

INTRODUCTION:  
SCHOOLS AS LABORATORIES  
OF DEMOCRACY

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The notions *community* and *mind* have been paid a great deal of attention over the years. These are unstable ideas, their meanings shifting both across and within discourses. Many lights have been shed on them from an array of vantage points without converging—from Aristotle to Hannah Arendt, for example, or Plato to Dewey, James Madison to Langston Hughes, Sojourner Truth to bell hooks, Confucius to Black Elk. The differences are not subtle: Plato's universalism is anathema to Dewey's pragmatism; the celebrated, secular mind of Europe's Enlightenment is Zen's "drunken monkey in a cage"; the Confucian approach to community life would be an Orwellian nightmare, awful and incomprehensible for many North Americans.

This book explores just one facet of this sprawling conversation: the concern to prepare citizens for a loosely defined genre of political and social community called "democracy." The volume is concerned especially with the views of one group that more than most others has cause to pay serious attention to democracy: educators. Featured mainly are educators interested in the school curriculum, for here lies much of the concentrated and concrete work on the topic. This volume, then, is a collection of inquiries, old and new, joined on the central question of our era: What does it mean

to educate children in such a way as to fashion them for the demands of an increasingly diverse society, one that is in Toni Morrison's terms "wholly racialized," and that is organized under and struggling, on and off, to realize the democratic ideal? As Chantal Mouffe writes,

[T]he challenge that we are facing today is precisely that of developing a view of citizenship which is adequate for multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies. We have to accept that national homogeneity can no longer be the basis of citizenship, and that pluralism must allow for a range of different ethnic and cultural identities. (1992, p. 8)

In this introduction to the volume, I will broach and support the notion that schools are fitting places for democratic education. I could do this by delving into the argument that education for democracy has moral primacy over other purposes to which schooling might be put in a democratic society. That has been done well elsewhere, however, and tends to be neither a novel nor terribly pressing point among educators already committed to education for democracy, especially those, I suspect, who read this book. It is, to be sure, a critically important argument, and one with which I stand in full accord. I shall use this space, however, to develop an argument that is likely to be consequential for educators who labor in the curriculum field, whether in central offices of school districts, state departments of education, classrooms, or the academy. In other words, I will *assume* the moral primacy argument—that the schools' first moral obligation is "to give all children an education adequate to take advantage of their political status as citizens" (Gutmann, 1987, p. 288)—and concentrate instead on how schools might actually accomplish this.

I will rely on the associationist view of democracy and its meaning for curriculum. On this view, closely linked with Dewey's and Toqueville's analyses of democratic life, we are able to see that schools generally possess easily and naturally, which is to say they *already* possess without first needing to be transformed, the bedrocks of democratic living—diversity and mutuality. As well, we are able to conclude that these are two practical and elegant standards against which curriculum plans for educating democrats can be examined.

I will begin with an examination of the associationist view,

which should help us distinguish between strong and weak forms of education for democracy, then explore briefly the consequences of that view for schooling in general and the school curriculum in particular. Finally, I will introduce readers to the plan of this volume.

## I. ASSOCIATED LIVING

The idea of educating the children *for democracy* as opposed to, say, educating them for authoritarianism or theocracy is central to the rationale for public education in the United States. It has not been the only rationale, to be sure. Educating a stratified labor force for domestic productivity, keeping children off the streets, and greasing the tracks of social mobility have also been central. Yet, the democratic mission has been resilient: Educators have argued that public schools provide a singular civic apprenticeship, an education for liberty, that a fledgling democratic society snubs only at great risk to its growth and longevity. Democratic experiments are *all* fledgling, to be sure, and typically they are short-lived. They do not have the advantage of citizens who are naturally democratic, for the democratic mind is not natural. It does not arise spontaneously but in institutions—democratic institutions—and then only with difficulty. Recall that egocentricity and ethnocentricity are primary forces in humans and, like breathing, take no special training. Democracy, on the other hand, consists of habits and competencies that require cultivation without which they will not sprout in the first place, or sprout then wither quickly. Barber (1992) is explicit:

The literacy required to live in civil society, the competence to live in democratic communities, the ability to think critically and act deliberatively in a pluralistic world, the empathy that permits us to hear and thus accommodate others, all involve skills that must be acquired. . . . Empower the merely ignorant and endow the uneducated with a right to make collective decisions and what results is not democracy but, at best, mob rule: the government of private prejudice and the tyranny of opinion—all the perversions that liberty's enemies like to pretend (and its friends fear) constitute democracy. (pp. 4–5)

Rationalizing public education in and through the democratic ideal is hardly new. Consider these widely cited statements making

essentially the same point, the first as the republic was beginning, the second as free public education was being considered in Boston:

Every government degenerates when trusted to the ruler of the people alone. The people themselves are its only safe depositories. And to render even them safe their minds must be improved to a certain degree. This indeed is not all that is necessary, though it be essentially necessary. An amendment of our constitution must come here in aid of the public education. The influence over government must be shared among all the people. (Thomas Jefferson, 1785)

The great moral attribute of self-government cannot be born and matured in a day; and if children are not trained to it, we only prepare ourselves for disappointment if we expect it from grown men. . . . As the fitting apprenticeship for despotism consists in being trained to despotism, so the fitting apprenticeship for self-government consists in being trained to self-government. (Horace Mann, 1846)

The civic value of education was apparent not only to European immigrants such as these but to the Africans who were in chains when both men spoke. W. E. B. Dubois's disagreement with Booker T. Washington is telling. A full half-century after the Emancipation Proclamation, Washington wished patience and "realistic expectations" on black people. He argued that prosperity would come in time but only in proportion to the freed Africans' willingness to embrace common labor. He urged them to forget their minds and instead to put their hands to work on farms and in factories. Agitating for social and political equality wasted valuable time that could otherwise be spent on the hard-won opportunity to work for a living without chains.

The implications for education were clear. "Booker T. Temptation" (West, 1993) was advocating for African American men training in the industrial arts, that is, vocational education for labor at the bottom rungs of the occupational ladder. DuBois railed against this movement, considering it nothing more than appeasement to the former slave-owning class. He wanted access to the civic realm, to the franchise, and, beyond this, to liberal education and what could be for people recently enslaved only the *imagined* possibilities of freedom to develop one's potential.

Is life not more than meat, and the body more than raiment? And men ask this today all the more eagerly because of sinister signs in recent educational movements. We shall hardly induce black men to believe that if their stomachs be full, it matters little about their brains. The tendency is here, born of slavery and quickened to renewed life by the crazy imperialism of the day, to regard human beings as among the material resources of a land to be trained with an eye single to future dividends. Race-prejudices, which keep brown and black men in their "places," we are coming to regard as useful allies with such a theory. . . . (1903/1982, p. 126)

John Dewey took the argument for a liberatory democratic education further than anyone before or since has done. Not only did he clarify the object of the apprenticeship, he specified its method. Dewey recognized that the aim of democratic education could be conceived in two very different ways. One, the weaker, nominal view, was expressed by Jefferson and Mann and is found in many school-district mission statements. It appreciates that the election of governors requires educated voters: "Since a democratic society repudiates the principle of external authority, it must find a substitute in voluntary disposition and interest; these can be created only by education" (Dewey 1916/1985, p. 93). A stronger conception. Dewey reasoned, understood democracy to be a kind of living together. More than a form of government, it is "a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience." This mode is distinct in two ways.

First, the interaction among a group's members entails numerous and varied interests that are consciously shared. Second, the interplay between and among groups is wide-ranging and unrestricted. Any group, therefore, must refer its own actions to the actions of other groups, and the existence of these groups as well as the interplay among them are encouraged by the mores and institutions consciously shared by the *broader* public—the *bigger* public, the *commonwealth* that contains these little publics. In this way, common interests and multiple reference points are joined and nurtured. To clarify, Dewey has us ponder life in a criminal gang:

[W]e find that the ties which consciously hold the members together are few in number, reducible almost to a common interest in plunder; and that they are of such a nature as to isolate the group from other groups with respect to the give and take of the

values of life. Hence, the education such a society gives is partial and distorted. (1916/1985, p. 89).

It is partial and distorted precisely because the gang is ingrown. Its shared interests are too few and unvaried (recall the first distinction), and they partition this one group from the diversity and reciprocity that define civic life (the second distinction). Such an education is inherently bigoted.

Dewey was no dreamer. The “give and take” of associated living that he wanted badly and thought deeply about is fundamental, not a luxury, and its necessity is derived from objective conditions of the industrial era—hallmark conditions such as increasing prosperity and personal freedom untethered by tradition, but also the sudden impossibility of isolation without ethnocentrism, ghettos, and alienation. Isolation dissolves multiple reference points in favor of ignorance because one’s particular experience becomes the sole reference point. Simultaneously, common interests are exchanged for private interests. In the industrial age, isolation breeds pathology.<sup>1</sup>

Diversity plus common interests, then, compose the bedrock of a democracy strong enough to cope with modernity. These require in turn the dissolution of “barriers of class, race, and national territory” (Dewey 1916/1985, p. 93) which are precisely what prevent populations both within and among nations from clarifying and pursuing broadly shared interests: housing, food, trade policy, land policy, equal opportunity, labor relations, child care, environmental stewardship, health care, and so on. None can be handled alone by the “little publics,” whether gangs, churches, professional associations, college faculties, ethnic or residential enclaves, sports clubs, diet clubs, the Chamber of Commerce, or nation states.

Dewey goes still further. He ties not only civic vigor but self-development to the commonwealth. The “situatedness” of identity-formation is rapidly becoming conventional wisdom among intellectuals, of course; Vygotsky and Foucault have seen to that. But Dewey’s approach remains direct and unique: The same barriers to association that prevent concerted, public action also prevent people from understanding their own activity and choosing their own lives. The hard-won, panoramic view of one’s situation that might be derived from a “widening of the area of shared concerns”

provides the conditions for “the liberation of a greater diversity of personal capacities” (p. 93). Brazilian educator Paulo Freire argued roughly the same point decades later using the concept “conscientization”: To awaken, to see themselves, humans must sever their adherence to and immersion in the world. They must be not merely *in* and *of* the world, as are nonhuman animals, but *with* it—both in and of the world and distant enough from it psychologically to allow self-knowledge of the world. “Only beings who can reflect upon the fact that they are determined are capable of freeing themselves,” he wrote. “Conscientization is viable only because man’s consciousness, although conditioned, can recognize that it is conditioned” (1985, p. 68–69).

Alexis de Toqueville’s work, published at about the same time that Horrace Mann was speaking to the Boston school committee, demonstrates that the strong, associationist view of democracy was not new with Dewey. Toqueville argued that nothing more deserves attention in the study of democracy “than the intellectual and moral associations” among people. “In democratic countries *knowledge of how to combine* is the mother of all other forms of knowledge; on its progress depends that of all the others” (1848/1969, p. 517, emphasis added). He was astounded by and evidently took great delight in Americans’ penchant for association. Not only do they associate for political purposes, as in the town meeting, but for countless civil purposes as well: sales and other business associations, financial, religious, charity, leisure, travel, courtship, health, labor, educational, not-in-my-backyard, large, small, serious, silly:

Americans combine to give fetes, found seminaries, build churches, distribute books, and send missionaries to the antipodes. Hospitals, prisons, and schools take shape in that way. . . . In every case, at the head of any new undertaking, where in France you would find the government or in England some territorial magnate, in the United States you are sure to find an association. . . .

The first time that I heard in America that one hundred thousand men had publicity promised never to drink alcoholic liquor, I thought it more of a joke than a serious matter and for the moment did not see why these very abstemious citizens could not content themselves with drinking water by their own fire-sides.

In the end I came to understand that these hundred thousand

Americans, frightened by the progress of drunkenness around them, wanted to support sobriety by their patronage. . . . One may fancy that if they had lived in France each of these hundred thousand would have made individual representations to the government asking it to supervise all the public houses throughout the realm. (pp. 513 and 516)

To the associationist foundation laid by Toqueville and Dewey was added the varied work of numerous twentieth-century social scientists. Walter Lippmann argued in *The Good Society* (1937) that new modes of association spawned by the industrial era—notably, division of labor and market-directed economies—presented genuinely new possibilities for social life. He was right. These associations made people mutually dependent on others not of their circle, the consequence of which potentially was a broadening of the commonwealth as shared interests became more varied and diversity among groups more pronounced. In fact, however, the commonwealth was in many ways weakened. New or revised support structures were not sufficiently in place to keep up with the new interplay. Labor often was treated mercilessly by owners; cultural and racial minorities were systematically excluded from power and privilege; the new comprehensive high schools quickly became diploma mills, specializing in requiring no one to learn; the bigger public adopted consumption as a major life project; and voting, democratic minimalism's version of popular sovereignty, became almost too much to ask. The bigger public rapidly was handing citizenship over to politicians and retreating from the common weal.

Edward Banfield's study in 1958 of an impoverished village in southern Italy provided vivid case data on the difficulty of bringing little publics into a working commonwealth. Here was a village that, on the associationist view, fairly could be described as dead. There was no organized action whatsoever in the face of striking local problems. And these were *felt* problems. Locals complained bitterly about them, but they did nothing. There was no hospital, no newspaper, only five grades of school, no charities or welfare programs, no agricultural organizations. The only "association," so to speak, was the nuclear family. Banfield concluded that the villagers' inability to improve their common life was best explained by their inability and unwillingness to combine, that its, to associate outside their families. They were unable "to act together for



their common good or, indeed, for any end transcending the immediate, material interest of the nuclear family” (1958, p. 10). Banfield called this *amoral familism* and gave its ethos as “Maximize the material, short-run advantage of the nuclear family; assume that all others will do likewise” (p. 83). Several hypotheses follow logically:

1. In a society of amoral familists, no one will further the interest of the group or community except as it is to his private advantage to do so.
2. In a society of amoral familists, only officials will concern themselves with public affairs, for only they are paid to do so.
3. In a society of amoral familists, there will be few checks on officials, for checking on officials will be the business of other officials only.
4. In a society of amoral familists, organization (i.e., deliberately concerted action) will be very difficult to achieve and maintain. (pp. 83–86)

More recently, the work of Robert Bellah and his colleagues (1985, 1991), Harry Boyte (1989), Carol Gould (1988), Amy Gutmann (1987), Karl Hess (1979), Ann Phillips (1993), Charles Taylor (1993), and Robert Putnam (1993) elaborate and specify the expansive, associationist view of the factors that constitute civic life. Running through them, and serving as a nutshell representation of their argument, is a devastating critique of the citizen’s penultimate act in weaker accounts of democratic education: voting. Voting is seen on this view to be woefully partial—a minor, nonassociative act when set against the interactive, buzzing, and inescapably political practices that define strong democracy and strong democratic citizenship. Hess (1979) is quite bold on the matter, stating that a person is simply not a citizen if his or her only function is to vote. For such a person is electing the people who act like citizens. It is they who deliberate about public problems and try to work out policy:

People who argue for their positions in a town meeting are acting like citizens. People who simply drop scraps of paper in a box or pull a lever are not acting like citizens; they are acting like consumers, picking between prepackaged political items. They had nothing to do with the items. (p. 10)

Voting is not mocked in this view, I should stress, but its limitations are not hidden either. Voting is an act of a “minimal self” (Lasch, 1984), producing a nanosecond of popular involvement in government followed almost without pause by a relapse into dormancy. It is citizenship, to be sure, but of the thinnest and weakest sort. Some argue that it is enough (James Madison, for example), but logically and morally it is not adequate for just and satisfying living in modern, culturally diverse societies. To educate for it, therefore, is to set a standard for citizenship that is lower than the times can tolerate.

## II. CONSEQUENCES FOR SCHOOLS

The upshot of the associationist view of democracy for curriculum deliberation is an affirmation of the long-held vision of public schools as laboratories of democracy. Public schools are in key ways ideal for this project because the two characteristics that mark the associationist view are indigenous to them. First, numerous and varied interests are consciously shared. Unlike in a criminal gang or the amoral family, many ties potentially connect members of the school community, faculty and students alike. These bonds potentially include studies, the daily routine, local norms of civilized interaction, the school mascot, and the goal of “making it through.” They also include cohorts, classrooms, courtship activities, play groups, cooperative study groups, athletic and other extracurricular clubs and events, counseling, health assistance, perhaps some school-policy decision-making, and the like. For teachers, the ties include curriculum planning across grades, courses, and departments, perhaps school governance deliberations, parent and paraprofessional contacts, relationships with noncertified staff, unions, professional associations, community networking, and myriad conversations with one another in coffee klatsches, meetings and so on.

Second, the interplay among groups—students, teachers, ethnic and racial groups, males and females, administrators, counselors, parents, nurses, police, guests, the media—potentially is quite vigorous. Public schools are the only public spaces encountered by virtually all children, and this makes them, if not ideal sites and certainly not the only ones, nonetheless *promising* sites for a genu-

ine civic apprenticeship. Public schools are places where the bigger public congregates, where the array of little publics gathers and engages in common activity. At least this is the possibility public schools afford. The problems that arise in them (academic, interpersonal, within-group, and between-group) around which discussion is made necessary and becomes a supreme associative practice, are precisely the sorts of problems through which a diverse body of young people gradually can be initiated into democratic community, which is to say into increasingly critical levels of civic competence: into wondering and worrying together about how we ought to live together.

But citizenship education has suffered too much utopianism and too much lip service. Schools are *potentially* ideal sites: this is their *possibility*. Realizing this dream is quite another matter. Democracy has not seriously been undertaken as a curriculum project in this society. The democratic aim of public schooling has been tucked safely away in the rationale and mission statements of school-district curriculum guidelines. Beyond the establishment of free public schooling, surprisingly little has been done to educate children for democracy. Curriculum plans have been laid, to be sure, as the chapters in this volume attest. But they have remained always on the outskirts of educational practice.

Two traditions in particular stand in the way of strong citizenship education. One prevents congregations, the other fails to take advantage of them. Tracking, racial and ethnic tensions, sexism, and ability grouping, for example, keep the little publics from congregating. Now that access to school buildings has been pretty much achieved (ignore for the moment their differential quality), grouping practices *within buildings* turn schools into clusters of discrete neighborhoods. The little publics are kept separate. Gangs, recalling Dewey's meaning, are *nurtured*. While these practices have received considerable attention as threats to equity in education, they persist at all grade levels and their implications for the broader project of democratic education has been all but ignored.

Second, just as obstructive as segregationist practices are those that fail to capitalize on difference where it is found. Consider that student bodies rich in ethnic, gender, racial, class, and school achievement differences are increasingly the norm in American public schools, and that this diversity is increasingly found within

classrooms, the first tradition notwithstanding. Yet, curriculum planning that takes seriously this heterogeneity is not common. The mere provision of playgrounds, lunchrooms, gymnasiums, heterogeneous classrooms, and extracurricular activities falls short of the associationist vision of commonality *where within and among these settings problems of common living are identified and mutual deliberation and problem-solving activity is undertaken as a routine practice of school life*. Ironically, conflict resolution, “tolerating diversity,” and even “multicultural education,” often function as discourses of avoidance, encouraging school people mistakenly to act against conflict, muffling or preventing it or rushing to put it out when it flames up, rather than seizing upon it to nurture diversity while working out the practices of democratic living. They are not at odds.

### III. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Such concerns are concentrated in the social studies field (Parker, 1991; Saxe, 1992). Social studies broke with academic disciplines at the turn of the century on the belief that history and the social sciences should not be learned for their own sake (even if that was possible) but used, or in today’s terms *situated*. Further, their use should be in artful combination (*integrated*), and the target of their use should be human betterment and figuring out what human betterment means. But reforms came slowly. Harold Rugg (chapter 2, this volume) complained in 1921 that progressive administrators and teachers were “impatient with the further perpetuation of non-essential material in our public school courses.” The culprits, he charged, were “college professors of history, geography, political science, economics, and established teachers in our larger high schools” who were working through committees of the American Historical Association, the American Political Science Association, and the American Sociological Society. These groups had dominated social studies reform for the thirty years before Rugg set out these sentiments, and they had failed to respond to the sea change that Dewey and Lippmann and countless others, including Mark Twain, Charles Peirce, William James, Carter Woodson, and George Herbert Mead, were endeavoring to grapple with: modernity.

On Rugg's view, essential subject matter entails three things: history brought to bear on important current problems, generalizations concerning social institutions, and knowledge of diverse cultures. This was hardly the muddleheaded fluff that latter-day critics (e.g., Rickover, 1959; Ravitch, 1985) liked to hang on the social studies mantle. A sample of the problems Rugg had in mind will illustrate:

1. Crucial matters of land; the history and critique of land policies.
2. Problems of the market economy and its historical development.
3. The history of labor problems; movements for the increase of cooperation between capital and labor.
4. How the press developed its influence at various times in our growth.
5. The history of experiments in government so organized as to give a critique of the relative fitness of various forms of government.

In addition to these three objects of a reconstructed social studies curriculum, Rugg saw "training children in the process of testing evidence" as the centerpiece. Here we come to the intentional cross-fertilization of challenging intellectual processes with challenging academic content that marks a thoughtful school curriculum at any grade level, distinguishing it from the lists of topics that dominate high school curricula and the lists of skills that grip elementary education. The study of problems, institutions, and cultures, on Rugg's view, could be accomplished in and through an intellectually lively and rigorous process of problem clarification and problem solving. The apprenticeship Rugg had in mind thus included simultaneously an initiation into social understandings and habits of reasoning.

This comingling of academic content and higher-order thinking is critically important in precollegiate education. It has become too clear over the decades that in elementary and secondary schooling, perhaps unlike in advanced levels of study, having their noses rubbed in content does not automatically engage students in reasoning with and about it, not even in learning it in some minimal way. Deliberate, planful attention is needed to both reasoning and content worth reasoning about, the result being what Resnick and Klopfer (1989)

call the “thinking curriculum.” While Rugg’s work proves this is not a new idea, recent work in cognitive psychology has clarified it.

A thinking curriculum is one in which declarative and procedural knowledge are taught as one thing, not two. They are *conceived* as one. Higher-order forms of thinking (e.g., argument analysis, manipulation of data, dialogical reasoning) are designed into lessons, thereby converting them into higher-order tasks geared to the production of higher-order understandings. For example, students gather and interpret numerous sets of data and diverse viewpoints in the course of grappling with a public controversy. In this way, students need not wait to use their heads until the facts have been “covered”; rather, gathering the facts, deciding which of them to gather, interpreting and analyzing them, and putting them to work on something that needs doing all are components of a meaningful and complex task. In Hunt and Metcalf’s famous phrase, “the content of learning may be regarded as the data of acts of reflective thought. . . . In a very real sense, knowledge does not exist before learning begins” (chapter 5, this volume).<sup>2</sup>

This reconceptualization of curriculum-making counters the common instructional method of laying in a thick foundation of background information *before* inviting learners to reason. Rarely do students typically get around to thinking about information because the pressure and desire to cover yet more information is so great. Students get loads of background but experience no foreground, no laboratory in which the background *becomes* background. The point here is straightforward: A curriculum of deliberation and problem-solving invites a different sort of intellectual and civic life than a curriculum of lists. In a thinking curriculum, knowledge therefore is regarded as the *culmination* of higher-order thinking, not, as Bloom (1956) got educators wrongly in the habit of thinking, the first measly step.

Not all democratic education projects since Rugg’s have been concerned to locate the cultivation of reasoning processes in academic learning. A good number have sought to shape the reasoning itself, making it the subject matter and leaving content to others or to another time. The propaganda-resistance movement just before the Second World War, for example, wanted to teach students techniques for detecting attempts to alter their opinions on controversial issues (chapter 3). Teaching and learning these critical thinking techniques was to be added to the routine school

curriculum. Even Kohlberg's moral reasoning work (chapter 10), aimed at developing students' sense of fairness by bringing them to intimate dialogue on matters of common living, was not embedded in the school curriculum but added on in the form of the "just community."

Whether embedded or freestanding, higher-order thinking has been considered a basic building block of democratic education throughout the century. The rationale, as Dewey saw, is a blend of the pedagogical and the political. The Right traditionally has viewed democracy as a set of institutions already achieved; the Left considers it a project—Lincoln called it a "proposition." On this view, democracy is more aspiration or path than accomplishment. The Right wants the Founders' truths, their answers to the great questions of common living, to be grasped by students and then applied. The Left wants the Founders' reasoning on these questions to be examined and their answers evaluated. It wants students to engage—to *experience*—the questions themselves. Allan Griffin (chapter 4) honed this idea in the 1940s, arguing that democracy depends upon the "development of people who are capable of steadily modifying their beliefs in terms of their adequacy for explaining a steadily wider range of experience. . . ." This in turn depends upon the diversity Dewey spoke of, without which this broadening of experience cannot obtain (television's evening news notwithstanding), and upon common interests, without which diverse publics have no impetus for congregating. Griffin included but pushed beyond these categories, stressing the needed intellectual training. His history curriculum centered on two points: "(1) improving and refining the reflective capacities of our population, and (2) breaking through the hard shell of traditional sanctity which encrusts many deeply rooted and emotionally charged beliefs."

In short, the Right emphasizes the already-constructed understandings that compose the democratic ideal; the Left emphasizes humans' shell-breaking deliberative capacity that might generate these understandings anew, or better ones.<sup>3</sup>

Deliberation-oriented democratic educators appear in roughly three forms. The first emphasizes the rational negotiation of private interests. On this view, citizens need to be critically minded participants in democratic procedures, especially electoral politics, and wary watchdogs of duly elected representatives. The second

wants more: a vigorous participatory democracy that is strong in the associationist sense described above. Here the main objective is to revitalize civic life and fashion a commonwealth for modern times, and the chief method is grappling with one another's views on the public controversies that arise naturally in civic life. The third form is more ambitious still. These educators want schools to be sites of social transformation where students are encouraged to uncover cultural and political taken-for-granted and to contest social forces that, left alone, perpetuate entrenched patterns of domination, thus preventing democratic living. These educators are leery of any form of democratic education that dismisses or ignores underlying power relations.

Of course, democratic educators of all stripes want schools that foster thoughtful citizens, but the Right stresses socialization and the Left critique. There is not, despite appearances, a tremendous gap between the two positions. More like opposite sides of a coin, or a paradox, both socialization and critique are essential to education for democracy. Attempts to devise a theory that overcomes the natural tension between the two are futile and unnecessary.

#### IV. PLAN OF THE VOLUME

This book enters this messy terrain with an historical and critical interest. In the first three of its four parts are seminal works from the twentieth century on the problem of educating democrats. These parts are arranged chronologically, each surveying in turn the early, middle, and recent years of the century. The chapters in each part are a disparate lot, displaying a remarkable diversity of interests, conceptions, and intents. New works prepared for this volume compose the fourth part. Each reflects on the work to date, taking stock, providing criticism, and proposing new directions.

Questions to guide readers' discussion of these chapters are given at the beginning of each part and are the same throughout. I hope they encourage critical reading, for the value of these works to those of us laboring in the curriculum field today is their function as springboards and stimulants. I do not apologize for this utilitarian approach. Our creative, imaginative thinking together today about the purposes of schooling and its relationship to the kind of society we want to construct—this is what matters to me.



This is why these earlier works are important. Accordingly, the *Questions for Discussion* invite readers to focus their attention first on the authors' sense of problem: To which problems are they choosing to attend? Concurrently, which problems are being neglected or denied? Second, readers are directed to the historical contexts of these authors' work. This is by way of encouraging readers to look into the reasons why a particular construction of a problem came to be, who believed it to be a problem, and why. For this reason, A United States or world history text or other historical references would be helpful companions to this volume. The third question goes to the authors' conceptions of democracy and, particularly, to the ways in which they articulate the twin concerns of diversity and mutuality (if they do this at all). The fourth question encourages readers to flip back and forth through the book, comparing the chapters. A data-retrieval chart, such as the one shown in figure I, could be useful for comparing the chapters based on these questions and others that readers may generate.

Works in the first part, "Early Years," range from Rugg's problem-centered curriculum to Wayland Osborn's attempt to teach high school students to resist propaganda. Both works were deeply embedded in their times, of course. (All of the chapters in this volume are "period pieces"; they could not be otherwise.) Rugg's chapter was a letter written in response to a speech given before the Secondary Education Club of New York City; Osborn's research built on the considerable work done by educators working in the highly volatile 1930s to make young people less susceptible to unscrupulous influences on their opinions. The era's brightest intellectual beacons arguably were two texts by John Dewey: *How We Think* and *Democracy and Education*. A key chapter from the latter is featured here, for it clearly lays out the associationist conception of democracy. But the former is equally pertinent to the education of democrats because it helped launch the teaching of thinking as a durable and central theme of democratic education. A selection of Allan Griffin's elegant work closes this section, adding an exclamation mark to the sentence Dewey was writing thirty years before and bringing his work into the heart of the social studies field.

Works in the second part, "Middle Years," were drawn more or less from the New Social Studies efforts of the 1950s and 1960s.

FIGURE I.  
Comparing the chapters using the *Questions for Discussion*

	<i>Question 1 Problems</i>	<i>Question 2 History</i>	<i>Question 3 Democracy and Diversity</i>	<i>Question 4 Comparisons</i>
1. Dewey				
2. Rugg				
3. Osborn				
4. Griffin				
5. Hunt and Metcalf				
6. Engle				
7. Taba and Elzey				
8. Oliver and Shaver				
9. Apple				
10. Kohlberg				
11. Newmann et al.				
12. Gagnon				
13. Mathews				
14. Bernard- Powers				
15. Whitson and Stanley				
16. Angell and Hahn				

At this point, the project to educate for democracy took two distinctly different forms: issue-centered education and inquiry. The first, found here in Hunt and Metcalf's, Engle's, and Oliver and Shaver's work, was akin to Rugg's: Educate the population to reason capably, to embrace individual freedom and human dignity, and to tackle genuine public problems loaded with value conflict. The inquiry approach was different in assumptions and intent. Represented here only in Taba's work, it was rather more scientized and aimed less at the moral imperatives of schooling than at academic disciplines themselves. This work nonetheless concerned itself with the cultivation of reflective minds and, hence, if indirectly, minds suited to the demands of popular sovereignty. What this approach ignored, however, was the democratic training that association-rich schools might afford. It generally held itself above the fray.

Works collected in the third part, "Recent Years," sample the 1970s and 1980s. Principles of psychology, philosophy, and sociology were joined in programs as different as neo-Marxist emancipatory pedagogy (chapter 9) and Kohlberg's moral development project (chapter 10). Newmann and his colleagues delineated an interdisciplinary high school curriculum designed to teach students to exert influence in public affairs, arguing that without this competence "the inalienable right to do so. . . cannot be exercised" (chapter 11). Finally, historian Gagnon brings us full circle, back to Rugg's response to the American Historical Association, by arguing that historical study is sufficient (chapter 12). At century's end, education for democracy is a noncollapsible array of visions and methods, some weak and some strong, some related directly to education for democracy, others arguably so indirect as to fall barely within the project.

The new chapters composing the fourth section of the volume reflect on these works. Each problematizes key features of the project. David Mathews asks civic educators to redefine *politics* and *citizenship* in such a way that deliberation—talking with one another about problems held in common—becomes the centerpiece of a curriculum for democracy. Jane Bernard-Powers asks why public life generally has excluded women, almost by definition. James Anthony Whitson and William Stanley "re-mind" readers that a discredited, dualistic conception of mind still governs progressive education discourse. Finally, Ann Angell and Carole Hahn take us

from North America to Denmark, Japan, and England for cross-cultural comparisons of democratic education.

Taken as a whole, the collection stands as an inquiry on what remains today an open question: How should young people be educated for democratic living in culturally diverse societies? Assuming there can be no democracy without democrats, and that democrats are made, not born, this is a sobering question. An education has not yet been attempted in this century, not on a broad scale anyway, that does not take the weaker of the two roads to democracy and, in tandem, that does not marginalize diversity.

Education for democracy is a program waiting to happen. The common school movement of the nineteenth century was democratic in its impulse and aspiration. It brought many of the little publics together. Beyond this foundation laid early in the century, however, educators have not ventured, at least not in ways that made an institutional difference. Mass and common schooling was a fundamental move, to be sure, but a more ambitious program awaits invention. We could call it by the clumsy name, "Civics, Now That We Have Public Education," thereby emphasizing that the project's point is to take advantage of the diverse congregation afforded by the common-school movement, and to use these associations as the ground of democratic education. It is an idea long overdue if *e pluribus unum* and *popular sovereignty*, which is to say democratic political community *with* cultural pluralism, are to have meaning in this and other lands in the twenty-first century.

## NOTES

1. In *The School and Society* (University of Chicago Press, 1899/1956), Dewey clarified the need for a new education to match the imperatives of modernity. He wrote of an "intellectual revolution" in which learning was no longer guarded by priests. Instead, "learning has been put into circulation . . . it has been liquefied. It is actively moving in all the currents of society itself" (p. 24–25).

2. Just as thinking cannot wait for the facts to be "covered," neither can democratic politics wait until formal education has ended. "Without recourse to democratic politics," Gutmann argues, "there would be no acceptable means to educate adults and no acceptable means of educating children outside the family" (1987, p. 287).

3. Recently, the Right has set up deliberation-oriented social studies educators as the *cause* of students' poor grasp of democratic knowledge (e.g., Cheney, 1987). This is not an entirely silly charge. Perhaps some understandings are best learned by memorizing them and then contemplating them until some sense is made of them. Still, it is typical of the Right's remedy for ignorance.

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