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Toward Enlightened Political Engagement

"In '56 and '57, night after night I sat down and wrote out a citizenship education program which would help illiterates learn to read and write, so they could register to vote."

—Septima Clark (1984, p. 152)

I want to articulate in this book a concept that is, I believe, central to teachers' work as the primary educators of "we the people." So far, I have suggested this concept by discussing its opposite, idiocy, and then contrasting this with the non-idiotic life, the citizen's life—for example, the work of Martin Luther King Jr., Mohandas Gandhi, Jane Addams, Thich Naht Hanh, or the citizenship educator whose quotation opens this chapter, Septima Clark, who developed education programs in the early years of the Civil Rights movement. In Chapter 2, I detailed three "advanced" ideas that help to sustain the non-idiotic life: *path* (democracy is more a project than an accomplishment), *participation* (popular sovereignty is not a spectator sport or something one contemplates but doesn't actually do), and *pluralism* (diversity both supports liberty and is itself a kind of liberty, and it nurtures the democracy we are trying to create).

In this chapter, I want to further specify the non-idiotic life, the citizen's life, as *enlightened political engagement*. I do this to further specify the curriculum goal of democratic education, and also to explore different ways of achieving that goal. My plan is to step beyond the territory most familiar to multicultural/democratic citizenship educators long enough to set alongside it additional and complementary ways of achieving that goal; then I will turn back to the more familiar territory and try to organize it in a way that emphasizes four intersecting priorities: knowledge, engagement, caring, and justice. First, I define enlightened political engagement. Second, I look beyond schooling altogether to other powerfully educative sites: social class and the voluntary community associations that young people join or find themselves in—basketball teams, churches and temples, 4-H clubs, neighborhood associations, and so on. Third, I consider schooling

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in two parts: one focuses simply on years of school attendance without looking at what goes on inside schools or at the differences between schools; the other takes us inside schools to curriculum, climate, social relations, and all the formal and informal activity that comes to mind with the term "school." Pulling together non-school associations, school attendance, and inside-school variables under one roof should help explain how the citizen identity and enlightened political engagement are cobbled together across various means. We could also imagine a set of educational policy recommendations drawn from across the array; this I venture at the conclusion.

ENLIGHTENED POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Before looking at these multiple approaches, let us look more closely at the goal for which they are a means. My general concern in this book is to use education to combat idiocy, which is self- and familial-indulgence at the expense of the common good. Put differently, idiocy is paying no attention to public affairs—more broadly, to the social and natural environment—even when this inattention undermines one's own liberty. Put positively, our goal is educating people for the role of democratic citizen—for walking the democratic path in a diverse society. These are citizens who have met the challenge of "puberty," as we saw in Chapter 1, and are capable therefore of responding creatively, willingly, and genuinely to the central citizenship question of our time, which was introduced in Chapter 2: *How can we live together justly, in ways that are mutually satisfying, and which leave our differences, both individual and group, intact and our multiple identities recognized?*

A principal attribute of the non-idiotic life, the life of the citizen, might be called *enlightened political engagement*.[1] The concept has two dimensions—democratic enlightenment and political engagement—and together they suggest something like wise participation in public affairs or "reflective civic participation" (Newmann, 1989). Enlightened political engagement is not easily won and it is never won for all time; one works at it continually (path), through one's actions with others (participation), and purposefully with others who are of different ideology, perspective, or culture (pluralism).

Both dimensions matter. *Political engagement* refers to the action or participatory domain of citizenship. Included are political behaviors from voting or contacting public officials to deliberating public problems, campaigning, and engaging in civil disobedience, boycotts, strikes, rebellions, and other forms of direct action. *Democratic enlightenment*, by contrast, re-

fers to the moral-cognitive knowledge, norms, values, and principles that shape this engagement. Included are literacy, knowledge of the ideals of democratic living, knowing which government officials to contact about different issues, the commitment to freedom and justice, the disposition to be tolerant of religious and other cultural differences, and so forth. Without democratic enlightenment, political engagement can move in dangerous directions (Ku Klux Klan members were and are, unfortunately, engaged). Knowledge, values, and attitudes—together, character or virtue—are the ballast that a democratic citizen brings to the action that he or she undertakes. Enlightened action is enlightened because it is aimed at the realization of democratic ideals. Unenlightened action undermines them.

Of course, the faculty called *judgment* or principled reasoning is required to distinguish between enlightened and unenlightened political engagement (Beiner, 1984). Judgment is required because drawing that distinction is not a matter of applying rules or recipes. Accordingly, reasonable people of good judgment may disagree vehemently about which course of action is best in a given circumstance. Should the majority be permitted to do whatever it wishes? Of course not. This would surely undermine democratic ideals, as political theorists from Aristotle to Madison and King have argued so well. But should corporate power be restrained? Should wealth be further redistributed? Should groups have rights or are rights only for individuals? Should women have reproductive freedom? Should voting be required? Should ex-felons be disenfranchised? These are highly contested issues *among* democratic citizens.

With this rough goal statement in hand, we are ready to look at two realms of democratic citizenship education: non-school initiatives and school initiatives. As we do so, the goal will be further elaborated.

SOCIETY AND ENLIGHTENED POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

With or without schooling, societies socialize their young. They enculturate them; they initiate them into the elders' conventions of knowing, valuing, believing, and behaving. These are the familiar terms deployed in the social sciences to explain social reproduction. The hothouses of this activity are the socializing forces and agencies in society—the immediate and extended family, churches and temples, workplaces, clubs, schools, television, movies, social class, the ubiquitous marketplace, and advertising. The people who set the conditions and ends of this socializing activity, to the extent it can be controlled, are parents, clergy, older siblings, bosses, appointed and elected officials, corporate moguls, publishers, tele-

vision producers, teachers, and so forth. In a complex, industrialized society, the array of socializing agents is broad and tangled, and citizenship education is spread across that array. Let me zero in on two key non-school citizenship-education sites: social class and voluntary associations. The latter is embedded in the former.

Social Class

"Poverty," as Joel Spring put it so simply, "is a major barrier to free access to ideas and education" (1989, p. xi). Social class membership locates one in a web of circumstances, relations, biases, and achievement expectations that are closely linked with citizenship knowledge, behaviors, and attitudes. The most disadvantaged citizens socially and economically (in the United States, women, African Americans, and the poor) are also "the least informed, and thus least equipped to use the political system to redress their grievances" (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996, p. 18). Affluent citizens, by contrast, are much more likely to know officials and the rules of the game, and they use both to their advantage, sometimes skewing the whole political community in their favor.

In both cases, people's ability to learn about and influence their community is shaped by their location in the economy. Whether children go to school, where they go, what they are taught there, by whom, how, and with whom—all these fundamental points of educational opportunity are predicted substantially by a non-social variable: social class membership. One of the surest ways to improve inner-city citizenship education is not by tinkering with curriculum and instruction but by ending inner-city poverty (cf., Anyon, 1997).

Voluntary Associations

I was born in a non-profit Seventh Day Adventist hospital in Denver, Colorado, and raised in a working-class United Methodist family in a suburb south of Denver. I joined bands and orchestras at school, belonged to the Cub Scouts and then the Boy Scouts, went to a summer camp run by a nearby Baptist church and another run by the United Methodists, raised money for the Salvation Army every Christmas, volunteered for the political party in which my parents were active, and listened to my parents talk about *their* organizations, from political parties to the League of Women Voters and the local parks-and-recreation board—all this by the time I left junior high school. I didn't appreciate then and have only begun to appreciate now (thanks to a burgeoning literature on it) that this joining activity, and all the groups available to me for joining, was an important aspect of

the civic culture that democracies require. (The democratic path is not built on thin air.) French sociologist Alexis de Tocqueville (1848/1969) visited the United States in the middle of the 19th century and was bowled over by all the joining:

Americans of all ages, all stations in life, and all types of disposition are forever forming associations. There are not only commercial and industrial associations in which all take part, but others of a thousand different types—religious, moral, serious, futile, very general and very limited, immensely large and very minute. 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. Finally, if they want to proclaim a truth or propagate some feeling by the encouragement of a great example, they form an association. 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. (1848/1969, p. 513)

Americans not only join groups to do things, they even join them to abstain from doing things they think they shouldn't be doing. One might imagine that they would simply not do it, whatever it is; but they join with others to not do it—to not do it *together*. This baffled Tocqueville:

The first time that I heard in America that one hundred thousand men had publicly 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 firesides. 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. (p. 516) .

The point is that we not only live our daily lives embedded in the grip of class membership; we live them also in small groups of all sorts. Warmer than the sociologically correct term "groups" connotes, they are *communities*. They exist in the intermediate realm between the overarching political community, on the one hand, and the individual and family, on the other. They are civic spaces, and "civil society" is the term now used to describe the combined mass of these organizations—the vast, deeply layered network of them.

A vibrant civil society—the existence of a vast array of voluntary associations—is one of the keys to making a democracy work. Why? These

informal, voluntary associations compose a social infrastructure where social life proceeds "on its own" in a sweep of different directions. In them, non-governmental yet civil relationships are made and nurtured. The people in "we the people" are constituted, and relationships that extend beyond the family are created and maintained (contrast this with the *amoral familism* idiocy introduced in Chapter 1).

Just as important, safety and a sense of self-worth can be found in such groups. For many poor inner-city youth especially (but not exclusively), these safe spaces provide ground in a world without ground, stable relationships in a world where there may be few. According to Heath and McLaughlin (1993), arts and athletics are often the favorite activities in non-school youth associations, for these provide

planning, preparing, practicing, and performing—with final judgment coming from outsiders (audiences, other teams in the league, and the public media.) A sense of worth came from being a member of a group or team noted for accomplishment; a sense of belonging came from being needed within the organization—to teach younger members, to help take care of the facility, plan and govern activities, and promote the group to outsiders. (p. 24)

Furthermore, criticism of mainstream norms and practices can flourish in these groups. They have been called "free spaces" (Evans & Boyte, 1992) because of their potential for unrepressed, candid talk. Totalitarian rulers of the kind seen in 20th-century Germany, China, the Soviet Union, Cambodia, Afghanistan, and so forth had to destroy such groups as the first order of business. Freedom of speech and press was denied, as was freedom of assembly. The civic spaces between government, on the one hand, and individuals and families, on the other, were razed. Government power was thus unbridled, and virtually no organizations remained that could check or balance it. Criticism of public officials and protest activities of any sort were, of course, criminalized. Those who dared to organize or speak out were imprisoned in jails or mental institutions or murdered.

Voluntary organizations, then, are civic spaces, safe spaces, and free spaces. Together they compose the infrastructure or seedbed of democracy. Without them democracy cannot take root, for they provide the fertile medium for the root to grow.

There are two object lessons on this point. The first, briefly, is found in the totalitarian-turned-democratic states of eastern and central Europe. Here, the democratic infrastructure was devastated by the former tyrannies, the fertile medium destroyed. Churches and temples were closed along with other venues of association. With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the overarching political trajectory of those states was changed to a

democratic mode and freedom of assembly was guaranteed in constitutions. *Yet, they flounder because civil society is still weak.* The totalitarian systems were grand exercises in wiping effective social organizations off the map. This is a lesson not only about the importance of civil society to creating and maintaining a democracy but about the difficulty of growing back a civil society once it has been killed off.

The second object lesson is more hopeful, and it reveals the agency and efficacy of voluntary associations—their ability to affect the larger society. Perhaps the most vivid object lesson in U.S. history is the generative role of African American churches in the Civil Rights movement. The Black church served as a *movement center*. According to Aldon Morris (1984), this is "a social organization within the community of a subordinated group, which mobilizes, organizes, and coordinates collective action aimed at attaining the common ends of that subordinated group" (p. 40). Any social movement has one or more movement centers. The Black church was not the only movement center within the Civil Rights movement; Black colleges played a significant role, too, as David Halberstam (1998) illustrates.

While the variety of churches in the African American community is staggering, mirroring the social, political, and economic diversity of that community, still, the churches had numerous institutional commonalities. "For one thing," Morris writes, "they all had the responsibility of spiritually and emotionally soothing an oppressed group" (1984, p. 11). These were African American churches, after all, and regardless of their differences their members were and are the most oppressed of all subordinated groups in North American save, perhaps, Native peoples. This commonality modifies any claim of variety among Black churches. Indeed, E. Franklin Frazier (1963) referred to the Black church as a nation within a nation and, therefore, a political force to be reckoned with:

As a result of the elimination of Negroes from the political life of the American community, the Negro Church became the arena of their political activities.... The church was the arena in which the struggle for power and the thirst for power could be satisfied. (p. 43)

The rest is history, as the saying goes. From the church network and its political arm, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, along with Black college campuses, sprang the movement. Just this one scene from Halberstam's (1998) history of youth involvement in the Civil Rights movement conveys the point in all its subtlety. Picture a desegregation sit-in at a Nashville, Tennessee, lunch counter:

To the students themselves, the experience was nothing less than exhilarating. John Lewis had been scared before the first sit-in. There were two things

which helped him get through. The first was his absolute certainty that what they were doing was right. The second was that he was not alone. He was with his friends, the closest friends he had ever had in his life. *He had sat there in the first Baptist Church right before the sit-in began* and had looked around, and he could tell how nervous all his colleagues in the core group were.... The reality of what they were about to do had finally set in. They were about to go up against the full power of the city of Nashville. (pp. 105-106, emphasis added)

Postcommunist eastern Europe drives home the lesson that a broad and deep network of social relations is necessary if democracy is to take root and if democratic practices are to be workable and sustainable. The role of the Black church and Black college in the movement drives home the lesson that voluntary associations are not static but generative. They can and often do push the status quo to grow toward the fuller realization of its own ideals. They can pressure democracies to make good on their promissory notes, as we saw in Chapter 2. As Gary Okihiro (1994) wrote, these groups have been anything but static. To the contrary, they have helped produce and clarify the core values and ideals of the nation: "The core values and ideals of the nation emanate not from the mainstream but from the margins—from among Asian and African Americans, Latinos, and American Indians, women, and gays and lesbians" (p. ix). In other words, voluntary associations are not only civic or public, as well as relatively safe places for their members; they are relatively free spaces of unrepressed and candid criticism of mainstream society. The democratic potential of voluntary associations exerting themselves on mainstream norms and values cannot be underestimated. Historically, subordinated groups have been "key staging grounds for interventionist politics—from the small group meetings of the early women's movement to the 'free pulpits' of Black churches in the Deep South during the civil rights era, to the 'liberated zones' of independence movements in the third world" (Trend, 1995, p. 10).

One learns in voluntary associations three important things that bear directly on the developing citizen's identity. First, one associates with others who are more diverse than one's family members. One is exposed to a wider and more complex social arena in which one's own perspective becomes one of many. The idiosyncrasy of one's family life can be seen in the reflective mirror of a broadened social horizon, and *pluralism* becomes—to some degree—a fact in one's own life. Second, one engages problems that stretch beyond one's own and one's family's. One becomes involved in the public realm, what Dewey called the public and its problems (1927). The public's problems are wider than the family's—police protection, food and water supply, sanitation, libraries, schools, hospitals, and so on. Even

in a choir, the members must deliberate with one another the practice sched-ules, artistic differences, and goals and strategies that may never surface at home. In 4-H clubs young people are planning fair entries, electing club presidents, working with adult leaders, and so forth—associating for pur-poses that go well beyond familial relations. Likewise, in the youth asso-ciations studies by Heath and McLaughlin (1993), young people are taking care of the facility and planning activities. Third, in voluntary associations one learns norms of deliberating across differences, norms that allow con-flict without threatening the group's existence. That is, one learns civility or mannerly conduct. Such conduct differs dramatically from group to group and setting to setting, of course: the manners of a bowling league will differ from those of a Quaker meeting. Swearing and teasing may be rewarded in one but forbidden in another, for example. Still, socially sanc-tioned conduct proceeds at full steam, decisions get made, and the group's future is not put at risk.

Voluntary organizations can be bad for democracy as well as good. The object lesson in the United States is provided by the Ku Klux Klan. In Germany, Nazi organizations overtook what was a democratic soci-ety—the Weimar Republic. What is learned in voluntary associations, then, can undermine liberal-democratic ideals. The larger political com-munity may emphasize liberal values such as toleration, for example, and a local church group may support this by taking young people on respect-ful visits to other churches and temples. Another church group at the same time might preach that members of other faith communities are sinners bound for hell. The larger political community may value gender equal-ity while a patriarchic men's club teaches that "the home is a man's castle." Nancy Rosenblum (1994) writes,

Liberal government does not require the internal life of every association to conform to public norms and practices by prohibiting discrimination, en-forcing due process, encouraging liberal private life (outlawing polygamous marriage as "patriarchal"), favoring democratic authority (congregational churches over hierarchic ones or worker control over other forms of man-agement). Liberalism does not command strict congruence "all the way down." (p. 540)

To summarize, the young learn much about citizenship, for better or worse, outside school. Location in the socioeconomic class hierarchy com-pels children to learn and not learn particular things; it places them in a particular social niche that allocates both a school building and, inside it, a school experience. Meanwhile, membership in multiple voluntary groups potentially deepens one's understanding of pluralism, placing one in over-arching moral grids that extend well beyond the family.

SCHOOLS AND ENLIGHTENED POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Schools are potentially rich sites for citizenship education. They present both a formal curriculum—a planned scope and sequence of teaching and learning that can be aimed directly at the development of enlightened po-litical engagement—along with daily situations of living together "in pub-lic" outside the family. Schools, then, are both curricular and civic spaces, and both can be marshaled toward the education of democratic citizens. But before peering inside schools, let us look at something that educators interested in curriculum and school climate typically overlook: the effect of simple school attendance on the development of enlightened political engagement.

School Attendance

By simple school attendance I mean nothing more than *years* of school attendance, ignoring what goes inside schools and all the attendant vari-ability. (I acknowledge that school attendance is no simple matter for stu-dents or their parents, particularly disabled or challenged students and students in poor city schools. I use the term "simple" only to distinguish going to school from the more complex matters of what goes on inside schools and the variability between schools.) Political scientists who are interested in citizen development call this variable "educational attain-ment" or "level of schooling." Using mainly survey research, they find again and again that years of schooling is the chief predictive variable of citizenship knowledge, attitudes, and behavior—in other words, enlight-ened political engagement. In fact, there is probably no single variable in the survey research literature that generates as substantial correlations in such a variety of directions in political understanding and behavior as years of schooling. It is "*everywhere the universal solvent*," political scientist Philip Converse writes, "*and the relationship is always in the same direction*" (1972, p. 324, emphasis in original; see also Lazarsfeld, Berlson, & Gaudet, 1944; Nie, Junn, & Stehlik-Barry, 1996; Verba & Nie, 1972). As for the indicators used in this body of work, there are a total of seven, five of which are asso-ciated with political engagement and five of which are associated with democratic enlightenment (there is some overlap, as shown in Table 3.1).

The first set, indicators of political engagement, is concerned with citi-zens' ability to participate in popular sovereignty—to engage in politics and to influence public policy. These five are knowledge of current politi-cal leaders, knowledge of current political facts, political attentiveness, par-ticipation in difficult political activities, and frequency of voting. The citizen who pays attention to public issues and knows the names and addresses

Table 3.1. Correlations between Citizenship Outcomes and Years of Formal Education Completed

Citizenship outcome	Correlation	Dimension
Knowledge of principles of democracy	.38	Democratic enlightenment
Knowledge of current political leaders	.29	Political engagement
Knowledge of other current political facts	.37	both
Political attentiveness	.39	both
Participation in difficult political activities	.29	Political engagement
Frequency of voting	.25	both
Tolerance	.35	Democratic enlightenment

Source: Nie, Junn, and Stehlik-Barry, 1996

of her current elected and appointed officials and contacts them now and then is better positioned to influence public policy than the citizen whose engagement begins and ends with watching political spectacles on television and/or voting. The second set, indicators of democratic enlightenment, is concerned with citizens' understanding of and support for the norms and ideals of democratic political community. These five are knowledge of principles of democracy, knowledge of current political facts, political attentiveness, frequency of voting, and tolerance. The citizen who knows that tolerance of diversity is crucial to making a democracy work possesses knowledge that is directly consequential for living together cooperatively in a pluralist society. This knowledge should, for example, restrain her from advocating a state religion or the incarceration of political dissidents—both standard practices in authoritarian states. It should help her to argue not only for her own rights but for the rights of others, especially those with whom she disagrees or whose cultural life she finds repugnant. What could otherwise be a kind of political engagement dedicated to self-aggrandizement at the expense of the common good (idiocy) is moderated by a grasp of democratic principles and one's obligations to the political community.

Table 3.1 displays correlations between years of schooling and these two sets of citizenship outcomes based on data from the 1990 Citizen Par-

ticipation Study (Nie, Junn, & Stehlik-Barry, 1996). They reveal a positive and consistent relationship between school attendance and the seven citizen outcomes. This is survey research, recall, so let me give examples of the questions used. The first indicator, "knowledge of principles of democracy," was measured by three questions: One asked respondents to identify a constitutional guarantee dealing with the Fifth Amendment; another asked them to distinguish between democracy and dictatorship; and the third to give the meaning of "civil liberties." The seventh indicator, political tolerance, was defined as "a willingness to permit the expression of ideas or interests one opposes." There were four questions: Respondents were asked if they would allow someone to make a speech in their community who called for letting the military rule the country or who was against all churches and religions, and they were asked whether books should be removed from the library when they advocate homosexuality or argue that Blacks are genetically inferior to Whites.

To be sure, these seven characteristics of enlightened political engagement do not capture the full range of desired citizenship outcomes. Deliberative competence, such as the ability to make policy decisions with citizens who are culturally different from oneself, which is the subject of Chapters 5, 6, and 7, is not addressed. Nor is the commitment beyond "tolerance" to fight for inclusion of groups historically marginalized. Still, they are headed in the right direction, and I suspect that none would be excluded from a more complete list.

But *why* does simple school attendance predict enlightened political engagement? Norman Nie and his colleagues (1996) conducted a path analysis to develop an explanatory model. They reached the following conclusions: First, school attendance influences political engagement by allocating access to political resources. Citizens with more schooling get more access than do citizens with less schooling. This is because schooling positions a citizen in the sociopolitical network. This network is like a giant stadium with a stage at the front. Those persons with more schooling generally are placed closer to the stage where it is easier to hear and be heard and become a player oneself.

What about the democratic enlightenment a citizen will or won't bring to his or her place in the stadium? (Recall, participation alone is not necessarily pro-democratic.) A high school or college graduate may have won a seat close to the civic stage but lacks the liberal understanding of democratic community needed to use that position for the common good rather than as a power base from which to launch his or her private agenda. As with the engagement dimension, enlightenment is also correlated positively with school attendance, but the path now, according to Nie and his colleagues, is cognitive rather than positional. Knowledge of principles of

democracy and the disposition to tolerate dissent are explained by formal schooling's positive impact on political knowledge and attitude. (When kids are taught these things, they stand a better chance of learning them.) There are two explanatory paths, then, in this attempt to reason why educational attainment has its well-established positive ties to citizenship outcomes: social network positionality and intellectual attainment. On this analysis, schooling is important for democracy because it gives one relatively more power *and* ideas about how to use it.

Educators who labor to shape school curricula and climate toward critical and democratic ends may find this school attendance data annoying. Perhaps they presume school attendance, for that battle seems largely to have been won thanks to the struggles first to create public schools and then to desegregate them. Accordingly, educators concentrate on practices internal to school buildings, on inequalities between affluent and impoverished schools (and between high and low tracks in the same school), on the effects of teaching quality, building leadership, materials availability, funding, the local policy context, and on the battle against racist and sexist practices embedded within the culture of the school. However, were educators to take a broader view of democratic citizenship education, they would not dismiss the role of school attendance in positioning citizens to exercise power and to shape how that power is exercised. They would take seriously two social reform movements that have been eclipsed in recent decades: increasing the school-retention (high-school graduation) rate and making higher education available to all, either free of charge or on a sliding scale.

Inside Schools

Asked why they ignore the phenomena to which teachers and students devote their days and educational researchers devote their careers—namely what goes on *inside* schools—political scientists could respond, "We don't need to look inside schools; attending them is what matters, and we have the data to support this claim." But there exists also a conceptual habit that might help to explain how they manage not to peer inside at curriculum, instruction, and the quality of school life. These researchers operate within a discipline that subsumes education within the concept *political socialization*, and political socialization studies generally are concerned with *unconscious* social reproduction. They are guided by a descriptive-explanatory aim, whereas the aim of educators is conscious social reproduction and transformation. The currency of educators is not description so much as prescription—reform, renewal, transformation. Educators are concerned to intervene in history and intentionally shape society's future—increas-

ing the literacy rate, strengthening citizens' ability to analyze social issues, deepening their grasp of constitutional principles, exposing racism, creating equal access where there has been only limited access, and so forth. When citizenship education is assimilated into political socialization, it is easy, as Amy Gutmann (1999) observes, "to lose sight of the distinctive virtue of a democratic society, that it authorizes citizens to influence *how* their society reproduces itself" (p. 15).

Democratic citizenship educators of all stripes act on this virtue and prescribe an array of interventions toward increasing some aspect or other of enlightened political engagement. There are a good number of empirical studies among this work,[2] but the bulk of it is theoretical and philosophical. Underlying debates (e.g., which should be emphasized: enlightenment or engagement?) fuel ever more literature on what *ought* to be done to educate democrats, and it is this amelioration-oriented literature that I want to explore in this section.

It is a sprawling literature. Two prominent attempts to organize it are by Barr, Barth, and Shermis (1977) and Cherryholmes (1980). Barr, Barth, and Shermis described three traditions of citizenship education inside schools: citizenship transmission, social science, and reflective inquiry. The first affirms existing political institutions and ideals (e.g., the rule of law, civil liberties, critical thinking, tolerance) and seeks to deploy education in their service, intentionally passing them to succeeding generations. The second and third are reform initiatives that endeavor to replace the transmission model. The social science tradition aims to help young people acquire the knowledge and methods of inquiry esteemed by the social science disciplines. The desired citizen can form and test hypotheses about social and political life; she can evaluate data, reason historically, and has mastered some of the central concepts of each discipline. This model is exemplified by Edwin Fenton's (1967) work and others in the New Social Studies movement. The third tradition seeks reform in a more activist direction: to develop citizens capable of rational decision making in public policy contexts. It is exemplified by Shirley Engle's famous article, "Decision Making: The Heart of Social Studies Instruction" (1960) and Hunt and Metcalf's (1955) curriculum that focused on those social problems that have been closed off from open and critical discussion (society's "closed areas").

Cleo Cherryholmes (1980) reviewed largely the same literature but from a different epistemological standpoint. He argued that each tradition described by Barr and colleagues was epistemologically naïve—the third (reflective inquiry) as much as the first (citizenship transmission); and the second (social sciences) more so than the other two. All three assume positivism; all three ignore the relationship of knowledge to power—to social position, interests, and ideology. Reflective inquiry gets the bulk of Cherry-

holmes's criticism, for while it admirably educates students to grapple with society's problems, it fails to work out a methodological stance that would allow citizens "to gain a critical perspective on solutions for which they and others strive" (p. 136). In other words, it engages students in social problem solving without enabling them to think about which problems are worth solving, according to whom, to what ends, and in whose favor. Cherryholmes thus delineates two basic approaches to citizenship education inside schools: critical and non-critical.

These two analyses of inside-school citizenship education are helpful as far as they go, but I want to supplement them by highlighting a set of tensions that speak more directly to the content of educators' current debates—feminist critiques of traditional citizenship education, for example, and the tension between teaching about democracy and teaching democratically. My organization of this literature can be summarized as follows: Inside schools, there are both curricular and extracurricular approaches, and within each is a central tension. This makes four basic clusters of approaches to democratic citizenship education within the schools (see Figure 3.1).

Curricular Approaches

Let us begin with two curricular approaches, looking at both their common characteristic and the central opposition that divides them, then move to the two extracurricular approaches, again looking at the common characteristic and the central opposition. Curricular approaches to citizenship education focus on intentional (conscious) curriculum and instruction in schools—on what educators have planned for students to learn in school and how students are to be helped (instructed, coached) to achieve those objectives. These include the three traditions described by Barr, Barth, & Shermis (1977) and they cut across the critical/non-critical distinction described by Cherryholmes. There can be both critical and non-critical treatments of a reflective inquiry curriculum, for example. One need only compare Engle's (noncritical, 1960) to Apple's (critical, 1975) work.

The central opposition within the curricular cluster today is *participation* versus *transmission*. Participation approaches seek to engage students in the actual activity of democratic politics rather than, as is the case with transmission approaches, preparing them for it. Participation advocates ask incredulously: How can young people possibly learn to be democratic citizens in non-democratic schools? On the participation end of the curricular dimension is involvement *in* democracy; on the transmission side is learning *about* democracy. The work of Shirley Engle (1960), Fred Newmann (1975), and Richard Pratte (1988), among others, suggest the participation approach, the work of Paul Gagnon (1996) and the committee that produced

Figure 3.1. Curricular and Extracurricular Approaches

x Transmission   Justice

Caring

y

                             Participation

x = *curricular dimension*

y = *extracurricular dimension*
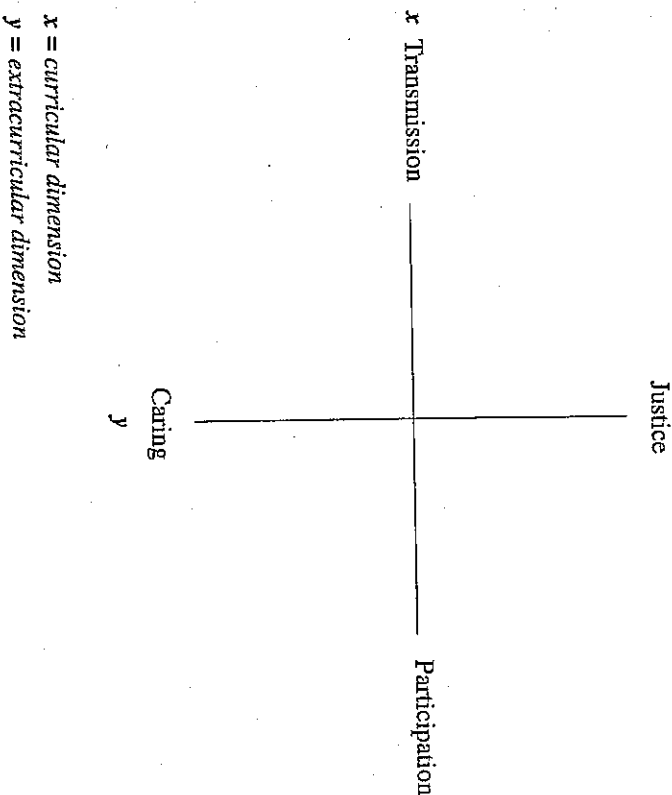
the *National Standards for Civics and Government* (Center for Civic Education, 1994), among others, suggest the latter.

Gagnon's main concern is that children should know the past because "historical knowledge is the precondition for political intelligence" (1996, p. 243). He urges teachers to "leap at (Thomas) Jefferson's argument" that the general education of citizens should be chiefly historical. Quoting Jefferson,

History, by apprising them of the past, will enable them to judge the future; it will avail them of the experience of other times and other nations; it will qualify them as judges . . . and enable them to know ambition under every disguise it may assume; and knowing it, to defeat its views. (quoted in Gagnon, 1996, p. 242)

Transmission advocates are not found only among conservative educators. Transmission is alive and well among critical educators who focus

on multicultural and pro-labor curricula. For example, the problem with an Anglocentric curriculum is that one perspective is uncritically transmitted rather than multiple perspectives being transmitted critically. The problem with a curriculum that celebrates generals and entrepreneurs but says nothing about labor, antiracist struggles, or economic democracy is not that a set of information is being transmitted but that it is the wrong set or that it privileges a single perspective (one that uncritically advantages the status quo) rather than multiple, competing perspectives that open up the inquiry to other possibilities (see Stanley, 1992). In this vein, the prominent Canadian socialist educator, Ken Osborne (1995), wrote a damning review of a new book on democratic education. He observed that many authors in the collection held forth on "democracy" and "democratic education" without defining it substantively, instead viewing it as a set of activities. One contributor to the book, Osborne tells us, wrote that "democracy is best taught as a process and best learned through active participation in decision-making...." Osborne responds:

There is, of course, a certain truth to this notion of democracy as process, but it takes us only so far. It is obviously true that a richer and more powerful democratic life will depend on a higher level of civic engagement than now exists. However, it is equally true that democracy involves more than simply "empowerment" and "participation," for fascists, racists, and assorted other anti-democrats can, and often do, feel highly empowered and participative, and also feel highly committed to a certain sense of community. The fundamental question must be this: once students are empowered and are ready to participate, what will they use their skills and powers to do? What will ensure that they will use them in the interests of democracy? (p. 122)

It should be noted that there is considerable overlap between the transmission and participation camps. Participation advocates typically want the Socratic tradition of critical thinking to be transmitted somehow from one generation to the next along with liberal values (e.g., liberty, tolerance, equality, justice) and institutions (e.g., rule of law, separation of church and state). Yet, inside the school, they don't want this transmission to eat up so much instructional time that none is left for deliberation, service learning, and direct political action (three kinds of participation) on real social problems both inside and outside the schoolhouse. Conversely, transmission advocates typically want students to participate in political activity, but they worry that without in-depth understandings of democratic principles this activity will be impulsive and unwise. Using the terms established earlier, we could say that at one pole of this curricular tension is political engagement, and at the opposite pole is democratic enlightenment.

Extracurricular Approaches

Extracurricular approaches involve the implicit or informal curriculum of the school. They focus not on what students should be learning directly from classroom instruction but on what they should be learning indirectly from the governance and climate of the classroom and the school. The common characteristic of extracurricular approaches is a concentration on the norms by which adults and young people in the school relate to one another and by which decisions on school and classroom policies are made. Toward the goal of cultivating democratic citizens, egalitarian and caring relations are prescribed over authoritarian and formalistic relations; cultural pluralism over assimilation; classroom and school climates that are open to the free expression of opinions and controversy over climates that encourage conformity and agreement; and student engagement in school and classroom governance over exclusion from such decision making. The rallying cry here, similar to the participation end of the curriculum dimension, is that it is absurd to teach about democracy without practicing it.

What would divide this apparently cozy group into opposing camps? Plenty. The central opposition among the extracurricular approaches today is between two social goods: caring and justice. The work of Nel Noddings (1992) and Donna Kerr (1997) suggests the former; the work of Lawrence Kohlberg (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989) and Myra and David Sadker (1994) suggests the latter. Kohlberg delineated a conception of morality as just (fair; principled) reasoning, which he specified as the ability to imagine oneself in another's shoes—to take the perspective of others with empathic understanding. Students can develop in their ability to reason justly, Kohlberg found, given the right kinds of classroom and school support. This support is exemplified in the pedagogic setting he created and studied in his later work, following his sociological turn, called the "just community" (this will be discussed in the next chapter).

For Noddings and Kerr, a keen sense of fairness is not the central moral requirement of democratic citizens; there is more importantly a realm of care, which is relational, responsive, and concrete versus intellectual, imaginative, and abstract. Kerr (1997) writes,

[T]he democratic psyche, formed in human relationships, is both receptive of the other and self-expressive. Genuine hope for democracy is grounded in this circuit of recognition. To jump over this reality in favor of talk of civil society and the requirements of political life is to fail to acknowledge the psychic and social realities in which democratic relations take root, when they do.... If democracy is to have substance [rather than being superimposed

upon human relationship], it can come only through the development of relations of mutual recognition and regard. (pp. 81–82)

This opposition among the extracurricular approaches is not a simple feminist/non-feminist one. Feminists are found on both sides of the justice/caring debate. For example, the Noddings/Kerr strand of feminist analysis is "maternalist"—grounded in the virtues of mothering—according to feminist political theorists like Mary Dietz (1992), Nancy Fraser (1995), and Anne Phillips (1991). By contrast, the latter articulate a strand of feminism that does not shy from reason, argument, and politics. "There are crucial distinctions between being a citizen and being a nice caring person," Phillips writes (p. 160). An ethic of care can lead (and historically *has* led) caregivers to neglect their own welfare.

The main tension on the extracurricular dimension, then, is between a worry on the one hand that the moral and political struggle for social justice and inclusion has edged out an ethic of care, and on the other, a worry that social justice will not be won, nor institutionalized repression dismantled, by caring people.[3]

To summarize, four sets of inside-school approaches are formed by intersecting two dimensions of inside-school democratic citizenship education: curricular and extracurricular activity. The resulting four quadrants should be helpful for making sense of several contemporary debates within the educator community about how best to nurture democrats. While I am aware that I have not exemplified the four quadrants fully, I want to stop here so that I can take up another related issue. If I may make just one more point first, however, about where this effort to conceptualize the inside-school approaches could go next, it would be to add a *third* dimension to the matrix: the critical/non-critical dimension that was mentioned earlier (e.g., Cherryholmes, 1980). Imagine Figure 3.1 now becoming a three-dimensional representation of the four quadrants. Doing so would create a near and a far version of each of the four quadrants for a total of eight (see Figure 3.2). We would then have a critical and a non-critical variation of each of the four quadrants. For example: In the *non-critical* variant of the upper right quadrant, we might place Shirley Engle's (1960) seminal work on decision making; in the *critical* variant of the same quadrant, we could place Michael Apple's (1975) also-seminal work on conflict.[4] In the *non-critical* variant of the lower right quadrant, we might place community service programs that help children perform good deeds, such as canned food drives for the hungry; in the *critical* variant of the same quadrant would go projects with social justice goals and a commitment to reclaiming lost personal histories (Giroux, 1993; Wade, 2000). Related to this, on

Figure 3.2. Curricular, Extracurricular, and Critical/Non-critical Dimensions

x = *curricular dimension*
y = *extracurricular dimension*
z = *near-far dimension*
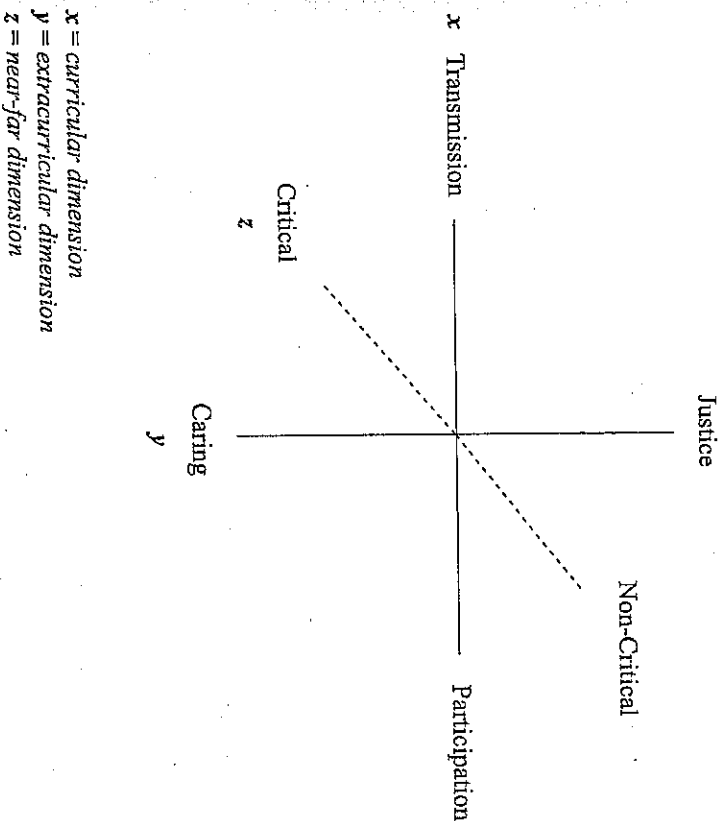
the *critical* side of the upper-left quadrant, we would hope to see serious study of the kind of economic system that makes food drives necessary generation after generation.

When compared to the citizenship effects of simply attending school, we see in the inside-school quadrants a multifaceted array of *intentional* educational activity—conscious social reproduction—the combined effect of which ought to supplement school attendance effects, maybe even overtake them. This is not only a conceptual but also an empirical matter, of course, and the necessary research question would go something like this: Can a multifaceted democratic citizenship education program inside schools add something more to the development of enlightened political engagement than what already is contributed by school attendance alone?

CONCLUSION

History gives democracy no advantages. All democracies are weak and short-lived, and no actually existing democracy is an ideal democracy. Most are minimalist democracies: most adults are allowed to vote in elections that are more or less fair, by which representatives, most of them rich, win their seats in visual media performances. Attempting in the face of this to educate for principled democratic activism—for enlightened political engagement—is ambitious, yet a moral necessity.

How to do it? Not every strategy has been considered, but three of powerful consequence in the battle against idiocy were explored: involvement in voluntary associations can provide youth with safe yet public spaces; by staying in school, young people position themselves closer to the political stage; and within schools, both curricular and extracurricular activity can democratically enlighten and engage them.

The three approaches—group membership, school attendance, and inside-school activity—present an apples and oranges problem, which makes awkward my effort to place them within the same analytic framework. The third is consciously intentional and prescriptive, while the first two are descriptive and explanatory. These first two are not really "approaches" to the extent this term implies goal-oriented (intentional and strategic) action. Still, I treat them as approaches for the reason that the variables and dimensions they identify are consequential; they contribute to the development of particular citizenship knowledge, skills, and attitudes, whether they intend to or not.

Let us see, finally, if policy directions might be culled from the three approaches taken together. This strikes me as a worthwhile effort because it incites our imagination toward the big picture rather than only a piece of it, and it does so in a way that is responsive to the practical question, What can we do? On my attempt to do this, eight policy recommendations emerge. The first two derive from the first approach, society. The third and fourth represent the second approach, school attendance. The final four represent the third approach, inside schools, with one prescription each for the four clusters within it. Were we to add the third dimension, critical/non-critical, we should be able to derive 16 recommendations.

Arena A: Society

1. Tackle inner-city miseducation by tackling inner-city poverty.
2. Involve young people in a rich array of associations, and involve them in governance (planning, deciding, implementing, evaluating) therein.

Arena B: School Attendance

3. Increase the high school graduation rate.
4. Make higher education available to all.

Arena C: Inside Schools

Curricular

5. Require high-quality civics/government courses and hold students accountable for learning this subject matter.
6. Infuse the curriculum with decision-making opportunities.

Extracurricular

7. Afford students opportunities to deliberate actual classroom and school problems.
8. Create a caring social environment at school.

Across the array of efforts to cultivate enlightened political engagement, where should educators focus their attention? What are the priorities? "All of the above" seems to me the best response: Fight poverty and fund education, involve youth in civil society, fight for equal access to schools and strive to keep youth in school through high school and college, and provide multidimensional citizenship education inside schools. To this list, we should add that rather than shying from diversity in communities, schools, and curricula, we should support it vigorously, and foster it as a democratic force and a necessary condition for freedom.

These recommendations are meant only to suggest what might be done on multiple fronts, simultaneously, to educate democratic citizens. The point here is to bring young people into and through "puberty"—that is, to introduce them to public life and to cultivate public citizens, not idiots. Because democracy is tenuous and unsure, because most democracies are short-lived, because tyrannies and ethnic strife are not uncommon—for these reasons, the cultivation of democrats is not to be wished away as a natural by-product of attending to other things, such as raising scores in reading and math. Real attention needs to be paid, and in several directions at once.