

Commentary on 'Democratic pedagogy'

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Conservative education tries to adapt the learners to the world that is given; progressive education tries to make the students unquietly critical, challenging them to understand that the world that is being presented as given is, in fact, a world being made and, for this very reason, can be changed, transformed, reinvented.

Paulo Freire

The ideas contained in this paper were first formulated as part of a chapter in my doctoral dissertation, which was completed in 1997. Some years later I added to my initial thoughts, scribbled some notes, and presented them at the 12th Annual Philosophy in Schools Conference, held in Brisbane in 2002. This presentation surfaced as a paper in *Critical & Creative Thinking: The Australasian Journal of Philosophy in Schools* (Burgh 2003a). Soon thereafter I revised the paper (Burgh 2003b) and it appeared in abridged form in the Asia-Pacific Philosophy Education Network for Democracy (APPEND) Philosophy Series, Volume 4: *Philosophy, Democracy and Education*, edited by Philip Cam. It was once again revised, but also expanded, and appeared in Chapter 5 of *Ethics and the community of inquiry: Education for deliberative democracy*, a collaborative authorship with Terri Field and Mark Freakley (2006). Some sections have been further revised and appear in other publications (Burgh 2009, 2010; Burgh & Yorshansky 2011). These revisions would suggest that my thoughts on these matters are constantly changing. To some degree this is true, but each time the changes have built on previous ideas rather than new ideas replacing old ones. I welcomed the invitation to revise the original paper, which includes sections not included in later versions. However, with almost 11 years passing since the original publication, I found myself deleting sections and replacing others. Subsequently, this paper is a culmination of all the revisions and incorporates ideas from each.

Revised article**Democratic pedagogy****Introduction**

In the late 1960s Matthew Lipman developed an educational syllabus based on transforming the classroom into a community of inquiry. He intended his method of practice to develop the students' capacities for reasoning and logic, as well as their social dispositions, through adult mediation between the culture and the child. This, he argued, would also improve the relationship between deliberative judgments and

democratic decision-making. For Lipman, the pedagogy informs the method of classroom practice which is the practice of philosophy. The pedagogy is 'reflective education', in which thinking is understood as a process of inquiry, and where learning to think is at the core of educational aims and practices. This is why the community of inquiry is best described as educational philosophy rather than as philosophy of education; that is, teaching methods and classroom practice are informed by certain pedagogical criteria whereby the practice of philosophy is the methodology of education (Lipman 2003, 2004, 2008).

Although philosophy is traditionally considered an activity not suitable for children,¹ Lipman claimed that children can engage in genuine philosophical inquiry provided that it is offered to them in ways suitable to their abilities and interests (Lipman 1988, 1991; Lipman & Sharp 1994; Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyan 1980). As part of his wider project, Lipman's aim was to promote the use of philosophical inquiry in schools and in the wider community. Indeed, Lipman's ideas on curriculum and pedagogy have already been established with promising results in a variety of educational settings, including schools, colleges and universities, in many countries worldwide, which makes them extremely important, particularly as effective pedagogy aimed at educational reform, as well as the development of civic literacy.

Educational reform, like most political movements, requires working against the perpetual constraints that society constructs to preserve and maintain the existing social and political order, including the tendency to indoctrinate the same moral practices in each new generation. Historically these constraints, imposed even by so-called democratic societies, have been complicit in the reinforcement and perpetuation of elitism and social divisions. Unfortunately, from the reformer's viewpoint, much of history has shown that the maintenance of commitment to social reform takes its toll. Political movements can and do fall short of their potential as agents of change, or internal power struggles sometimes threaten to destabilise the momentum generated over a period of time.

Ironically, one of the major barriers preventing students from participating in educational philosophy (for Lipman, this means philosophy functioning educationally) is the very education system itself. The contemporary educational system is constrained by bureaucratic rationality, which not only informs the way teachers approach education, but tends to thwart efforts by teachers and parents who seek democratic reforms. Ideally, it is preferable to eliminate or, at least, minimise the impact of bureaucracy on the way schools are presently administered (Rizvi 1989, 1993; Walker 1990). As an upheaval of current institutional practices seems unlikely, educational reform is best served through a step-by-step approach. Less radical, bottom-up reforms, including the devolution of hierarchical institutional arrangements, are more practical as means to subverting social, economic and

¹ Plato tended to restrict philosophy to mature students on the grounds that it made younger people, including children, excessively contentious. This view, although not popular among philosophers today, was echoed by Tony Coady, who, while generally positive about Philosophy for Children, cautioned that 'philosophy can easily create smartarses out of bright kids ... If introduced to people who are still immature, it could have a bad effect' (in Slattery 1995, p. 21).

political agendas. Furthermore, this approach regards reform as a social process (i.e. it is not dictated by government policy that must somehow be implemented) that has an educative potential in providing opportunities for people to participate in the formulation of educational policy. This approach is beneficial insofar as it is a realistic approach for bringing philosophy to educational institutions, and especially for those educators committed to the integration of philosophical awareness and procedures in all aspects of curriculum, teaching and learning. The emergence of philosophy in schools illustrates this well. It indicates a growing willingness of administrators, teachers and parents to challenge the institutional practices of the educational system. It can also be taken as evidence of acceptance by the community, generally, of philosophical inquiry as a model of education. Some educators see the introduction of philosophy in the classroom as a reappraisal of education, others see it as an appealing approach to be integrated into the current curriculum or new curriculum innovations, while still others realise its potential of improving reasoning skills or as an appropriate pedagogy for value inquiry.

Notwithstanding any misgivings about contemporary educational institutions, there is a contrast between the approach of philosophy and that of other disciplines. While it is true that other disciplines, like philosophy, require the use of certain conceptual tools, the discipline of philosophy also prepares students to think in other disciplines. Philosophy, therefore, provides an effective model for the educational process as a whole. In one sense, this means simply that educational philosophy can make a fundamental and much needed contribution to the present curriculum. Lipman's (1988) vision promises much broader horizons. He envisioned philosophy with children as paradigmatically representing 'the education of the future as a form of life that has not yet been realized and as a kind of praxis' (p. 17).

Alas, there is a tendency among policy-makers who profess a commitment to the goals of lifelong learning to see education as providing a means for enabling individuals, organisations and nations to meet the challenges of an increasingly competitive world, to the neglect of involving people in a continuing process of education aimed at self-actualisation and a learning society. This charge has serious implications for contemporary democratic societies and attitudes toward education. Schools are institutions that produce a product which is sold to children and parents as education, rather than places of opportunity—integrated with work and the rest of life—that prepare and direct children toward becoming an integral part of a well-informed citizenry.

Regardless of how well schools fulfil their role as democratic institutions (which includes allowing students to be involved in the definition and shaping of problems they are invited to consider), dissension and confrontation will persist in a democratic society. It is unlikely that people will be completely happy with their social, economic and political status, because even so-called reasonable people disagree on solutions or the formulation of the problems. This is inevitable because people bring different frames of reference to specific situations, thereby deriving different solutions and policy decisions. The success of efforts to deal with the resulting problems will hinge on the shared commitments of citizens, which will provide a context for deliberation and decision-making. This can be brought

about by helping students to understand the connections between societal values and their own values. To this end, the classroom community of inquiry is thought of as a pluralistic community, focussed on dialogue and collaborative activities. Put another way, 'Lipman's classroom forms an inclusive cooperative community in which communication and inquiry sow the seeds for democracy' (Cam 2006, p. 8). How, and in what way, this might be achieved is the topic of this discussion.

In this paper, I outline three models of democracy: the liberal model, which emphasises rights and duties, and draws upon pre-political assumptions about freedom; communitarianism, which focuses on identity and participation in the creation of political ends; and deliberative self-governance, whereby citizens deliberatively shape their collective lives in public forums—at various levels of government and in different political and social arenas. I argue that some kind of deliberative democracy is defensible as a preliminary justification for how citizens might shape their lives, and is therefore compatible with other forms of democracy, insofar as they can result from democratic deliberations. Acceptance of such a view raises further questions about the purpose or aims of education consistent with this conception of democracy. I contend that it requires an educational model that is committed to aligning curriculum, pedagogy and assessment to produce a transformational environment that will inform our structures—a commitment to democratic education and not merely education for democracy. Lipman goes part of the way to achieving these ends. I contend that more emphasis needs to be placed on Dewey's notion of reconstruction, which includes taking into account the primacy of deliberative democracy (i.e. the development of deliberative and communicative relationships) and placing emphasis on the radical conception of citizenship as a learning process (i.e. citizenship is experienced as a practice that connects individuals to their society, sustained through social reconstruction).

Democracy

Before we move on to discuss the three models of democracy it is necessary to distinguish democracy as it is actually practised in Western nations, and the deliberative or participatory models advocated by thinkers such as John Dewey (1915, 1916). Representative government and freely-held elections at regular intervals are considered to be the hallmarks of democracy. The assumption is that democracy is synonymous with regularly held elections, and that without elections there is no democracy:

Government by elected representatives is taught in schools and presented in the media as the natural way of doing things. Powerfully legitimized by the ideas of mandate and merit, representatives elected under this system consider that the electorate has given them a mandate to govern, while bureaucrats consider that merit and expertise justify their role in a powerful decision-making elite. (Carson & Martin 1999, p. 1)

The view that mandate and merit are rationales for good governance is seriously flawed. Western representative systems of government concentrate power with parliament or congress and exclude citizens from direct decision-making and participation. Thus, because power is concentrated amongst a small number of politicians and high-level bureaucrats, and because citizen input into policy is minimal, political accountability is low and elected representatives are susceptible to vested interests, misconduct and corruption. As most of the general institutional characteristics typical of modern democracies (such as elected representatives, free and fair elections at regular and frequent intervals) were derived from republican conceptions of democracy (typically in the USA) or constitutional monarchies (Westminster parliamentary systems such as those practised in Australia), the theoretical descriptions outlined in the first two models below will have direct application to understanding contemporary democracies.

The deliberative model, on the other hand, provides a vision of an ideal democratic society which supports greater participation and deliberation as necessary conditions for democratic life. Arguably, such a system better supports the guiding ideals and pedagogical practices advocated here. The fact that a genuinely deliberative democracy does not as yet exist should not hinder attempts to introduce or implement deliberative institutions or practices. As proponents of both liberal-democracy and republicanism advocate deliberation as a necessary requirement for decision-making in a democracy, it is not deliberation *per se* that is in question but rather the extent to which deliberation should be enjoyed by all citizens. In this sense, all democracies will claim to be deliberative.

Liberal citizenship: Rights and duties

According to Gerard Delanty (2000), to speak of citizenship is to speak about group membership or, more specifically, membership of a political community which involves a set of relationships between rights, duties, participation and identity. Competing theories place different emphasis on these components of citizenship.

Citizenship, in the classical tradition of modern liberal thought, is a legal status bound up in pre-political notions of liberty, the private domain and consumer rights, to the neglect of the public sphere. While much contemporary debate on citizenship has focused on a return to the substantive dimension of citizenship, the relationship of citizenship to democracy has not been the focus of discussion in liberal debates. Instead, 'citizenship is reduced to a formalistic relationship to the state as one of rights and duties' (p. 22). Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's (1987) statement, 'there is no such thing as society, only individuals', sums up the lack of a substantive dimension to citizenship. With the arrival of neo-liberalism and the emphasis on decentralisation, deregulation and privatisation, the concept of citizenship has once again become strongly linked to the market. In sum, by denying the social in favour of individual consumers, neo-liberal versions of citizenship have relegated citizenship to

the realm of the market and/or the sphere of the state.

In modern liberal democracies, popular participation in decision-making is restricted. The power of electors is formally limited to voting, and decision-making restricted to elected representatives. The longer these representative groups stay in power, 'the more their interests become identified with the survival of the state' (Walker 1992, p. 316). Although it can be argued that regularly held elections enable citizens to participate in decision-making, the outcome is similar to that of the referendum, and there is no significant way that the majority participates in framing policy. The introduction of the citizen initiative as a supplement to regularly held elections seems to be a way of avoiding some of the pitfalls of representative democracy and the impracticability of direct democracy. However, the difficulty facing contemporary liberal theorists is how to reconcile the notion of individual liberty with constitutional constraint on governments elected by the people. Liberal arguments reason from the value of liberty to imposing limitations on the state, whereupon constitutional mechanisms define and delimit the powers, rights and duties of the executive, other government institutions and the citizens, in order to protect individual liberty. The crucial question that modern democratic theorists need to address concerns not so much the extent of popular control but how such control might be exercised. The answer will depend on the practical applicability of competing liberal theories. Critical to the assessment of competing theories is whether a solution requires a move away from traditional conceptions of liberalism or the influences of social democracy on liberalism. A viable solution will also hinge on the practical applicability of an educational pedagogy for the teaching and learning of the relevant democratic procedures that is compatible with liberal-democratic principles. Communitarian critiques of liberal political philosophy have modified liberalism to produce liberal communitarianism (Delanty 2000, p. 25).

Communitarian models of democracy

Unlike the liberal tradition, which appeals to the individual as the foundation of civil society, communitarian versions of citizenship locate civil society in *community*. Emphasis is on identity and participation rather than on rights and duties. Communitarians reject contract in favour of community, extending citizenship to the domain of politics, although the concept of politics does not extend to democracy (Delanty 2000, p. 24). However, there are also marked differences in the ways communitarians treat identity and participation. Three forms of communitarianism will be described: liberal communitarianism, conservative communitarianism, and civic republicanism.

In reaction to liberal conceptions of politics, liberal communitarians stress the importance of citizenship as participation in a political community, but also emphasise identity specific to a particular community. What is rejected is a notion of self as an abstract and universal entity, replaced by a culturally specific, and therefore socially

constructed and embedded self. According to Charles Taylor (1994), the fundamental issue is the integration of self and other, which is an essential feature of social life. The encounter between self and other is embedded in a shared language, and crucial to this encounter is a discourse of recognition at a public level. The concept of community in communitarian discourse, which has its foundations in the politics of recognition, is the community of the dominant culture recognised by the state. Since political community rests on *prior* cultural communities, minorities and incoming groups must adapt to this community in order to participate as citizens in the political community.

Conservative communitarianism also focuses on identity and participation. However, identity is allied with the notion of the nation or civil society, and participation with civic responsibility. In its most conservative form it is likely to 'stress family, religion, tradition, nation and what in general might be called cultural consensus' (Taylor 1994, p. 29).

Civic republicanism is a radical form of liberal individualism that places emphasis on public or civic bonds, rather than on moral communities as is the case with communitarianism in general. Participation in public life occupies a central space and is the essence of the public bond. It is also equivalent to, but far more pronounced than, the emphasis given to identity in liberal communitarianism. Proponents of civic republicanism include Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762), Hannah Arendt (1958) and Benjamin Barber (1984). In republicanism we find a commitment to public life, whereas the liberal formulation emphasises self-interest or personal autonomy. Any connection to privatism and negative liberty, which are hallmarks of liberalism, is denounced in favour of an explicit political conception of citizenship, positive liberty, and a self-governing political community.

Republicanism challenges the liberal presupposition that a self-governing community is incompatible with representative democracy. Whereas liberal democracy has an historical connection to constitutional monarchy, civic republicanism, according to its more radical proponents, is a much more compatible companion for representative democracy. The challenge for civic republicanism lies in relocating or wrestling politics from the state into the public forum. The main concern of republicans generally is that of popular sovereignty over a particular relationship between monarch and parliament. The irony of the Republican vs. Monarchy debate in Australia, which resulted in a referendum in favour of the status quo, is that the debate on whether or not to maintain any existing ties between monarch and parliament remained superficial. This was to the detriment of any open and informed public discussion on the question of shifting power from parliament to the public forum.²

The liberalism/republicanism debate rests on whether or not constitutional safeguards or popular sovereignty can offer an adequate justification for democracy. Liberals and communitarians have tended to frame this question in terms of seeking foundations for

² I am referring in particular to the current practice of adversarial politics, characterised by government and opposition, party politics, and debate.

democracy.

A radical theory of citizenship and democracy

To avoid the problem of democracy being subservient to a normative theory of citizenship, radical democracy offers a theory of democracy whereby the citizen plays an active role in the construction of democracy. Rather than confine citizenship to membership of society or the bearer of rights which informs democratic theory, radical democracy implies a conception of citizenship that is 'repoliticized by democracy, allowing us to speak of democratic citizenship' (Delanty 2000, p. 36). More specifically, it is a theory of democracy whereby citizenship is seen as participatory citizenship with a democratic aim; that is, of transforming the relationship between society and the state. By shifting the emphasis away from a model of citizenship that rests on political foundationalism—in the sense that a particular model of democracy can be justified only by an appeal to self-evident truth about human nature, natural rights or other pre-political or normative foundations—toward an emphasis on democratic engagement, citizenship itself becomes the means of transforming politics.

What makes theories of radical democracy distinct from liberal and communitarian conceptions is that democracy and citizenship are not treated as separate discourses. Citizenship is not a theory of the individual but of collective action. By extending citizenship to democratic participation, rather than confining it to societal membership, citizenship is an active process of social change through political transformation. Put another way, the dualisms of the state and society, democracy and citizenship, and the individual and community are resolved. The state and the community are seen as interdependent, and citizenship the prime mover for democratising both. Dewey's notion of democracy is exemplary of community tied to democracy. Democracy, according to Dewey (1916), 'is more than a form of government, it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint, communicated experience' (p. 87). Dewey's vision of democracy is that of a strong democracy; a process of community formation founded on deliberative communication. It is a deliberative model of democracy that provides a vision of an ideal democratic society which supports greater participation and deliberation as necessary conditions for democratic life.

Dewey's version of democracy could be described as a precursor to discursive democracy, later elaborated by Jürgen Habermas, as it locates democracy in both the state and society and is concerned with the deliberative process within public communication. Emphasis is not only on participation, but also on the quality of the participation, and thus challenges the notion of the liberal autonomous individual subject and the private-public distinction. This shifts the emphasis also onto civic virtues such as tolerance, a willingness to listen and be open to alternatives, and a readiness to reason. It also stresses the relationship between language and a sense of community, and locates the epistemological justification for democracy as a form of communal deliberation in both the public sphere and the institutional political culture

of civil society. Dewey's justification, therefore, satisfies Barber's demand for an epistemology that is legitimated by a certain democratic politics rather than politics that is legitimated by a certain epistemology. This form of deliberative communication implies an intersubjective understanding of self where the 'idea of the public is also recast as a medium of open-ended communication' (Delanty 2000, p. 42). The epistemology of the community is fallibilism; an ongoing learning process of reconstruction through reflexive scrutiny and self-correction. It is what Habermas (1996) calls 'a fallible learning process through which a society gradually overcomes its ability to engage in normative reflection on itself' (p. 444). Citizenship, in this sense, 'is as much about the articulation of problems as it is about their resolution' (Delanty 2000, p. 46).

Radical democracy recognises that citizenship, like democracy, is a fluid and on-going process of socio-cultural construction; it is never permanent and complete. What I am stressing here is the learning dimension of citizenship as a process of social reconstruction. As a learning process, citizenship takes place in communicative situations arising out of ordinary and extraordinary life experiences and events. Seen in this way, citizenship has a cognitive dimension; in other words, it is experienced as a practice that connects individuals to their society, sustained by individual and collective narratives, consisting of memories, common values and shared experiences. Thus, citizenship has a transformative role to play, not just in enhancing the individual's cognitive competencies, but also in bringing about collective learning. The advantage of framing citizenship as an active learning process is that it shifts the focus of citizenship from membership of a political community onto common experiences, cognitive processes, forms of cultural translation, and discourses of empowerment. Citizenship must be able to give voice to personal identities that come out of communicative relations, rather than as an expression of neo-liberal values of individualism or shared communitarian values. While coping with diversity is one of the tasks of citizenship, as an active learning process citizenship can become an important means of cognitive transformation of self and other. Put another way, citizenship as a learning process shaped by communicative and deliberative processes and relations is radically democratic. It concerns the task of constructing and enhancing democratic ways of association, such as learning to give new definitions to work, social relations, and ecological relations.

The fact that a genuine deliberative democracy does not as yet exist should not be considered a hindrance. If we are ever going to achieve a stronger democracy of the deliberative kind in what Dewey called the Great Community, we need to have microcosms in place. This leads us to the kinds of educational arrangements required to fit deliberative democracy and to facilitate democratic transformation.

Education and democracy

Whether or not justification for democracy can be found in liberty and rights, identity and participation, or in deliberation, the promotion of democracy has educational implications. Modern democracies are confronted with the challenge of providing education that is responsive to an increasingly complex world, and responsible to the differing needs of students (Burgh & O'Brien 2002). Therefore, the importance of citizenship preparation as an integral component of schooling cannot be denied if education is to make a contribution to the cultivation of democratic competencies and values to enable civic participation (Burgh 2010; Gutmann 1987; Sharp 1991). The overall goal of civic participation 'is for better decisions, supported by the public and fostering the increased wellbeing of the population' (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006, p. 173). Civic participation can be described in two ways: (1) as collective and individual activities reflecting interest and engagement with governance and democracy, and (2) as the quality of the participation with regards to deliberative processes and decision-making.

A useful framework for assessing education with regards to citizenship preparation according to the above measures is to distinguish between, what I call, *education for democracy* and *democratic education* (Burgh 2003a, 2003b, 2009; Burgh, Field & Freakley 2006; Burgh & Yorshansky 2011).³ Whereas education for democracy focuses on the acquisition of knowledge and skills as a means to improve the capacity of future citizens to exercise competent autonomy, democratic education recognises the social role of schooling as that of reconstruction and that children and young people have an integral role to play in shaping democracy. It is my contention that education for democracy may serve political leaders in modern democratic societies who have a vested interest in promoting the essentially pre-political conception of citizenship, 'a means for enabling individuals, organisations, and nations to meet the challenges of an increasingly competitive world to the neglect of involving people in a continuing process of education aimed as self-actualisation and a learning society' (Burgh 2002). Democratic education, on the other hand, is more attuned to the procedural concerns of democratic education.

Education for democracy

The primary goal of education for democracy is the achievement of an educated citizenry competent to participate in democratic societies. What is crucial is that education develops in students, and in the population generally, a sufficient degree of social understanding and judgment so that they have the capacity to think intelligently about public issues. It is not a proposal for a particular way of teaching, but rather it is a way of teaching that has been interpreted in various ways. One way is to teach or instill a set of values or to stress democratic values as respect for the institutions of

³ Peters (1966) also deals extensively with the relationship between democracy and education. He offers three ways in which education could be democratic: (1) the democratization of education, (2) the school as a democratic institution, and (3) education for democracy.

democracy. This approach to education for democracy presupposes a common identity—one in which values, beliefs, morals and perceptions are congruent with those that are dominant within the society at the time, notably those identified with liberal-democracy. It is displayed in the calls for teaching values designed to promote national identity, global identity, or multicultural identity. For example, in July 2002, with the unanimous support from the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA)⁴, the Australian Government commissioned a values education study designed to:

- enable schools to develop and demonstrate current practice in values education,
- provide an informed basis for promoting improved values education in Australian schools, and
- make recommendations on a set of Principles and a Framework for improved values education in Australian schools. (Department of Education, Science and Training 2003, p. 1)

The report of the study led to the development of a Draft Framework for Values Education that was modified after further consultation, endorsed by MCEETYA (1999), and published in 2005 as the *National framework for values education in Australian schools*. The emphasis was on democracy underpinned by a set of broad, general values as a body of knowledge, rather than on democracy as a way of life.⁵ The assumption is that values can be prescriptively taught through either: (1) a character education approach which identifies the stated values as universally shared values that students will supposedly accept and enact as guides for behaviour, or (2) a cognitive developmental approach which promotes moral reasoning through moral dilemmas or values clarification.

Another approach to education for democracy is through civics or political education, often infused into social studies programs. According to this view, in order for students to be adaptable and socially responsible contributors to the democratic society in which they live, they must acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of their country's political heritage, democratic institutions and processes, systems of government, the judicial system, and other aspects that will assist them to become fully functioning citizens. This approach need not be purely descriptive. It can provide opportunities to expose students to concepts and values supposedly necessary for democracy, such as social justice, rights, equality, freedom, choice, culture, identity, ecological and economic sustainability, and so forth, or to model procedures, such as classroom elections or mock parliaments. The assumption behind this approach is that not only is there certain

⁴ Membership of the Council comprises State, Territory, Australian Government and New Zealand Ministers with responsibility for the portfolios of education, employment, training and youth affairs, with Papua New Guinea and Norfolk Island having observer status.

⁵ Then Australian Federal Minister for Education, Brendan Nelson, proclaimed that these values which are 'intuitive of education itself, parents want prescriptively taught. Imperfect though each of us is as parents, we nonetheless expect school to reinforce the values we believe important foundations for life' (Nelson 2004, p. 7).

political knowledge that can be attained, but also that it is desirable that such knowledge, namely liberal-democratic values, principles and procedures, be reinforced in schools. Pedagogically it relies on a normative approach to education and, if not taught critically, it becomes a model of cultural transmission whereby students take on board particular facts and apply these to their lives. To avoid these problems, some approaches emphasise political literacy. This approach places less emphasis on political competence, and aims at developing a broad range of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are prerequisites for political understanding (Wringe 1984, p. 97). Typically stressed are procedural principles that underlie democratic attitudes, a focus on political issues rather than on political institutions, or the skills required to influence group decisions, and how to do so in an appropriate democratic way. Teaching democracy through civics, political education or political literacy programs focuses on the role of the individual as having certain political obligations and social responsibilities as a citizen. Of the three approaches, the political literacy approach affords more opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes for active citizenship, but it too falls short of a radical view of the citizen as a democratic citizen. Democratic values are seen in a favourable light as shared values bestowed upon all citizens, albeit that they may require gradual reform. This is a far cry from radical citizenship whereby education is seen as a means of transforming democratic politics.

Education for democracy need not be limited to civics or citizenship education that deals with the origins, structures and functions of democratic systems of governance. Critical thinking approaches to educating for democracy have also found a place in the school curriculum. The aim of these approaches is to provide opportunities for students to critically evaluate the principles, values and processes that underlie democratic institutions and systems of governance. Rather than superficial discussion of particular facts, emphasis is on the underlying concepts that those particular facts reflect. The basis of this approach is to develop an active and informed citizenry able to participate responsibly as members of their society. Some approaches expand on the notion of critical thinking beyond civics, political education or political literacy programs as a means for developing critical attitudes in students to enable them to articulate and support their views, and to develop skills in problem-solving and decision-making as future citizens. What is crucial to this view of education for democracy is that education develops in students a sufficient degree of social understanding and judgment so that they have the capacity to think intelligently about public issues that matter to them. This approach is a step in the right direction. However, the underlying idea of all such education is that students should be initiated into the established traditions and institutional practices, and that gradually they could adapt their ability to think critically to novel situations or challenge some practices that may no longer be rationally defensible. While the emphasis is on developing democratically minded citizens, the character of the citizen is still that of the liberal citizen; an autonomous individual with the capacity to think rationally and to make choices.

Recent moves toward a thinking-oriented curriculum have placed the development of

thinking at the centre of education reforms. Emphasis, in particular, is on higher-order thinking skills. The failure of students to learn these skills has resulted in a rapid growth in thinking skills programs aimed at developing students' analytic and logical acumen. Moreover, it has re-kindled an interest in the use of philosophical discussion as an effective pedagogy for facilitating deeper learning and intellectual engagement. Not surprisingly, proponents are eager to point to the merits of philosophical inquiry in improving students' thinking. But this narrow conception of philosophy as merely a thinking skills program is misleading because, 'it immediately marginalises the social, ethical, aesthetic, affective and political components that are as integral to the teaching of thinking as the skills themselves' (Splitter & Sharp 1995, p. 3). While an adequate theory of education for democracy must include a place for critical thinking, it would be a mistake to de-emphasise or deny altogether the integral link between philosophy and democratic practice, as it is this link that distinguishes education for democracy—whereby citizenship is seen as a set of values— from democratic education, which emphasises citizenship as a learning process.

Democratic education

How does democratic education differ from education for democracy? While the primary goal of democratic education also is the achievement of an educated citizenry, its emphasis is not on promoting the competencies considered to be necessary for flourishing in a pre-existing model of democracy. Democratic education recognises that young people also have an integral role to play in *shaping* democracy, and that democracy is an educational process and not something to educate toward. Historically, the connection between democracy and education and intellectual discussions about schools as democratic institutions can be dated back to Dewey's influential book *Democracy and education* (1916). Two models of democratic education have emerged, both rhetorically influential, but limited in practice due to their seeming incongruence with conventional methods of schooling. One model emphasises self-regulation and progressivism, and the other is concerned with communicative and deliberative capabilities.

Self-regulation

According to the self-regulating or school governance model of democratic education, schools must embody decision-making structures that facilitate and foster meaningful participation by all members of the school community, and which may lead to ongoing social reconstruction and change. Although, in practice, restructuring efforts have been more rhetorical than actual, this progressive model of democratic education provides not only opportunities for students to participate in decision-making, but also purports to enhance their ability to self-regulate their roles within community life through learning and sharing. As the history of progressive education has shown, few schools actually practiced school democracy in the full sense of the term, insofar as all functions of school management, curriculum, and the pedagogical relationship between teachers and students were fully democratised. Mostly, schools were less permissive, leaving administration

mainly to professionals with varying degrees of input from students and parents.

This account of democratic education has been mistakenly identified with vulgar interpretations of progressivism. Progressivism is underpinned by the belief that the aim of education is to change school practice, a view that can be traced back to the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the Swiss educational reformer Johann Pestalozzi, and the German educator Friedrich Froebel, but most notably influenced by the educational philosophy of Dewey. Although he shared with other progressive educators and researchers an attraction to child-centred educational practices, an emphasis on educating the whole child, and a focus on the relationship between thinking and doing as integral to the learning process, Dewey was critical of the progressive education movement generally and distanced himself from it. But his principles—that schools should reflect the life of the society and that the process of upbringing and teaching is an end in itself—shaped the progressive movement in the USA and other parts of the world. In practice, progressivism advocates a curriculum that follows the interests of students and emphasises active learning and deep understanding. While it can be loosely said that Dewey advocated some sort of progressivism, the theoretical underpinnings of the progressive education movement, especially the relationship between education and democracy, are too vague.

Progressivism in the USA, and in many other countries, was discredited for being vague about the relationship between democracy and educational methods, in particular, ‘the process of upbringing and teaching as an end in itself’ (Englund 2005, p. 136). However, it is more accurate to describe this model as more closely linked to progressivism in the UK, and in particular AS Neill’s renowned Summerhill School (Neill 1960a, 1960b, 1992). Summerhill exemplifies a very permissive self-governing school. The community of students and staff makes its own rules, which pertain to situations that arise from community life. Some commentators claim the social control at Summerhill to be based on the democracy of the Athenian model; others maintain it is the educational principles set out in Rousseau’s *Emile* (1762/1979). Just which model describes Summerhill best is a moot point. Neill shared Rousseau’s belief in non-interference (although he insisted on not having read Rousseau); that freedom exists only where students govern themselves in an environment where they are able to learn and play at will. In addition to Rousseau’s framework, Neill added a Freudian dimension. He postulated that freedom was desirable not only because it enabled children to be natural, it also was therapeutic, empowering children to escape repression, hostility and guilt. In sum, Neill believed that if students were given freedom and self-governance in relation to school practices they would develop good habits and demonstrate the capacity to share responsibility with adults for positive social reconstruction.

It should be noted that Summerhill was not the only attempt at experimenting with self-governing schools. The philosopher Bertrand Russell also put his educational ideas into practice in his school at Beacon Hill (from 1927). Although he was not attracted to Rousseau’s naturalism, he adopted some progressive methods to which Rousseau himself would not have objected. For example, classes were not compulsory, manual work was encouraged, student self-government was instituted, and the principles of liberty were

instilled.

An early Australian example of democratic schooling, which emphasised social reform within a self-governing school, was Koornong in Victoria. Founded in 1939 by JC Nield, Koornong was anything but conventional. Being more impressed by Summerhill as a model of progressivism, Nield incorporated many of AS Neill's ideas. Participation in school governance was a central feature, and Nield thought of the meetings as plays about the school's social life; the enactment of actual relations conducted within the school. Beyond the school's activities, students were given the opportunity to observe, and to take part in, the creative activities of the adult world.

Currently, there is a diversity of educational approaches among alternative schools in which students are involved in planning and decision-making. A current example of schooling that acknowledges the importance of student participation in school governance and administration is Brisbane Independent School. Located in the semi-rural surrounds of Pullenvale in South-East Queensland, Australia, BIS commenced operation in 1968 as a result of six academics from the University of Queensland becoming dissatisfied with the lack of alternatives within the State system of education and other non-government schools. According to the BIS prospectus:

The teaching staff or parents do not engineer the establishment of rules. Issues that develop during our time together are discussed by the children at school meetings and handled as the group sees fit. In these meetings the children make their own rules which are decided by democratic vote. The children are encouraged to consider that accompanying consequence. This is a process that must be respected as it allows students to learn firsthand the process of responsibility, self-empowerment and ethical development. (Brisbane Independent School n.d.)

Typically, the school community commences the day with a group or whole-school meeting, usually run by the students who swap the chairperson role each day. These meetings allow students and staff to share in the planning of the daily activities, to voice problems or concerns, and to vote on issues that need resolving. Students also establish their goals for the day, organise materials, and arrange teacher time for individual activities.

Since the forming of the initial Brisbane Independent School Society in 1967, and subsequent establishment of a committee to administer its affairs, many State and other non-government schools have made attempts to become more open and child-centred. Whilst the differences in teaching practice have become less acute in recent decades, the emphasis on a student-centred curriculum and the degree of student and parental involvement in school governance continue to be salient differences between the underlying philosophy of BIS and that of its State school counterparts.

The claim that children ought to govern themselves, to be able to learn or play at will, so that they will develop as far as they are capable of developing and share in the responsibility for social reconstruction, has been heavily criticised. It is not evident that freedom and self-governance in relation to schooling are sufficient to foster an educated

citizenry competent to participate in democratic societies. Speaking on the notion of participation in school governance generally, Mark Weinstein (1991) argued that 'children have neither the responsibility for making actual school policy decisions, nor information and deliberative competence adequate to the task' (p. 16). According to Weinstein's critique, expecting children to participate and share the responsibility for school governance is thus 'contrary to the democratic principles of nondiscrimination and nonrepression' (p. 16). Not surprisingly, he recommends the development of communities of inquiry in the classroom, whereby students learn deliberative strategies not through participation in school governance, but by focusing on issues in such a way that enables them to prepare for sharing the responsibility of public deliberation and governance.

Communication and deliberation

The second sense in which the term democratic education is used refers to an education where communicative and deliberative capabilities and attitudes are developed. This account of democratic education, which relies on a pragmatist interpretation of Dewey's educational philosophy, recognises the importance of education as communication 'where different perspectives are brought into ongoing meaning-creating processes of will-formation' (Englund 2005, p. 141). Like Neill, Dewey also understood the importance of participation, but a significant intellectual difference is that he also recognised that the development of democratic dispositions required effective communication. This is achieved through education as communication because social life is communicative or, as Dewey (1916) put it, 'Not only is social life identical with communication, but all communication (and hence all genuine social life) is educative' (p. 8).

According to Lipman (1991), the constructivist pedagogy of the community of inquiry provides a model of democracy as inquiry, as well as being an educative process in itself, and as such has much to offer with regards to democratic education. The term *community of inquiry* has a long history that dates back to Charles Sanders Peirce, whose original formulation is grounded in the notion of communities of disciplinary-based inquiry engaged in the construction of knowledge. However, its current usage as a productive pedagogy owes much to Lipman, who placed it at the centre of his Philosophy for Children curriculum. The community of inquiry is a collaborative, inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning through philosophy; a teaching methodology in the tradition of reflective education in which good thinking and its improvement are central. It has been described variously by different authors (Burgh, Field & Freakley 2006; Cam 2006; Splitter & Sharp 1995) and has been embellished in practice, but mostly it follows the method of practice set out in Lipman's publications on his educational theory and practice and implicit in his curriculum materials. Briefly, it commences with the students sitting in a circle reading a text, a story, or other stimulus, which is effectively an introduction of a problematic situation to stimulate students to think about what might be puzzling or disagreeable. As a group the students identify

problems through the generation of questions based on what each of the students find problematic. Following on they offer suggestions in response to a central question by expressing their opinions, exploring ideas, stating conjectures and generating hypotheses in order to find possible answers, solutions or explanations. This leads to the analysing of concepts and use of reasoning to develop arguments, in order to gain deeper understanding of the problems, issues or topics into which students are inquiring. The teacher's role is to facilitate the substantive discussion through the use of open-ended questioning and the introduction of exercises, discussion plans and other classroom activities that compel students to inquire further and to connect their own questions with the philosophical questions of the tradition. Only after such a thorough investigation are the students, as a community of inquirers, ready to evaluate their thinking and to bring their deliberations to closure (Freakley, Burgh & Tilt MacSporran 2008, pp. 6-7).

While the community of inquiry has gained attention from both scholars and classroom teachers alike, it is important to note Dewey's contribution to the formulation and evolution of this model of democratic education, in particular the incorporation of practicality. According to Dewey, an idea must be tested and final judgment withheld until it has been applied to the situation or state of affairs for which it was intended. Through reflection and reasoned judgment the consequences that ensue from the testing of ideas are evaluated and only then do the inquirers establish meaning. In other words, the practical testing of ideas becomes an integral part of the inquiry process; it is essential for the facilitation of the Deweyan ideals of thinking, community, autonomy, and democratic citizenship that it intends to facilitate (Bleazby 2006). Building on Dewey, Lipman (1991) explained that the classroom community of inquiry is 'the embryonic intersection of democracy and education', and 'represents the social dimension of democratic practice, for it both paves the way for the implementation of such practice and is emblematic of what such practice has the potential to become' (pp. 249-250). However, the literature on philosophy for children can be regarded as vague on the facilitation of practicality as an essential feature of the inquiry process itself. To be effective, the community of inquiry as a teaching practice must fit with democracy and support it; that is, it must support a collaborative form of inquiry that encourages the social communication and mutual recognition of interests. This requires the integration of practical learning with philosophical communal inquiry in order to facilitate learning outcomes which may lead to social reconstruction, wherein citizenship is seen an active process of social change through political transformation.

The notion of social reconstruction rests on an interpretation of Dewey's educational theory and practice as reconstructionism. Whereas progressivism is directly aimed at schooling practices and curriculum to develop individual capacities, reconstructionism uses democracy as the reference point for schools to develop the participatory capacities and dispositions in students as a way to ensure on-going development of society. Seen in this way, reconstructionism views schooling as making a contribution 'to the development of pupils' interest in societal questions by focusing on possibilities

for everyone understanding the kind of issues involved in such questions' (Englund 2005, p. 137). It advocates education as an instrument for change; a view that can be traced back to Dewey's fundamental concern that schools and civil society needed attention to strengthen democracy. Democracy, in its fully fledged form as a way of life, could only be obtained through a civil society comprised of citizens with the capacity for fully-formed opinion. Dewey (1916) highlights this in the following quotation: 'Since education is a social process, and there are many kinds of societies, a criterion for educational criticism and construction implies a *particular* social ideal' (p. 105). In other words, reconstructionism is concerned with the reconstruction of civil society as the root of democracy, which has its beginning point the transformation of the student thinking.

As mentioned, social reconstruction requires the integration of practical learning with philosophical communal inquiry. Practical learning approaches vary, and might involve scientific experiments, productive labour, or some kind of service learning, usually work experience or community service activities. As we are concerned with the tie between education and democracy our chief concern is with service learning. However, as Jennifer Bleazby (2005) points out, 'in practice, many service learning programs fail to fully facilitate the reflective, creative, caring and critical inquiry and disposition, and the meaningful practice that they intend ... Social reconstruction learning involves the identification of social problems in order to develop and implement real solutions to them' (p. 1). This account of practical learning as social reconstruction learning is congruent with a pragmatist conception of the community of inquiry, which emphasises communicative and deliberative capabilities, and is consistent with Dewey's conception of communal inquiry as a process of constructing and applying ideas that aim at real social change. Whereas Dewey argued that common and productive activity through school occupations, properly used, would connect students to the school curriculum and engage them in social activities via firsthand experience, social reconstruction learning incorporates student participation in community development projects and other social and political activities to facilitate an understanding of the process of self-governance, and therefore has the potential to bring about social change. By applying their inquiry skills to actual situations students purposefully reconstruct their social-cultural environment (Bleazby 2004).

Self-governance, as the term is used here in relation to social reconstruction, is not to be confused with school governance. Rather, it is engagement with the design and implementation of solutions to social problems that affect not only the members of the class, but also members of the greater community. In this sense democratic education extends beyond the classroom and the school. Democratic education requires members of the school community to understand the connection between themselves as active members of the community, the school of which they are a part, the greater community, and responsible decision-making. The school, and the community to which it belongs, becomes a microcosm of a greater deliberative democratic community.

My emphasis on democratic education as social reconstruction relies on Dewey's

(1916) notion of communion, which is present in his educative ideal of communal dialogue as being identical with social life. To fully appreciate the impact of Dewey's education theory and practice, democratic education needs to not only consider Dewey's emphasis on reconstruction, but it must also incorporate a pragmatist interpretation. Following from his own words regarding reconstructionism in the quotation cited earlier, Dewey reveals his debt to pragmatism when he says:

The two points selected by which to measure the worth of a form of social life are the extent to which the interests of a group are shared by all its members, and the fullness and freedom with which it interacts with other groups. (1916, p. 105)

According to Thomas Englund (2005), from a neo-pragmatist perspective these words emphasise the importance of education as communication (p. 137). Not only is education communicative, but communication in the form of communal dialogue is itself educative. To reiterate Dewey (1916) words: 'Not only is social life identical with communication, but all communication (and hence all genuine social life) is educative' (p. 8).

If we take into account Dewey's emphasis on reconstruction and the pragmatist interpretations of his theory of education what is revealed is a radical conception of citizenship. When applied to Lipman's idea of transforming the classroom into a community of inquiry, we get a better sense of what he meant:

To convert the classroom into a community of inquiry is to foster in students the capacity to form opinions about democratic ways of life; to encourage experimental intelligence and plurality as a way of transforming or reconstructing society. But it is also accomplished through education as effective communication which is exemplary in communal dialogue. It is an educative ideal that moves between the classroom and civil society. (Burgh 2009 n.p.)

Dewey's emphasis is on social integration as a 'communicative and argumentative consensual process' (Englund 2005, p. 139) that is an on-going educative process. It follows that the philosophical and educational basis for developing the kinds of curriculum materials and accompanying teaching practices that will enable students to explore the core concepts associated with democracy and citizenship needs to take into account the primacy of deliberative democracy (i.e. the development of deliberative and communicative relationships) and to place emphasises on the radical conception of citizenship as a learning process (i.e. citizenship is experienced as a practice that connects individuals to their society, sustained through social reconstruction).

Conclusion

Both the liberal and communitarian conceptions of politics place emphasis on a prior commitment to the structural principles of an existing society. The contribution of education is to educate for democracy: the achievement of an educated citizenry competent to participate in modern democratic societies. According to Peter Davson-

Galle (1999), the community of inquiry can 'improve the capacity of future citizens to exercise competent autonomy as moral agents' (p. 17), but there is 'no guarantee that it will be their decision to support any sort of society which we would approve of' (p. 17). In other words, the classroom community of inquiry as pedagogy can have a significant effect on the operations of democracy. The truth of such a statement is, of course, a matter for empirical investigation. In terms of the purposes or wider aims of education in a democracy, the community of inquiry may not be fully consistent with the liberal/communitarian conception of politics. Davson-Galle acknowledges that indirect forms of democracy are less well aligned with the principles of the community of inquiry (p. 11). However, the relationship between education and legitimate forms of power cannot be separated. Elected representatives have an interest in what is taught in schools. If the effects that Davson-Galle refers to are significant enough to have an impact on certain sectional interests within the community, it is unlikely that philosophy in schools will gain support from state education departments; and if the interests of the elected representatives are identified with the survival or interests of the state, then it is unlikely to get support from voters and the community.

On the other hand, if democratic societies wish to not suffer from a dearth of civic literacy, a melding of democratic values into educational practice is required. The integration of pedagogy and curriculum with practical learning, namely social reconstruction learning and self-governance, is necessary for an adequate model of democratic education. Democratic education requires a democratic curriculum free from the pre-political presumptions underlying liberal and communitarian conceptions of democracy. However, democracy demands educational procedures that are prior to any substantive claims about democracy itself, and are not an instrument for democracy. Davson-Galle's remarks, therefore, should not be seen as a criticism of the effects that philosophical inquiry can have on democracy. Rather, they are intended to open discussion on whether educators who advocate the introduction of philosophy in primary, secondary and higher education classrooms should be at the vanguard of educational reform or at the very least seeking to engage with the current educational innovations, or whether philosophy should remain as a classroom activity for improving students' thinking and, therefore, their competency to participate in democratic societies.

The argument presented in this paper can be summed up as follows: (1) students should be made aware of the social and political implications of their actions, and (2) to this end, they should be encouraged to deliberate over what affects their daily lives, not only in the classroom, but also in the context of the school and its social connections to the greater community.

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