

Educational Leadership and Democracy

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Introduction

This paper is a contribution to a fundamentally important debate – the relationship between education, educational leadership and the creation of a democratic society. The central thesis of the paper is that democracy and citizenship can not be taught but have to be learnt through authentic experience. The role of education leaders is to create an environment in schools in which the principles of democratic society can be experienced and so understood and acted on.

This paper is not a call for democracy in schools – it is about making schools more democratic. The paper starts with discussions about the nature of democracy and education and how they might interact, through a discussion about the nature of educational leadership to detailed analysis of the theory and practice of education for democracy.

1. Understanding Democracy

The debate about the status and nature of democracy is akin to that about whether teachers are professionals. It is possible to develop criteria to demonstrate that teachers are, or are not, professional. The debate hinges on the relative significance attached to a range of criteria and is usually resolved by subjective judgement. One way of resolving what is an increasingly circular debate is to abandon the emphasis on status and focus instead on practice – professionalism rather than professional. So with democracy; rather than try to resolve the differences between competing claims this discussion will focus on the consensus – prevalent in Europe – as to what democratic societies actually do. This is to move from a relativistic Platonic debate about democracy as a possible ideal to a more pragmatic approach.

The following list of criteria for a democratic society need to be seen as interdependent and in no particular order of priority. The emphasis is on a democratic society rather than the political system. However, it may be useful at this stage to offer a brief and limited typology of democracy as a political system to clarify the debate. The most common usages of democracy as a political system seem to cover the following broad definitions:

“Pure” democracy: a system where all citizens have a direct involvement in the political process. This has probably never existed – ancient Athens was a democracy only for free men, women and slaves had no right to participate.

“Representative” democracy: this covers a wide range of practice – it is often referred to as “Western” democracy and is based on the election of representatives to a legislature at regular prescribed intervals. Such representatives are not delegates; therefore, choice is restricted to choosing those who will exercise real choice.

“Totalitarian” democracy: usually a one party state where by elections regularly returns one party to power. This is often facilitated by the lack of any opposition parties or the use of criminal and corrupt practices at elections.

In the context of this discussion democracy is more than the arrangements for the allocation of political power. A democratic society can be said to have the following characteristics:

- High significance is attached to *individual freedom* and *personal liberties* guaranteed by the *rule of law*.
- In their personal and political lives individuals are able to make *choices* which directly inform political and social systems, with the *majority* will prevailing but minority rights being respected.
- There is optimum *participation* in political and social processes with appropriate levels of influence. *Representatives* selected through the political process are *answerable* and *accountable*.
- Democratic systems are *open* with maximum access to information and the sharing of knowledge to allow informed *consent*.
- A primary function of governments elected by a democratic society is to *protect* the safety, wellbeing and economic and social security of its citizens.

- Democratic societies work to ensure that their members lead lives which allow opportunities for *personal growth*, creativity, artistic expression and social fulfilment.

The words which are highlighted probably provide a basic vocabulary of democracy. Each word carries a complex web of meaning and interpretation and will be conditioned by historical, cultural, social and economic imperatives. Hence there is a need to avoid summative judgements and to see democracy as a relativistic and formative concept rather than an absolute. The only caveat to this position is that the process has to be one of enhancement of the various factors rather than their erosion or limitation.

A democratic society is therefore one that seeks to enhance, consolidate and extend the six characteristics outlined above. A democratic society is one that is committed to change, growth and improvement in its institutions and systems. This is a key defining characteristic in contradistinction to totalitarian regimes which invariably seek to prevent change and development. The process of becoming a democratic society is the process of maximising each of the six elements above which are now considered in detail.

Individual Freedom

For many this is the *sine qua non* of democracy. It is the most evocative claim of any struggle to achieve democracy. Freedoms have traditionally had both positive and negative expressions. The positive freedoms include freedom of speech, of assembly, of conscience. The negative freedoms include freedom from want, hunger, persecution etc. Combine these two approaches and a challenging manifesto emerges of a range of personal liberties, enshrined in a constitution and guaranteed through the rule of the law. Thus democracy includes not just the right to vote for a government but also the right to criticise that government and to propose alternatives to it – a point lost on most totalitarian democracies. However, such rights automatically entail the recognition of the rights of others to engage in the same process – and therein lies the great strength of democratic societies and their fundamental weakness. Monbiot (2003) captures this tension:

Democracy is unattainable unless it is brokered by institutions, mandated by the people and made accountable to them, whose primary purpose is to prevent the strong from oppressing the weak and to prevent people of all stations from resolving their differences by means of violence. The collective noun for such institutions is government. So democratic government, of one kind or another, appears to be the least-worst system we can envisage. (p.41)

Whatever ethical authoritative source is claimed for individual freedoms and personal rights it does seem that only a democracy can safeguard them in practice.

Choice

Personal and collective choice is fundamental to a democratic society. I am not living in a democracy if I can not choose which books to read, which movies to watch, how and what to worship, whom to associate with etc. Equally I have to be able to choose

which government will make choices on my behalf. But again I have to accept that my choices will eventually be circumscribed by the majority. There will always be a tension between the stated preferences of the majority and the views of experts; however:

...most political decisions are not simply decisions about how to do something. They are decisions about what to do, decisions that involve values, trade-offs, and choices about what kind of society people should live in. There is no reason to think that experts are better at making those decisions than the average voter. Surowiecki (2004) (p.267)

It might be tempting to think the more choice the better the democracy – is a country with 14 political parties more democratic than the country with two? The issue is obviously qualitative rather than quantitative – it depends how real the options are, how genuine and significant the alternatives are. There does seem to be a very high correlation between levels of civic engagement e.g. voting and the perceived validity of the choice: the greater the hegemony between parties the lower the turn-out at elections. It could be that political consensus denies democratic vigour. The increasing technical complexity of modern societies has tended to produce deference to experts and a willingness to surrender certain fundamental choices in order to preserve perceived greater freedoms. A combination of apathy and deference has tended to infantilise citizens in many societies creating dependency on a government that knows best.

Participation

Participation refers to the extent to which the members of a democratic society are actually involved in the political process. In a “pure” democracy presumably every citizen would be directly involved in every decision. The scale and complexity of modern states clearly militates against this. In such systems democracy is essentially “diluted” into a process of electing representatives who are perceived to have a mandate to exercise choices on behalf of their constituents. Participation therefore becomes symbolic, voting is on generic issues over a long time scale except where the issue is deemed so significant that a referendum is required – however these are often advisory.

Thus political representatives become surrogates, and, according to local political traditions, delegates or representatives. Either way they are invariably deemed to be accountable – directly through the ballot box and indirectly through being answerable to the same laws as every other citizen. The greater the level of participation the greater the level of accountability – which is manifested in moral terms as well as legal requirements.

Openness

Access to information is fundamental to the informed consent that is central to any notion of a democratic society. The validity of consent is directly proportionate to the integrity of the information on which it is based. Thus most democratic societies will work to minimise the amount of data that has restricted access and work to make the functions of government as open as possible, subject to personal confidentiality and

the needs of national and commercial security. Openness is not about access; it is also about the right to publish and debate so as to encourage the debate that informs the giving of consent.

One significant trend of the twentieth century might be termed the paternalism of the professions. The dominance of the professional classes across society led to the culture of “need to know” in medicine, national security, education and increasingly across a wide range of political processes. It is remarkable how, across Europe, there is such a wide spectrum as to what should be classified as secret or confidential.

Protection

Democratic societies accept a responsibility for the safety and well-being of their citizens. Thus democratic societies ensure the provision of education, health care, housing and security and ensure that there is appropriate provision for the vulnerable and disadvantaged members of society. In doing this they demonstrate that democracy is as much about the quality of life as about political processes.

Personal Growth

Democracy is about the capacity to lead a full and rich life i.e. to give expression to every aspect of what it means to be human. A democratic society is enabling in that it creates the environment which allows individuals to be able to choose a life that is enriching and fulfilling for them. It recognises that over and above social and economic security there is a need for personal creativity to be expressed in the widest possible ways. One of the signs of a healthy and effective democratic community is diversity in the arts and literature.

In his discussion of John Dewey’s view of democracy Boisvert (1998) summarises Dewey’s model of democratic life which is:

...difficult and challenging. It is not an easy path. Democracy requires vigilance, effort, and experimentation. The experimental spirit is important in order that democracies may always modify the means enacted toward the realization of the ideal.

...A democracy should be judged by the way all of its citizens are able to develop their capacities and thus grow in effective freedom. It should be judged by the way it encourages individuality...(p.71-72)

For Dewey democracy is about the extent to which the individual can flourish in community and society but this is a reciprocal relationship – the growth of the individual is a direct expression of engagement in the community and society.

What the argument for democracy implies is the best way to produce initiative and constructive power is to exercise it. Power, as well as interest, comes by use and practice...The delicate and difficult task of developing character and good judgement in the young needs every stimulus and inspiration possible...I think, that unless democratic habits and thought and action are part of the fibre of a people, political

democracy is insecure. It cannot stand in isolation. It must be buttressed by the presence of democratic methods in all social relationships. (1937: pp345-6)

For almost every person in a democratic society the single most important relationship after family and community is the educational process. The next section will focus on the nature of education within a democratic society.

2. The Role of Education in a Democratic Society

The model of democracy proposed in the previous section is deeply rooted in literate and engaged citizens. Indeed it could be argued that literacy is fundamental to a democratic society: however it is literacy in a cultural sense as well as a technical skill related to reading and writing. Building on Dewey’s model of democracy Boisvert summaries his core propositions for education:

1. A system of education in a democratic society must not only be open to all its citizens, but must make a concerted effort to succeed in well educating them. In practice, this means paying attention to the differing situations of children entering the educational system.
2. The educational system must help increase freedom as power to select and accomplish adequate life-projects. It must also foster the growth of individuality.
3. Democratic education must widen the scope of student interests. Understanding history, the sciences, painting, music and literature are the prerequisites to breaking down barriers between classes and establishing a context for wider shared interests.
4. Education in a democratic society must also inculcate the habits of taking account of others prior to making decisions....Democratic practice is marked by taking others into account, by considerations of consequences and how they impact beyond their immediately perceived benefit for the agent. (Pp.107-108)

Dewey draws a very clear distinction between education and schooling. Schooling does not, of itself, constitute the basis for the development of a democratic society. Schooling has to be seen as a necessary but not sufficient, component of education. The prevailing imperative of schooling is largely economic and vocational rather than democratic. The tension between schooling and educating can be represented in the following model:

Schooling	Educating
Teaching	Learning
Information	Knowledge
Generic	Individual
Competencies	Qualities
Linear	Complex
Employability	Humanity

Fig.1 Schooling and Educating

In this model schooling is presented as being essentially reductionist, instrumental and limited. Most modern democracies talk of education but in fact focus on schooling and this is manifested in the daily experience of school students across the world.

Teaching and Learning

It is only necessary to look in many classrooms to see that they are focused on the teacher and designed for listening rather than engaging in learning. Most schools (and school systems) have high confidence in what they teach (the curriculum) and how they teach it (the role of the teacher). The emphasis is on the delivery of the curriculum to a class – not on the learning of the individual. This is maintained most directly in the automatic chronological cohort progression found in most systems, the prescribed curriculum and increasingly prescribed models of teaching, the timetabling process and the hierarchical organization of most schools.

Few schools are designed with learning as the *a priori* of the educational experience. In fact, few systems, let alone schools, have any shared public definition of learning as the basis for designing the educational experience.

Information and Knowledge

The lack of a shared definition of learning inevitably leads to a focus on the replication of information rather than the creation of knowledge in school systems. This is most powerfully demonstrated in assessment systems which tend to focus on the presentation of “right” answers which are derived from a curriculum presented by teachers. Even in higher education there are very few examples of assessment focused on the creation of knowledge. In many systems preparation for living in a democracy has become a subject called citizenship to be taught, memorised, replicated and assessed rather than a process based on experiences allowing individuals to create their own knowledge, demonstrated through understanding.

Generic and Individual

Although most systems claim to focus on the individual (and assessment generally does this) the experience of schooling is largely generic. The schooling system is based on cohort progression, the teaching of groups and limited choices usually offered within narrow confines – it is not even table d’hôte, let alone a la carte, it is the no choice conference dinner. It is the model T Ford, any colour, as long as it’s black. Thus the preparation for exercising choice in a democratic society is to be told there is a choice – not to learn how to exercise it as an individual by building personal understanding.

The movement to personalization of the public services is a significant antidote to the long established pattern of generic provision. In education it has the potential to enable students to choose:

- What they learn.
- When they learn.
- How they learn.
- Who they learn with.

It would be wrong to underestimate the impact on schooling of these simple propositions and equally the need to build capacity to enable such choices to be made. However, for the Department of Education and Skills in England:

To build a successful system of personalised learning, we must begin by acknowledging that giving every single child the chance to be the best they can be, whatever their talent or background, is not the betrayal of excellence, it is the fulfilment of it. Personalised learning means high quality teaching that is responsive to the different ways students achieve their best. There is a clear moral and educational case for pursuing this approach. A system that responds to individual pupils, by creating an education path that takes account of their needs, interests and aspirations, will not only generate excellence, it will also make a strong contribution to equity and social justice.
(DfES)

Competencies and Qualities

The concept of an educated person is complex and elusive; there can be no aspect of the education process which is not contestable. The imperative to mass education in democratic societies has tended to see a reductionist approach to the curriculum in order to a/ allow for consistency and uniformity and b/ facilitate measurement to support outcomes and performance based models of accountability.

This has inevitably led to a focus on those aspects of schooling which can be measured – thus the emphasis is on the tangible, the pragmatic and the instrumental. The qualities of an educated person – a moral sense, an engagement with cultural issues, the ability to debate and question are inevitably subordinated to those elements which are controllable. Schooling tends to operate on the lowest common denominator; schooling is a necessary, but not sufficient component of education but too often the two terms are seen as synonymous.

Linear and Complex

Schooling is a linear process – this is manifested in many ways:

- Chronological progression through the school system.
- The formal, structured nature of the timetable.
- Schemes of work and lesson plans.
- The organisation of many classrooms.

Education, by contrast, is highly complex – it can take place any time, anywhere. It is not bounded by a curriculum, a classroom or the presence of a teacher. The family, community and peer group may well have greater impact than the school. What is taught at school may not be understood until the learner is at work or in any one of numerous social situations. Education often takes place by chance, in a random and non-sequential way.

Employability and Humanity

For many education systems the fundamental purpose of schooling is to ensure a suitably qualified workforce. This is both a national imperative and a personal entitlement. However, the extent to which the schooling system actually creates young people who are equipped to start work is a strongly debated topic in many democratic countries.

Schooling systems grew up in western style democracies when the demand was for large numbers of compliant workers with a relatively low skill base to staff factories engaged in mass production. The world of work has changed in these countries and schools have failed to keep up.

It is the broad range of human qualities, rather than the narrow and limited view of specific skills that are needed for employment in the modern world, coping with complexity and living a full and rewarding life. Such qualities might include:

- emotional intelligence;
- a commitment to personal growth and learning;
- perseverance and optimism;
- the ability to live and work interdependently;
- a clear sense of personal values.

Of course, schooling does not preclude the development of such qualities but they are often incidental and marginalised by the limited view of the curriculum.

The danger of a technical and functionalist view of education is that it will create dependency and inhibit the development of those individual qualities which are fundamental to citizenship in a healthy and vibrant democracy.

3. Education Leadership and Democracy

There is an inevitable tension between prevailing models of leadership and the characteristics of democracy described previously. In essence, it has been argued that democracy is about optimising choice and participation. Much of the discussion about leadership, by contrast, tends to focus on the individual – the idea of the hero leader, the credence that is still attached to the notion of the charismatic leader. The prevailing orthodoxy about leadership identifies a range of distinctive characteristics:

- Leadership is focused on one individual who occupies the most senior position in the hierarchy.
- Leaders are invested with symbolic status.
- Leaders are seen as having primary responsibility for the vision and values of their organisation and the parallel process of securing commitment.
- In many school systems leaders have a clear personal accountability for the performance of their schools.
- Leaders often have significant powers of patronage and control over resources.

These points are reinforced by the structure of many schools which is usually in the form of hierarchy with levels of power and authority being determined by the

principal/headteacher. The professional career structure of teachers in many educational systems works through a process of increasing proximity to power. This trend is reinforced by two further factors.

Firstly, in many western-style democracies leadership in general, and in education in particular, remains an essentially masculine model with much of the language associated with leadership being expressed through essentially masculine metaphors. This is reinforced by the dominance of Anglo-Saxon perspectives on the nature of organisations, social relationships and value systems. Secondly, education, like many other aspects of society has come to be dominated by notions of technocratic-efficiency and performance. As Apple, (1982) puts it:

The strategic import of the logic of technical control in schools lies in its ability to integrate into one discourse what are often seen as competing ideological movements, and, hence, to generate consent from each of the,. The need for accountability and control by administrative managers, the real needs of teachers for something that is 'practical' to use with their students, the interest of the state in efficient production and cost savings, the concerns of parents for 'quality education' that 'works' (a concern that will be coded differently by different classes and class segments), industrial capital's own requirements for efficient production and son on, can be joined. (p.151)

The centralizing tendency of many governments has seen policy become increasingly concerned with practice with higher levels of specificity and control. This has tended to reinforce the power of institutional leaders by compromising individual professional autonomy. In some systems there is a stubborn resistance to this trend but the received wisdom of school improvement equates the effectiveness of the school with the personal effectiveness of the principal/headteacher.

There is no doubt that one individual can have a substantial impact on the effectiveness and performance of a school. But at what cost? The greater the emphasis on the individual the greater the potential cost in terms of disempowerment, loss of capacity, limited sustainability and failure to optimise the full potential of the staff. As Lambert (1998) expresses it:

When we equate the powerful concept of leadership with the behaviours of one person, we are limiting the achievement of broad-based participation by a community or a society. School leadership needs to be a broad concept that is separated from person, role, and a discrete set of individual behaviours. It needs to be embedded in the school community as a whole. Such a broadening of the concept of leadership suggests shared responsibility for a shared purpose of community. (p5)

If leadership is perceived as the characteristics of one person, trait theory, then it will inevitably compromise growth. However, if leadership is perceived as one manifestation of the democratic process i.e. it is a collective capacity rather than personal status. Lambert (1998) defines it thus:

The key notion in this definition is that leadership is about learning together, and constructing meaning and knowledge collectively and collaboratively. It involves opportunities to surface and mediate perceptions, values, beliefs, information, and assumptions through continuing conversations; to inquire about and generate ideas together; to seek to reflect upon and make sense of work in the light of shared beliefs and new information; and to create actions that grow out of these new understandings. Such is the core of leadership. (pp5-6)

This definition places leadership as a democratic process rather than as an alternative to democracy. There is a danger of oversimplifying the debate to a continuum of dictatorship to democracy but in schools the potential for one individual to exercise significant personal, and sometimes arbitrary power, are considerable. Lambert's notion of building leadership capacity requires a significant conceptual shift if leadership is to be a means of achieving and modelling democratic practice rather than an alternative to it.

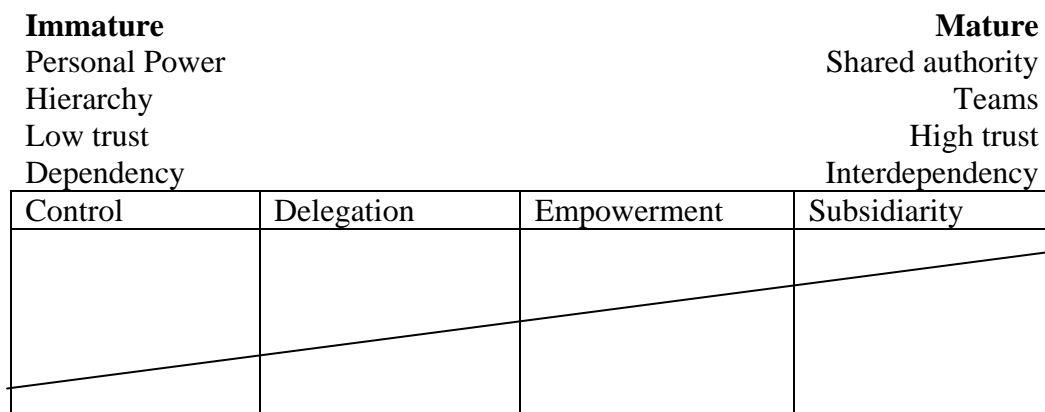


Fig.2 Shared Leadership

Fig.2 offers a model of shared leadership which seeks to demonstrate the relationship between the various factors that determine the nature of organisational relationships. The various elements can be defined thus:

Control – power and authority located with one person or a small group. Very limited participation and choice for the majority; relationships are essentially hierarchical with clear lines of command and formal answerability with sanctions: a dependency culture based on immature social relationships.

Delegation – a balance of the handing over of responsibility and authority. On the left hand side of the continuum responsibility will tend to outweigh authority. Relationships are hierarchical and bureaucratic with clear definitions of areas of responsibility.

Empowerment – the level of authority is sufficient or greater than is needed to do the job. Individuals are able to exercise choice and discretion in their work within the context of broad organisational imperatives which they have contributed to.

Subsidiarity – the concept of subsidiarity is probably best understood as a form of Federation – high degrees of autonomy within a interdependent structure with significant levels of choice and decision making at local level.

This movement from left to right across the continuum is characterised by a growth in choice, participation, trust and authority; the movement from an immature controlling relationship to a mature interdependent relationship in which leadership is shared. In Crick's (2002) terms:

Civic republicanism, that is the democratic spirit of direct participation, can and should be firmly rooted in regions, localities, neighbourhoods; and all powers that can be devolved should be devolved. (p119)

And, of course, this applies as much to pupils and students as it does to teachers and all who work in schools. The movement from control to subsidiarity needs to be a feature of the whole school in order to inform how teams and departments, and most importantly classrooms, operate.

Such an approach creates an authentically democratic school where participation and choice are increased in a valid and genuine way at every opportunity. For Heifetz (2003) this means:

The most interesting leadership operates without anyone experiencing anything remotely similar to the experience of 'following'...When mobilised, allies and friends become not followers but active participants – employees or citizens who themselves often lead in turn by taking responsibility for tackling tough challenges, often beyond expectations and often beyond their authority. They become partners. And when mobilised, opposition and fence-sitters become engaged with the issues, provoked to work through the problems of the loss, loyalty and competence embedded in the change they are challenged to make. (p69)

The movement from immature to mature organisations, from control cultures to genuinely democratic institutions may involve a "power sacrifice". It is an act of significant personal courage for a leader to deliberately seek to create the situation where personal power is replaced by shared authority and organisational roles, structures, policies and processes are changed to reinforce to reinforce the change. It may well be that this leaves the traditional school leader in a complex and ambiguous situation where external accountability is unchanged but internal relationships are totally altered. The changes are demonstrated in the following model:

Old Order	New Order
Personal Power Hierarchy Control Direction Instruction Transaction Individual Status	Shared Authority Subsidiarity Choice Development Dialogue Transformation Collective Engagement

Fig.3 Educational Leadership for Democratic Education

4. Learning to be a Citizen

The dominant activity in most schooling systems is the delivery, memorisation and replication of information. The dominant modes of teaching involve teacher control of what is taught, how it is taught, how it is organised and how it is assessed. There is thus very little of what takes place in schools and classrooms which models, in any way, the fundamental principles of democracy. This directly contradicts much of what we are coming to understand as the basic principles of effective learning. It is not enough to provide information about what democracy is – in order to build commitment to, and engagement with, democratic principles three key elements need to be in place:

- the school and classroom need to model democratic principles in practice;
- learning about democracy has to be experiential;
- learning has to be rooted in individual understanding.

Democracy and citizenship are not subjects – they are ways of life. It would be impossible to develop scientific understanding without experimentation, skills in sport can not be developed by lectures, and drama involves active engagement and activity. It is not necessary for schools to be democracies in order for them to foster democratic engagement. Democracy is always a qualified and relative concept. However, it is necessary for democracy to be perceived as a way of living which requires the application of knowledge, skills and personal qualities. Schools can work to be more democratic than they are by using democratic processes which provide valid experiences that enhance engagement and understanding.

The danger is that democracy becomes a subject to be taught rather than a way of life to be lived. Schooling largely operates as a vehicle for the delivery of a curriculum, largely through subjects. It is these subjects that form the basis for the structure of the school experience and are the only recognised outcomes in terms of assessment and accreditation. Chomsky (2000) identifies the tensions and problems in this approach.

Any school that has to impose the teaching of democracy is already suspect. The less democratic schools are, the more they need to teach about democratic ideals. If schools were really democratic, in the sense of providing opportunities for children to experience democracy

through practice, they wouldn't feel the need to indoctrinate them with platitudes about democracy. (p27)

The best way to discover how a functioning democracy works is to practice it. Well, schools don't do that very well. A good measure of functioning democracy in schools and in society is the extent to which the theory approximates reality, and we know that in both schools and society there is a large gulf between the two. (p28)

The debate about the place of democracy in education has to link to the increasingly sophisticated debate about the nature of learning in schools. Schooling tends to focus on what might be described as shallow learning – the memorisation and replication of information in a process that is largely extrinsically motivated. This approach inevitably results in compliance and dependency - the very antithesis of democratic principles. Education, by contrast, will be more concerned with deep learning, the conversion of information into knowledge through a process of reflection, testing and application. Deep learning is about intrinsic motivation where individuals accept responsibility for their own learning and development.

Personal understanding is the key outcome of the learning process; it is the direct manifestation of the movement from generic information to personal knowledge. Knowledge is internalised information which enables and informs action. Thus I might read a book about how to drive a car but it is only when I engage in the process of learning to drive that the information in the book becomes practical knowledge that informs my ability to drive.

The essential stages in moving from information to knowledge; from the generic instruction to the personal can be summarised as:

- The presentation of relevant information through lectures, reading etc.
- Modelling of that information through discussion, debate, exercises, simulations, experiments.
- Application of the emerging understanding into real-life situations in which theories and hypotheses are tested against experience.
- Feedback, review and reflection on the implications of the inaction between theory and practice.
- Support in improving practice, application in new contexts, building and extending confidence.

This progression is, of course, artificially linear and will vary from individual to individual but certain factors are common to all learning to make this process work:

- The development of a shared vocabulary that facilitates dialogue and so enhances understanding.
- Intrinsic motivation based on perceived relevance and significance.
- Support for the learning process based on mentoring and feedback.
- The identification of the qualities and skills that are needed to support the development of understanding.
- Opportunities to fail safely on the way to personally valid success.

Preskill, Vermilya and Otero (2000) identify a range of qualities or dispositions which are necessary to effective dialogue and therefore model the essential attributes of democratic life:

- ⇒ Hospitality: inviting, engaging and welcoming
- ⇒ Participation: the expectation that all will contribute and become involved
- ⇒ Mindfulness: sensitivity and awareness
- ⇒ Humility: the recognition that no one individual can have a monopoly of truth or insight
- ⇒ Mutuality: recognition and respect for others
- ⇒ Deliberation: careful and deliberate thinking based on logic, analysis, and evidence
- ⇒ Appreciation: recognition, acknowledgement, celebration and respect
- ⇒ Hope: An optimistic and positive outlook
- ⇒ Autonomy: Balancing the needs for individuals to retain their personal integrity while working interdependently.

These qualities and dispositions seem fundamental to any collaborative human enterprise; they are fundamental to a successful team, the effective classroom and any collaborative human activity. Crucially they are the pre-requisites for successful debate and dialogue and thus serve as models for the democratic process. These qualities and dispositions are underpinned by a range of skills and behaviours which need to be explicitly defined and addressed.

Such skills and behaviours might include:

- deep listening;
- giving feedback;
- summarising and reviewing;
- building consensus, managing conflict;
- open and formative questioning;
- building-on and enriching contributions;
- recognising multiple perspectives;
- challenging and testing assumptions;
- reflection;
- securing consensus and agreement.

The combination of this list of qualities and skills could serve as the basis for any model of effective social relationships; they also serve as a model for effective learning as well as being fundamental to any democratic process. This it is possible to argue that the qualities and skills for democracy are the same as those for social and learning relationships – they are symbiotic. The issue for schools, therefore, is to be less concerned with the information about democracy and citizenship and more concerned with creating authentic personal understanding.

Authenticity is fundamental to any learning process which is concerned with personal values and beliefs. Young people are remarkably perceptive when presented with superficial or formulaic approaches to matters which they regard as highly significant in their own lives. They are quick to spot hypocrisy, double-standards and inconsistency. So the teaching of democracy and citizenship has to take place in the

context of genuine and valid activities which reflect the integrity of the topics being discussed.

A summary of the key elements in this discussion so far will produce a list of criteria for the development of democratic practice in schools:

1. Democratic practice involves choice and participation underpinned by rights and accountabilities.
2. Effective learning involves movement from theory to practice, from the generic to the personal, from information to knowledge.
3. Engagement in democratic activity requires a range of qualities, dispositions, behaviours and skills.
4. To have impact on learning about democracy and citizenship has to be authentic, i.e. valid, concrete and consistent.

These criteria can be applied to a wide range of activities in schools:

- The explicit development of the qualities and skills as part of a meta-cognitive strategy.
- The introduction of choice and negotiation into planning of lessons – focusing on how if not what.
- Teachers using activities which demonstrate and reinforce democratic practices – and making explicit links.
- Developing representative and consultative bodies which have authentic authority and accountability with genuine choices and the ability to enact decisions.

5. Building Democratic Capacity

Democracy is fragile. Every nation reserves the right to suspend democratic principles and processes in times of crisis or emergency. But democracy is also subject to incremental erosion through an increasing emphasis on technocratic expertise or administrative efficiency. It is therefore essential to ensure that democratic principles and processes are deeply embedded in the social fabric so that they come habituated and the shared reference point for political engagement. In this respect schools have a fundamental role to play in developing democratic capacity – the willingness to engage in and strengthen the democratic infrastructure.

The extent to which a school is actively engaged in building democratic capacity can be judged by its responses to the following questions:

1. To what extent do the school's vision, values and mission statement demonstrate an explicit commitment to democratic principles?
2. How far is there an open flow of information to allow for informed engagement?
3. Does the school actively support and encourage the 'great freedoms'?
4. Does the school demonstrate a commitment to the dignity and rights of individuals and minorities?

5. Do the organisational structures and processes of the school model, as appropriate, democratic principles?
6. Is there a clear commitment to the enhancement of the 'common good'?
7. Does the school encourage critical analysis, debate and challenges?
8. Is there genuine participation, sharing of authority and building of trust?
9. Does the school seek to share authority?
10. Are there genuine choices available?

In her significant and valuable study Learners as Leaders Patey (2004) makes a number of important recommendations based on the initiatives in the schools she studies:

- Where students are **learners they are empowered**, so **they are trusted and freed up to take responsibility for their own learning and the learning environment**. Once freed to take responsibility, young people can develop leadership skills.
- Schools and colleges find that learners are at the centre of the community if the **climate and culture of the organisation** allows **students to be empowered and able to contribute to the leadership and direction** of the organisation.
- Where students have a **knowledge and understanding of how they learn effectively**,...this enhances their leadership role within the organisation.
- The schools and colleges, for which case studies appear in this *Think piece*, create a culture and climate that promote leadership opportunities for young people.
 - These chances are **open to all** not just the able, articulate or vocal.
 - The curriculum developments and initiatives **are integral to** what the school offers and not bolted on.
 - Some schools are appointing senior staff to promote leadership across the organisation.
- ...evidence was seen that showed that younger students and primary school children are able to develop leadership skills and take on responsibilities,...(p 25)

Patey makes a direct link between learning, leadership, culture and climate in schools as well as a vital component of preparation for adult life. What follows are practical examples of strategies in schools taken from Patey (2004), The BT Schools Awareness Supplement in the Guardian (21.09.2004) and the 2020 Vision

Supplement of the Times Educational Supplement (24.01.2003). The various examples have been integrated to provide generic illustrations of the possibilities for democratic development and participation:

- Focus groups students being actively involved in reviewing the quality and nature of teaching.
- Members of the school council playing a full and significant role in the selection and appointment of teachers and senior staff.
- The school council being democratically elected, given a budget to manage and specific authority and responsibility for an aspect of the school's life, e.g. development of an environmental area, responsibility for the design, building and operation of a "safe-quiet" area in the grounds.
- Developing specific conflict management, negotiation skills and strategies to manage anger and violence through peer mediation, e.g. changing prefects into counsellors.
- Using ICT to develop partnerships with schools in other countries which are then integrated into a wide range curriculum activity to focus on issues such as racism, xenophobia, persecution and intolerance to develop a global perspective on citizenship.
- The conversion of traditional schools council (token consultation and debates on uniform, meals and discipline) into a student leadership team that parallels and engages with the school leadership team.
- Moving from spasmodic charity events to sustained relationships involving time, skills and engagement as well as money.
- Students having responsibility as ICT managers and mentors for staff and adult learners.
- Students qualifying as sports coaches and leading sports teams.
- The student leadership team being actively involved in school management processes, e.g. the annual curriculum review, departmental performance, cross-curricular issues and special projects and initiatives.
- Students manage a weekly newsletter, radio station and TV station which act as a source of two-way communication, debate.
- Students engage in real research projects which are fed into the school's policy making process. Students become researchers, engage in market surveys, run focus groups and are thus able to contribute an evidence-based, authoritative voice to the development of the school.
- Students are given opportunities (and the skills) in order to be able to negotiate with teachers:
 - the focus of an aspect of the curriculum;
 - alternative methods of learning and teaching;
 - methods of presentation and assessment;
 - strategies for review and evaluation.

The school leaders involved in many of these projects reported a wide range of positive outcomes:

- improved academic performance;
- high attendance levels;
- improved relationships, less bullying;
- greater commitment and involvement.

The strategies outlined above give lie to the idea that preparation for citizenship in a democratic society involves knowledge of political processes – it rather requires engagement in social relationships. This requires an explicit school philosophy about the role and status of learners in schools; the following statement is taken from the values statement of Kambrya College, Berwick, Victoria, Australia:

Relationships

The human values we live by are as valid today as it will be in our students' futures. Treating others with the same rights and privileges, as we would wish for ourselves is timeless. What has changed and will continue to change is the modern context that human interaction takes place in and the pressures this places on human relationships. Technology has meant that we can now communicate and relate to people in many different ways. We can form relationships with people across the other side of the world without ever having any personal contact; we are a truly global society. If we look at the development in communications over the last twenty years and then peer twenty years ahead, the world of science fiction may give us our best glimpse as to what may exist. Living in a global society is both a challenge and an adventure, which our students need to prepare for.

The values and vision of Kambrya College are reflected in many of the practical examples outlined above. There does appear to be a very high correlation in all types of organization between levels of commitment and engagement and the explicit articulation of values which are known, shared and understood.

There are, of course, substantial constraints on schools making the movement from helping students understand the principles of democratic life to being democracies themselves. It may well be that schools will always be microcosms of the society and culture that they serve. However, there is an equally compelling argument that educationalists should not just be reactive to society but should also be actively committed to changing it – the idea of education as a key vehicle for the achievement of social justice. If this line of argument is accepted then there are a range of possible developments for schools (that do not involve the libertarian perspective that worries so many educationalists!)

Possible strategies for the increased democratisation of education might include:

- A much greater emphasis on shared leadership with a far more equitable distribution of authority across the school, less emphasis on hierarchical structures and much more focus on team-based approaches.
- Patterns of accountability which distribute responsibility and have a much broader range of outcomes than many systems have today.
- Greater community involvement in schools so that governance is a community responsibility and includes genuine opportunities for designing and developing local provision.
- Increasing emphasis on the personalization of learning with genuine and valid choices being made available in response to ability, maturity and motivation.
- The use of ICT to enhance communication, information flow, dialogue and decision making.

- The development of educators of a super ordinate commitment to democratic principles which are then used to inform their professional practice.
- The development of curriculum models that focus on educational outcomes rather than school performance and give high priority to the knowledge, skills and qualities needed to be successful citizens in a modern democracy.
- The recognition that effective leadership is a collective capacity, irrespective of age, gender, ability, creed or race rather than personal status.

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