

CURRICULUM for the EDUCATED CITIZEN

International crises and events in our national backyard are directly influencing our concept of citizenship and our educational priorities. It is, of course, impossible to discern the long-term effects of the revolution in Iran, the crisis over the American hostages, or the Soviet invasion and takeover in Afghanistan. The early knee-jerk reactions ranged, predictably, from "Hell No, We Won't Go!" (to the Persian Gulf) to "Hell Yes, We Will Go!" (to the Moscow Olympics). The doves and hawks reemerged to flutter on the political horizons and warm up the rhetoric as the presidential campaign got under way and frustration over Iran mounted.

Responsible members of the press have tried to catch the mood of scholars, commentators, and the public in general. Their reports have ranged from a belief that there is too much talk of war in Washington to *The New York Times* editorial (3 February 1980) that speaks of an appropriate "stiffening of America" to regain a position of strength in the world. Pollsters have discovered a rather sudden and surprising rise of cold war mentality and even a militant mood among a large majority of ordinary men and women. In February, a poll by the Associated Press and NBC reported that two-thirds of Americans would favor U.S. troops fighting the Soviets if they invaded Western Europe or the Persian Gulf. *Time* magazine (*The New York Times*, 5 February 1980) found three-fourths (including two-thirds aged

Schools should teach the fundamental values of our democratic political system.

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18-24) in favor of reinstating draft registration.

Such sudden and extensive shifts in public opinion may moderate as international affairs cool down, and they may not. In either case, they raise fundamental questions about education and citizenship and call for a thorough reexamination of education for citizenship.

Our fundamental ideas and values regarding a democratic constitutional order must be reexamined, focusing on justice, freedom, authority, privacy, due process, personal obligation for the public good, and basic human rights, all bound up with our view of the role of government in relation to public and private individuals. We must look closely at these concepts as they bear upon our view of ourselves and our view of Soviet Russia's violation of Afghan rights, the Ayatollah's version of Islamic justice, and Andrei Sakharov's lack of freedom to speak out in his own country.

I like the way Anthony Lewis put the issue in *The New York Times* (24 January 1980):

For the West, for Americans especially, the brutal Soviet actions are as severe a test as we have had in a long time. The test is of more than military strength. It is a psychological and moral challenge: a test of our maturity, our wisdom, our commitment. The details of our response will be debated in the months ahead. But some general principles ought to be clear.

Among those principles, he mentions the following:

Steadiness is vital.

Hysteria has no place in our response.

Self-righteousness is to be avoided.

We must be true to ourselves, to our own vision of humanity.

It is his final point that especially bears upon educators. Do we *have* a clear vision of humanity to which we can be true? Do we *have* a clear vision of ourselves to provide the basis of a curriculum design for the educated citizen?

Several professional education societies¹ have drawn up and circulated a statement entitled *Organizations for the Essentials of Education*, which they have endorsed collectively. The major purpose of their statement is to resist easy formulas or pressures for back-to-the-basics, minimal competency testing, and simplistic emphasis upon survival skills. They are arguing that society must reaffirm the value of a *balanced* education resting upon the interdependence of skills and subject matter content of all the essential studies in the school curriculum. According to their statement:

Educators agree that the overarching goal of education is to develop informed, thinking citizens capable of participating in both domestic and world affairs. The development of such citizens depends not only upon education for citizenship, but also upon other essentials of education shared by all subjects.

Please note that the "overarching goal" is developing *informed, thinking citizens*. Education for citizenship is the *primary* purpose of universal education; education is not solely or

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primarily to serve the self-fulfillment of individuals, or to develop the mind for its own sake, to get a job, or to get into college. These latter purposes have come to be important goals of education in the United States, but the fundamental historic reason why the founders of this Republic called for public schooling was that the education of all the people was essential for the achievement and maintenance of a republican form of government. This purpose has been paramount in much of the subsequent efforts to establish a truly universal, free, common system of public schools.

After stating the general proposition that the overarching goal of education is to develop informed, thinking citizens, how do the organizations define the essentials? Specifically, they say the essentials of education include the ability:

- to use language, to think, and to communicate effectively;
- to use mathematical knowledge and methods to solve problems;
- to reason logically;
- to use abstractions and symbols with power and ease;
- to apply and to understand scientific knowledge and methods;
- to make use of technology and to understand its limitations;
- to express oneself through the arts and to understand the artistic expression of others;
- to understand other languages and cultures;
- to understand spatial relationships;
- to apply knowledge about health, nutrition, and physical activity;
- to acquire the capacity to meet unexpected challenges;
- to make informed value judgments;
- to recognize and to use one's full learning potential;
- and to prepare to go on learning for a lifetime.

These essentials for the educated person should come close to appealing to the vast majority of the education profession.

But what happened to the overarching goal of developing citizens? All of these "essentials" will surely stand citizens in good stead, but neither this list nor any number of curriculum guides try to define citizenship or the role of the public citizen (distinguished from the private person) in social and political life. There is no clue as to what an "informed, thinking citizen" should be informed about or should think about in his or her role as a citizen.

It may be unfair to criticize this short statement for not doing what it possibly did not intend to do. But we must now, more than ever, take seriously our claim that we are preparing citizens. This may not exhaust all of what we try to do in the schools, but it should come as the highest priority throughout the years of schooling.

The fundamental ideas and values upon which our constitutional order is built should be the core of explicit and sustained study, based upon realistic, scholarly knowledge and searching criticism conducted throughout the schools from kindergarten through high school and the years of liberal general education. There will not be universal agreement as to what these key ideas and values are; there will not and should not be a single curriculum design imposed upon all schools in the nation. But the education profession should be trying vigorously to become sophisticated and explicit about the substantive concepts and ideas that form the common core of American citizenship. It is now time for a concerted effort to formulate the civic and cohesive values that major national, professional, and public interest organizations could collectively endorse.

The goal of civic education for American schools is to deal with all students in such a way as to motivate them and enable them to play their parts as informed, responsible, committed, and effective members of a modern democratic political system. This can be achieved in a number of specific ways, but an efficacious civic education program should include orienting students to the political values, the political knowledge, and the skills of political participation required for making deliberate choices among real alternatives. An efficacious civic education will recognize that students have different backgrounds, interests, and capabilities, but the goal is to achieve, as much as possible, common understanding and common commitment to democratic value claims.

An efficacious civic education for the schools will include not only curriculum, classroom teaching and learning, but will embrace the whole school system, its organization and administration, its activities and gov-

ernance, its climate and "hidden curriculum" and its relation to the community and other agencies concerned with civic education. It will not only impart valid, reliable, and realistic knowledge, but it will exemplify democratic political values in its whole operation and, as far as possible, help students to learn the skills of political participation.

For 200 years the basic ideas and values of political democracy have been asserted and debated. The assertions range from the most eloquent and persuasive statements in the English language to endless pedantic and trite mouthings of unexamined phrases. Yet, when the crises arise and when the fundamental debates are held, certain key concepts emerge that lay claim to the beliefs, commitments, loyalties, and actions of American citizens.

The following set of ten ideas of "value-oriented" claims—a decalogue—should be used as an intellectual framework for designing civic education programs for the schools. I make no claim for their originality. Too much has been thought and said over too long a period of time to make any such claim. And each value often elicits wide differences of interpretation.

The ten value concepts are divided into two general types: those that primarily promote desirable cohesive and unifying elements in a democratic political community and those that primarily promote desirable pluralistic and individualistic elements in a democratic political community. There is a continuing tension, sometimes overt conflict, between the values of *unum* and *pluribus*, but civic education must, just as American democracy must, try to balance, honor, and promote both.

As a whole, they make up a decalogue of the civic values that schools should seek to exemplify. As "values," they are not lists of competencies or specific goals of behavior; nor are they overgeneralized or vague traits of personal character. They are conceptions of the desirable or worthwhile elements in the democratic political system which should be viewed as the criteria by which specific goals of citizen behavior are chosen and judged. To put it another way, those in charge of designing curriculums of civic education should test the elements of their programs

to determine to what extent they incorporate these ideas or concepts in their own curriculums, however designed in scope and sequence.

It will be obvious that these are normative concepts, each with extensive histories of scholarly analysis, controversial interpretation, and conflicting practice. But they are the very stuff of our common political life, and they should be confronted directly and explicitly as appropriate to the age and capacity of students. They are not the "new" social science concepts of "role," "status," "stratification," "socialization," "political culture," "decision making," and the like. But they appear in the highest reaches of political discourse and jurisprudence, as well as in the ordinary language of governance in schools and communities, in political discussions and campaigns, and in the proceedings of courts, hearings, grievance committees, and policy councils. They require nothing less than a lifetime of consideration if they are to become more than sunshine symbols or crisis crutches.

Obviously, these ideas are not discrete or mutually exclusive; some often conflict with others; and they are subject to many different interpretations, but they provide significant guidelines to the kinds of ideas that should be uppermost in an efficacious program of civic education. I would not argue for a particular order of priority in pedagogical treatment. Some teachers, some schools, some systems may well start at different points or with differently named concepts, depending upon their sense of fitness for the local situation. But at the least, a full-fledged acknowledgement of the civic role of education will lead to a consideration of them all at some point in the school's program—and in relation to each other.

The curriculum design for the educated citizen should aim at the goal of combining the values of a stable pluralism with the values of a cosmopolitan civism. Stable pluralism means that the freedoms, diversities, privacies, due process, and human rights that we should honor, respect, and encourage must be based upon a strong underpinning of political and psychological legitimacy which in turn arises from the cohesive elements of civism. Cosmopolitan "civism," means that our sense of civic duty

should embrace the best of our historically generous, open, and tolerant approach to difference rather than our narrow, bigoted, provincial demands for conformity. The need for such a balance between civism and pluralism is just as great in higher education and teacher education, if not more so, as it is in elementary and secondary education.

I heartily endorse the following statement by John W. Gardner (1979), who, as President of Carnegie Corporation, Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, founder of Common Cause, and in countless other ways, has consistently spoken up for the best in American education and politics:

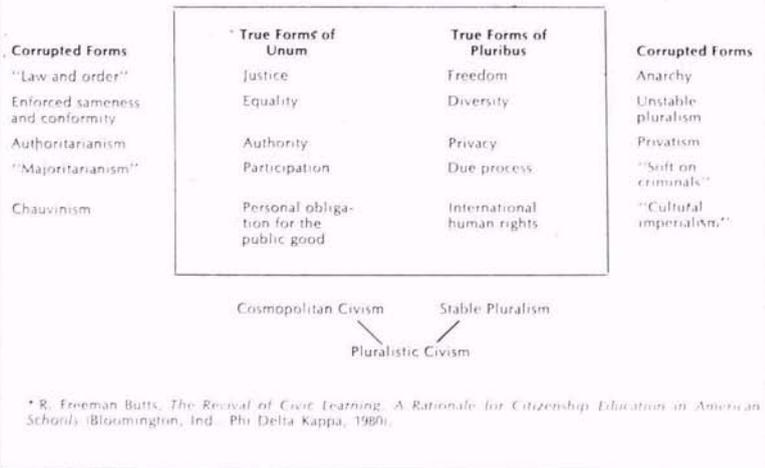
I am a strong defender of our plural-

interests, organizations, and groups that make up our national life must keep their part of the bargain with the society that gives them freedom by working toward the common good. Right now. In this time of trouble. Their chance for long-term enjoyment of pluralism will be enhanced by a commitment to the common good—as we go through this difficult passage. At least for now, a little less *pluribus*, a lot more *unum*.

¹ These organizations include ASCD, the National Council for the Social Studies, National Council of Teachers of English, International Reading Association, National Science Teachers Association, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, and the teachers of mathematics, art, music, foreign languages, speech, and health education.

Figure 1. A Decalogue of Democratic Civic Values for the Schools*

(with apologies to Moses and Aristotle)



ism, meaning by pluralism a philosophy and set of social arrangements that permit the existence of many competing ideas, many belief systems, many competing economic units. I habitually defend the private sector because it is the heartland of our pluralism. There, in both the profit and non-profit segments of the society, a multiplicity of thriving institutions, vital and diverse, provide the essential dynamism to our system.

But a society in which pluralism is not undergirded by *some* shared values simply cannot survive. Pluralism that reflects no commitments whatever to the common good is pluralism gone berserk. . . .

At this moment, we are a nation in disarray. No point in mincing words. This is a moment when the innumerable

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