Being a member of society requires some basic skills: critical judgment, social awareness, connection to community, and strong values. This is the role of education. Lawrence Kohlberg's "just-community" approach is an attempt to empower students to contribute actively to a democratic way of life. Kohlberg's stress on community rather than the individual is one of many ways to negotiate the shifting forces of self and society. This focus on the power of the community, however, raises interesting questions about the relationship that exists between the individual and the community, where issues of freedom, authority, and citizenship are concerned. Turning to the work of Amy Gutmann and Henry Giroux may help to clarify and remedy these concerns.

Chapter Four:
Amy Gutmann's and Henry Giroux's Views of
Authority, Freedom, and Citizenship

INTRODUCTION

How does an individual decide whether to pursue his personal plan of development? Should he grow in harmony with and at the same pace as society? Should a student question the statements that are made by teachers only when he knows that they are incorrect, or should the pupil disagree when he feels the teacher might be wrong? Does a member of a community have the right to doubt the tenets of the society and still contribute to societal and individual advancement? Can a society establish guidelines of behavior and still promote individuality and collectivity?

If democratic civic education is to provide students with the social and intellectual skills needed to function as productive members of the community, as political participants in the process of government, and as self-directed individuals, the negotiation of self and society that Dewey and Kohlberg discuss needs to be governed by three principles: authority, freedom, and citizenship. These elements of democracy are essential to the navigation of the conflicts that arise when schools attempt to teach students about the way the world works. In addition, they must be understood to enable the same students to influence and change how it works. Since each person is educated through experience, and each of our lives is constituted by varied activities, no one has the same view of how authority, freedom, and citizenship should be defined. Because all human beings are unique individuals, and each person's perspective on life is different, these terms need to be identified and defined in general terms before the process of educating socially and civically aware individuals can be achieved.

In this chapter I will investigate the issues surrounding how authority, freedom, and citizenship can be defined to promote the growth and development of a democratic way of life--a way of life that successfully negotiates the conflicts that arise between self and society, individuality and collectively, in a democracy. By analyzing the ideas of Amy Gutmann¹ and Henry Giroux², I illustrate in what

¹. Amy Gutmann, Democratic Education (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987); and Amy Gutmann, "Undemocratic Education,"

ways these issues are essential to how schools teach children to take responsibility not only for their own lives and actions, but also for the community's construction and existence. After describing the historical context in which they were writing, I identify how Gutmann addresses and how Giroux interprets the ideas of authority and citizenship; I also explore their ideas about civic responsibility, power, voice, community commitment, and individualism. I conclude by discussing once again, multiculturalism. This discussion of authority, freedom, and citizenship helps to clarify further the give-and-take relationship between self and society, and between the individual and the community, that I have explored above, based on the work of Dewey and Kohlberg.

GUTMANN AND GIROUX'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The work of Gutmann and Giroux reflects the conflicts and problems of society during the middle to late 1980s. During the post-Reagan years, the United States experienced a similar sense of loss similar to that with which individuals had dealt during the period of Dewey's work. Not only was there economic depression and stagnation in the community, but there was also a severe lack of hope pervasive in the thinking and actions of citizens. As a result of the despair, poverty, social problems, and human suffering that permeated the psychological well-being of humans, individuals underwent a re-evaluation of the "American Dream." The ideas of Gutmann and Giroux reflect a radical, postmodern perspective of how this "dream" can be reconstituted to form the foundation of a more caring, responsible, and inclusive society.³

Liberalism and Moral Life, ed. Nancy Rosenblum (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1989).

2. Henry Giroux, Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life: Critical Pedagogy in the Modern Age (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

3. The term "postmodern" refers to a school of social and political theory that calls into question the validity and usefulness of "modernism" in society. It attempts to construct a critical perspective based on democratic principles. Essentially, postmodernism rejects any form of totalizing and all-encompassing thought or action. It creates conditions in society in which individuals must make their own decisions without the benefit of fixed references. Usually, postmodernists do not privilege the individual over the

Here is where Gutmann and Giroux make their most salient and powerful contributions to the discussion of democratic civic education. Although they approach the issues of individuality and collectivity from somewhat different perspectives, they serve to advance the understanding of the conflict between self and society into the modern age. To this end, I utilize the work of Gutmann and Giroux to provide a more diverse appreciation for the complexities of these issues. Gutmann and Giroux, like Dewey and Kohlberg, seek to improve the educational system to better enable students to play an empowered and active role in their future communities.

AMY GUTMANN: A POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE ON DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION

Amy Gutmann comes to the task of discussing democratic education from the prospective of a political philosopher. Her view of how education should best be utilized to cultivate the continuing development of American democracy is based on properly preparing students to enter the world outside the classroom. Therefore, Gutmann's ideas of authority, citizenship, self, and society are centered on the principle that the classroom and school environment must cultivate a perception and understanding of democratic life. To achieve this goal, her philosophy of democratic civic education focuses on ways in which the individual can help to foster a more caring and accepting community. Consequently, schools must cultivate more active civically and socially minded citizens.

In persuading individuals to think and act by regarding the value of civic and social considerations, Gutmann focuses her investigation on three issues: authority, freedom, and citizenship. In brief, she believes that authority and freedom are complementary principles. They refer to the guidelines, or boundaries, that regulate the behavior of individuals in society. These rules, or principles, of

society. Rather, they see society and the individual as being inseparable, in constant contact and interaction. Here, however, Gutmann and Giroux clearly privilege individualism over communitarianism. See Henry A. Giroux, "Postmodernism and the Discourse of Educational Criticism," Journal of Education (Boston: Boston University School of Education, 1988) 5-30.

individual action are to be put in place to ensure that all members of society are given an equal opportunity to make a positive and active contribution to the present activities and future events of the community.

This is connected to her definition of citizenship. In essence, citizenship involves following these parameters of action. A "good" citizen is someone who has agreed to accept and adhere to these boundaries of behavior.⁴ "Good" does not mean simply doing what one is told. It means believing what one is told without questioning or analyzing it. However, true citizenship inherently entails the members of society having an equal say in what these guidelines of community action will be. Without this determinant, citizenship is little more than a tacit approval of authoritarian rule. It is certainly not a quality of democratic life.

Adopting some of the arguments that Kohlberg utilizes in his justification of his "just-community" approach to education, Gutmann claims that the primary way to ensure that individuals have a say in shaping the scope and direction of their shared society is through participation. However, she does not simplify this argument, as Kohlberg does, to mean a participatory form of government and decision-making. Rather, Gutmann recognizes that this simplified means of creating democracy in a community is superficial and circumspect. She states, that because "democratic societies therefore prevent majorities (as well as minorities) from repressing inquiry and restricting political access,"⁵ the democratic ideal entails much more than voting as a means of participation. Instead, a democracy should identify the types of experiences and relationships that equip students with the skills and knowledge to become responsible citizens, capable of adapting to and succeeding in a changing world. This goal can only be reached by preparing students for the conflicts, problems, and decisions they will encounter in life. Extending this

4. Political theorists identify this as the process of accepting "legitimate" authority. Thus, citizens trust in and follow the rules and regulations that have been established by other people. We shall come to see that Gutmann has developed a more empowering definition of "citizenship."

5. Gutmann, Democratic Education, XI.

argument to its logical conclusion, I believe that an understanding of the struggle between self and society, between the individual and the community, is paramount to obtaining and sustaining a democratic life.

To this end, schools play a central and powerful role. The goal of democratic education, in Gutmann's view, is to help students to realize that the world and individuals do not exist apart from each other. Neither the community nor the individual can prosper without the input and guidance of the other.⁶ Therefore, she sees the need for people to be empowered before they can influence the growth and development of society. Basically, empowerment comes about in school by developing the intellectual capacity and moral reasoning skills that enable students to be critical thinkers. Schools need to develop the self-esteem and mutual respect of citizens by getting them to question the existing power structures, the "right" ways of acting and of doing things, and the "voices" that are being spoken and heard. Much like Dewey, Gutmann believes it is important to focus on the intellectual, moral, and spiritual strengths of individuals (dominant and sub-dominant, rulers and ruled, adults and children) to determine the basic ideals and attitudes on which a community should be based.

The central way Gutmann sees people being empowered to act and react responsibly and intelligently is through a process of "conscious social reproduction."⁷ A democratic theory of education focuses on what might be called "conscious social reproduction"--the ways in which citizens are or should be empowered to influence the education that in turn shapes the political values, attitudes, and

6. This is similar to the postmodern relationship between structure (society) and agency (individual). See Henry Giroux, "Postmodernism and the Discourse of Educational Criticism," 15; and Peter MacLaren, Life in Schools: An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the Foundations of Education (New York: Longman, 1989).

7. This is in contrast to political socialization that is labeled as "unconscious social reproduction." In the "conscious" process, actions and beliefs are examined, while in the "unconscious" process individuals produce, imitate, and copy what is happening in society without thinking. See Gutmann, Democratic Education, 15.

modes of behavior of future citizens.⁸ In this view of development, every social influence, relationship, and experience serves the purpose of providing a means of shaping, reshaping, or directing the growth of the community. Educational activities and instruction are very important to this procedure. What happens in the classroom is an integral part of preparing students to take control of, and responsibility for, their community. These experiences serve as steady and recognized initiatives to provide the skills and critical ability to make society more inclusive and productive.⁹

HENRY GIROUX: A RADICAL DEFINITION OF AUTHORITY, FREEDOM, AND CITIZENSHIP

Much like Gutmann, the focus of Giroux's argument is an attempt to reinterpret the ways freedom, authority, and citizenship are defined. Specifically, he wants to see how these terms can be identified and utilized to reinvent a democratic ideal in the community. As a result, he believes that the school plays a central role in implementing the redefined meaning and characterization of authority and citizenship. Giroux makes the claim that schools need to be institutions of "emancipatory authority and citizenship." The reason for this is that "schools are one of the few sites within public life in which students, both young and old, can experience and learn the language of community and democratic public life."¹⁰ Because the society that we inhabit is becoming increasingly diverse, there is a need to learn to live with, and accept, these variations in life. The movement to a more multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-faith society demands it.

⁸. Gutmann, Democratic Education, 14.

⁹. In contrast to Dewey and Kohlberg, Gutmann sees education as a tool that can be utilized to sustain change in society, i.e. "education is a function of society." Traditionally, most educational reform has been result of a change that has occurred first in society. For this reason, the focus of Gutmann's argument is society in general, and education in particular. On the surface, this may seem less radical than Dewey's or Kohlberg's thinking. However, Gutmann stresses the necessity to change by any means, on a large-scale and societal. In contrast, Dewey and Kohlberg see change on the small-scale and localized.

¹⁰. Giroux, Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life, XIII.

Giroux sees this happening only by tearing down the old constructs and pillars of society. He recognizes that schools are reproducing the unequal, subordinating, and silencing power relationships that have historically caused conflict.¹¹ The social relations of sexism, racism, class discrimination, homophobia, xenophobia, and ethnic prejudice are prevalent in society. These characteristics have caused communities to evolve without mutual respect, care, and compassion. They have thus been incorporated into the educational system without being addressed, examined or criticized.

It is the discourse of uneasy harmony, one that smoothes over the conflicts and contradictions of everyday life with an appeal to teaching tradition and character development. . . . A pedagogy of chauvinism dressed up in lingo of the Great Books [tradition] presents a view of culture and history as if they were a seamless web, a warehouse of great cultural artifacts. No democratic politics of difference is at work here.¹²

This is the problem with education. Instead of being used as an instrument of change, it has been utilized as a tool of conformity.¹³

Giroux claims that a constant renewal, revitalization, and re-inventing (an active and informed criticism of the community) is needed to remedy these situations. To do this, he adopts Dewey's idea of individual development as being the key to empowering students to become active and creative members of society. As discussed above, this idea is the cornerstone of Dewey's concept of democracy. Where some people would make the claim that the individual must lie within the confines or "walls" of the group, Giroux argues that society's very existence is determined by the dynamic qualities of its citizens. The questions of how to live, what to do, the best way to behave in terms of the society and the individual is, and

¹¹. This similar to Gutmann's identification of "unconscious social reproduction." See Footnote Seven.

¹². Giroux, Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life, 19.

¹³. This is an example of "education as a function of society."

what the boundaries of action are, are connected to where one lives. Giroux is not referring to the actual physical location of one's home, or the city or state from which an individual comes. Rather, a person's position in life, how one lives, is determined by the social, cultural, and economic relations they have had with other individuals. The group--either in terms of family, ethnic, or defining characteristic--dictates a person's power to act and react. Only by freeing citizens from the discriminatory power relations that are inherent in present relationships will a better community be constructed in the future.

Like Gutmann, Giroux's view of education's role in shaping a democracy is based on the idea that schools serve as a source of hope and possibility. The activities of the classroom can be utilized to transform society. School is one of a few places where citizens can participate in the experiences that enable an individual to make a positive contribution to the community.¹⁴ His commentary on the United States' system of education is only radical in terms of how explicit its prescriptions for change are. Essentially, Giroux observes that the school, as a social institution, is capable of directing and guiding the growth and development of society.¹⁵ He is not naive enough to believe that education is a nondiscriminatory endeavor; nor does he see the methods of educating for a democratic society as equalizing or non-repressive. He states, in fact, that "it is within the dialectic of oppression and transformation that the language of critique and possibility as the precondition for resistance can be learned and practiced in the context of everyday life."¹⁶ Therefore, Giroux feels the history of subordination and silencing of individual

¹⁴. It is even more true than the "political processes" of society. It is my belief that there is the potential for more people to come in contact and be empowered through education than through the process of voting and serving in government. For this reason, schools fill the role of reaching and serving the democratic needs of society.

¹⁵. In contrast to Gutmann, Giroux's view of education's role in society is similar to that of Dewey and Kohlberg, i.e. he believes ideally in "society as a function of education." Although both Gutmann and Giroux are working to achieve similar goals, this difference in thinking is important to bear in mind when discussing their ideas.

¹⁶. Giroux, Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life, XI.

and collective voice provides the source for developing a more productive form of education and democratic life.

FREEDOM AND AUTHORITY

Gutmann argues that one of the primary ways education makes the community more inclusive and negotiates some of the tensions that arise between self and society is by defining the relationship between freedom and authority. Freedom entails the right and ability to behave as a rational and individual actor. Freedom allows a person to make decisions based on her outlook on life. Furthermore, freedom demands the removal of restrictions on thought and action. In contrast, in most circumstances, authority entails a restriction of behavior. Authority regulates and determines what type of activity and thought--freedom--is allowed. By doing this, the foundation of the community is established.

Paulo Freire argues, however, that freedom and authority are not necessarily exclusive and conflictual. Rather, he believes they are characteristics of a community that can only exist in concert. "There is no freedom without authority, but there is also no authority without freedom freedom and authority cannot be isolated, but must be considered in relationship to each other."¹⁷ Only if certain restrictions on behavior are established, will a person's rights and responsibilities be protected from encroachment and danger exerted by another member of society. Furthermore, the vitality and creativity that assures a society's existence and development can only be reached if freedom is present. Freedom entails recognizing and examining the merit of difference of behavior and thought. Only by allowing and valuing this diversity, will a more democratic community be created.

It is also necessary to understand Giroux's perspective on these same issues. Historically, people have viewed authority in restricting terms. It has been seen as setting limits, necessary or not, on behavior. Conservatives have defined authority in terms of what positive and necessary parameters of behavior are established. Seen

17. Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Continuum Press, 1970) 176.

as belonging to the state, government, or people in power, authority is essential to negotiating the conflicts that arise between the individual and the community. Most of the time, these disagreements are decided in favor of the actor with greater power and influence. Liberals, though, have defined authority in negative terms. They see authority as oppressive government control of their freedom to act, think, and live the way in which they want. To liberals, authority is problematic, because it limits their ability to act and challenge injustice in the community.

Giroux, however, defines authority in liberating and emancipatory terms. His view of "emancipatory authority" is based on the idea that some level of authority exists in all human relationships. In every contact a person has with another person, the principle of authority is negotiated. In the ideal case, each party comes together to form a bond on which the relationship is based. Theoretically, in establishing these bonds, something is given up and gained by both parties. To either party, this might mean sacrificing freedom of action in order to make collective decisions. Furthermore, it might also mean taking on additional responsibilities, for the privilege of leading a group of people. In personal relationships, teacher-student relationships, or community-citizen relationships, individuals should have equal rights to authority. They should have the opportunity to control and choose when, and what kind of relationships they want to enter. A person who wants to accomplish a particular goal may require guidance or assistance from an outside force. In return, the individual sacrifices some autonomy of action as a condition of receiving assistance. However, this should be a conscious decision that is made by, and not forced on, the individual. This condition would result in an increased level of responsibility, accountability, and answerability in society.

Authority is based on the idea of a give-and-take relationship. If this were not true, the community withstood the passage of time. Giroux would counter that this is true only for the dominant groups in society. He states, "We are living in a transitional era, in which emerging social conditions call into question the ability of old orthodoxies to name and understand the changes that are ushering

us into the twenty-first century."¹⁸ Therefore, confusion and irresolute standards of behavior dictate the growth and development of the community. The subordinant and marginalized sectors of the community do not have the power, nor the right, to participate in the decision-making process. In the words of Agnes Heller, "It is not the rejection of all authorities that is at issue here, but the quality of authority and the procedure in which authority is established."¹⁹ Giroux believes that authority needs to be defined in such a way that it expresses the ethic of solidarity, social transformation, and vision of citizenship that are essential for a democratic way of life.

SELF AND SOCIETY: CITIZENSHIP

Students must not only learn to live in accord with the standards of society, but they must also acquire a certain level of character development and moral reasoning to challenge the existing boundaries. In order to question and examine these restrictions critically, there must also be a sufficient level of freedom present in society. It can neither be so great as to threaten authority, nor so small as to silence any member of the community. Rather, there must be a compromise between freedom and authority for a democracy to survive. Here Gutmann sees education playing a key role. "Conscious social reproduction" can only be achieved if all citizens are educated to participate in individually and collectively shaping the society:

Either we must educate children so that they are free to choose among the widest range of lives because freedom of choice is the paramount good, or we must educate children so that they will choose the life that we believe is best because leading a virtuous life is paramount.²⁰

A good life, and a good society of self-reflecting people, requires individual and collective freedom of choice.

¹⁸. Henry Giroux, "Postmodernism and the Discourse of Educational Criticism," 13.

¹⁹. Giroux, Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life, 72.

²⁰. Gutmann, Democratic Education, 36.

On the other hand, Gutmann also describes the need for education to foster and develop the cohesiveness of society. He argues this would create a respect for and understanding of the parameters of behavior established by authority.

The public school . . . aids in shaping social identity of future citizens by cultivating or changing common culture. The common culture has two components: shared beliefs and practices particular to this city-state (such as speaking English and celebrating Thanksgiving) and those essential to any democratic society (such as religious tolerance and respect for the dignity of persons).²¹

Schools need to provide experiences that allow students to recognize common interests among members of society. They must be able to relate these experiences to a consideration of individual interests, in light of an understanding of the interests of others. Both activities must be governed by the principles of nondiscrimination and non-repression. By doing so, education serves to preserve the intellectual and social foundations of democracy. As a result, students are empowered to contribute to a democratic society.

Perhaps the key component Giroux contributes to this "radical," or at the very least "progressive," view of democracy is the way in which he defines citizenship to incorporate aspects of the conflict between self and society. He says that

At issue is the need to develop a form of citizenship in which public language takes as a referent for action, the elimination of those ideological and material condition that promote various forms of subjugation, segregation, brutality, and marginalization, often expressed through social forms embodying racial, class, and sexist interests.²²

21. Gutmann, Democratic Education, 72.

22. Giroux, Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life, 6.

In both the liberal and conservative definitions of democracy, he argues that the rights and responsibilities of the individual take on a subordinate role to the constructs of society. The individual is second in importance to the community. As a consequence, a "good" citizen is a person who accepts the authority and word of more powerful elements of society. These sources of power may be the government, parents, males, Anglo-saxons, whites, or any other dominant group.

Giroux thus defines "emancipatory citizenship" in a different light:

Lost here is the imperative of educating students to affirm moral principles that renounce social injustice and encourage students to become more involved in the world in order to change it an emancipatory form of citizenship that puts equality and human life at its center and equates democracy not with privileges, but with democratic rights that ensure meaningful participation in the political, economic, and social spheres of society.²³

Essentially, this is what is lacking in school and society today. By and large, students have traditionally learned little about the language of community and public association. They have not developed the skills to create and affirm their own stories along with those of others who inhabit different cultural, racial, and social positions. In addition, schools have not taught students how to balance their own individualistic interests with those of the public life. In the 1980s, schools were instilling and perpetuating unequal power relationships.

For this reason, citizenship needs to take on a more active meaning in a democracy:

Citizenship, like democracy itself, is part of a historical tradition that represents a terrain of struggle over the forms of knowledge, social practices, and values that constitute the critical elements of the tradition. However, it is not a term that has any transcendental significance

²³. Giroux, Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life, 14.

outside the lived experiences and social practices of individuals who make up diverse forms of public life.²⁴

As a result, true citizenship must be the product of the individuals that constitute the community. I would argue that Giroux sees this as the role of the school:

Citizenship in this case becomes a process of dialogue and commitment rooted in a fundamental belief in the possibility of public life and the development of forms of solidarity that allow people to reflect and organize in order to criticize and constrain the power of the state and to overthrow the relations which inhibit and prevent the realization of humanity.²⁵

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Giroux criticizes the present system of education, because students are not developing the critical skills of analysis and questioning necessary for full participation in a democracy. Instead of taking everything at face value, as the gospel of knowledge, students must learn--must be taught--to be skeptical citizens; they must learn the powers and the methods of discovery that Dewey stressed as essential for democracy. These skills empower each individual in society to play an active role in determining the activities, growth, and development of her shared community. "Giving students the opportunity to learn by understanding the mediations and social forms that shape their own experience is important . . . because it provides them with a critical way to understand familiar terrain of everyday life."²⁶ As a result, Giroux sees the community as a product of individual and group effort.

To this end, schools must teach students how to question the tenants of society. Gutmann states, "Children must learn not just to behave in accordance with authority, but to think critically about authority if they are to live up to the democratic ideal."²⁷ Kohlberg

24. Giroux, Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life, 5.

25. Giroux, Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life, 6.

26. Giroux, Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life, 105.

27. Gutmann, Democratic Education, 51.

claims that this is most effectively and efficiently achieved by allowing students to have a say in educational activities. He believes that individual children are closest to how things actually are in society. They represent, in school the position that subordinate groups--minorities--occupy in society. For this reason, empowering students in the classroom helps to achieve the democratic goal of giving marginalized groups a voice in the community.

Gutmann disagrees with this argument. She feels the solution to this problem is not giving students equal control over the conditions of their schooling--and by extension, a voice in society. She recognizes that within the classroom there are certain power struggles. Students with higher I.Q.s, or more advanced moral or intellectual development, have an educational advantage over other students. Consequently, they are better able to adapt to and thrive in new experiences. Faced with information and arguments that are used to explain what is being taught and learned, these individuals take on a superior position vis-a-vis their less able, subordinate classmates. As a result, it reproduces the discrimination and conflicts present in society.

By establishing an understanding of the relationship between freedom and authority, Gutmann seeks to illuminate these problems for students, and thus gives students the ability to direct their own lives. This process empowers and enables students to contribute to society. Freire points out that education serves as "the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transforming of their world."²⁸ Only when a negotiated level of freedom and authority is seen as essential to a society is the democratic ideal possible.²⁹

Inherent in this relationship is the necessity of individualism. The individual must construct his own view of reality, power, morals, ethics, respect, and purpose. Thus, in a sense, the individual

28. Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 15.

29. The thinking of Gutmann and Freire is similar because they both feel that only by empowering students--creating an educational environment where all citizens are given the opportunity and tools to contribute on an equal footing--will a more inclusive and vibrant community be constructed.

constructs her own community by building on the framework of society. A person can only do this by destroying the existing power relationships--good and empowering, or bad and subordinating--present in society, and then constructing a new meaning of existence. However, Giroux points out a danger in this approach to democratic life. He says,

If people cannot, will not, or do not identify and socialize personal commitments in public acting, then they cease to be citizens. They are transformed into cunning rationalists, or mere functionalists, no longer the protectors of justice, freedom, and dignity.³⁰

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL IN DEVELOPING CITIZENSHIP

The school is one apparatus that works to bring these conditions into existence. Gutmann believes that the school, as an institution, plays a critical and paramount role in determining how the tension between rights (both individual and collective) and responsibilities (in terms of self and society) is resolved. She says schools must get students "to begin to assume responsibility for the course of their own lives, and to understand that responsibility goes far further than the pleasures of the moment."³¹ Through discussions and activities that focus on social and civic problems, students will see the need to care for, and to act in accordance with, other citizens. This is how she defines citizenship. Citizenship means that an individual recognizes that he can only develop into a "good" person if the community as a whole becomes a better place. Plato also comments on this subject: "Unless children learn to associate their own good with the social good, a peaceful and prosperous society will be impossible."³² By recognizing this need, students will be shaped into civically and socially aware members of society.

Gutmann seeks to create a democratic society that is open in terms of recognizing and accepting the value of difference, and stable in terms of setting up the boundaries of individual behavior in the

³⁰. Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 32.

³¹. Gutmann, Democracy and Education, XI.

³². Gutmann, Democracy and Education, 23.

community. "The ideal of democratic education also insists on instituting a common standard compatible with diversity: children must be able to participate intelligently as adults in the political processes of shaping their society."³³ The school's role in a democracy--to sustain and revitalize the existing tenants of democratic life--is not only to allow less dominant voices in society to speak, but also to persuade the dominant forces to value these opinions. Given the history of discrimination and repression present in most communities, this is not an easy or straightforward task.

Here Gutmann makes an interesting point about education's ability to influence the activities and thinking of individuals. Specifically, she argues, democratic education does not offer solutions to all the problems of society. Rather, this theory considers ways of resolving the conflict between self and society with a commitment to both the individual and the community. To achieve this outcome, she sees education as including every social influence that makes individuals unique members of society.

Pluralism is an important political value insofar as social diversity enriches our lives by expanding our understanding of different ways of life. To reap the benefits of social diversity, children must be exposed to ways of life different from their parents--in the course of exposure--must embrace certain values, such as mutual respect, among persons, that make social diversity both possible and desirable.³⁴

Mutual respect is defined not simply as "live and let live," or "to each his own," but more specifically, as a willingness and ability to adequately regard other reasonable points of view. Although an individual may not accept these characteristics as correct, he must be able to see the purpose and merit of these qualities. As a result,

33. Gutmann, Democracy and Education, XI.

34. Gutmann, Democracy and Education, 33.

individuals must be able to think critically about the rules and regulations that constitute the parameters of society.³⁵

Giroux argues, simply, that schools need to link the critical ability to think and act reflectively to the concept of social change. By convincing students to take risks, question, and struggle with ongoing relations of power, schools can encourage students to alter the circumstances under which they live. As Giroux states, "Central to my concern is developing a view of authority and ethics that defines schools as part of an ongoing movement and struggle for democracy."³⁶ In order to achieve this, many voices and perspectives need to contribute to the decision-making process, to overcome the silences and omissions of past definitions of authority. The knowledge and expertise of women, working-class people, ethnic minorities, and other marginalized groups need to be heard in school!

The curriculum of democratic education plays an important role in attaining this goal. Giroux states,

A curriculum based on an emancipatory notion of authority is one in which the particular forms of life, culture, and interaction that students bring to school are honored in such a way that students can begin to view such knowledge in both critical and useful terms.³⁷

For a democracy to grow and develop, the activities and interactions--planned and unplanned--of the classroom, and of the school in general must promote these feelings. Thus, the skills that are acquired serve to prepare *all* students to develop and maintain the public spheres of a democracy.

CRITIQUE

Giroux and, to a lesser but equally important extent, Gutmann, are correct when they say that citizenship entails considering how one's actions will affect other people. Giroux is also right in saying

³⁵. In this regard, these arguments are applicable to all activities and societies, including personal relationships, power structures, and democratic principles.

³⁶. Giroux, Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life, 72.

³⁷. Giroux, Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life, 104.

that once this consideration is no longer present citizenship disappears, and the individual is then situated outside the boundaries of society.³⁸ However, this change in position says nothing about the destructive characteristics the individual continues to possess. She can still influence the relations and actions of members of society, which is the problem with Giroux's desire to question every element of society. By adopting a "postmodern" perspective, in which a person tears down every tenant and relationship in the community, there may be nothing left on which to build. As Kenneth Gergen states,

For if the subject of knowledge is deconstructed, and the telling cannot in principle be true or false, then all authoritative claims (and claims to authority) are placed in doubt. Scientists, elder statesmen, Supreme Court justices, ministers, rabbis, business leaders, medical doctors, psychiatrists, economists, professors . . . all those traditionally granted status as 'knowing something' are brought into question.³⁹

The divisiveness of "deconstruction," and the possibility of destruction, are thus inherent dangers of Giroux and Gutmann's vision of democracy.

The problem with this approach is that it criticizes and takes apart the existing structures and practices of society without providing any solutions for the future. It does not offer solutions to society's problems that result from conflict between self and society, individuality and the collective. I agree that students must be better empowered to enable them to participate in and direct the community. Gutmann and Giroux illustrate how the present situation does not permit this, and what needs to change to allow for this to happen; neither, however, provides a plan for how this may be

³⁸. This is in contrast to certain postmodern approaches that see the individual in terms of being within, not outside certain configurations of power, space, and place. See Henry Giroux, "Postmodernism and the Discourse of Educational Criticism."

³⁹. Kenneth Gergen, The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life (New York: Basic Books: 1991) 124.

sustained in the future. This is where I will advance the discussion through my perspective on democratic civic education.

WHAT ABOUT MULTICULTURALISM?

Turning our focus once again to the topic of multiculturalism, a better understanding of both the positive and negative aspects of Gutmann's and Giroux's thinking is gained. Both of these theorists share Dewey's assumption that individualism and individual development are the starting points for the development of a community.⁴⁰ For this reason, it is accurate to say they would be strong supporters of multicultural issues of difference and diversity. In this practice, Gutmann and Giroux would find opportunities to establish skills that empower each citizen with the freedom and authority to be an active participant in the activities of the community.

I believe that Gutmann and Giroux are correct when they point out that the power of individualism results from diversity. I think the uniqueness of individuals results from the opportunities citizens have to integrate, reflect on, and modify their own thinking and actions in response to other citizens. However, because both theorists are clearly more radical and explicit than Dewey in their recipes for change, I would modify my thinking with a caveat. In terms of multiculturalism, there must be some built-in guidelines to help sustain the growth and collective development of both the individual and the community--guidelines that would ensure that the collective society does not disappear.

Concern for the collective identity of the community is what has arisen as a barrier to multiculturalism. Certain individuals in society--i.e. people in positions of power--feel apprehensive about the possibility for disorder that may arise out of efforts to diversify society. Real or imaginary, these concerns need to be addressed to provide individual and collective progress. Balancing these concerns is difficult; Gutmann and Giroux do not do so.

⁴⁰. This does not mean they necessarily agree on how to change society, or on who should take the leading role in this change. Rather, they both recognize the necessity of change.

CONCLUSION

The themes of freedom, authority, and citizenship as they apply to the relationship between self and society are paramount to the development of a democratic way of life. An adequate understanding of these principles from Dewey and Kohlberg to Gutmann and Giroux are essential to negotiating the struggles that come between the individual and community. While Dewey stresses the individual and Kohlberg focuses on the society, Gutmann and Giroux identify the important role this conflict plays in preparing future generations of civically and socially aware individuals. As a group, the members of a community must be able to listen to and to cooperate with each other. However, this cooperation is constantly being challenged and renegotiated in terms of the existing struggles for power and voice:

The two most distinctive features of democratic education are its simultaneous refusal to dissolve the tensions between individual freedom and civic virtue in a potent philosophical solution, and its insistence on finding a principled rather than pragmatic way of living with the tensions. Living with tension is not easy, nor is it without sacrifices in freedom and virtue.⁴¹

Gutmann and Giroux stress the need for this situation to be recognized and dealt with.

Therefore, the theories of both Gutmann and Giroux illustrate the need for a more socially and civically aware educational system. Schools need to teach about the human race and its problems, so that people will not find it as difficult to accept ethnic, racial, sexual, and gender diversity. Giroux comments,

John Dewey, in particular, strongly argued that democracy as a way of life is a moral ideal that implies a form of community-in-struggle whose aim is to

⁴¹. Amy Gutmann, "Undemocratic Education", Liberalism and Moral Life, ed. Nancy Rosenblum (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989) 88.

reconstruct human experience in the realization of such principles as freedom, liberty, and fraternity.⁴²

The goal of education is to get students to realize that the world and individuals do not exist on their own. Schools need to be public spheres that educate students to be critical citizens who can think, challenge, take risks, and believe their actions will make a difference in the larger society. The theories of both Gutmann and Giroux identify schools as places that provide students with the opportunity to share experiences and to work in social relationships that emphasize care and concern for others. An educational system that stresses the purpose and means of acting responsibly in a democracy fosters the development of a future society in which all citizens benefit.

⁴². Giroux, Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life, 81.

Chapter Five:
What Does This All Mean?:
My Perspective

INTRODUCTION

Education can be the key to a meaningful life. It should give individuals the opportunity to use their natural talents in a worthwhile manner. Through education, individuals should have the chance to make the impossible possible, the imaginary real. In addition, education serves as a social apparatus that is capable of empowering individuals and shaping the direction and progress of society. For this reason, schools should provide students with the formal structure and guidance to develop their individual strengths while overcoming their inherent weaknesses. What students learn--or do not learn--in school has a lasting effect on their ability to live a productive life, a life that requires citizens to have the skills, knowledge, and experience to become civically and socially responsible at adapting to, directing, and succeeding in a changing world. Therefore, an education that fails to prepare children properly for the conflicts and problems that they will encounter in life is wholly inadequate.

Unfortunately, these issues and concerns are not being widely addressed by much of public education. As the world becomes more socially, politically, and economically interdependent, schools must provide students with a better critical understanding of their own experiences in relationship to society. Thus, formal education must teach students about the powerful bonds that exist between individuals. In addition, schools must educate students about the delicate relationship that exists between individuals and their community. By opening students' eyes to diverse and alternative explanations, education can help society to address, challenge, examine, and create updated values, beliefs, ideals, and practices that more accurately reflect the present problems and possibilities of the community. In this way, students can come to a better understanding of how their own experiences relate to the world and its future.

In this chapter, I will outline the perspective on education that I have constructed to attain these goals. Focused on the high school level, and rather broad in scope, my theory pertains to activities and ideas of democratic civic education. It addresses some of my concerns with the present educational system while providing an

alternative method of teaching and learning that takes into consideration the needs and demands of civic responsibility and social awareness in today's students, as articulated by theorists John Dewey, Lawrence Kohlberg, Amy Gutmann, and Henry Giroux. To this end, I combine Dewey's focus on the individual and Kohlberg's concentration on community growth with Gutmann's and Giroux's concern for authority and citizenship to create my own philosophy of education that reflects the flexible, give-and-take relationship that must exist for students to come to realize that they help to build the community, and the community helps to shape them. As a result, education must take on a life transforming role in society.

My perspective on democratic civic education negotiates the conflict between individual and community commitment, the necessity for authority and freedom, and the desired goals of civic responsibility and social awareness. The aim of my approach is to help foster a society in which people are better able to work and live together, to coexist, and to improve the present and future state of their individual and common lives.

WHAT DO WE KNOW AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

In our present system of secondary education, advancement, success, and achievement have been determined by the grades students receive in specific skills areas--reading and writing in English, computation in math, balancing an equation in chemistry, listing the United States presidents of the twentieth century, or memorizing Spanish vocabulary words. In general, not reaching pre-established standards of performance has meant failure--failure in terms of not fulfilling the expectations for performance established by society.¹ These activities, and the proficiency of performing them, have been utilized as the criteria for "good" citizenship. By living up to these academic demands and preconceptions, it is believed that the individual will make a positive contribution to society. How, however, does this benefit the student when she is in society? More

¹. For more detailed information see National Commission on Excellence in Education, "A Nation At Risk," Kevin Ryan and James M. Cooper, eds., Kaleidoscope: Readings in Education (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1992) 224-234.

specifically, do these skills better enable her to contribute to changing the circumstances, attitudes, and activities of the community?

As I have outlined above, Dewey suggests that a lack of concern and concentration on the individual created the sense of loss that was present in the United States following World War One. Kohlberg argues, however, that by stressing the individual, schools failed to create and secure an accurate community identity. He focuses his theory on the need to build group identity. On the other hand, Gutmann and Giroux see this as a constraining threat to individuality. They focus on the importance of coming to understand, respect, and create a critical perspective on difference in other individuals.

Does the normal educational system achieve and integrate these goals of individualism, collectivity, freedom, authority, and critical perspective that Dewey, Kohlberg, Gutmann, and Giroux articulate? In most cases, today's schools do not. A truly effective approach to schooling must go beyond this basic means of teaching and learning. I am not rejecting outright the value, necessity, and purpose of existing educational activities. Rather, I believe that in the society in which we live, these methods are no longer sufficient to enable students to reach their highest levels of achievement.² These are only part of the equation needed for assisting in the evolution of the world. This is because social development--sensitivity and awareness of the needs of others--has rarely been seen as a part of the traditional curriculum. Historically, the education system has viewed social values--morals, ethics, and concern for human beings--as interfering with the more important objective, mastery of skills.

My theory of education does not present this problem. It recognizes the need and benefit of encouraging and helping students to understand the commonality of human beings. I believe teachers must be open and honest with students. Individuals must treat each other as human beings with respect, dignity, and honor. By doing

². Here "achievement" is defined as reaching the upper level of a person's potential in terms of academic, social, and community pursuits.

this, self and society will be able to coexist and prosper in harmony with each other.

EDUCATION AS A LIFE TRANSFORMING PROCESS

Perhaps the most accurate way to categorize the ways in which Dewey's ideas on individualism, Kohlberg's ideas on the community, and Gutmann's and Giroux's ideas on authority, freedom, and citizenship are articulated in my approach is to see education as a life-transforming process. To a large degree, I combine the idea of "education as a function of society" with the idea of "society as a function of education" to construct my argument:

Education and society are as interconnected as self and society. Neither the individual nor the community can exist independently from the other. In the same way, neither the school nor society can do so. Therefore, what is important to bear in mind is that education is a life-transforming process for both self and society.

I see life as a learning experience. I believe every person is a learner. Here, I incorporate the thinking of Dewey on this issue into my perspective of democratic civic education. To me, formal education should be based on this idea: school is life, not simply a preparation for living. Only by going through "real life" experiences in school will a student be adequately equipped to adapt to and shape the diversity of experiences he will encounter in the community. In many cases, this entails educators providing opportunities to students before they encounter them in society. These activities give students the chance to act and reflect first-hand on experiences, before they take on "real life" consequences.

To this end, education serves as a process of self renewal. As Gutmann argues, education is a process of "conscious social reproduction." Every social influence, relationship, and experience provides a means of shaping, reshaping, and directing the development of the community. The lessons learned within the four walls of a classroom transform life from its present situation to future applications. What happens in the classroom prepares

students to take control of and responsibility for their society. For this reason, an education is only adequate if it encompasses all customs, ideas, beliefs, activities, hopes, dreams, experiences, suffering, and thinking possessed by *all* members of society. The combination of these factors produces an educational situation in which learning about other individuals and groups produces a democratic, civically aware, and socially responsible citizenry.

The experiences of multiculturalism that I have argued would be endorsed by Dewey, Kohlberg, Gutmann, and Giroux entail the development of skills which provide students with the opportunity to better hone their interpersonal skills. These skills are what make citizens more sensitive to and aware of the precarious balance, based on the tension created between individualism and commitment to the community, that exists in society. Through community projects, public forums, and participation in the processes of government and social services, my perspective on democratic civic education provides students with life experiences that develop and enhance a better understanding of this conflict and its precarious qualities.³

If the role of education is to transform society from its present situation to some future state, then it must be based on the ideas of self-determination (in terms of being given the opportunity to think and act for oneself), empowerment (in terms of having other citizens respect and honor what one does or says), and responsibility (in terms of being in the position to reason and defend what one does in the role of citizen). Students, as future members of society, should have the right and opportunity to participate in the decisions of school and society that directly affect them. As a result, they are given the authority and freedom, as defined by both Gutmann and Giroux, to have some say over the course and direction of the community's growth and development. In addition, by acquiring this expansion of rights and privileges, individuals take on added responsibilities. This is the purpose of democratic civic education. It should prepare and allow students to have these new rights, while

³. See Chapter Seven for a more detailed outline of the activities that I use to convey these experiences.

ensuring that they value and carry out the accompanying civic and social responsibilities.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT

Every person is different. Each human being has her own special characteristics and abilities. One person may be a good athlete, another may possess great musical talent, and a third may have great mathematical skills. Students come from different economic, cultural, and racial backgrounds. In each case, the child possesses a characteristic that makes her unique. Teachers must help students realize that they are special, and that they possess abilities that make them important and worthwhile. Once students realize their individuality, teachers must help develop these skills so they can deal critically and creatively with the reality of transforming the world. As a result, they will be better prepared to act and react to the changing environment around them. In this way, formal education should be a place where all students, regardless of race, class, gender, age, or ability can learn to participate in society.

The key to democratic civic education is to focus on the child. Here I incorporate Dewey's idea that education must be student centered. Schools must see and understand the differences and similarities among children. Teachers must recognize these characteristics and adapt to each individual. Only by seeing and adapting will a teacher be able to reach each student effectively. I believe every child is born with special skills. The role of education is to help cultivate these talents. The opportunities and activities of the classroom help individuals cultivate these inborn skills through experience. For this reason, every student is a guide on a safari of learning: a person who possesses knowledge that can be passed on to others through education. The individual is a teacher-guide in the odyssey of transforming the democratic society, while the community is the student-traveler in the maze of life. The job of education is to help a democratic society succeed at this daunting task.

To this end, the individual is the most important variable in the educational process. The community is second in importance to the

student. The community must temper its ideas, beliefs, and feelings for the individual's best interests. Dewey is correct when he points out that the whole (society) can only exist as a composite of its parts (individuals). Thus, individualism becomes the foundation of education. Here individualism is defined in terms of every person having the right, opportunity, and ability to pursue his beliefs and activities within the confines of a commitment to the society.

Every event in the classroom and experience in school should build on this theme. When choosing activities, educators must take into consideration studies and experiences that enhance the continuity and interaction of individuals. These experiences must improve the common life people presently live and enhance a person's well-being in the future. The best way to accomplish this is by education promoting and involving the processes of inquiry, investigation, discussion, evaluation, and questioning into every event of the school. Therefore, individuals will develop what Dewey identified as the "principle of continuity": the ability to see the backward and forward connection that exists between what the situation was, what they did, and what happened as a result.⁴

THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTIVATING THE COLLECTIVITY OF LIFE

By establishing a community, individuals agree to follow certain rules and regulations. Members have come to the conclusion that boundaries of behavior are needed to ensure that every individual's right to freedom of action is not threaten by the actions of another person. For this reason, Kohlberg argued that the school's role in society was to construct and negotiate the parameters of community life. In essence, his theory of education stresses the need for schools to cultivate the child's natural interaction with a developing society. Only by being exposed to the limits of behavior, boundaries of actions, and interests of the community will a democratic, and socially and civically aware society be cultivated. Thus, the individual's position in life is determined by the growth of

⁴. John Dewey, Experience and Education (New York: Teachers College Press, 1938).

the society. As a result, the community takes on superior importance in relationship to the individual.

Incorporating this line of thinking into my perspective may seem to contradict my sentiment that the individual is the foundation of society. The individual is still the basis of society, but only in terms of providing the fuel that drives the engine of the community. That is to say, the individual is the life of society, but the community *is* the society. To put it another way, the community is the tree, and individuals provide the sun, air, and water that nourish the tree. Without these ingredients, the tree could not live. But at the same time, without the tree these ingredients wouldn't have a purpose. For this reason, the individual and the community must continually adapt and shift in relation to each other. The process of negotiating the conflicting interests and desires of the individual and community is carried out by education.

The school serves as a crucial connection between the individual and the outside world. It provides experiences that are beneficial to the individual's growth and to the development of society. The atmosphere of the learning community can play a central role in students coming to see and accept some of the restrictions of behavior that are essential to the establishment of a democracy. To overcome the dilemma of having students choosing between passively obeying, actively rejecting, or subtly undermining decisions, the school should encourage and incorporate student voice into all of its activities. Various forms of participatory democracy grant students greater control over the course of their education, and convince students to take on a greater degree of responsibility for their actions. Thus, the tension between individualism and collectivity is utilized in a creative manner by providing opportunities in school and in the classroom that illustrate to students that individual development includes the necessity and obligation of recognizing the rights and claims of other members of society.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CRITIQUE AND THE NEED TO QUESTION AND CHANGE

Perhaps the best way to recognize and respect the rights and claims of others is to develop a "critical perspective" toward life. In this way, Gutmann and Giroux contribute directly to my perspective on democratic civic education. First, since I believe in and encourage the questioning of authority in society and the classroom, my approach teaches the ability and will to question the activities of the class. My curriculum teaches students a form of "intelligent disobedience," in which students learn how and when to resist and challenge aspects of society. As Giroux suggests, the only way for education to be utilized as an instrument of change, that will help a society and its citizens construct a better future life, is by challenging the existing tenets of society. Unequal, silenced, or subordinated power relations have historically caused conflict in society. This has established social relations that are based on sexism, racism, class discrimination, homophobia, xenophobia, and ethnic prejudice. As a result, they have been incorporated into and unconsciously socially reproduced by traditional education without being thoroughly questioned or examined. Only through active and informed criticism, cultivated by a democratic form of education, will a constant revitalization of how to live, what to do, the best way to behave in terms of the society and individual, and the boundaries of action be constructed and implemented into a community.

Second, my approach reinforces the need for patient and reasonable thought before acting. It encourages the postponing of immediate action based on desire until observation and judgment have intervened. As a result, the school takes the role of fostering conversation about the directions of society. Because our society is becoming an increasingly multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-faith community, there is a need to learn to live with, and accept, these various forms of life. A person's ability and willingness to negotiate these new parameters of society determine his position in life, how he lives, and what role he will play in the community. My approach to education establishes the environment in which students can acquire the skills and experiences to work out the struggles that

will arise between their own wants, needs, and desires in relationship to the wider group of society. As a result, education becomes a mode of assessing one's own interests and needs, listening to and trying to understand others, and balancing conflicting points of view in a fair and cooperative manner.

Third, this theory of education significantly modifies the structure, substance, and function of education. By allowing and encouraging students to question the existing power structures, the existing means of doing things, and the voices that are speaking and being heard, schools can help to develop self-esteem and mutual respect in students. For example, by encouraging and rewarding empathetic behavior in all individuals and groups through the way reading, writing, math, art, social studies, and science are taught, my approach helps to develop an understanding of the commonality of being human. Thus, democratic civic education teaches students to respect the inalienable dignity of other human beings. The acceptance and application of the diversity, new experiences, and varied viewpoints and perspectives that form the foundation of civic and social responsibilities are essential elements of citizenship in a democratic society.

WHAT WILL THE CURRICULUM BASED ON THIS THEORY LOOK LIKE?

I have argued that education is a holistic activity. It involves everything and anything. Every issue, event, and subject is connected in some way. In essence, the curriculum formed according to this theory of education needs to be as varied and diverse as the individuals that are being taught. It must be constantly adjusting and readjusting to new experiences. Just as the individual is being shaped, so also is the system of education. Since the goal is not merely to prepare students for a productive life in the "real" world, the curriculum must be integrated enough to use the knowledge students have learned in their other classes to illustrate more clearly what is being taught. It must connect grammar rules in English with effective resume writing, or perhaps, illustrate the ethnic makeup of the U.S. by using percentages students have learned in math class.

The educational activities governed by this theory acknowledge the social responsibilities of education by presenting students with situations where problems, observation, and information are calculated to develop social insight and interest. Through peer decisions, majority voting, and individual evaluations of academic, social, and personal pursuits, the curriculum allows individuals to pursue activities that hold personal interest and worth, while remaining respectful of the goals of others by tempering one's actions through considering the consequences to society if everyone acted in the same manner. This is why I believe schools should be more than just buildings to students. School should allow students to go on great adventures, meet new people, and discover amazing things.

One way to reach this goal is through a schooling process that combines the "traditional" and "progressive" methods of teaching. I believe teachers need some guidelines to follow while teaching, guidelines that demonstrate the most important and essential modes of thinking and behavior that contribute to the growth and development of civic responsibilities and social awareness. The "traditional" method establishes these guidelines. By providing students with places, people, and events in society, it can give them the necessary background information essential for intelligent study. By having students read a combination of textbooks and "real" books chosen from a list of appropriate sources, they will have the opportunity to formulate their own ideas and arguments.

"Real" books are books of primary information. They are government documents, original fiction or nonfiction, biographies, and newspapers. By studying these, with help and guidance from the teachers, students will gain the skills necessary to make intelligent and well thought out decisions. Teachers should provide students with the information of life and allow them to decide what to do with it. Perhaps this is the hardest skill to acquire as a teacher: the skill of being neutral and allowing students to make their own decisions. A teacher should encourage students to make their own choices in life and then educate them on the implications of their decisions. This enables students to make personal choices as individuals in society.

TOPICS THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED TO ACHIEVE EQUALITY OF VOICE

My curriculum will help to foster in students the ability, willingness, and confidence to make individual decisions that take into consideration the needs and goals of society by using the topics that will be stressed. In particular, I think it is important to mention some of the issues that would be covered in such a course.⁵ Three areas that I feel are especially important for students to learn more about are gender relations, multiculturalism, and communication skills.⁶ Gender bias is a representation of a larger societal phenomenon.⁷ Regardless of stated intentions and philosophies, educational behaviors are based on deep-rooted assumptions that see differences between the appropriate behaviors, roles, and jobs for women and men. These subtle differences are reflected in the way we treat individuals. As a result, individuals view fellow human beings with biased eyes. People, both males and females, evaluate each other according to gender-based expectations of an individual's abilities and interests. Thus, the gender of an individual becomes the determining factor of a person's worth. People are prejudged according to their gender, and not because of their natural skills and abilities.

Multiculturalism would be another major topic in my curriculum. By exposing students to a variety of beliefs, a more fully developed person will be created. There are many ways to live, many things to believe. People have come to understand life in certain ways when they might have learned otherwise. By exposing students to alternative and marginal beliefs, future choices are constrained but not necessarily restricted. If anything, this process provides students with a greater variety of future choices by

⁵. Part Two of this project will elaborate on these issues. For the purpose of Chapter Five, this discussion will suffice.

⁶. This does not preclude the importance of the four Rs: reading, writing, arithmetic, and respect. Rather, I am talking about skills that should be used to cultivate the further development of these qualities.

⁷. For more information see The A.A.U.W. Educational Foundation, How Schools Shortchange Girls (U.S.A.: The A.A.U.W. Educational Foundation and The National Educational Association, 1992).

exposing them to more information. Thus, they have greater freedom to choose their actions.

The simple solution to this phenomenon would be to stop reproducing these inequalities. To solve the problems of education completely, we must end gender bias and discrimination in society. It is possible to change the system if reforms based on a systematic, complete revision of the stated curriculum are universally applied. In my curriculum, women's experiences and culture, as well as diverse perspectives and viewpoints would be equal players. By discussing women's experiences of childbearing and nonviolent resolution of conflict, or the lives of migrant workers, handicapped individuals, and criminals, new solutions to society's problems can be found. By creating a more caring educational community and a safer world, the current conditions of poverty, crime, and child neglect can be solved.

There is one final issue I feel needs to be addressed in education. A phrase from a song by Guns an Roses accurately states this problem. It says, "What we've got here is a failure to communicate. . . . Some men [people] you just can never reach." Sometimes people simply do not understand or comprehend the world around them. The problem with society is that people don't listen to each other. Individuals fail to talk to each other, and they fight and kill because they fail to understand each other. People fail to interpret intelligently what other individuals are saying. This is the problem with the world and today's educational system. In my curriculum, communication skills--both talking and listening--will be fostered. Through open forums, debates, and discussions, students will have the chance to develop these skills. Only by listening carefully will teachers better understand students, students better understand teachers, and individuals better understand each other.

It is one of the benefits of a curriculum that is built on the ideas of self and society, individualism and community, freedom and authority, empowerment and citizenship. If I am correct in seeing the future filled with diverse experiences and different avenues of progress, then students need to be adaptable. This flexibility can most clearly be cultivated by exposing children to various new and

old elements of life. The primary reason students need to experience diverse cultures and ways of life is to learn how to develop multiple ways of interacting. This capacity is essential to participating in and directing the community by combining many experiences to arrive at a complete understanding of the world.

CONCLUSION

In the future, our society--the community we share as unique individuals--will be vastly different from what is present today. As society becomes more diverse, more integrated, and less static, students will need to be able to negotiate the delicate balance between self and society. The precarious tension between individualism and a commitment to community is becoming harder and harder to utilize in positive ways. The divisions between majority and minority, self and society, authority and freedom, and individualism and community will become more difficult to identify. As a result, education must provide students with the opportunities to negotiate this tension before confusion, conflict, moral disillusion, civic neglect, and social unrest develop.

As a result, the aim of my approach to education is to get students to realize that they do not exist apart from society. All human beings are unique individuals, and each person's experiences and perspective of life is different. Only by addressing, negotiating, and overcoming this diversity, in an equitable and equally empowering way, will students learn about the world, and be prepared to influence and direct the way it works. Therefore, schools should be public spheres that educate children to be critical citizens who can think, challenge, take risks, and believe their actions will make a difference in the larger society. They should be places that provide students with the opportunity to share experiences, and to work in social relationships that emphasize care and concern for others. All students are different. Teachers should provide educational experiences that help to prepare students for later in life by helping them to understand the world around them better.

Education provides a student with the knowledge necessary to gain control over her life. Success in school should give students a

sense of accomplishment, self-esteem, and mutual understanding that helps to motivate each individual to be responsible and productive members of the family, participants in the neighborhood and community, and citizens of the society. Teachers should provide an atmosphere in which a knowledge, understanding, and experience of democratic civic education can be gained freely and productively. I will illustrate in Part Two of this project how my approach to education allows students to participate in the diverse and changing world they will encounter after high school.

Chapter Six:
"Individual Rights and Social Responsibilities":
A Curriculum Overview

INTRODUCTION

How does a teacher put theory into practice? How does a teacher transform the facets of educational theory into a practice of teaching and learning that will most effectively convey its core beliefs? How does he cultivate and illustrate the central tenets of educational theory within his classroom without losing track of the diverse ways students learn? How does a teacher provide educational activities and experiences to his students that reflect a particular way of thinking while still being representative of the philosophy of education to which he adheres? How does a teacher determine what makes good practice?

The conversion of theory into practice is difficult. In this process of interpreting and then applying educational theory to the classroom, an educator not only has to choose topics and activities that are reflective of the material she is required to cover, but she must also insure that these same experiences are presented in such a way as to reinforce the central framework of the theory. More importantly, each facet of the material and all the activities--taken individually or collectively--must provide a clear vision of this theory. In both a linear and holistic fashion, I think, ideas, units, topics, discussions, and activities must create, develop, and focus on the goals and objectives of the theory in an effort to form a cohesive and coherent curriculum. Therefore, a teacher must bear in mind the validity, relevance, and value of what is being taught and learned in her classroom. As a result, the curriculum is representative of theory.

In addition, an explicit rationale and specific explanations of why certain topics and activities were chosen over other material and means of presentation must be provided as evidence to justify what is being done. With each decision that is made, certain things are included and other things are excluded from the educational process. As a result, a curriculum is no more neutral than the theory it represents. Rather, the activities and topics that form the basis of a curriculum represent a specific interpretation of theory. Educators must bear in mind that no matter what topics they choose to cover in their courses, no matter what activities they use to illustrate these topics or what methods of teaching they utilize in this process, there

will always be alternative ways of interpreting and implementing the same theory.

To this end, we have seen in previous chapters that democratic civic education theory not only provides a vision for what topics should be covered in school, but it also paints a picture of some of the ways in which this material can best be presented in the classroom. In **Part One** of this project, I discussed the topics of self and society, the individual and the community, authority and freedom, and empowerment and citizenship as voiced by various democratic civic educators. The theories of John Dewey, Lawrence Kohlberg, Amy Gutmann, and Henry Giroux provide a diverse picture of how these issues have traditionally been dealt with in school, and what changes must be made in order to address them more effectively. Drawing on these insights, I outlined my own approach to democratic civic education in Chapter Five. In **Part Two** of this project, I utilize and implement this approach as a means of thinking about how the students of today should be educated. By creating a high school civics curriculum, "Individual Rights and Social Responsibilities," I have provided an example of how this can be done. In this respect, I take the framework of democratic civic education theory and transform it into practice.

In this chapter, I provide an **overview** of the topics and activities that will be elements of my democratic civics curriculum. Utilizing ideas from all of the authors I have discussed above, along with personal experiences in the classroom, I have developed a curriculum that will serve a dual purpose. First, it provides a working knowledge of the founding principles of democracy. Second, it applies this information in a reflective nature to a variety of situations. Therefore, not only will "Individual Rights and Social Responsibilities" provide students with basic knowledge pertaining to American democracy, but it will also establish methods of thinking and modes of acting that will cultivate the development of more active and productive members of the community.

In this chapter, I outline the rationale for this curriculum¹ and some of the methods that will be utilized to support and carry out this course of study.² From here, I discuss the goals of the course and point out the core beliefs and ideas that will be established in obtaining these objectives. In addition, I point out the issues, themes, and sources of information that will serve as a framework of study. I also mention what types of activities and means of evaluation will be utilized in the context of the course. Finally, I briefly discuss the course dynamics and the type of students for which it is intended. In the process, I highlight the material and topics that will be covered. In the following chapter, I provide a more detailed and elaborate discussion of this material.

RATIONALE FOR AN UPDATED COURSE IN DEMOCRATIC CIVIC EDUCATION

Traditionally, high school civics courses have focused on learning about the different facets of the government. By looking at the founding of the United States through the use of The Declaration of Independence and The Constitution, and by viewing the various branches and functions of the federal, state, and local governments, it is hoped that students will gain an understanding of the workings of society. In addition, they learn the terminology of politics and the law, discuss voting and the economic system, and are shown how to be "good" citizens. In many classes, students are given one perspective and a single answer to the question of democracy. As a result, they see "being good" in terms of following the rules of the game: doing and acting in accordance with what other people--people in positions of authority and power--tell you to do.

Although this may not necessarily be wrong, it does severely limit the productive potential and growth of society. It makes it more difficult for society to change or adapt in response to the passage of

1. Much of the theoretical rationale for this democratic civics curriculum has already been covered. For this reason, the explanation provided in this chapter is quite brief. It revisits the highlights of Chapter Five.

2. The methods, topics, and activities of my democratic civics curriculum will be more fully elaborated in Chapter Seven.

time and the change of circumstances. Traditional civics curriculums have only looked at the past as a means of saying what is wrong with the present without providing a solution, or the ability to formulate a solution, to these conflicts.³ My civics curriculum attempts to address this problem.

Today, our communities are characterized by disagreements, problems, and difficulties. It is my contention that many of these conflicts arise out a lack of thought about and reflection on where we as a democratic society have come and where we as a community are going.⁴ Rather than looking at what has happened in the past and applying it to what is taking place in the present to gain a better understanding and picture of what may take place in the future, civics classes, traditionally, have merely looked at the past. They have done this as a means of justifying the practices of the present day without evaluating the validity and usefulness of these practices. In contrast, the value of "Individual Rights and Social Responsibilities" is that it successfully integrates these *traditional topics of civics* (i.e. The Constitution, the branches of Government, The Declaration of Independence, citizenship, legal rights, and responsibilities) with concerns about *social awareness, civic responsibilities, self-esteem, and mutual respect*.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND CORE BELIEFS OF "INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES "

The overarching goal of this course is to provide students with the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the delicate relationship that exists between individuals and society in a democracy. As a result, it empowers young citizens to play a role in

³. These arguments are similar to those put forth by Amy Gutmann and Henry Giroux. The problem with both of these theorists is that they merely say what is wrong without giving a definitive way of solving the problems of the community. For this reason, they convince people to question the existing structures of society, but fail to provide a direction, or guidance to reform these structures. These thoughts are what made me uneasy regarding their ideas for change.

⁴. See Amy Gutmann, Democratic Education (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987) 14; and Henry Giroux, Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life: Critical Pedagogy in the Modern Age (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988) 187.

and direct the development of the present and future activities of their community. Primarily this is a combination of the ideas of Dewey and Kohlberg. Taking into consideration their arguments for individual and community development, the goals of "Individual Rights and Social Responsibilities" are: *the accumulation of accurate knowledge about the founding principles of our democratic community; the cultivation of habits of inquiry and methods of discovery that are outside the traditional textbook-oriented means of learning; the development of decision-making skills that stress patient, informed, and reasonable thought before actions are taken; and the stimulation of critical curiosity and perspective that allows individuals to question, evaluate, and reflect on all aspects of their own lives and the community.*

To this end, one objective of the course is to develop in students reflective and critical thought that gives them the ability and confidence to realize that personal growth (empowerment) can come about only through gaining an understanding of public life and participation in the activities of the community. It occurs by combining traditional civics topics with experiential learning, reflective role-playing exercises, and group discussions. As a result, students develop the skills and knowledge that allow them to think and act for themselves. They become individuals who can effectively and successfully conduct their lives within and in support of their community.

By engaging in participatory, thought provoking, hands-on activities and experiences, students develop in the course the necessary skills, apparatus, and tools to deal with the changing world that they will encounter. In addition, these activities provide opportunities for students not only to become products of society, but also to make society serve as a function of their actions (i.e. not only are these activities powerful learning experiences, but they also serve to empower and inform students about the delicate, conflictual relationship that exists between self and society, and between the individual and the community). As a result, civic responsibility and social awareness are fostered.

Another objective of "Individual Rights and Social Responsibilities" is to open students' eyes to diverse and alternative explanations for what *has, is, and will* take place in their community. To this end, a better critical understanding of their own experiences--a self-confidence in or self-esteem about these experience--in relationship to society--a mutual understanding and respect for the value of other citizens' experiences--will evolve. The purpose is to provide an arena of learning that precipitates this process. This idea is based on the belief that empowerment and democratic citizenship for all individuals can be created. In the process, the community and individuals become more willing and able to address, challenge, examine, and create updated values, ideals, and practices.

Most of the ideas that will be explored through the topics and activities of this course are fundamental to the framework of our democratic society. These include: *liberty and its qualities of equality, fairness, tolerance, freedom, compassion, and equal rights; civility and its characteristics of helpfulness, cooperation, self-restraint, civic responsibility, personal responsibility, and mutual assistance; human dignity and honesty that includes respect for self, others, and all things; the rules of law and justice; and the value of diversity.* As I have challenged the construction of the traditional civics curriculum, I also want to make it clear that the purpose of my curriculum is to investigate these ideas. It is an effort to re-define them so that they are relevant to the present and future lives of students.

ISSUES, THEMES, AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Because the primary objective of my civics curriculum for students to gain an understanding of and appreciation for the delicate relationship that exists between an individual and the community, the two primary issues that will be tackled in "Individual Rights and Social Responsibilities" are **self and society**. Every topic and activity that is considered in the course of this curriculum will deal with developing a better understanding of these issues.

Therefore, human rights, civil rights, and community service will be continually referred to as issues that form the framework of study. Here, I am talking about human rights in terms of how and in what ways all humans deserve to be treated, not in terms of what is given to them, but rather what is innately theirs. Civil rights refers to the way individuals treat each other. This can be either by how a specific individual treats another person, or by the way a group treats other groups. Finally, community service is defined in terms of how and to what extent individuals should contribute to their society. Each of these issues helps to develop a better understanding of the relationship between authority and freedom. As a result, they serve as a means for creating a definition of citizenship.

Each of these topics is a facet of the larger discussion of individuals and community. Although not explicitly stated as the issue that is being discussed, in some implicit fashion a more diverse and reflective understanding of the individual and the community will be cultivated. Through this line of thought, these issues will be considered in respect to how the individual fits into various communities. This is not just what the individual receives from the community, but also what the individual contributes to the community. Therefore, students will also be asked to think about the relationship between the individual and the classroom, the individual and the school, the individual and the local community, the individual and the national community, and the individual and the international community.

In addition to the specific topics that are discussed in the course of this curriculum, these issues can be further developed by looking at the experiences that dominate the lives of students. To this end, the sources of information come from students' lives. This is because in their lives in the classroom, in school, or at home, the conflict between self and society needs to be made relevant to the student. Therefore, movies, records, television, novels, newspapers, art, and poetry are used as potential sources of information to utilize in the activities. By making the individual and community relevant to the experiences of students, each student develops a better

understanding of the complexity of the balance that exists between them.

ACTIVITIES AND METHODS OF EVALUATING STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Instead of discussing the specific methods by which information will be conveyed, I have chosen to mention the types of activities that serve as the means of evaluating students' development. Because one of the main objectives of this course is to foster a better understanding of the delicate balance that exists between an individual and the community, all of the activities are designed to help students develop better abilities and apparatuses to negotiate situations and experiences in which self and society, either directly or indirectly, come in contact with each other. *Not only do I want students to be able to navigate these interactions, but I want the activities of the course to provide students with the skills, confidence, and habits of inquiry that will allow them to determine the events, scope, and direction of these experiences.* As a result, the students of today will be able to become more productive members of the community--citizens who not only exist within the parameters of that community, but who also contribute actively and equally to determining and defining those boundaries and norms of action. *One of the ways to insure that this happens is by having every activity focus on how, where, why, and to what extent personal growth and public life are connected.*

To this end, grades in this course will not be formulated in a traditional fashion. Objective test and quizzes will not be utilized. Instead, students will be evaluated in terms of the quality of their work, the extent to which they illustrate this work, and the ability and willingness they exhibit to revise and reflect on what has transpired. For this reason, grades will be given in a **portfolio format**.⁵ Each and every piece of work that a student completes--presentations, writing samples, discussion contributions, projects, and essays--will be brought together to provide an evaluation that is

⁵. For an explanation of this form of authentic assessment, see Grant Wiggins, "Standards, Not Standardization;" Kaleidoscope: Readings in Education, eds. Kevin Ryan and James M. Cooper (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1992) 472-480.

representative of the integrated and diverse ways in which students learn.

Student competency and mastery will be evaluated by the ways in which they are able to incorporate and go beyond the mere facts and figures they have learned. Students will need to exhibit an ability to build an arguments or make a case for how the "traditional" topics of civics can be utilized to gain a better understanding of their present situation and future life. To this end, mastery of skills will only illustrate the basic level of competency. Real competencies will be measured by the way students use these skills to act and react, and reflect on the community and their experiences.

Adopting Dewey's theory that the individual's needs must be the focus of education--and, for that matter, the focus of the community--I have decided to evaluate each student in terms of her unique abilities and the extent to which they grow as a result of the work they undertake in the course. In contrast to more traditional means of evaluation, each student's evaluation will be unique to that student. Rather than being a measure of how closely, or inaccurately, students resemble the performance of the typical individual, a portfolio approach to grading reflects a person's complete performance regarding to all educational experiences. In this way, the primary activities of this course are *community projects, current events assignments, reflective journal entries, class meetings, class discussions, opinion papers*, and a *final culminating project*. For each student, the grade and the weight of that grade will vary in accordance with their interests, skills, and effort.

The purpose of the community project is to provide students with the opportunity to come in contact with situations outside the walls of the classroom. Consisting of four different experiences, students will have the opportunity to learn first-hand about self and society. Each week students will be required to perform a community service of their choosing, whether it be coaching youth soccer or working in a nursing home. Students will also be asked to participate in two group community projects. These may take the form of helping around school or assisting someone in the local community. Finally, the class as a whole will perform one community project. In

all cases, either as an individual or as a member of a group, these activities will provide experiences, information, and perspectives on which to reflect and question.

Consisting of reading and writing every day of the week, current events--reading a daily newspaper or a weekly news magazine--gets students in contact with the outside world. This contact is not as direct, nor as experiential, as what occurs in community projects, but it does give students information about timely activities about which they can talk and compare with which they can compare with what took place in the past. In addition, this activity provides me with a way of insuring that students are staying on top of the issues of the community. As a result, this experience encourages students to develop habits of critical curiosity and inquiry, which both Gutmann and Giroux feel is one of the most important attributes students should develop through the course of their education. Current events activities serve as the birth of this process.

By getting students in the habit of writing down what they think and observe, journals--daily entries and periodic essays--will continue to foster this way of thinking. Not only do they serve as a valuable tool to measure the direction, distance, and scope of a student's progress, but journals also help students to slow down and refine the arguments and statements they are making. They provide places where students can write down their thoughts and then re-visit them at some future time and place. This serves as a means of giving students a record of their experiences, and as a source of information on which to reflect.

Along the ideas of Kohlberg, bi-weekly class meetings provide students with the chance to vocalize and implement their learning in a sheltered environment. Using the skills of inquiry they have developed in the course of other activities, in combination with what they have learned about the foundations of American democracy, students are given a chance to participate in a democracy. Not only will be participants in that society, but they will also be able to see first-hand how the issues of individuality and community interact. As a result, they will become better prepared and more confident in

their abilities to contribute to and direct the development of their communities.

Finally, class discussions (which occur on a constant basis) and opinion papers (assigned at least once a week) allow students to make a statement, and then force them to back it up with a well organized and well-articulated argument. These activities allow students to have a "voice" in the classroom. They also permit students to direct the pace of inquiry. If students have something to say that is important, class discussions and opinion papers them say it. This serves as a source of information that can further the learning of all individuals in the community. In addition, periodic class presentations will provide added opportunities for students to voice their opinions and beliefs.

COURSE DYNAMICS, TYPE OF STUDENTS, AND CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

What will the class look like? The civics curriculum that I have constructed is meant to be utilized by high school seniors and juniors.⁶ It is my belief that students of this age have the requisite cross-section of experiences that will allow for animated discussion based on varied viewpoints and opinions. In addition, students of this age generally have reached a level of psychological development that allows them to look at issues from a variety of perspectives.⁷ And, although they may not agree with or see clearly every perspective, they are able to recognize and admit that they do, in fact, exist in society. Finally, by and large, seniors and juniors in high school have spent enough time in school so that behavior and

⁶. All the statements regarding the dynamics of this course and the type of students that would take it are made in an attempt to give a picture of how the ideas of democratic civic education might be implemented in the classroom. For this reason, I have consciously provided details to make this process clearer for the reader. However, all of these ideas and statements can be adapted according to the characteristics of the students involved.

⁷. See Richard H. Hersh, Diana Pritchard Paolitto, and Joseph Reimer, Promoting Moral Growth: From Piaget to Kohlberg (New York: Longman, 1979); and F. Clark Power, Ann Higgins, and Lawrence Kohlberg, Lawrence Kohlberg's Approach to Moral Education (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

discipline are not a problem. Class time can be concentrated on living and learning.

Ideally, the students in "Individual Rights and Social Responsibilities" would be middle to upper-level learners, who have shown some ability in presenting their ideas in writing or discussions. However, neither of these characteristics is a prerequisite for this elective course. I have chosen to label it as "elective" because at present it is best suited for a specific type of student.⁸ To this end, students who choose to take this course must possess a high level of motivation and initiative, self-discipline, and a willingness to work hard and make sacrifice. This is because the topics and activities of this course will require a great deal of both individual and group time and effort, both in the classroom and outside the classroom, to complete. As a result, a great deal of energy--intellectual, emotional, and physical--will need to be devoted to this course. For this reason, I feel that if it is elective in nature I will have an easier and more successful time interesting these types of students.

Another characteristic that must be kept in mind when choosing students for this course is class demographics. Ideally, students taking this class will be representative of the many groups and diverse experiences that are present in the community. First and foremost, they must come from a variety of backgrounds that are characterized by various histories which are examples of how people live, think, act, and believe. Included in this topic are ethnic differences, geographic differences, socio-economic differences, and ability differences. To this end, the number of students in my classroom would range between fifteen and twenty. Any less than fifteen, and I run the risk of not having a wide enough range of experiences and voices. By the same token, any more than twenty students, and I run the risk of not being able to have the students speak and have their voices heard. A final general characteristic of the class demography is that it must possess gender equality. As a

⁸. This does not mean it will not have value to, nor should not be implemented in, all classrooms with all different students. Rather, in this case, I have chosen to tailor the course for a specific type of student.

result, it will be more representative of the "real" world than many high school classrooms. In all cases, the optimal range of a broad and varied cross-section of experiences and views must be present.

Finally, this course will be taught during the spring of the school year. Consisting of the time period covered by the third and fourth marking periods, it would run for a total of twenty weeks. Included in this twenty week period are two weeks of vacation--which will be utilized as opportunities to do projects outside the classroom--and one week of finals. Therefore, the course will in reality consist of seventeen weeks of in-class learning. Meeting in the afternoons, this course will have **fifty minutes** of instructional time **three times** a week, and **one hundred minutes** of instructional time **two times** a week.⁹ Over the course of the third and fourth marking periods, it will meet approximately eighty-five times.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE TOPICS AND ACTIVITIES THAT WILL BE COVERED

As I mentioned above, I maintain that today's students not only need an understanding of the foundations of American democracy, but that they must also be able to compare this information to what is transpiring today, and to what may take place in the future. Therefore, "Individual Rights and Social Responsibilities" consists of a combination of traditional and non-traditional activities. It is traditional in that I have chosen to utilize a textbook for some of the work that will be done. Entitled Civics: Responsibilities and Citizenship, this book will be utilized as a source of information and reference throughout the course.¹⁰ The course is also traditional in that the students will investigate the foundations of our democracy.

However, when studying The Declaration of Independence, The Constitution, and The Bill of Rights I have chosen to look at the documents directly. In addition, I have also chosen to look directly at

⁹. A seven period class week will provide ample time to cover a diversity of subjects, and effectively carry out several class activities.

¹⁰. David C. Saffell, Civics: Responsibilities and Citizenship (New York: Glencoe, 1992).

other documents throughout the course. These include the "Seneca Falls Declaration," the "Declaration of Conscience," John F. Kennedy's inaugural address, a speech by Malcolm X, a speech by Martin Luther King, and a speech by George Bush.¹¹ This leaves much of the investigation and analysis to the students. As a result, the focus of learning is student-centered.

Finally, the course is non-traditional in terms of the topics that are covered. Essentially it is broken down into units of discovery. They consist of: *fundamentals of American democracy; expansion of rights and liberties, the three branches of government, civic responsibilities and the local government; community service; civil rights; and the individual and the world.* In each of these units, the issues covered and activities provided help to reinforce the goals and objectives of the course.

CONCLUSION

This chapter provides an overview of what is covered in "Individual Rights and Social Responsibilities." Not only does it present the rationale behind the topics covered in the course, it also outlines a framework of discovery. As a result, it establishes the context, direction, and understanding of what is required to turn a perspective of democratic civic education into a specific curriculum in civics. In addition, this chapter provides a glimpse of the details of the curriculum. And although brief in nature, it provides a framework and a point of reference to which to turn when discussing the specific activities and experiences that will be part of the units and topics previously mentioned. Finally, the ideas discussed in this chapter help to illustrate the purpose of the activities that I will discuss more fully in the next chapter.

¹¹. Most of these speeches can be found in William Safire, Lend Me Your Ears: Great Speeches in History (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1992).

Chapter Seven:
"Individual Rights and Social Responsibilities":
Unit Outlines and Rationales

INTRODUCTION

It is important to understand the fragile give-and-take relationship that exists between self and society. In the previous chapter, I provided a general overview of the high school civics curriculum that I have constructed to help students reach this goal. In this chapter, I give a more detailed account of the activities that constitute the structure of "Individual Rights and Social Responsibilities." After briefly mentioning the materials that will be utilized, I provide an outline of the units and specific topics of the course. I then discuss each separate unit, and explain how the activities I discussed in the previous chapter will be implemented in the process of learning. I then provide a rationale, explanation, and justification for why I chose these specific topics and activities. Throughout this process, I make reference when appropriate to the ideas and thinking of democratic civic educators Dewey, Kohlberg, Gutmann, Giroux, and Carlson.

MATERIALS TO BE USED AS SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND PLACES OF REFERENCE

The materials that will be utilized in this course are varied in nature. The course consists of both traditional "secondary" sources of study and more progressive and experiential "primary" sources of discovery. Although there are some standard "textbook" sources of information, by and large they are of lesser importance in relation to what students are learning. Because each individual student will have the opportunity to pursue areas of personal interest, and because these areas of investigation will require various resources and sites of information, I can only provide here a very basic listing of the materials that will be used.

As mentioned previously, the textbook for "Individual Rights and Social Responsibilities" is entitled Civics: Responsibilities and Citizenship.¹ This text provides a good overview and basic knowledge of the foundations of American democracy. Therefore, I use it as a reference source throughout the course. It gives essential

¹. David C. Saffell, Civics: Responsibilities and Citizenship (New York: Glencoe, 1992).

details, facts, and figures in a concise, coherent, and straightforward manner. In addition, I have also chosen to use three books as the sources for the ten documents that will be explored in the course. These books are: A More Perfect Union², Right versus Might³, and Lend Me Your Ears.⁴ From parts of each book students will have the opportunity to analyze documents in their original form. This gives them a chance to formulate their own opinions and interpretations without the prompt of an author. As a result, ideas of the past take on universal meaning, and are applied to present and future situations in individual and collective life. Because students come to these sources of information from different perspectives, the universality of these experiences is limited to the core ideas.

COURSE SCHEDULE

What follows is an outline of the units that constitute this course and the approximate amount of time that will be devoted to each topic. Although topics seem to be limited to specific blocks of time, it is only to designate the theme that will be highlighted. As in any cross-disciplinary study, the activities and issues that will be focused on are integrated. Therefore, all themes and topics will be continually revisited throughout the course to gain a better understanding of the contributions these diverse issues can make to the study of civics.

OUTLINE:

Week One: **INTRODUCTIONS**

Weeks Two, Three, and Four: **FUNDAMENTALS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY**

Week Five: **Vacation-- INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY PROJECT ON RIGHTS**

Weeks Six, Seven, and Eight: **EXPANSION OF RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES**

². Paul F. Boller Jr. and Ronald Story, A More Perfect Union: Documents in U.S. History (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1992).

³. John Temple Swing, Right versus Might: International Law and the Use of Force (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1991).

⁴. William Safire, Lend Me Your Ears: Great Speeches in History (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1992).

Weeks Nine and Ten: **THE THREE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT**

Week Eleven: **TRANSITION TO CIVIC RESPONSIBILITIES**

Week Twelve: **THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Week Thirteen: **Vacation-- GROUP PROJECT ON CIVIC RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY**

Weeks Fourteen and Fifteen: **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Weeks Sixteen and Seventeen: **CIVIL RIGHTS**

Week Eighteen: **THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE WORLD**

Week Nineteen: **FINAL PROJECT**

Week Twenty: **FINAL**

The rest of this chapter will be devoted to elaborating on these topics. After highlighting the issues to be included in each unit, I provide an explanation of and rationale for the specific activities that have been chosen. In part and as a whole, what is covered in "Individual rights and Social Responsibilities" serves as a realistic and accurate portrayal of how the issues of individuality, community, empowerment, authority, freedom, and citizenship have been discussed in previous chapters. In addition, this course helps to develop an understanding of and appreciation for the precarious relationship that exists between self and society.

WEEK ONE: INTRODUCTIONS

OBJECTIVES:

Labeled as "Introductions," the purpose of this unit is to introduce me to the class, the class to me, and both of us to the task at hand. Therefore, in this unit, there are two objectives. First and foremost, students will gain information about and an understanding for the issues and topics that will be covered in the course. This process will include obtaining a sense of what will be expected of them in terms of assignments, work load, motivation, and means of evaluation. Also, students will experience the methods of teaching and learning that will be utilized in the course. Finally, students will be introduced to the central theme of the course: **the relationship between the individual and his or her community.** Second, this unit will give me a chance to get to know what the students in

my class are like. Not only will I learn their names, and begin to discover their likes and dislikes, interests inside and outside the classroom, and a glimpse of their background and history, but I will also be able to start to formulate an understanding of and appreciation for the way each student learns, the level of her motivation, and their willingness to speak up and be heard both inside and outside the classroom.

MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES:

Primarily the materials that will be utilized in this unit come from the students. In response to a series of questions, students will, in groups and as individuals, discuss different issues in society. In addition, "Introductions" requires them to think about, vocalize, and write in their journals on various topics that will be covered in "Individual Rights and Social Responsibilities." The unit will consist of questions of the day, and activities intended to give a broader understanding of the particular question. Some of these questions are: *What is the purpose of education? Why do we go to school? What is an individual's role in a community? What is a community? What is citizenship? What does it mean to be a "good" citizen? How are laws established?*

By looking at the question of citizenship, we can gain an understanding of exactly how this will happen. For example, on the board at the beginning of one class, the question "What does it mean to be a citizen?" might be followed by the statement "It means having the capacity to choose, the power to act to attain one's purpose, and the ability to help transform a world lived in common with others." For the entire class period, the question of citizenship would be the topic of discussion. After asking each student to think about issues covered by the question and statement, a class discussion would ensue in which students could exchange their thoughts and feelings. For homework, the class would be asked to write a several paragraph essay reflecting on what they thought about and learned during the class.

RATIONALE:

The rationale for this unit can be related directly to democratic civic educational theory. In it, Dewey's focus on the individual, Kohlberg's concern for the community, and Gutmann and Giroux's stress on critical understanding will all begin to be explored. In addition, not only does this unit introduce the topics that will be covered, but it does it in such a way so that the students will gain a sense of control over the course of their learning. As a result, they will begin to develop the skills that I argue are needed for citizenship in a democratic community.

These skills include listening to the voices of other individuals, respecting experiences and perspectives of other members of the community, developing habits of inquiry, and a renewed level of empowered self-respect. To this end, "Introductions" serves as a place of common departure from which to progress. It helps to formulate rudimentary definitions for "individual," "community," "rights," "responsibilities," and "citizenship." As a result, what students experience will serve as a starting point to which they can refer back, reflect, modify, and refine.

WEEKS TWO, THREE, AND FOUR: FUNDAMENTALS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY**OBJECTIVES:**

The purpose of "Fundamentals of American Democracy" is to provide the students with a good working knowledge of the ideas, issues, and principles that serve as the foundations of American democracy. By looking directly at the documents that form the basis of this structure, students will continue their individual development by gaining a more elaborate understanding of liberty, equality, fairness, freedom, equal rights, justice, rule of law, fairness, and tolerance. In addition, the goal is to have students successfully apply and integrate these issues with the activities and events that are presently dominating their individual and common lives. Furthermore, I intend this unit to serve as a source of evaluation regarding what the future holds for the relationship between self and society. I hope that this unit will provide students with the

confidence to continue to develop their attitude and skills of critical inquiry, in regard to the relationship between an individual and the community.

MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES:

Since this is a three week unit, there will be several topics and sources of information used to attain these goals. To this end, Chapters Three and Four of the text will be highlighted.⁵ As I stated before, the purpose of reading and studying this information is to provide background information that will serve as the framework for discussion. In addition, these chapters are excellent points of reference to use when studying other issues pertaining to American democracy. In conjunction with the reading, The Declaration of Independence,⁶ The Constitution,⁷ and The Bill of Rights⁸ will be examined.

During Week Two, The Declaration of Independence will be studied. Looking specifically at what was being declared as independent, who was doing the declaring, what they intended as a result of the document, and what issues it raised, a combination of individual and group activities and discussions will be utilized. In addition, study of this topic will conclude with each student declaring in writing (in their journal) and vocalizing to the rest of the class her **independence from something**. Although risky in nature--students could declare their independence from all school authority, thus being free of rules and regulations--this exercise serves to mirror the thought processes and actions of the founders of American democracy. For this reason, it is important for students. It provides them with an active application of their learning and an example of the first step in forming a society.

Week Three will be devoted to investigating the intricacies of The United States Constitution. Perhaps no other document in the world serves as a more powerful reminder of the beliefs and ideas

⁵. Saffell, Civics, Chapter Three, "The Constitution" and Chapter Four, "The Bill of Rights," 68-115.

⁶. Saffell, Civics, 562-63.

⁷. Saffell, Civics, 564-573.

⁸. Saffell, Civics, 574-575.

that citizens of American democracy hold as fundamental. For this reason, this document will be used as a means of identifying and discussing these issues. The culmination of this exercise will be to have each student contribute to constructing a **class constitution**. This constitution will reflect the varied needs, goals, and experiences of the class. Forming a class constitution not only helps to develop the parameters of individual and group behavior, but it also serves as an active and concrete example of the second step in setting up a democratic community.

Week Four will consist of studying The Bill of Rights. Issues of equality, diversity, and rule of law will be specifically highlighted. The Bill of Rights provides sources of information that serve as the focus of how the rights of individuals are established and grant to serve as the foundations of citizenship. To conclude this study, students will be asked to work in groups to form their own **bill of rights**. This exercise will be used as an example of the final step in forming the foundation of a democratic society. After declaring independence and establishing the parameters of behavior in a constitution, a bill of rights establishes and protects the specific rights of various majority and non-majority groups. Therefore, the class will learn what needs to be done to ensure the continuation of a productive society.

RATIONALE:

The rationale behind this unit is to provide students with an understanding of the common values, beliefs, and practices that form the underlying foundation of society. Through cooperative simulation activities that mirror the real life processes of forming a democratic community, students are empowered to act in and direct the class community. This helps to highlight the issues of authority, freedom, control, power, voice, self, and society. Addressing some of Kohlberg's concerns about the need to develop a sense and understanding of community, this unit combines several group and individual activities as a means of evaluation. In addition, it highlights some of the many ways in which consideration for the individual and the community must be negotiated to prevent conflicts and difficulties

from arising. This process illustrates the activities and goals of Kohlberg's "just-community" schools. Furthermore, by studying the documents directly, critical and original investigation is cultivated. Finally, by having students complete assignments that mirror the focus of these documents, they start to develop a working knowledge of issues that can be applied to a variety of experiences.

WEEK FIVE: INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY PROJECT ON RIGHTS

OBJECTIVES:

Completed over a week of vacation, the objective of this unit is to provide an integrated, experiential activity that serves as a link to all the issues and ideas that have been explored to date. It provides a personal experience in which the students can apply what they have learned to situations and events that are presently dominating the interactions between individuals and the community. In addition, it is intended to serve as an experience on which students' future critical inquiries and questions can be based.

MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES:

The specific projects that individual students will complete are determined by their own interests and desires. The only qualification is that they must be individual in nature and they must deal in some way with the rights of individuals in the community. Some examples of these projects are helping to ensure that police patrol neighborhood streets during the day and assisting in the registration of voters. In addition to actual participation in a community project, each student will be asked to prepare a short report on his experience. This will be shared with the rest of the class during the first week of the next unit.

RATIONALE:

This unit is designed to provide students with experiences in the world outside the classroom, an understanding of the role an individual plays in the community, and a source of information on which to reflect. Adopting Dewey's belief that an individual's learning must be made relevant to her particular situation, this exercise serves as an example of student-centered learning. Also, because students are able to choose an experience that they are

interested in, this experience strengthens the understanding of the need for the development of bonds of community commitment emphasized by Kohlberg, and the development of critical curiosity emphasized by both Gutmann and Giroux.

WEEKS SIX, SEVEN, AND EIGHT: EXPANSION OF RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES

OBJECTIVE:

The objective of this unit is to illustrate how and in what direction fundamental rights and liberties can be expanded to include a broader cross section of citizens. As a result, students will continue to refine their understanding of the connection that exists between individual rights and social responsibilities. Therefore, students will gain insight into the importance of becoming tolerant and willing to accept difference and diversity. A final purpose of this unit is to introduce the topic of multiculturalism.

MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES:

The materials that will be used in this three-week unit come from both primary and secondary sources. First, students will read and investigate Chapters Five through Eight in their text books.⁹ These chapters gives them a framework for understanding how previously discussed issues have been expanded to be more inclusive in regard to citizenship. At the same time, they will look at the Gettysburg Address¹⁰ and the Seneca Falls Declaration.¹¹ Finally, through individual activities and projects and cooperative learning experiences in regard to parties and elections, students will study the foundations of democracy.

Week Six will consist of studying the Gettysburg Address. This document is an example of how, during the Civil War, President Lincoln pleaded with the nation to reevaluate and reexamine the beliefs, attitudes, and ideals that formed the basis of American

⁹ Saffell, Civics, Chapter Five, "The Citizen and the Community," Chapter Six, "Parties and Politics," Chapter Seven, "Voting and Elections," and Chapter Eight, "Public Opinion and Interest Groups," 116-197.

¹⁰ Saffell, Civics, 585.

¹¹ Boller and Story, A More Perfect Union, 160-165.

democracy; we will utilize the document in the same way. Looking at it to draw conclusions about the present society, this document will serve as a means of evaluating how far we have come, and how much further we have yet to go into the expansion of rights and liberties to all people. To personalize this experience, students will be asked to demonstrate an event in their life that forced them to re-evaluate their beliefs, in any form they see fit.

The Seneca Falls Declaration will be the topic of discussion for Week Seven. During the week, individual activities and group discussions will be utilized to raise and gain a greater understanding of women's equality in all aspects of private and public life. By looking at this topic with a critical eye, students will develop a better appreciation of the relationship between personal growth and public life. One example of these empowering activities is writing and sharing an essay on the topic of how each student has been treated unfairly some time in his life.

Finally, Week Eight will be devoted to studying the construction and beliefs of national parties, how these parties play a role in the election process, and what the purpose of interest groups are in the government. To conclude this unit, students will be asked to get into groups and form their own parties. These parties should be representative of the issues they feel are important in their lives, the beliefs they hold as essential, and the goals they are trying to accomplish.

RATIONALE:

The purpose of this unit is to highlight the issues surrounding efforts to make government and positions of authority more reflective of the diverse individuals and varied experiences that constitute society. To this end, the documents and topics discussed here are intended to raise and reinforce these issues. Dewey, Kohlberg, Gutmann, Giroux, and Carlson all focused on the need to make the structures of the community more representative of the citizens of society. Not only will this unit give students a glimpse of how this change can occur, but it also provides reasons why this

needs to take place. It encourages students to develop apparatuses to combat certain discriminatory structures in society.

WEEKS NINE AND TEN: THE THREE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

OBJECTIVES:

The objective of this unit is to provide an understanding of how the three branches of the federal system work together to govern society. To reach this goal, more traditional civics curriculum topics will be discussed to provide a working knowledge of the standard practices and procedures of the structures of the national government. In addition, a connection between the individual and the national community will be fostered. Finally, students will develop the skills to participate in the process of governing.

MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES:

Focusing on Chapters Nine through Twelve of the text,¹² this unit provides an overview of the federal government. For this reason, many of the activities of Week Nine will involve acquiring knowledge about the branches and functions of the national government. By introducing a specific government agency or function, students will be asked to investigate in groups various characteristics of the topic. This discovery method of acquiring information provides students with an activity-based learning experience. In addition, during Week Ten, students will take on the role of various elements of the federal government in a simulation activity. The roles they take could be a Supreme Court justice, a member of Congress, the head of a Federal Agency, or a member of Cabinet. After choosing a topic or issue to discuss, members of the class will be asked to research, introduce, pass, and determine the constitutionality of a specific bill. Because students will have the opportunity to apply, first-hand, what they have learned, this government simulation serves as a useful activity.

¹². Saffell, Civics, Chapter Nine, "Congress," Chapter Ten, "The Presidency," Chapter Eleven, "The Executive Branch," and Chapter Twelve, "The Judicial Branch," 198-293.

RATIONALE:

The rationale behind this unit is based on the skills, information, and experiences that I argue students need to survive in and contribute actively and productively to a democratic community. In addition, this unit is important because it builds on the theme of active learning that Dewey stressed, by having students apply what they learned during Week Nine to the activities of Week Ten. Although not as directly linked to the topic of individuality and community as other units, it is important in terms of providing a framework and point of reference for future experience. As a result, reflective decision-making skills will be further refined.

WEEK ELEVEN: TRANSITION TO CIVIC RESPONSIBILITIES**OBJECTIVES:**

The objective of this unit is to refine and cultivate further students' decision-making skills, including the ability to observe, analyze, and reflect on a specific experience. As result, students will gain a better understanding of their present situations, and will start to develop ways in which to improve, change, elaborate, or enhance this position in the future. The core beliefs conveyed through this unit are the importance of mutual assistance, the value of self-restraint, the purpose of civic responsibility, and the contribution of personal responsibility. Therefore, as a result of the ideas and activities with which they come in contact, students will reflect with a conscious eye, an open heart, and a critical mind on the decisions they make and how the actions they take affect both them as individuals and the community as a collective.

MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES:

The materials utilized during this unit are similar to what have been used in other units. They will read their traditional secondary source textbook and have a chance to study directly a document of historical worth. In both cases, what is learned from one source will be applied in an explicit fashion to what is being looked at in another source. In this way, students will have an opportunity to interpret life experience in light of learning.

During Week Eleven the topic of discussion will be Senator Margret Chase Smith's "Declaration of Conscience"¹³ speech made in response to the tactics of Senator Joseph McCarthy during the 1950s. After studying Chapter Fourteen and Fifteen of the text,¹⁴ the class will look specifically at what type of conscience Senator Smith is referring to in her speech. Students will be asked to determine and discuss what "voices" (as a woman, a Senator, a Republican, and a American citizen) can be heard in Senator Chase's speech. We will focus on her effort to convince the American people that individuals in positions of authority have no right to ride rough-shod over the community. In this process, Senator Chase reminds society about the pillars of American democracy that are being threatened by the "Red scare" of Senator McCarthy. Finally, at the end of the week, students will take part in re-enacting how what Senator Smith said might have been received by the rest of the community.

RATIONALE:

The rationale for this unit is to serve as a transitional phase. Up to this point, the individual has been the focus; the establishment and preservation of individual's rights and liberties has been stressed. Here, because this units focus on individual conscience, the purpose is to show how the community contributes to the development of a freer and more powerful individual. **However, hereafter, the focus will shift to ways in which the individual contributes to the community.**

Raising questions of equality and citizenship that Gutmann and Giroux discussed, this unit is valuable because it continues the cultivation of skills and beliefs that have been raised in early units. Not only does it talk about the relationship between an individual and her community, but it does so by explicitly looking at the issue on the local scale. Therefore, this unit is useful because it provides students with important information about the workings of society and issues of responsibility.

¹³. Safire, Lend Me Your Ears, 606-610

¹⁴. Saffell, Civics, Chapter Fourteen, "Local Governments: County, Town, and City" and Chapter Fifteen "Community Issues," 318-363.

WEEK TWELVE: LOCAL GOVERNMENT

OBJECTIVES:

The objective of this unit is to provide students with an active, hands-on learning experience that provides insight into the facts and figures they have learned. To this end, the goal is to have students see and experience the issues and topics that are foremost in the minds and activities of local officials. In this way, a better understanding of the community will be established.

MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES:

During Week Twelve, the focus will be on elements of the local government. All the exercises in this segment will highlight the different ways in which individuals have an obligation to their local community. The culmination of this unit will have the students spend an afternoon with a local public official. They will then come back and give a report to the rest of the class describes the experience by analyzing the role and purpose of the person that was shadowed.

RATIONALE:

The rationale for this unit is similar to the previous unit. The point here is to continue the transition of the course's focus from the individual to the community. The act of observing a local official and then sharing these observations with the class serves this end.

WEEK THIRTEEN: GROUP PROJECT ON CIVIC RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

OBJECTIVES:

The objective of this unit is to have students work together in small groups to complete a project that is representative of what they have learned. In addition, this activity will provide students with an opportunity to explore areas of group interest that they have not had the chance to investigate. "Group" identity will be constructed. Finally, it will cultivate students' sense of cooperation, helpfulness, and compassion.

MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES:

Because this unit will be completed over a vacation week, the requirements are rather broad and self-directed. The only things

students are required to do are: work in a group of three or more people; document and demonstrate to the rest of the class the purpose of the experience; relate the experience to what we have already studied; and make sure the experience deals with an individual's responsibilities to the community. Some examples of projects students might approach are helping to clean up a park, helping to transport the elderly, or helping to supervise a youth activity.

RATIONALE:

The purpose of this activity is to give students a chance to apply what they have learned to society. As a result, students further enhance the development of self-esteem and mutual respect. They do this by contributing successfully to a group project. In addition, the exercise is valid in terms of cultivating the collectivity of life that Kohlberg stressed. It is valuable, because it gets students to draw connections between self and society. In doing this, pupils start to recognize and realize that they must not only think in ways of personal gratification, but they need to also think in terms of community survival. This is the point I argue. As a result, they begin to modify their actions in accordance with the value of contributing to the community.

WEEKS FOURTEEN AND FIFTEEN: COMMUNITY SERVICE

OBJECTIVES:

The purpose of this unit is to extend the meaning of community commitment to include issues of national concern. By focusing on broader issues that affect individuals outside students' natural boundaries of experience and contact, it will start to cultivate an understanding of the universality and inter-connectiveness of life. In addition, it will provide an excellent opportunity for the topics of human rights, authority, freedom, and citizenship to be revisited. As a result, the objective of this unit is to develop further an appreciation for the obligations an individual has to her community.

MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES:

President John F. Kennedy's "1961 Inaugural Address"¹⁵ will be utilized in this unit as the focus of discussion for Week Fourteen. Issues of what it means to be a citizen will be raised. Revisiting what they said during the first week of school, students will write in their journals about how their personal definition of community has changed. In addition, President Kennedy's famous quote, "Ask not what your country can do for you--ask what you can do for your country," will be highlighted in terms of what he might say about the present situation in the United States. The week will culminate with each student writing an essay in her journal that investigates what our country does for us and what we do for our country.

In Week Fifteen, the theme of community service will be put into action. As a group, the class will spend each afternoon of the week participating in some type of community service project. Left entirely up to the students to decide, this activity will serve as a synthesis of student learning. Not only will it pull all past learning together, but it will help students gain a better perspective on future issues and activities.

RATIONALE:

The rationale behind this unit is to highlight the diverse ways in which individual citizens have a commitment to their communities. By allowing students to choose the activity the class will participate in, they are empowered to direct the scope and focus of their learning. Dewey sees this as personalizing the process of education, but it also, as both Gutmann and Giroux said, serves as an equalizing experience. It does this by showing students that everyone has an equal commitment to society. In addition, in spirit, society should hold an equal commitment to each citizen. Therefore, this unit is important because it represents the explicit link between self and society that Carlson stresses as being paramount.

¹⁵. Safire, Lend Me Your Ears. 811-815.

WEEKS SIXTEEN AND SEVENTEEN: CIVIL RIGHTS

OBJECTIVES:

The objective of this unit is to highlight the issue of civil rights in the course of developing American democracy. Focusing on two different ways to approach the issue, it will provide students with an understanding of the benefits and drawbacks of working from inside or outside the established power structure. As a result, students will gain a better understanding of how difficult it is to convince individuals to change their beliefs and practices. Furthermore, this unit helps to cultivate a better understanding of equality of rights and respect for difference.

MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES:

The materials that will be used in this two week unit are Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech¹⁶ and Malcolm X's "Exhort of African-Americans to Confront White Suppression."¹⁷ By utilizing a variety of individual and group activities, the contrast between non-violent opposition and change and violent opposition will be explored. The purpose will be to illustrate exactly what both King and Malcolm X were trying to achieve, why they were trying to achieve it, what methods they used to achieve these goals, and how effective were they in achieving these goals. To this end, Week Sixteen will focus on Martin Luther King. It will culminate with the students sharing with the rest of the class what their dreams for the community (local, national, or international) are. Week Seventeen will focus on Malcolm X. It will conclude with students writing an essay on how they would go about changing what is wrong with the way people treat each other.

RATIONALE:

The rationale for this unit is that civil rights continues to be a topic of importance and concern for many individuals and groups in society. Not only groups of marginalized standing, but also majority groups, are interested in finding ways to become more accepting of

¹⁶. Safire, Lend Me Your Ears, 495-500.

¹⁷. Safire, Lend Me Your Ears, 611-619.

diversity and difference. For this reason, it provides an opportunity for students to learn about the historical significance of civil rights, how it is interpreted in the present day, and in what ways it may affect future generations. Perhaps the most important characteristic of this unit is that it serves as an excellent opportunity to take stock of where our society is, and where it is going in terms of multiculturalism. To this end, it strengthens many of the points made by Dewey, Kohlberg, Gutmann, Giroux, and Carlson.

WEEK EIGHTEEN: THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE WORLD

OBJECTIVE:

The goal of this unit is to draw connections between the United States and other regions of the world. Although short in duration, the objective is to illustrate to students that what takes place outside the boundaries of the United States has relevance to what happens within the country. In this way, the topic of multiculturalism can be revisited in hopes of cultivating a greater degree of acceptance and tolerance for difference. Finally, it will give students a greater appreciation of the physical vastness and individual diversity of the world.

MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES:

The sources of information that will be used in this one week unit will come from current events. Because students have been reading the newspaper each day, and keeping track of what is going on around the world, a majority of what is going to be highlighted is what we will have already learned. In addition, we will look at George Bush's idea of a "New World Order."¹⁸ By applying what we have discovered about the U.S. and its democracy, this unit will investigate the situations of other nations. In a somewhat relative comparison, students will discover exactly what conditions are present throughout the world. For this reason, students will be asked to illustrate and present what they think America's place in the world is.

¹⁸. Swing, Right versus Might. 152-158.

RATIONALE:

Essentially, the purpose of this unit is to continue to expand students' understanding of the relationship that exists between an individual and the community. In addition, skills of critical inquiry and decision-making will continue to be developed. It raises issues of citizenship in regard to the world community; issues that both Gutmann and Giroux feel are central to the understanding of democracy in terms of individual contributions and community structures. Finally, it is meaningful because it highlights issues that more traditional civics courses do not address. This unit asks Carlson's question, "Can we as Americans learn something from other societies?" For this reason, this unit serves as a measure of what should or can be done to improve the future situation of society.

WEEK NINETEEN: CONCLUSIONS**OBJECTIVES:**

The objective here is to provide a culminating experience for students. The goal is to have students pull all their learning together in one activity. It serves as a good measure of how much students have learned over the course of the semester. In addition, this activity gives students an opportunity to exhibit, in a creative fashion, what they think, believe, and feel. As a result, a higher degree of self-esteem and mutual respect will be cultivated.

MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES:

The materials that will be used in this unit include all information and experiences students acquired during the course. The assignment here is to "DEVELOP YOUR OWN COMMUNITY." Although this may appear simple and straightforward, it requires students to organize, synthesize, and reflect on everything that has been covered. Included in this project will be requirements to establish the laws of the society, design institutions to govern the society, describe the physical appearance of the community, and decide on the common customs and beliefs of the society. Students will have four class days to complete the assignment. They may exhibit the community they create in any way they deem

appropriate. The only requirement is that they share them with the rest of the class on the final day of the fourth marking period.

RATIONALE:

The rationale behind this assignment is to provide students with an opportunity to exhibit what they have learned. In addition, this assignment serves as an example of how all the ideas and theories of democratic civic educators can be utilized to cultivate more socially aware and civically responsible students, which is why it is meaningful to the students.

WEEK TWENTY: FINAL

The final for this class will be a two hour session of evaluation questions regarding the purpose, meaning, and value of the topics, exercises, activities, and principles of the course. Used largely as a tool of determining what can be done to improve the course in future years, this experience allows students one final chance to have a say in the scope and direction of democratic civic education.

CONCLUSION

Through this chapter, I have provided an outline of the units and activities of which "Individual Rights and Social Responsibilities" would consist. In addition, I have provided statements of objectives and goals for each unit, materials that will be utilized, and a rationale for what I have chosen to do. Finally, I have made explicit references to the ideas that John Dewey, Lawrence Kohlberg, Amy Gutmann, and Henry Giroux put forth through their theories of democratic civic education. As a result, I have shown how these units and activities are a direct outgrowth of my approach to education which I articulated in Chapter Five. They illustrate the negotiation of self, society, freedom, authority, and citizenship between an individual and her community. Therefore, in conclusion to this chapter, I feel it is important for me to reiterate why I feel the relationship between an individual and his or her community must be stressed in the course of education. I believe:

Education and society are as inter-connected as self and society. Neither the individual nor the community can exist independently from the other. In the same way, neither the school nor society can do so. Therefore, what is important to bear in mind is that education is a life-transforming process.

Chapter Eight: Conclusions

INTRODUCTION

Morality, self-esteem, power, freedom, authority, self and society, and mutual respect may seem like controversial topics to investigate within the four walls of a classroom. These issues may provoke uneasiness in the minds of children and in the hearts of parents. Critics say that these issues should be dealt with within the home, thus parents or the family should teach children about these topics, which need to be understood to enable individuals to develop fully. Throughout the course of this project, I have maintained that this situation may no longer be possible in an ideal sense.

Because of the breakdown of the traditional family unit, the rise of violence, and the general disregard for personal and societal worth, education must to play a more involved role in dealing with these issues. Presently, however, these are areas of study that are not being addressed in school. It is my contention that they should be. My own experience in working with students on what rights they have in society has taught me that they seem to turn a deaf ear to the accompanying responsibilities of these rights. Especially in today's society, students have a tendency to have a "give-me" attitude about life. In addition, students seem to lack the basic minimal understanding of what they need to know merely to survive in society. This is occurring at the same time the community is increasingly demanding a more caring and sharing attitude. As issues of diversity, difference, and multiculturalism continue to develop in importance, students will need to develop a more flexible and comprehensive understanding of how they fit into all levels of the changing community. For this reason, I think it is necessary for the issues I have mentioned to be discussed and negotiated by students. Only after such an experience can they develop to their full potentials.

In this final chapter of "Democratic civic Education: Preparing the Students of Today for the Society of the Future," I would like to emphasize once again the important role education can play in transforming the present and future lives of students. To achieve this goal, I mention two stories that convey the attitude an individual needs to develop to gain a better understanding of, and role in, her

community. The first story comes from a tale my grandfather once told me. The second story is about a boy growing up amid the sectarian violence of Derry, Northern Ireland. Both of these tales illustrate what I hope my project will be able to accomplish for students.

THE OLD MAN ON THE SIDE OF THE TRAIL

When I was a young boy, my grandfather would tell me bedtime stories about his boyhood friend, "Indian Joe." Although I've always had my doubts about the existence of this mysterious figure from Gramp's childhood, one story in particular taught me a valuable lesson.

One day, when Joe and my grandfather were walking through the woods looking for an apple tree to climb, they came across an old man sitting on the side of the trail. As they approached, he said, "Boys, you look like you are young and fit." They said they were. "Boys, you also look like you are full of energy and a sense of adventure." Joe said they were always looking for new places to explore. Old man said, "You have a sparkle in your eye and a spring in your step." My grandfather thanked him, and inquired why he was in the middle of the woods. He said, "Boys, I am sitting here because I can go no further. I have seen much in my days. I have had a good life, but I am old now. Therefore, I decided yesterday I would learn about the world and its people before I die." My grandfather inquired, "But old man, you have not traveled far and now you can go no further. Surely, you have not met many people to pass on your wisdom to. Please let us take you someplace where you can fulfill your goal." "Young man," the old man said, "you are right and wrong. You are right that I have not traveled far, nor met many people to learn from and teach. But you are also wrong. I have met you and your friend. And now, I can die in peace. I know that you boys have the youth, sense of adventure, energy, and sparkle in your eye to do what I am not able to do. You can travel around the world learning about yourselves and other people. Make me this one promise; carry out my dying dream before you get old and end up alone in the middle of the woods." They said they would, and began to walk away. As they turned back to thank this wise sage, he was nowhere to be found.

My grandfather said that the story's moral is to do all you can when you are young. Take every day as if it is your last. Get the most out of it. See what you can give to and share with other people. He said it would require a lot of hard work; however, it also would bring great happiness and satisfaction.

Sadly, many times this seems not to be true with much of our community. In both our country and locations around the world, human beings seem unable to coexist peacefully with their

neighbors. In high school and junior high school classrooms, I have seen these conflicts. I have witnessed the hate, contempt, and bitterness people hold toward each other. And I ask myself, WHY? Why can not people accept each other for whom they are? Why do people feel threatened by someone who is different from them? Why do people take the more traveled road of ignorance and conflict over the less traveled road of knowledge and negotiation?

THE NOT SO YOUNG MAN FROM DERRY

"I've become friends with someone I used to hate, and I've made friends with people I didn't think I'd ever like I've become friends with those people, because I now think of friends as people. Some of my best friends, I don't know their religion . . . and I don't really care."

--Kevin, a 12 year old boy at Oakgrove Integrated College, Derry, Northern Ireland

These are powerful words from a boy who has yet to reach his teenage years. A person who has never known a society devoid of religious strife and violence. These are the sentiments of a child who knows that just by opening his mouth he can turn the tables of discrimination against himself. And yet, through education, Kevin has come to realize that what really matters in life is having friends. He could care less where these people come from, look like, or talk about. Instead, Kevin wants to meet and learn about people.

While I was in Derry, I was exposed to the discrimination and intimidation present in Kevin's world. I experienced the type of social injustice I want to overcome in our society. One day, when I was crossing the bridge back into Derry, I noticed an army checkpoint. Knowing that I had done nothing wrong, I was confident I would have no trouble passing the soldiers. However, as I got closer to the checkpoint, a soldier came running towards me. He yelled, "Stop and raise your hands!" I did so immediately. He asked, "What do you have in your knapsack?" I said in an innocent way, "This knapsack?" "Don't give me any trouble," he replied, as he jabbed his machine-gun into my chest. I said quietly, "Just books, sir. I am coming from the school and have some books to read." The soldier

looked in my bag and let me pass. But before I got too far, he said, "Remember around here we do as we are told. Next time someone asks you a question, don't be so smart in your reply. We don't do things like that around here."

CONCLUSION

The problem with traditional education is that people are not given the chance to question and evaluate society and their roles in the community. I am trying to remedy this feeling. Society must be willing and ready to transform the system of public education. I feel my approach to democratic civic education is one solution to this problem. As a result, I have argued throughout the course of "Democratic Civic Education: Preparing the Students of Today for the Society of the Future" that the purpose of education is to prepare students for later in life by cultivating an understanding of the present community. By using children's experiences in an active way, teachers can help them better understand their present position in society. One of the results of this course of study is to allow students to evaluate their own thinking and beliefs in relationship to the world around them. This provides students with the experience and ability to make critical, coherent, intelligent, and well-thought-out decisions about what responsibilities they have to themselves and society. As a result, education serves as a life-transforming process. What is learned, or not learned, determines the direction and distance an individual can travel in the community. For this reason, the issues and activities that are tackled in school are important.

Furthermore, what I have discussed throughout the course of this project is essential in terms of enabling students to negotiate the conflicts and problems they will encounter in life. The democratic civic education philosophies of John Dewey, Lawrence Kohlberg, Amy Gutmann, and Henry Giroux can be implemented to reach this goal. My approach to issues of authority, power, self, society, freedom, individuality, community, and citizenship, which has been illustrated here and in previous chapters; is a starting point for helping American democracy to become more civically aware and socially responsible. If I can get students to understand the bond between

their own lives and the lives of others, "Democratic Civic Education: Preparing the Students of Today for the Society of the Future" will have been successful in starting to open their eyes to the delicate relationship that exists between individuals.

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