For citizenship education to be more than empty study, lessons must embody, and educators need to model, democratic principles.
Democracy does not reside in the hollow assertion that we are democratic. It lives or dies in the day-to-day commitments and interactions of ourselves and our fellow citizens. Education for citizenship, therefore, cannot be an education about citizenship. Instead, it must be an education in citizenship, in the practical experiences of being citizens.

This means that in schools—organizations that are not famous for democratic organization—we need classroom experiences that teach what Alexis de Tocqueville called the "habits of the heart": the sensibilities of democratic responsibility. Citizenship education must engage students in activities that simultaneously demand a high regard for self and a recognition of one's interdependency with others.

American History Rewritten

A great example of education for citizenship is an experimental curriculum developed six years ago by Noreen Austin, a fifth-grade teacher in the Berryessa School District in San Jose, California. Working with an extraordinarily diverse group of students, many of them recent immigrants, Austin decided to build her curriculum around the immigrant experiences of all her students. To begin, she covered an entire classroom wall with a world map and invited students to research the personal history of each family's travel to the United States. As the students shared their personal chronicles, Austin lined colored threads between their places of origin and San Jose. The colors represented major blocks of time (red for pre-1800, blue for 1800-1840, green for post-1975, etc.).

Three things happened as each child's "thread" was traced across the wall. First, the commonality of the immigrant experience emerged through the eager telling of vastly different stories. Second, the identity of being an "American" shifted from abstract notions to concrete histories of struggling families. Further, the "first Americans" were no longer the Pilgrims, but rather the families of Tina and Terri and Daniel, whose roots were Native American. The next oldest Americans were black classmates, whose ancestors had been forcibly brought here well before most of the other families had migrated. Third, the classroom became a beehive of historical research. As each child shared stories from grandparents and parents, the web of threads grew denser across the wall, the class sought to know more about the times through which their people had moved.

At this point Austin knew she had a winner: a classroom in which each student was eager to work because everything was somehow connected to his or her own family's experience. But the costs were also immediate; she had to drop all of her prior curriculum planning. Every part of the curriculum became organized around the immigrant experience: social sciences (obviously), science (early farming, first factories, different technologies), math (for reconstructing everything from early town plans to wage rates for immigrant workers), and reading (everywhere).

The curriculum became unified through a common project: the class would write its own history text based on the students' own experiences. The students organized themselves into work teams, sometimes on an ethnic basis (and often where a non-English-speaking student was tutored by a bilingual student), sometimes on the ad hoc basis of fifth-grade friendships. They read prodigiously, drew and painted, sang and wrote poems, tape-recorded family stories, prepared a school presentation, and wrote their own history book.

A Lesson of Interdependency

As we monitored this project, its success in conventional terms was clear: students gained competence in subject matter and social skills. But the greater payoff was in the sensibilities learned.
"We all seek to develop assertive individuality in our students, yet we know that citizens must have more than their own naked self-interest at heart."

The habits of democratic citizenship understood through the reconstruction of history by way of each student's own history. These habits and sensibilities about the relationship between individuals and communities are fundamental to any education for citizenship. Students learned to locate themselves at the center of history. History—American history; the national experience—was not an alienated recitation of distant events. As students traced family dates along a common line with dates of national importance, they were not strangers to the American story—they were the American story.

If the students realized one seldom-learned lesson—that history did not happen outside of them—they experienced another: that their own history was linked in many dependent ways upon the history of others who were quite different from them on the surface. This revelation was most apparent to Austin's students in their study of work and production—of factory workers and field hands, of slavery and of small businesses. As they reconstructed how communities work, the lesson of interdependency became tangible: the clothes I wear come from the work of others; the tools my grandfather used were made by someone else.

These lessons are not abstract, yet they are the substance of any cogent lesson about citizenship. Democratic citizenship is an odd combination of hubris and humility; we assume that "we the people" may rule, and yet we must understand that we cannot do so without others. The usual litany of democratic virtues—respect for others, commitment to diversity and freedom, belief in civic and juridical equality between citizens—is empty recitation without practical experience in which acting through these virtues makes sense. As Austin's students learned to value the practical experience of working together to reconstruct their common, familial experience as "Americans," selfhood and citizenship were wedded.

Civic as Well as Pedagogic Goals
The Berryessa experience is not an artifact of one fifth-grade classroom. We have used family histories in urban politics courses and "parallel timelines" in several courses to explicate historical development. The same model has been used in community college history courses and university social history courses; it would be a natural for high school courses.

This is the kind of political education appropriate for a democratic people. We all seek to develop assertive individuality in our students, yet we know that citizens must have more than their own naked self-interest at heart. They must have some sense of the link between their self-interest and
the interests of the community of which they are a part. Although this is not something that can be taught abstractly through texts, it can be learned through experiences in which students do, in fact, depend on each other—or through the imaginative recreation of their own histories in which their relatives depended upon communities.

**Teaching That Embodies Our Values**

We have focused here on a curricular model, but the lesson beyond curriculum is that the organization of the learning environment and the expectations of that environment must embody democratic principles. The quality of our education for citizenship depends upon the quality of our example. Educators must model the beliefs we say we want among our students. This is not easy, given the structures of authority and command that characterize most educational institutions. But a beginning can be made in the clarification of the values espoused by faculty and staff and a recognition of the values operated on. That is, we all profess a belief in values such as cooperation and appreciation of our differences, yet in our daily lives we feel compelled to act upon survival-themes such as competition and protection of turf. The juxtaposition of "preferred values" and "operative values" does not mean we are acting in bad faith but rather that we may not yet have found ways of organizing our work environments to reflect the values we think we want to teach. And this failure presents a genuine problem for any curriculum for citizenship.

Certainly we can't expect students to learn democratic values if we don't practice them ourselves. The Berryessa experience is again instructive: Noreen Austin had to give over considerable control to her students in the daily life of the classroom; she had to trust them to work on projects that mattered to them. Her trust was repaid because the students cared about what they were doing; they might not have cared as much had they not been given freedom and trust.

**Self-Reliance with Responsibility**

We return, then, to the necessity of linking citizenship to democratic values, and citizenship education to the practice of those values. The first and central task of educators is to develop a self-consciousness about our own values—and how we act on them.

Citizenship education is education in both self-reliance and community responsibility, taught by faculty who are themselves self-reliant and responsible citizens. It is, therefore, at the heart of all education: education which liberates rather than domesticates, which inspires confidence and self-determination rather than dutiful recitations of proper beliefs.

We will have to admit what is hard to admit, and policymakers will have to admit it and simultaneously fund it: any education that aims to liberate young people into citizenship is fundamentally radical and risky. Radical because it insists on students who question the root of things and grow to believe in their own capacities to make decisions. And risky because it asks that we give to the young the opportunity to make their own mistakes in learning that citizenship is about choosing the community's future. But it has always been radical and risky to be a democracy. Now is not the time to be afraid.

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