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**Legislation Institute**

**DECENTRALISATION.  
DELIBERATION.DEMOCRACY.  
Our Power in Diversity**

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Yaroslav Pylynskyy & Oleksandr Kopylenko

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## **FOREWORD**

If at the beginning of the 20th century it was suggested to choose the most used word or some other notion to determine the contemporary development of society the educated citizens of Europe, the USA, or even the Russian Empire would most likely choose the word «progress». It was such a period of time when the so called «progressists» mainly dominated the US media, science, education and culture, and there were they that determined the trajectory of the American social evolution. Simultaneously, a rapid economic, cultural and scientific development took place in Europe and Russia that had a significant impact on the welfare of the population.

Today even a brief analysis of social media brings us to a conclusion that the most widely spread notion of our time would be the word «crisis». Indeed, counters in the Google search engine impartially show that now this notion is nearly the most frequently used one in many languages of the world. Thus, only the Ukrainian segment of the Internet shows that the notion of «crisis» is being used almost three times more frequently than the notion of «progress».

Is this really a clear indicator of the situation in the modern world? The answer is probably not, as unambiguous as it seems at first glance. The fact is that over a hundred years ago, people really believed in the rapid improvement of their lives, they saw it, if not every day, then at least every year. And, most importantly, they participated in this process themselves being confident that the real change for the better depended on their actions. It was a period of involvement of the broad strata of the population into the government management, a period of the rise of electoral democracy, when women got the right to vote and the society, in its majority, believed that progressive changes would ensure the improvement of universal welfare.

Nowadays this conviction is not so widespread, and the direct dependence of citizens' well-being on participation in elections and the choice of political leadership of the country are not so obvious. And this is a global problem. In many countries citizens have lost faith in the ability to effectively solve their problems by voting in elections where «one person, one voice» simply dissolves in millions of others, and the elected leaders are so unavailable in the period between the elections, that citizens do not expect already, that they could somehow affect any serious changes by means of their electoral decision. Moreover, the quality of these elected managers, as well as the effectiveness and social usefulness of the solutions adopted and proposed by them, cause more and more doubts in the vast majority of citizens.

Nowadays in Ukraine, after more than 25 years of trampling on the ground and absence of reforms, destruction of local and national infrastructure, mass unemployment and departure from the country of a large part of talented and hard-working citizens, the reform has finally begun, which is likely to be the beginning of genuine progress, a turn to democracy and increase in the well-being of citizens. A decentralization has begun in Ukraine. Will it be, as its proponents declare, the start of prosperity and well-being era of the Ukrainian people, will soon become clear. Like all other social changes, this movement has one very important dimension – involvement of the widest possible segments of the population in creation of their own future. This engagement is not just a silent consent of the human masses of a totalitarian society and their willingness to dig, hack, minify, condemn someone and subjugate something on a call of a leader. No, it is precisely because of this reform that the truly collective will of the still artificially atomized citizens, individual and collective owners of their community must finally appear, who, voluntarily united, will independently and constantly take collective decisions vital for themselves and their children, and the community as a whole. Citizens will be able to take

such well-balanced decisions only together, having carefully considered and discussed the problem facing the community of the village, city, district. Therefore, they will have to meet the challenge together as the problem deepens, analyze and discuss the causes of its occurrence, and look for the best ways to solve it. The experience of other countries where the community problems are being jointly solved shows that during the discussion, not only the exchange of opinions and clarification of the attitude of different citizens to the core of the problem should be taken into account, but also the joint development of ways to overcome it and identify individuals (bearing in mind their opportunities and interests), who are able to find a way out of the situation, that is to solve the problem.

Deliberation is a new notion in Ukrainian educational and political discourse. It is becoming widespread today due to the development of democratic processes in Ukraine, and first of all decentralization, which should involve the widest range of Ukrainian people to participate in the management of their community, city, state. Starting from the 17th century, this notion was used primarily in English and American courts to identify the process of thoughtful and comprehensive discussion by jury members in order to make the most balanced decision. Later, already in the 20th century during the great depression in the US, when it became clear that the economic crisis would hardly be possible to overcome without engaging the broad masses of population into the struggle against it, the term deliberation was adopted into a political vocabulary. At that time the government helped to organize citizens' meetings in order to find answers to the most complex issues that troubled their communities and the nation as a whole. At that difficult time a new stage of democracy development started in the country.

Just like it was in the period of antiquity, citizens began to directly engage themselves in improving their own lives,

discussing the problem together, looking for ways to solve it and then to get rid of it. Consequently, democracy, which at that time was mostly competitive, when by means of elections and voting people decided which candidates deserved the right to make political and economic decisions in the next few years, was getting more and more deliberative. Thus, the electoral competition, which always inevitably divided people into winners and losers, gradually turned into a discussion and then a joint solving of socially important problems.

Now when the process of decentralization has been launched in Ukraine, and more and more citizens of the country are joining the public administration both at the local and national level, perhaps, it is worthwhile to turn to the proven experience of the United States and other Western countries that have long taught the people of their countries with the help of deliberative meetings to be responsible citizens. For it has long been understood in the West that the ability to be a citizen is not a congenital one, but has to be developed in a long learning process first at school, then at the university and in a community. And this training to be a citizen is perhaps the most permanent, because it lasts all life. This is probably the main difference between the American school and the Ukrainian one. The American one primarily teaches people to be citizens, and only after that teaches them different subjects. And in Ukraine this country the old Soviet principle is still relevant – instead of educating people to be true citizens they are being taught different subjects.

How to restore citizens' trust in democratic institutions, how to return them to democratic procedures, how to make governance more predictable, manageable and controlled? These issues are now widely discussed in practically all democratic countries. In most countries these discussions focus on two key points: the quality of managers and experts, and activity and competence of the citizens.

In the proposed collection of articles scholars and experts from the USA, Brazil, Romania, Israel and Ukraine talk about the experience of overcoming social problems in their countries. According to the scholars, one of the effective ways to overcome the crisis of modern democracy is to involve citizens as much as possible in discussing their local, regional and national problems, their participating in solving them and establishing cooperation with experts and professionals in public administration. To do this it is necessary to develop the widest possible training of citizens (in schools, universities, communities), to organize the deliberative meetings and take part in them. Indeed, as experience shows, without the voluntary and informed participation of citizens in solving most of the social problems, it is difficult to rely on long-term systemic changes in state governance at all levels.

***Oleksandr Kopylenko***  
*Director of the Legislation Institute  
of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine,  
Academician of the National  
Academy of Sciences of Ukraine*

## **DELIBERATIVE EDUCATION FOR A DEMOCRATIC UKRAINE**

*Yaroslav Pylynskyi\**

*The main purpose of schooling is to educate a citizen. Neither a mathematician nor a philologist, neither an athlete nor an artist, but a citizen, able to live and work for the good of a society. If so, then all the strategies and tactics of modern education and schooling should be primarily aimed to achieve this goal<sup>1</sup>.*

### **Introduction**

The pernicious forces that are destroying democracy in Ukraine can be divided into four main groups: corruption, the increasing influence of advertising specialists and PR advisers in election campaigns, the separation of freedom and law, and, finally, the citizens' indifference towards community issues, and a reduction of participation in public life, including elections.

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\* *Yaroslav Pylynskyi* is a senior scholar in the Legislation Institute of the Verhovna Rada of Ukraine and a senior scholar in the Institute for Pedagogical Education and Adult Education at the National Pedagogical Academy of Science of Ukraine. Pylynskyi previously worked as a scientific secretary of the Division of Languages, Literature and Art Studies, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. He is the former director of the Kennan Kyiv Project at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (1998–2014). Pylynskyi earned a PhD in philology from the Institute of Ethnology, Folklore and Art Studies, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (1989) He is also the author of *From the Nation of Migrants to the Nation of Patriots: How American Education Has Created the American Nation* (Kyiv, 2016) and *Deliberative Education in Decentralized Environment* (Kyiv, 2018). Areas of expertise: civic and democratic education, public deliberation, education, deliberative pedagogy.

<sup>1</sup> *Дем'янчук О.* Політична освіта. Місток між державою та громадянським суспільством. У: Громадянське суспільство: проблеми теорії та практики. К. : НАУКМА. 2008. С. 70.

This last issue deserves special attention because, in a way, it is the foundation of all the other issues. In today's world, citizens have very little influence on the political realm. Common people can easily be kept away from the political life and very often they also willingly relinquish their control. But this is a general problem of democracy, because its efficacy, legitimacy, and vibrancy depend on the political participation and the competition of citizens.

Even if citizens express desire to influence public life, it is quite difficult for them to make informed decisions collectively. In most cases, they act in a hurry and mostly take into account only their current interests. They do not think about the broader context or about future prospects. Even when citizens make informed decisions collectively, it is still difficult for them to move towards a common goal, because people often do not really know how to coordinate their work in the public sphere.

However, research shows that, if issues appear to be very important for citizens, they are willing to work together in order to solve them. Reasoning how to solve the problem, people overcome their differences and make informed decisions, and, thus, essentially assert themselves as citizens. Thus, citizens' deliberation represents an important instrument for creating democracy; an attentive and careful search of ways in which to solve problems becomes the base for furthering a democratic environment. Also, when citizens begin to consult with each other about important issues, they demonstrate their ability to make decisions and, further, to work together, overcoming difficulties.

***Deliberative education is designed to give citizens instruments and knowledge to improve their lives by combining their knowledge and efforts.***

For a long time, the Ukrainian society was educated under totalitarian control. This primarily applies to those who are over thirty now. The younger generation has also been taught

obedience to the state, maybe not as intensively as their parents – but since the majority of teachers and educators had not have any other experience than the totalitarian one, they reproduced it in their daily educational practice. Thus, the idea of the state as the good or evil parent has been deeply ingrained by the Soviet pedagogy in many Ukrainians. It is, therefore, difficult for many citizens to realize that they have to pursue their own interests, create communities, control the authorities that they elected, personally improve their lives, and take responsibility for their mistakes and miscalculations.

If children do not learn to read, write, and count, they cannot be effective citizens and successful members of a society. This is obvious and nobody objects to it. But the current practices indicate that without a proper democratic education, without thoughtful discussion of their own problems, and the clarification of all the possible pros and cons, it is impossible for citizens to make qualified decisions that would be supported by the majority and perceived as their own, and not imposed by the authorities.

However, the majority can also be wrong if it is insufficiently or badly informed. Since information spreads at the speed of light nowadays, wrong decisions can turn democratic societies into plebiscite democracies, with all the possible negative consequences or, worse still, into authoritarian regimes. Therefore, democratic education and, above all, educating citizens to thoughtfully discuss public issues can help them become not only active, but conscious decision makers both in their community and in their own country. As one Dutch politician aptly said, «For many of our fellow citizens, democracy is something as inevitable as rain». But democracy is not a natural phenomenon, it is the result of purposeful human activity that has to be taught. This simple truth is unfortunately not so clear for many people<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See more: Mathews David. *The Ecology of Democracy*. Kettering Foundation Press. 2014. P. 5.

In this context, it is important to note that people often engage in collective actions, which are quite similar to those of so-called «anonymous flocks». This became especially obvious during the last few decades when information started to spread so quickly that this process can be compared to the visual contact<sup>1</sup>.

Konrad Lorenz notes that people under certain conditions can become an «anonymous flock». An anonymous flock is comprised of many living creatures who stay closely together and move in the same direction. Under such circumstances individuals in the pack try to stay as close as possible to each other. Moreover, according to Lorenz, this desire of closeness can be not only innate, such as for certain types of fish and birds, but it may be the result of individual learning. Observations by scientists over many years corroborated with those by his colleagues gave Lorenz reason to believe that instinct, which gathers groups of animals, is a fierce force. And this force of attraction to the flock, which affects individuals or their small groups, increases with size. Lorenz believed that, in spite of the apparent drawbacks of animal existence in large packs, this lifestyle should also have some advantages that not only balance the shortcomings, but also exceed them, so that long-term selection pressure brought in animals such complex mechanisms of joining in the packs.

Most sociologists believe that the original form of social association is a family and, on its basis, various forms of associations that are common among mammals developed in the process of evolution. However, there is reason to believe that the first form of community – in the broadest sense of the word – is an anonymous flock, a typical example of which is a school of fish in the ocean. Within this formation there is no structure, only a large number of identical elements. They definitely influence each other, because there are different

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<sup>1</sup> Lorenz Konrad. *On Aggression*. Routhlege Classics, London NY. 2002. PP. 134–145.

forms of communication between creatures that are joined together in such unities.

A large school of small and closely united fish shows some volatility. Occasionally, some quick-witted fish form a small group that moves forward, outside of the school. But as such groups stretch up and deviate from the main group, the tension inside them rises. Usually this development ends up with the swift retreat of the enterprising groups into the depths of the school. As Dr. Lorenz comments, «Watching these indecisive actions one almost begins to lose faith in democracy and to see the advantage of authoritarian politics»<sup>1</sup>.

Relevance of this worry was corroborated by a simple, but very important experiment conducted with river minnows by Erich von Holst. He took one minnow and removed its forebrain, which is responsible for making fish join a school. A minnow without a forebrain eats and swims normally, as any other. But it does not care if none of its «relatives» from the school follow; that is the only difference in its behavior. Thus, the fish with brain affected by operation, does not share the inherent indecisive behavior of a normal fish, which usually pay attention to other fish around them. This did not matter to the brainless fish: if it saw food or had any other reason for doing so, it swam resolutely in a certain direction and the whole shoal followed it. By virtue of his deficiency, the brainless animal had become the dictator!<sup>2</sup>

A crucial reason for such a behavior is that this form of association is completely anonymous. Each individual is entirely satisfied with anyone's company. The idea of personal friendship does not apply in such anonymous flocks. As members are practically identical, it makes no sense to stick with a particular individual. Ties that unite such anonymous flocks are quite

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<sup>1</sup> Lorenz Konrad. *On Aggression*. Routhlege Classics, London NY. 2002. P. 140.

<sup>2</sup> Lorenz Konrad. *On Aggression*. Routhlege Classics, London NY. 2002. P. 141.

different from the personal friendship that makes our modern communities strong and stable. But friendship and mutual understanding should not only be taught: they also need to be maintained and practiced. These skills and knowledge not only emerge and are taught but are also maintained and improved in society groups thanks to constant direct contact.

In the meantime, the vast majority of Ukrainians perceive the state as something impersonal, even though all state functions are performed by certain known people. All governmental decisions are made by certain officers and sometimes it is a small circle of only a few persons. If people are not aware of this simple fact, they do not understand the need to establish effective control over officials, their activities, decisions, and income. Only if there is such control, society can overcome or at least minimize corruption and create equal possibilities for all its citizens.

Citizens could have avoided most of the problems or easily overcome them if they were sufficiently informed and could study the problem. Failures are perceived especially painful when ignorance at the societal level results in individuals suffering, because usually it is much more difficult to correct collective errors than those of just one person's. And it's not just because of the different scale, but also because people are often convinced that the majority is always right and that collective intelligence cannot be wrong, so any different minority opinion is false. The situation is complicated by the fact that if the knowledge that mankind has accumulated in math and natural sciences can be impersonally passed to the next generation through books or various electronic information media. Social knowledge, common types of relationships and patterns of actions are mainly reproduced and passed on through live communication<sup>1</sup>. Thus, humanism, tolerance, kindness, and

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<sup>1</sup> See more: *Kant, I. Idea Of A Universal History On A Cosmopolitical Plan (1784)* URL: <http://philosophyproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/IDEA-OF-A-UNIVERSAL-HISTORY-ON-A-COSMPOLITAN-PLAN.pdf>

mutual assistance cannot be established once and for all and then only be increased and developed. On the contrary, every time they have to be reestablished. That is why the ethical characteristics of a society and moral values of individuals are vulnerable and volatile. What is now considered an unacceptable evil tomorrow may turn into an empty superstition and, vice versa, something that is perfectly normal today could be viewed as a violation of basic human rights tomorrow. In the meantime, people are suffering. Yet, their sufferings pass away with them and next generations often bother so little that they are likely to repeat the same mistakes, condemning many more people to suffer. Can this vicious circle be broken? Unfortunately, there is no explicit answer. Once we are aware of the challenge, but not trying to do anything about it, it would be a grave moral failure, even a worse sin than doing evil because of ignorance.

Experience tells us that people organize their lives successfully when there is a viable balance between what communities should do and what the government should do. In areas where people tend to obey the state they expect its paternalistic care and thus exhibit passivity, and a continuous development lag is usually observed. In order to bring up active and responsible citizens, it is important to use *deliberative education*.

*Deliberative education*, as we understand it, is a set of tools, techniques, and methods that educate citizens and help them to become active members of the society who can discuss common problems thoughtfully and find wise solutions. It represents a crucial element in sustaining civic education. Moreover, this education should be continuous, because it serves to educate competent and thoughtful citizenry, capable not only of making wise collective qualified decisions, but also implementing them together.

Democratic education in Ukraine has a long history, as it dates back to the revolutions that began in Europe in 1848

and created a large number of educational civic organizations in Central and Eastern Europe<sup>1</sup>. These civic groups and organizations voluntarily took the burden of public education in the numerous non-state nations in the region.

In terms of the nineteenth century politics, it meant the transformation of subordinate subjects of absolutist empires into citizens of national democracies by means of education. In Ukraine, «Prosvita» (Enlightenment), took on this mission<sup>2</sup>. The proliferation of the «Prosvita» chapter organizations began in Ukraine in the 1860s – 1870s, first in Galicia (Austro-Hungarian Empire), and then through the rest of Ukraine, and further in Kuban and even in the Volga and Far East regions of the Russian Empire. They appeared everywhere where Ukrainians created their settlements.

The activities of these centers of cultural and civic education prepared the emergence of the democratic Ukrainian state in 1917. However, due to the weakness of the newly formed democratic state institutions, Ukraine was unable to resist the totalitarian Bolshevik Russia. Therefore, after a long war (1918–1921), Ukraine was conquered and it became part of the communist empire. As a result, during the first half of the twentieth century, Ukraine lost about half of its population, including most ethnicity-based communities (Polish, German, Jewish, Greek, etc.). Together with the Ukrainians, they all became victims of the communist and Nazi genocides<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Spring of nations. Revolution 1848-1849 in Galicia. URL: <http://www.aus-ugr.narod.ru/37.html> // *Kost' Levytskyi*. The History of the Political Thought of the Galician Ukrainians, 1848-1914, (Lviv, 1926). PP. 17–26.

<sup>2</sup> Всеукраїнське товариство «Просвіта» (The Ukrainian association «Prosvita»). URL: <http://prosvitanews.org.ua/istor.html> // *Лозинський М.* Сорок літ діяльності Просвіти (Lozinski M. Forty years of activities of «Prosvita»). URL: <https://archive.org/stream/sorokldialn00lozyuoft#page/n3/mode/2up>

<sup>3</sup> See: *Snyder T.* Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin. Basic Books. 2012. P. 560 // *Baberowski Jörg.* Derrote Terror. Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. 2003. S. 290 // *Stéphane Courtois, Joachim Gauck, Ehrhart Neubertetal., Das Schwarz buch des Kommunismus. Unterdrückung, Verbrechen und Terror.* (1998) Piper Verlag, München. 2004.

Meanwhile, the communists introduced a well-developed and sophisticated political education for all citizens in the territories where they achieved the control. Political education in Soviet Ukraine was promoted by government-run educational institutions – kindergartens, schools, vocational schools, and universities, where young generations were indoctrinated with the so-called «scientific communist outlook.» Thereby, from early childhood, future citizens were educated in the spirit of loyalty to the existing political system, assured at the ultimate truth of the ideas of the communist party, with an uncritical attitude towards reality, with complete obedience to and strong faith in the communist utopia<sup>1</sup>.

Another important element of civic education was the education of the adults. It was a continuous communist education that lasted for life. People were taught at theoretical seminars, conferences, and regular political information meetings that took place in all enterprises and institutions, especially in the Schools and Universities of Marxism-Leninism and in the trade union clubs of political education. In addition, all employees received an additional portion of communist education at various trade union meetings in accordance with the Soviet slogan, «Trade unions are the schools of communism».

Another important part of the political education in the former USSR was the in-depth training of history researchers for the Communist Party as well as training of «ideological workers» in the field of the Marxist-Leninist philosophy and scientific atheism. These courses were compulsory in all university and vocational school. In addition, we should also

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<sup>1</sup> For example, in the typical English learning manual for the 8 grade (Ukrainian-English phrase book. K. 1980) only four of 33 sections were not politically oriented: *My family, My working day, The United Kingdom and London.* The rest of the subjects had positive political content: *Rights and duties of the citizens of the USSR, Lenin and his Mother, Foreign Languages in the life's of V. Lenin and K.Marks, The 25th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union etc.*

mention political lecturers, whose number totaled around 687,000 people in Ukraine at the end of 1970th (the total population in Ukraine at that time was slightly less than 50 million)<sup>1</sup>.

However, as it became clearly demonstrated by the collapse of the Soviet Union, all these efforts eventually trained people in a dual-thinking process that is typical for most totalitarian societies. Once under the influence of an economic and social decline, which is inevitable for every closed society, when the Party weakened its repressive pressure on citizens, the artificial, superficial, and decorative nature of the communist political education became apparent. It became evident that the purpose of the Soviet education was the protection of the interests of an essentially small group – the party leadership, which, in fact, did not even believe in its own deceitful propaganda.

But, over the years, this Soviet political education – dogmatic, uncritical, and hypocritical – deeply traumatized the Ukrainian society. To overcome its consequences, the Ukrainian society has had to pave the way for a return from communist to human values, from class enmity to the «golden rule» and the moral norms of the civilized world.

It is notable that ideologists of communist political education avoided discussions, debates, and deliberation in their practical work, because their goal was not to educate citizens capable of self-reflection and self-evaluation with advanced critical thinking, but obedient executors of the will of the party leaders.

After the collapse of the USSR, the Soviet system of civic education ceased to exist and during following decade, for the reasons mentioned above, any talk about any political or civic education was considered inappropriate. The first

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<sup>1</sup> Дем'янчук О. Політична освіта. Місток між державою та громадянським суспільством. У: Громадянське суспільство: проблеми теорії та практики. К. : НАУКМА. 2008. С. 69.

really important event in the development of civic education in Ukraine was the establishment of the Institute for Civic Education at the National University of «Kyiv-Mohyla Academy» in 1999. Almost simultaneously, a couple of NGOs such as the Centre for Civic Education «Kyiv Brotherhood,» the Ukrainian Association of History and Social Sciences Teachers «New Day» were established. These organizations began to study the political and civic culture of the Ukrainian society and to organize conferences and seminars that attracted a lot of participants<sup>1</sup>. A new generation of scholars and public activists began to develop the concept of civic education, to introduce courses (like «Civic Education Policy»), and to write textbooks to help teachers disseminate the values of civic culture<sup>2</sup>.

At the same time, the teachers of Ukrainian civic education felt the complexity of this task. After all, the object of study (democracy) and learning theory and practice had undergone significant transformations during the previous ten years. In the meantime, many people not only in Ukraine talk about the crisis of democracy and argue that it's degrading and it weakens their positions. Thus, teachers in such «new democracies» as Ukraine face a set of serious methodological problems. They feel confuse not only about how to teach for democracy, but also uncertain regarding the very notion of democracy.

### **Problems of Democracy and Tasks for Deliberative Education**

Even the supporters of democracy, not to mention its opponents, do not deny the opinion according to which democracy is the worst form of government except for all the other forms. Today it is clear that the optimistic assumption

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<sup>1</sup> Громадянська освіта в Україні. Семинар. Київ. 2 жовтня 2001 р. URL: [https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/2001\\_10\\_02.pdf](https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/2001_10_02.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> *Бакка Т. В., Ладиченко Т. В., Марголіна Л. В.* Шкільний курс Громадянська освіта: основи демократії та методи його навчання. Основа. 2009. С. 254.

that people within themselves are good and we just have to free them from the oppression of tyrants and then justice will prevail, unfortunately it is not viable in real life<sup>1</sup>. The unsuccessful development of democracy in most of the countries that used to be part of the Soviet Union finally dispelled these illusions regarding the inherent democratic instincts of citizens and the notion that they naturally desire to live in a just and democratic world where all social problems are to be solved through the competition of ideas and knowledge. Regardless, this belief in people is particularly wide-spread among supporters of democracy in countries with authoritarian regimes. Despite the apparent failure in one country, the proponents of this view inevitably appear in another one. Therefore, they can truly be considered democratic optimists.

But in countries where democracy does exist, democratic pessimists dominate because they understand that «people aren't born knowing how to be citizens in a democracy. It is something they have to learn»<sup>2</sup>. They do not believe in people anymore and suspect that all of them are egoists. However, democratic pessimists do believe in the magic of democratic procedures and principles. «In modern liberal societies, there is greater agreement on principles that deal with procedures rather than on matters of substance. The general support for democracy and equality of opportunity are substantive principles generally agreed upon, though again, only at an abstract level. Specific workings out of these and other principles are subject to wide-spread disagreement and require procedural resolution»<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Paradoxical, but this intellectual tradition mostly has flourished in the middle of 19 century under the influence of Rousseau's writings in the bosom of different socialist oriented movements.

<sup>2</sup> Deliberative Pedagogy. *Teaching and Learning for Democratic Engagement*. Ed. by Timothy J. Shaffer, Nicholas V. Longo, Idit Manosevitch, and Maxine S. Thomas. Michigan State University Press. 2017. P. viii.

<sup>3</sup> Klosko George, *Democratic Procedures and Liberal Consensus*. Oxford University Press. 2000. P. 231.

Both points of view, optimistic and pessimistic, have been coexisting among democrats since the eighteenth century, but now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is clear that the standpoint of the pessimists is also limited, despite the fact that they were apparently successful in many countries. The basic foundations of democracy – universal suffrage, multiparty system, transparency of elections, political freedom, human rights, etc. – were effective drivers of social development and they worked successfully for over a hundred years. But now it is quite obvious that there are three main problems that represent a significant threat to the future of democracy.

**The first problem** is that authoritarian regimes have learned to masquerade themselves as democracies: this is what happened in the former USSR and other socialist countries. For example, modern Russia also demonstrates all the attributes of a democracy, but, in fact, it remains an authoritarian state<sup>1</sup>. In addition, authoritarian regimes have learned to use democratic institutions in their fight against democracy itself<sup>2</sup>. However, there have already been similar situations throughout history. For example, the Russian Empress Catherine the II<sup>nd</sup> successfully fought for democracy and the rights of religious dissidents in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth until it was neatly divided between the three monarchies<sup>3</sup>. It is also worth to mention the activities of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the

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<sup>1</sup> «An essential condition for the development of democracy in our country is the creation of an effective legal and political system. But the development of democratic procedures could not be reached by the cost of the rule of law, neither the so hard-won stability, nor the sustainable implementation of the taken economic course». V. Putin (Message to the Country, 2005.)

<sup>2</sup> *Friedrich Hayek. Law, Legislation and Liberty, Volume 2: The Mirage of Social Justice* University of Chicago Press. 1978. P. 210.

<sup>3</sup> Piotr Stefan Wandycz, *The Price of Freedom: A History of East Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present*. Routledge; 2001, P. – 345. // Norman Davies, *God's Playground. A history of Poland*. Oxford University Press, 1981, P. 1210; // A. Andrusiewicz, Katarzyna Wielka. *Prawda i mit*, Warszawa 2012, P. 688.

First World War in the opponent countries<sup>1</sup>. Particularly successful was the cooperation with Vladimir Lenin and his Bolsheviks, who eventually began the October Revolution, seized power, and, as a result, Russia stopped military actions in World War I<sup>2</sup>.

However, modern authoritarian regimes came to a new level of fighting democracies. Suffice it to recall the story of the German girl Lisa which was completely fabricated by Russian security services and pro-Russian media in Germany in the winter of 2016<sup>3</sup>. And there are plenty of similar examples.

**The second problem** is that democratic countries arrived at a new phase of development. As the recent elections in the U.S., Brexit, or the migrant crisis in the EU show, now traditional democracies need to update their tools. Although the main democratic foundations were formed in the nineteenth century and stood the test of time, now they have become vulnerable to manipulations. Various authoritarian groups, both within these countries and outside, use democratic instruments (freedom of speech, human rights, rule of law, and free elections) to wreck democratic societies.

To overcome this danger, it is important to spread civic education, to involve citizens in active cooperation, to help them develop critical thinking skills, and encourage them to discuss and solve the problems of their community and country in public forums. This should help modern liberal democratic society to develop harmoniously, excluding the scenarios in which democracy is imposed «with an iron hand» or when there is chaos and anarchy.

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Boghardt. Spies of the Kaiser: German Covert Operations in Great Britain during the First World War Era. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. xiv + 224 pages.

<sup>2</sup> Z.A.B. Zeman, Germany and the Revolution in Russia, 1915-1918: Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Ministry. Oxford University Press; 1958, - 180 p.

<sup>3</sup> See more: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criminal\\_case\\_of\\_Lisa\\_F](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criminal_case_of_Lisa_F). or : <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/subversion-tsar-will-protect-election-from-russian-dirty-tricks-0pf2kps77>

**The third problem** is most evident in the countries that are on the road from authoritarianism to democracy. In these countries we can observe different combinations of political forces.

Given the current methods of dissemination of information and education via the Internet, there is social demand for the latest and most advanced forms of democracy. However, in these countries both citizens and the society as a whole have not yet fully accepted the values that represent the basis of all successful liberal democracies in the world. It becomes particularly apparent if we look at the level of political and economic corruption<sup>1</sup>. As we have noted previously, undeveloped democratic values and wide-spread «communist» morality prevent these societies from becoming truly democratic.

Today, the Ukrainian society faces perhaps the most obvious and urgent problem of modern democracy, namely the «quality» of its citizenry or the human factor of democracy.

Unfortunately, today in many countries there is a very real threat of ochlocracy<sup>2</sup>. However, we know that this attempts to prevent the expansion of ochlocracy by developing meritocracy, where experts and scientists have the right to have the last word. Nevertheless, this way has essential drawbacks as well. After all, scientists and experts were the ones who sent Giordano Bruno to the stake. Probably he was the first famous victim of intrigues in the expert community. Thus, the question, «For whom democracy exists, and who is its bearer?», still remains open in these societies. If we apply the standard formula from the constitutions of most modern democracies where people are considered to be the subject and the source of power and

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<sup>1</sup> See more: <http://dyvys.info/2016/12/30/2016-ukrayina-u-svitovyh-rejtyngah/>

<sup>2</sup> In many democratic countries populism is growing up, and thus to power comes leaders who de facto represent not conscious citizens – the demos, but ochlos.

democracy, it excessively simplifies the answer to both of these questions. Hence, modern societies have to use some kind of a mediator in order to permanently solve nascent social problems. This intermediary is bureaucracy, which causes another problem – anonymity and over-organization of modern democracy.

Over 200 years have passed since its last reincarnation and democracy has transformed itself into an almost impersonal conveyor of decision-making and its implementation. However, this work has been increasingly slowed down without any apparent external causes. Thus, it becomes increasingly clear that the functioning of a bureaucracy in republics is almost identical to the bureaucracy in monarchies. In both cases, they are equally prone to corruption, slow, and inefficient. Now, there is a system in which problem perception, discussion, and decision-making can last many years, and the implementation is postponed because of formal reasons or it takes a lot of time<sup>1</sup>.

In Ukraine, the grip of bureaucratic nomenclature weakened for a short period in the early 1990s, but since the mid-90s it has been restored, managing public property for its own benefit as it was during the Soviet period, but this time using the framework of the market economy. This happened because private property that was separated from the state in the case of reforms remained largely under the control of bureaucracy. Nowadays Ukrainian bureaucracy, through the tax system, supervision of banks, and control over the property (especially over real estate and land) as well as using corruption, prevents private business from full scale disposing of their property. As a result, all the financial resources meant to support political parties are concentrated in the hands of state bureaucracy.

Regular elections also do not guarantee that emerging problems will be solved, especially if they exist at the local level. At the same time, elections are certainly more expensive

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the creation in Ukraine of the state bodies intended to fight against corruption lasts more than two years.

than the phone call to the «Emperor». In addition, one also needs to get to the «Emperor» by bypassing his secretariat. We believe that this resemblance of bureaucracies in democratic republics and in authoritarian regimes makes them very similar in the eyes of common citizens – its everyday consumers. That is why they become sometimes so receptive to authoritarian demagoguery.

If an authoritarian regime is «soft» or «vegetarian» and citizens do not have high expectations, democracy and authoritarianism are not perceived as totally different systems of governance. Thus, **the third problem** can also be defined as «*democratic fatigue*». It manifests differently in the «old» democracies and in the states that have just recently become democratic<sup>1</sup>. In countries with robust democratic traditions there is a psychological problem that can be called «cloy of democracy.» Countries that recently got rid of authoritarian regimes experience «confusion because of democracy». This psychological condition is well reflected by political polls and the low turnout in the regional elections in post-revolutionary Ukraine in 2015 and 2016.

The fact that democracy actually means pluralism and there is no sole correct and officially approved picture of the world is a psychological shock to many citizens in post-authoritarian countries who are accustomed to only one correct ideology or one religion. When voters have to choose a «product» that cannot be quickly assessed, they often try to withdraw from any choice, especially because of the habit to do only the «right» things.

Besides, democrats find themselves in a double trap of their own pluralistic methodology. They cannot and do not want to give a clear philosophical description, hence programs of further social development and talks mostly about abstract values obscure for many people. At the same time, democrats do not offer any short-term, scientifically based «roadmaps»,

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<sup>1</sup> See the situation in Poland and Hungary or Britain and the United States.

similar to those imposed by Marxists, such as communist industrialization, collectivization, or the introduction of the «five-year plans», etc.

At the same time, authoritarians rigidly impose their projects, ideas, and values as the only right ones, thus offering quick and easy solutions to complex problems of social development. They do not understand that in the modern world «Force ... should be reserved, in terminological language, for the 'forces of nature' or the 'force of circumstances', that is, to indicate the energy released by physical or social movements»<sup>1</sup>. As Hannah Arendt stated in one of her latest works, «Violence can always destroy power. Out of the barrel of a gun grows the most effective command, resulting in the most instant and perfect obedience. What never can grow out of it [violence] is power»<sup>2</sup>. So, today there is a serious challenge before modern democracies: to work out a new theoretical agenda for the world without losing its openness and pluralism. Which means that they have to pass both the 21st Century Scylla of authoritarianism and Charybdis of chaos.

The experience of successful democracies shows that this task cannot be accomplished without the involvement of the citizens and their collective work. Continual thoughtful discussion of issues and solutions to community problems is critical for democracy. Only by training in deliberative skills it would be possible to educate conscious citizens who will be ready to develop a democracy together with their fellow citizens.

### **Doing Deliberative Teaching and Learning for a Better Society**

As it was mentioned before, deliberative pedagogy is focused first, as it should be, on the classroom and on the challenge of offering students an understanding of citizenship

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<sup>1</sup> See more: <http://www.fsmitha.com/review/arendt.html>

<sup>2</sup> See more: <http://www.fsmitha.com/review/arendt.html>

they can use every day. But it also has the potential to spread from the classroom to the institution as a whole – and the potential to bring the institution into a more productive relationship with the public<sup>1</sup>. That is why is important especially for the new democracies to elaborate not only on the teaching methodology but also on the learning of techniques which should help not only the teachers to teach deliberation in schools, but also the students to learn deliberation and to practice it consciously in their social life.

In our book, we will analyze deliberative practices as they were formulated by D. Mathews in the introduction to the book *Deliberative Pedagogy*:

1. Naming problems to reflect the things people consider valuable and hold dear.

2. Framing issues for decision-making that not only takes into account what people feel is valuable but also lays out fairly all the major options for acting – with full recognition of the tensions growing out of the advantages and disadvantages of each option.

3. Making decisions deliberatively to move opinions from first impressions to more shared and reflective judgment.

4. Identifying and committing all the resources people have, including their talents and experiences, which become more powerful when combined. These are assets that often go unrecognized and unused.

5. Organizing civic actions so they complement one another, which makes the whole of people's efforts more than the sum of the parts.

6. Learning as a community all along the way to keep up civic momentum<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *Deliberative Pedagogy. Teaching and Learning for Democratic Engagement*, Ed. by Timothy J. Shaffer, Nnicholas V. Longo, Idit Manosevitch, and Maxine S. Thomas. Michigan State University Press. 2017. P. XII.

<sup>2</sup> *Deliberative Pedagogy. Teaching and Learning for Democratic Engagement*, Ed. by Timothy J. Shaffer, Nnicholas V. Longo, Idit Manosevitch, and Maxine S. Thomas. Michigan State University Press. 2017. P. IX

As we know, traditional teaching goals are aimed to help students learn a preset amount of knowledge. Teachers give students organized and segmented information (knowledge) and teach the skills usually approved by educational authorities<sup>1</sup>. The goal for the students is to learn information and skills created and developed by others. The knowledge acquired while schooling constitutes a certain amount of information gained from a variety of disciplines; it stays in the students' minds in the form of clusters that do not always have semantic connections between them or with the reality around. Thus, in the process of education both teachers and students are frequently unable to link the content of one subject with the knowledge from other disciplines. Generally, in modern Ukrainian, school learning is based on information that has already been acquired by someone else, so, during the evaluation process, students demonstrate themselves (in the broadest sense of the word), but do not search for a better knowledge<sup>2</sup>. In such circumstances, the teacher becomes de facto a controller, and, in a certain sense, students are well (or poorly) manufactured products. When these types of teaching and learning are used, students develop a statist and paternalistic tendency, especially those who later work in the field of public administration and are in charge of its intellectual support<sup>3</sup>. And, thus, they are quite skeptical about the abilities of their fellow citizens to solve problems in the public sphere at all levels<sup>4</sup>.

*Deliberative teaching and learning* are both interactive. First, students get some information about the world, but they acquire

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<sup>1</sup> See more: <http://classroom.synonym.com/goals-traditional-education-8023.html>

<sup>2</sup> See more: Glasser W., *The Quality School. Managing Students Without Coercion*. Harper Perennial, 1992.

<sup>3</sup> See more at: Robert Nozick, *Why Do Intellectuals Oppose Capitalism?* // Cato Policy Report. 1998. January–February.

<sup>4</sup> David Mathews., *Politics for People: Finding a Responsible Public Voice*, Paperback 1999. University of Illinois Press. PP. 65 – 79.

new knowledge and learn via interpersonal interactions. So, in the classroom, the student learns through interactions with other students and the teacher how to find knowledge through individual and collective activities, how to think independently, and act collectively. Instead of a mere demonstration of skills and knowledge, students experience and there is a collective and individual search for knowledge. In a sense, it is a return to the teaching and learning methods that first appeared in ancient Greece and, in fact, which helped to create this ancient democracy<sup>1</sup>.

So, using such deliberative training, the teacher creates an environment in which students discover something themselves, acquire new knowledge, and gain experience in various spheres, they learn to seek neither a compromise, nor a consensus, but the knowledge, which can never be finally defined and obtained. At the same time, they learn that liberty means living with conflict. Through collective deliberation they muster that diversity and equality each has their place in a constitution of the society which seeks to guarantee these greatest life values for all. Such is the ultimate goal of *deliberative education*.

A famous American psychologist, Albert Bandura, wrote that learning would be an extremely time consuming process – not to mention the fact that it would be very risky – if people were learning how to act solely relying on the consequences of their actions. Fortunately, in most cases, people learn through simulation. Based on observations of our surroundings, we form ideas about new types of behavior and, later on, this coded information is used as a guide for further actions. Before putting in practice a particular behavior, people can learn from examples, even approximate ones, and thus they can avoid many mistakes<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Jaeger Werner. *Paideia: the Ideals of Greek Culture*. Volume 1. Oxford University Press. 1965.

<sup>2</sup> Albert Bandura. *Social Learning Theory*. Prentice-Hall. 1976. P. 40.

## **The Position of Teacher and Student in the Educational Process and the Introduction of Deliberative Education**

Organizing the educational process, teachers in traditional schools first of all think about the content of their own activities. The syllabus usually describes only what the teacher should do. So, in the classroom, the teacher is the main person, who manages the activities of the students, shows, talks, asks, keeps the class in order, and restricts the actions of students.

These conditions determine the position of a student in the classroom – a passive listener, who is sometimes given the opportunity to demonstrate his or her knowledge. Hierarchical teacher-student relationships form authoritarian patterns, generate competition among students for the teacher's attention, stimulate competition, and make collaboration in the classroom unnecessary. To some extent, society is modeled as a hierarchical patron-client system and this hinders the creation of informal horizontal connections in a society, without which cooperation and trust networks cannot appear or exist.

Changing the position of teacher and student as a result of the introduction of *deliberative education* will lead to changes in the educational process – establishing an interaction between teachers and students on an equal footing. This attitude means that teachers accept opinions and active positions of students and recognize their right to independence of judgment; teachers do not stick to the belief that only they have the correct view or it can only be recorded in the textbook. This is especially important in the teaching of humanities.

## **Organization of Communication during the Learning Process in Deliberative Education**

The process of communication in a traditional education system is mainly restricted to a teacher's monologue. The teacher addresses students, using ready knowledge and, via a system of rewards and punishments, forces them to learn

this information as compulsory. The interaction between the participants in the educational process, as we have noted, is usually based on the initiative of the teacher and it is structured according to the beforehand prepared lesson plan. This process can be represented as a model of a one-way communication. This method of communication allows the teacher to present a large amount of information in a short period of time, and the feedback is restricted to the short answers of the students.

During *deliberative communication*, students have the opportunity to share their thoughts, impressions, and feelings about a particular topic, to talk about their own conclusions, and get to know ideas not only from the teacher but also from their classmates.

Teachers organize the learning process; they are consultants or facilitators, who do not pay attention only mainly to their own actions. The teaching process is focused on links between students, their interaction, and cooperation. The learning outcomes are achieved through mutual efforts by all the participants in the learning process, which means that students take on the joint responsibility for the learning outcomes and that in the future they will become responsible for their own life and its constant improvement.

Treating the classroom as a community means respecting diversity and navigating inevitable conflict. The classroom often consists of people with different socioeconomic backgrounds and political perspectives. Discussing controversial topics can be particularly interesting, albeit challenging, when students are encouraged to speak from the basis of their lived experiences. It's important to allow differences to surface. And, while professors should not appear biased or politically motivated, it may be unrealistic to expect them to hide their personal views. This poses an ethical dilemma, which professors can address by backing arguments with evidence, respecting opposing and diverse views, and

encouraging students to evaluate the reasonableness of all views presented, including their own<sup>1</sup>. That isn't to say that professors should always be transparent about their political opinions, but doing so can be a powerful pedagogical tool<sup>2</sup>.

### **Teaching Methods in Deliberative Education**

It is possible to see the benefits and effectiveness of *deliberative education* only when this is directly implemented through educational activities. Further on we will offer several proven methods of deliberative training that enable its effective implementation.

When using deliberation in education, it is important to organize the activity of the students as well as to create an adequate learning environment in school. In addition, during the learning process, it is important to organize forums involving students, as future citizens, to solve local problems. Therefore, it is crucial to organize *deliberative forums*, both at classroom and school levels, to teach students how to conduct them and to mold their habits to solve community problems together after in-depth discussion. Students should learn that thanks to such public events it often becomes clear that a personal problem is, in fact, a common one and it could thus bother a lot of people. During such discussions, these problems can be identified and students learn to search for best ways to solve them. Also, these discussions help young people to learn how to use democratic procedures in practice and teach them about democracy and tolerance.

In the future, students will not only participate but also organize such meetings in their communities themselves. Thanks to the formation of strong relationships inside the

<sup>1</sup> (Hess & McAvoy, 2015) Hess, D. E., & McAvoy, P. (2015). *The political classroom: Evidence and ethics in democratic education*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>2</sup> Deliberative Pedagogy. *Teaching and Learning for Democratic Engagement*, Ed. by Timothy J. Shaffer, Nicholas V. Longo, Idit Manosevitch, and Maxine S. Thomas. Michigan State University Press. 2017. P. 218

classroom and in the school, and uniting efforts, the duplication of efforts could be avoided and, thus, an effective synergy could be achieved. Students will be able to create an effective plan for future work and decide what useful things can be done for the community, as well as to learn how to seek and to reach consensus and determine priorities. Usually, during these discussions, new leaders and volunteers who take responsibility for the plans developed by the community emerge<sup>1</sup>.

Democracy is constantly challenged by different internal and external threats, but in solving these problems and neutralizing threats, society reinvents itself and is constantly updated. This process requires the close attention and participation of all members of the society, as restrictions in participation limit democracy, eventually transforming it into the power of groups – the oligarchy, or the power of an individual leader – dictatorship.

***Deliberative education is designed to give citizens instruments and knowledge to improve their lives by combining their knowledge and efforts.***

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## EDUCATION THROUGH A DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRATIC LENS

*Timothy J. Shaffer\**

### **Introduction: The Current State of Democracy in a Global Setting**

Evidence is mounting that democracies are in crisis. There is growing distrust of media. Confidence in major institutions has reached historical lows. Historically fringe voices are gaining strength and becoming more common and visible. Partisanship is increasing dramatically. Social media echo chambers provide content that confirms our beliefs, isolating us from diverse views.

Scholars and other observers note that while democratic practices globally are close to an all-time high, recent data highlight a troubling statistic: the number of countries (24) «backsliding on democracy» are equal to those advancing in more democratic ways». Further, «autocratization is now showing up in larger countries such as 'Brazil, India, Russia, Turkey, and the United States'». This is significant for these countries and beyond because this trend toward autocratization affects one third of the world's population – 2.5 billion people (Lührmann et al., 2018, p. 6).

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\* *Timothy J. Shaffer* is Principal Research Specialist for the National Institute for Civil Discourse and is Assistant Professor of Communication Studies and Assistant Director of the Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy at Kansas State University. He is also associate editor of the *Journal of Public Deliberation*. Education: B.A. (2004) St. Bonaventure University, Theology (magna cum laude). M.A. (2006) University of Dayton, Theological studies. M.P.A. (2008) University of Dayton. Ph.D. (2014) Cornell University, Education. Areas of expertise: Public Deliberation, Civic Engagement, Education.

In the United States, where I am based, elected officials are eschewing unwritten rules and norms. This is forcing a country often referred to as a hallmark for democracy to acknowledge its own challenges. It is also within this climate that books such as *How Democracies Die* and *The People vs. Democracy* (Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018; Mounk, 2018) have become best-selling titles to scholarly and popular audiences alike. But as Erik Jones puts it, «Democracies Don't Die, They Are Killed» (Jones, 2018). This perceived death, then, is not simply from natural causes. Instead, it has come about because of particular political actors and policies—or because of people's disengagement from political life because they see themselves outside of the realm of influence because of their lack of capital. Concern about the prospects of democracy are not only for our time, however. We can easily find concern expressed in earlier times.

Writing about the rise and fall of civilizations, Arnold Toynbee warned in 1931 that, «men and women all over the world [are] seriously contemplating and frankly discussing the possibility that the Western system of society might break down and cease to work» (1932, p. 1). In *It Can't Happen Here*, Sinclair Lewis (1935) offered a literary take on both the fear and likelihood of fascism in America. And in his book *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness*, Reinhold Niebuhr wrote that, «it must be obvious that democracy, in so far as it is a middle-class ideology, ... faces its doom» (Niebuhr, 1944, p. 2). What, then, was to be done in response to the concern about the loss of democracy or, as Niebuhr put it, the model of democracy that was situated in a privileged class and excluded others? This is the place where education through a democratic lens becomes an important corrective to another otherwise bleak view of the world. Importantly, education helps to create space in which concern about the continuation or further development of democratic practices and ideals can be articulated, understood, and addressed.

## **Democratic Conceptions of Education**

When considering major influences in the development of think about education with a civic telos, it is not uncommon to turn to John Dewey and Paulo Freire, two important figures in the field of democratic education each bringing a critical dimension to how we might approach civic education through deliberative and dialogic approaches in our work today.

John Dewey is often a reference-point, especially in the English-speaking world, for those who advocate for education's purpose being its larger social role rather than simply the benefit of an individual. In *Democracy and Education*, Dewey noted that «a society which not only changes but which has the ideal of such change as will improve it, will have different standards and methods of education from one which aims simply at the perpetuation of its own customs» (Dewey, [1916] 1997, p. 81). He argued that education is fundamentally different if one is attempting to change or improve society instead of simply replicate it and maintain the status quo. In his view, it was critical in a democracy that educational spaces be able to not only accommodate but welcome diverse experiences in order to create something new. The generative power of education was more important than the replication of existing ideas or practices. It was building on these notions that Dewey, in *The Public and Its Problems*, emphasized the importance of situating democracy within the «neighborly community» (Dewey, [1927] 1954, p. 213). For students in classrooms, they were engaging in democratic practices with the intention to employ similar approaches to interactions, decision making, and learning experiences in the world beyond the confines of a classroom. Significantly, Dewey's view of educational spaces would not align with the language of classrooms – in schools or university – somehow being separate from the «real world.» Indeed, Dewey saw educational spaces as opportunities to rethink shared life, just

as he advocated for communities to reimagine and reengage in ways that took seriously the contribution of ordinary people in public life.

Similar to Dewey, Paulo Freire, the Brazil educator who focused his work on marginalized communities and the importance of utilizing education to help people identify and overcome oppression in their lives, is another significant voice as we think about the intersection of democracy and education. His critique of what often passed as «education» similarly looked at the preservation of the world as it was and gave voice to the view that perpetuating a particular reality inherently suppressed those marginalized in that worldview and, instead, saw education's power to challenge, reconceptualize, and reshape society. Freire challenged the banking conception of education which occurred when educating was an act of «depositing» information and in which «students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor». It took place within a world that was spoken about as if it were «motionless, static, compartmentalized, and predictable» (Freire, 2000, pp. 72, 71).

When the world was viewed in such a way and education was seen as the transmission of information from one to another, the impact was significant on learners. In Freire's words: «The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world» (Freire, 2000, p. 73). In his view, education was to be liberatory from the constraints of the world as it was experienced, especially by those marginalized and oppressed. Critical consciousness, conscientization, or conscientização in Freire's native Portuguese, was essential to education. His suggested alternative to the banking model was what he referred to as the problem-positing method. Central to this method was a

concept that helps to bridge to contemporary discussions about dialogue and deliberation within education spaces – schools, universities, and communities.

The problem-positing method stood in contrast to the «antidialogical and non-communicative» banking model of education and was «dialogical par excellence» because it was «constituted and organized by the students’ view of the world, where their own generative themes are found» (Freire, 2000, p. 109). When space is created for people to bring their lives and experiences to the table, the table is no longer the place where one sits and absorbs or documents. It becomes a space for dialogue, an exchange in which teachers make sense of students’ comments and vice versa, not simply to be able to rearticulate what has been stated but in order to «re-present» the discussion as a problem which they can attempt to address (Freire, 2000, p. 109).

When this dialogical model of problem-posed education is then situated within a lived experience rather than a detached or artificial world constructed for instructional purposes, education recalibrates and becomes about how one lives in the world instead of remaining as content from a lecture. Seeking to address problems through dialogue allows people to «name» the world, a «precondition for ... true humanization» (Freire, 2000, p. 137). Elsewhere, Freire would write about democracy in a way that demonstrates the way in which these concepts – education and democracy are intertwined. He noted that, «Before it becomes a political form, democracy is a form of life, characterized above all by a strong component of transitive consciousness» (Freire, 1974, p. 25). The ability to act and engage is critical. Coupled with a deep sense that democracy is a way of life before it is formal political structures or limitations, educational grounded in the idea of critical consciousness points to a model of learning in formal and non-formal settings being rooted in communication and engagement with others.

Dewey and Freire are but two, albeit significant, voices in the development of think about democracy and education. As an historian of education and civic life particularly focused on the role of dialogue and deliberation, there are many significant voices I could include here. Without offering a long list, it is worthwhile to acknowledge that the contemporary discussion about integrating and embedding dialogue and deliberation in educational spaces is not a new invention.

For example, the development of the field of dialogue and deliberation in the United States traces back more a century to the time of the forum movement and the popular education efforts aligned with the idea of public discussion that included lyceums and Chautauqua (Keith, 2007; Meyers, 2012; Shaffer, 2017a, 2017c). If we look at the development of the discussion movement through the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, there is a very clear alignment with education. The work of John Studebaker, for example, sought to leverage neighborhood schools as sites for informed discussion. Utilizing neighborhood schools, Studebaker championed group discussion because, «It is basic to good democratic action that we develop the capacity for group discussion of all issues and problems which affect our group life» (Studebaker, 1935, p. 43). He continued by noting that public forums should be operated as a «regular adult education program in the public-school system. The discussion method is a technique of education. It should be used by the agencies for public education in a definite process of education» (Studebaker, 1935, p. 43).

During the same period during the 1930s, community-based adult education was utilizing discussion-based methods for engaging diverse populations around shared public problems. An effort made by the US Department of Agriculture and community-based Cooperative Extension Service highlighted the ways in which rural communities were included in the training of discussion methods that they

would use adult-education practices to engage communities around shared public problems (Shaffer, 2016, 2018b). The role of professional educators in this work is an important theme to note; people were encouraged to learn about how to facilitate small group discussion and then to take these skills into their respective communities long after the trainings and workshops ended (Shaffer, 2017e, 2018a). In places such as Canada, the use of dialogue was paired explicitly with civic and economic actions. The Antigonish movement in Canada serves as a powerful reminder of how community-based education based on small group dialogue could serve as the foundation for collective action through the establishment of cooperatives, such as credit unions, that would continue for years to come (Shaffer, 2017b). But the fervor with which the forum movement shaped the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century dissipated as programs died off for lack of interest because of both World War II, but also a shift to new media and means of communication which did not require people to meet face-to-face in order learn and engage (Keith & Cossart, 2012, p. 56; Loss, 2012).

Similarly, scholars in fields such as communication, political science, adult education, and sociology engaged questions about the role that groups and group discussion played in what Mary Parker Follett (1918, 1924) referred to as a «process of cooperating existence». Dwight Sanderson, a rural sociologist, wrote extensively about communities and placed communication at the heart of social relations: «Without communication there would be no community and no civilization» (Sanderson, 1922, p. 37). Throughout the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, disciplines explored groups and their interactions from multiple vantage points (Lindeman, 1924; Sanderson, 1938). In 1940, J. V. Garland and Charles F. Phillips of Colgate University published *Discussion Methods Explained and Illustrated*, an extensive collective of diverse group discussion methods intended to serve as a resource for

those studying or group discussion. In their preface, the editors wrote about the goal of the book: «In the use of this book, as well as in the use of other aids, the student will do well to forgo the temptation to seek ready-made answers to all his problems, and to remember that discussion is a constantly changing and shifting field where the «rules» are largely descriptions of practice» (Garland & Phillips, 1940, pp. 3–4). This publication, like others, emphasized the need to see discussion as a way to overcome the appeal of easy answers.

Within communities and higher education, the post-World War II context shifted more squarely away from public issues being the concern of a general lay populace to trained professionals, building on efforts from earlier in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to utilize technocratic approaches to public challenges (Fink, 1997; Jordan, 1994; Vest, 2007).

### **Dialogue, Deliberation, and Education Today**

Today, education globally has a multidimensional role to play: in one sense, it does what Freire criticized in that it prepares people for the world as it is, primarily economically. In another way, education – both in schools and universities – has the opportunity to cultivate democratic habits and practices that can embody the aspirational visions stated by Dewey, Freire, and others. Concerns about the rise of anti-democratic populism and authoritarianism not only show up in educational institutions and spaces but are heightened if we take seriously the idea that classrooms in schools and universities are sites of democracy in practice. Significantly, these educational spaces have the opportunity to serve as microcosms for democratic life and its discontent if we acknowledge and engage this reality.

In schools, for example, democratic approaches to education – and educating – remind us that we have an opportunity to rethink the ways in which we approach

pedagogical concerns, how students are encouraged to engage politically-relevant issues, and how schools address issues of diversity and difference through organizational settings such as governing boards (Asen, 2015; Hess & McAvoy, 2014; Molnar-Main, 2017).

Similarly, in higher education, we know there are multiple fronts upon which we could appropriately think about the democratic implications for how we approach our teaching as well as our organizational dynamics. What is essential is to recognize not only the opportunity to speak about public purposes through mission statements (Morphew & Hartley, 2006) and lofty rhetoric, but also to cultivate opportunities for democratic learning through democratic practices (Battistoni, 1997; Grant, 2003; Hoy & Johnson, 2013; Hunter & Brisbin Jr., 2000; Olivos, 2008; Ronan & Kisker, 2016; Shaffer, Longo, Manosevitch, & Thomas, 2017; The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

Schools, colleges, and universities have the opportunity to create environments where students and others can learn about important topics and divisive issues while also charting paths forward in response to collective challenges. Significantly, efforts to cultivate informed civil discourse through dialogue and deliberation have flourished on campuses across the United States and beyond (Birnie, 2016; Carcasson, 2010a, 2010b, 2013; Diaz & Glicrest, 2010; Lawrence, Justus, Murray, & Brown, 2015; Levine, 2010; London, 2010; Longo, 2013; Shaffer, 2014; Shaffer et al., 2017; Thomas, 2010).

In formal and informal spaces, it is important to acknowledge the roles that everyday conversations – when people are more likely to interact rather than in formal settings – play into how we think about shared concerns (Kim & Kim, 2008; Lee & Mason-Imbody, 2013; Mansbridge, 1999; Polletta & Lee, 2006). For educators and students alike, there

are opportunities to take part in structured discussions, but there are also many settings in which non-formal conversations in dining halls transform into more substantive discussions.

### **Grand Challenges Briefly Defined**

For educators, we have four grand challenges to confront if we view education being a transformative institution in the lives of individuals and communities. These include interrelated dimensions of (higher) education: institutional mission, academic scholarship, professional identity, and pedagogical approaches. I address these substantively elsewhere (Shaffer, 2017d) and will only tease out two themes in this space – pedagogical approaches and professional identity. These are central concerns if we want to view education through a deliberative democratic lens.

First, we must consider how faculty members and administrators think about preparing the next generation of students with civic purposes in mind when it comes to how we approach teaching and learning. Undergraduate and graduate training, for example, remains primarily committed to the idea of replication of expertise rather than challenging accepted norms and practices. Freire's ideas are not widely held, especially outside of circle who view themselves as critical theorists.

Nevertheless, efforts are being made to frame education through a civically-engaged lens for undergraduates (Colby, Beaumont, Ehrlich, & Corngold, 2007; Harvard, 2012; Rhoads, 2003), graduate students (Kniffin, Shaffer, & Tolar, 2016; Orphan, 2015; Shaffer, 2012), community-based adult education (Blair, 2003), and those aspiring to join the ranks of academe (Post, Ward, Longo, & Saltmarsh, 2016). Attempts to deepen community engagement have had varying degrees of success, but attempts to further develop curricula point to the need to further expand programs to include more than

a select group of students if we are to take such work to scale (Hoy & Johnson, 2013). In addition to a civic framework for pedagogies, there is a grown subfield of deliberative pedagogy that specifically invites educators to approach their teaching – in classrooms and communities – through a deliberative paradigm (Doherty, 2012; Drury, Andre, Goddard, & Wentzel, 2016; Longo, 2013; Makaiau, 2015-2016; Shaffer et al., 2017). Attending to this emerging area of scholarship about teaching and learning is critical as we are to approach democratic concern through dialogue and/or deliberation.

Second, beyond thinking about how academic professionals educate and prepare students, they must reflect on the fundamental question about what *type* of professionals they are. There are three views of professionals one can take on the question of whether, how, and for what purposes professionals should be engaged in civic life. For educators interested in deliberation, an orientation to the broader world is often assumed and expected. The first of these first views «calls for professionals and their institutions to *stay out* of the work of naming, framing, and addressing the problems people face in their neighborhoods and communities» (Peters, Alter, & Shaffer, 2018, p. 14). In this view, the professional steps back and those without credentials and professional capacity should be the one's addressing problems in democratic ways. The second view is a «call for professionals to *take over* the work of naming, framing, and addressing people's problems, and for people who are not credentialed professionals to step aside» (Peters et al., 2018, p. 15). This view has often dominated how higher education professionals have engaged, taking expertise out into the world to solve problems. The third view, and the one that I advocate, is an in-between position, one that is best put this way: «If it makes sense and is possible, *jump in* – but be respectful, be humble, and be careful» (Peters et al., 2018, p. 15). For professionals, it is being aware of one's expertise and its usefulness alongside the value of what lay citizens have

to contribute. This grand challenge for academics is function as civic professionals rather than technocrats with a penchant for getting involved in community issues as if experts are the only ones capable of addressing a public problem (Boyte & Fretz, 2010; Dzur, 2008, 2017; Sullivan, 2003).

The challenge is to transform two defining elements of education – who teaches and how they do so. If we take seriously Dewey’s call for improving society and Freire’s challenge to pose problems in dialogue with others, then our approaches to education must be altered. Deliberative pedagogy offers one path to thinking about education’s democratic purposes. It affords an approach that aligns with democratic principles and practices. With the concern about the future of democratic political norms and the rise of autocratization, the role of education is more important than ever. Preparing people, young and old, for life in a vibrant and engaging democracy requires them to be familiar with the hallmarks of such a society. If we are to think about *thick* practices of democracy rather than more passive or *thin* forms of participation (Barber, 1984), then utilizing deliberation within classrooms and other educational settings is of the utmost importance. Democracies die because of political inaction, but democracies can also be invigorated through individual and collective consciousness grounded in deliberation about the issues that matter and need to be collectively addressed.

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## DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM: EXPLORING POSSIBILITIES FOR DELIBERATIVE PEDAGOGY

*Telma Gimenez\* , Andressa Cristina Molinari\*\**

### **Abstract**

Dialogic pedagogies have been at the forefront of critical language education (Matusov, Marjanovic-Shane, 2017). In foreign language learning, dialogic practices have been mainly associated with sociocultural approaches drawing on authors such as Bakhtin, Vygotsky and Freire. This is complemented by more politically nuanced proposals coming from the political science front, with suggestions that dialogic education can enhance democratic mindsets and prepare citizens to engage with others in light of competing worldviews and values. One of such possibilities is deliberative pedagogy, centered on the joint exploration of potential courses of action to address collective issues, by considering their pros and cons with the aim of arriving at a common ground for action. In this article, we report on two experiences that explored aspects of deliberative pedagogy in English language teaching both as a curricular activity and as an extramural course. The conclusions suggest that language and democracy can be learned in those contexts, but many challenges still remain.

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\* *Telma Gimenez* is currently Associate Professor at Universidade Estadual de Londrina, Paraná, Brazil, where she teaches Applied Linguistics and English as a lingua franca in the undergraduate degree program and supervises postgraduate research on foreign language teacher education and educational policies. She is a researcher funded by CNPq. She holds a Ph.D. from the Department of Linguistics and Modern English Language, Lancaster University.

\*\* *Andressa Cristina Molinari* – Department of Foreign Language Teaching, Londrina State University, Londrina, Brazil.

*Keywords:* deliberative pedagogy, democracy, English language teaching.

## **Introduction**

The idea that education is inherently political is far from being a novelty. However, in many educational settings «banking education» (Freire, 1977) is still a reality and many students are positioned as objects to be instructed in the skills necessary to perform jobs as if these were the only thing people required to live in society. As a consequence, politics has been removed from the schooling realm and in many countries and this has contributed to political apathy and lack of social awareness, resulting in political illiteracy.

The result has been disastrous for the quality of democracy and this realization has led many governments to adopt citizenship skills as part of the school curriculum with a view to transform the political culture into a more participatory one. Educational institutions have a role to play in achieving this goal. As Carr (2008, pp. 149) states:

While there are numerous factors involved in the formulation and framing of democracy in schools, clearly educators have an important role to play in cultivating and shaping the educational experience for students in relation to their present and future attitudes, behaviors, ideologies and engagement regarding democracy.

Whilst that author takes critical pedagogy as an approach that can lead to political literacy, in this paper we want to discuss dialogue as an important skill to be acquired through socializing experiences in schools. The ability to dialogue in public is an essential one to increase the power of individuals and collectivities in solving problems and making political decisions and acting together. The ability to make decisions together as envisaged by public deliberation in

which alternative viewpoints are considered and balanced against what people hold valuable, with inevitable trade-offs, represents an important asset and one that can be developed in educational settings, especially in higher education institutions.

If, on one hand, it is important to develop citizenship values at a local level it is even more relevant to conceptualize it in a larger scenario, considering that the world is interconnected. In fact, such is the importance of these skills that they are named «core skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> century» (British Council, 2017).

The paper will bring reflections on the possibility of combining dialogue and democracy in foreign language classrooms through two published texts reporting an experience with deliberative conversations in the English language classroom. In the first paper (Gimenez, Fogaça and Metliss, 2011) we present an extramural course and in the second one (Gimenez, Molinari, 2017), an experience in an undergraduate program aimed at preparing teachers of English as a foreign language. First, we will present the justification for educators to engage with the power of dialogue in strengthening people's ability to develop empathy and negotiate differences in a respectful way. Then we will summarize the reports on both contexts, and finally, we will elaborate on the potential use of deliberative practices in school and university settings in order to create a more positive meaning for political participation and active global citizenship.

### **Why democracy in Brazilian schools and universities**

As an emerging democracy, Brazil has faced enormous challenges in the recent decades to strengthen its institutions. After a period of dictatorship, the faith in democracy started to be regained through direct elections at all levels. The country has achieved a high level of sophistication in the electoral process, with the creation of electronic ballot machines, which

enabled results of millions of votes to be known in few hours. The progress in perfecting the mechanics of voting has not resulted in greater faith in politicians though. On the contrary, in recent years, we have witnessed a decline in confidence in our political institutions. Nowadays, even the Judiciary is under suspicion. With great disappointment, Brazilians have learned that the traditional ways of doing politics are ingrained in the political life of the country and jeopardize people's willingness to participate in the political arena.

With all the pitfalls of representative democracy and under this kind of political atmosphere it is extremely important that education reinforces the value of democratic ideals, i.e. one that really represents people's will. Apathy has to be fought with opportunities to bring back the faith in people's capacity to rule their lives. Education has an important role to play in guaranteeing a democratic ethos. Schools and universities are therefore responsible for creating opportunities for students to engage in the types of productive dialogue that can change their perceptions of politics.

However, there are different interpretations of the role education can play in this process and the socializing power of education cannot be ignored. Socialization into a political culture can happen in many forms. Civic education has been traditionally interpreted as teaching about the norms and conventions of elections: it highlights the right to vote and acknowledge the will of the majority. According to this perspective, education is about enabling future citizens to make the right choices when choosing among the candidates. It also includes knowledge about the political system and the civic duties. Given the pitfalls of this kind of politics and the negative connotations of representative politics, it is not surprising that most people would not be interested. In places like Brazil – where voting is compulsory – people regret that they have to choose. Politics is something they would rather avoid.

Additionally, due to its historical links with the dictatorship, civic education is usually equated with indoctrination.

One of the possible ways of approaching the theme is to deconstruct the myth that democracy or other values such as social justice are subjects that can only be introduced in social sciences classes. Education can create spaces for citizen action by fostering learning based on dialogue between teacher and students, and between students themselves, in order to prepare them to interact in society. This is something that can be done across the curriculum. Students need opportunities to exchange ideas and deal with conflicting choices in a respectful way.

There is, therefore, the need to create opportunities for students to engage with a different kind of politics, a form of politics that thrives on a different mindset: not one of just voting, joining interest groups or protesting, but one of building understanding of issues with others and deciding on action upon collective reflection on those issues.

An issue is political in the sense that it affects a large number of people by determining their future. Fundamental in the idea of public politics is that the citizen himself or herself has to be involved in those determinations. If representative politics fails to do so, then we need a different kind of politics that is more sensitive and closer to the people's will.

This other kind of politics, that is public precisely because it derives from the «public», does not necessarily exclude representative politics and may not even be a «pure» form of politics. In fact, its advantage lies in opening up the conflicts inherent in democratic societies without resolving them by appealing to the will of the majority. It rests on the assumption that the minority has to be heard. Public politics is therefore the exercise of the multiple voices in society, the voices of the citizens who do not want to channel the complexities of their judgment to a single vote.

According to Levine, Fung & Gastil (2005), «many people in many countries are gathering – in a wide variety of settings and formats – to discuss and address public issues. There is a growing movement calling for the development of deliberative civic culture and public institutions». The momentum for this movement is fostered by educational institutions that are faced with the challenge of creating an alternative mindset, especially in the cases where faith in democracy has weakened.

The recognition that long-term trust in political representation can and must be initiated in educational settings, governments throughout Latin America have adopted citizenship education as a central goal in all school subjects. To create a more positive attitude towards participation and politics schools have been charged with the responsibility of educating for citizenship.

Language and social sciences classes are the preferred site for this kind of teaching, which, has been dominated by the understanding that politics is about participation in oral debate. It is not for another reason that rhetoric is one of the key contents in the curriculum. It is perhaps unfortunate that a confrontational style has been adopted in many cases and deliberation has not been included in such occasions. Deliberation, however, has much to offer to the current trend to change the political culture in many countries. Although this may be a long-term goal, the participation in spheres that allow the free airing of views and the identification of common ground for action is crucial.

### **Pedagogy for democratic involvement**

Dialogic pedagogy and deliberative pedagogy have a lot in common. They are both concerned with life in democratic societies. As Matusov & Marjanovic-Shane (2017, p. E3) argue, students are socialized in authoritarian institutions «where negotiation, authorial judgment, and democratic decision

making about one's own fate are not legitimate». In order to legitimize authorial judgement, they report on the experience of introducing the concept of Open Syllabus Education, in which students have the opportunity to make decisions about all aspects of the educational process including the curriculum, learning commitments, educational policies, summative assessment among others. They justify their approach as follows:

Paradoxically, a democratic society suspends democratic practices and relationships for the eventual mastery of participation in a democratic society. Ironically, it is true not only for children but also for adults in conventional institutionalized education.

This authoritarian pedagogical regime creates the biggest educational problem, namely that the very people that are in the center of educational practice are excluded from having a legitimate right to make decisions about its meaning and purpose. This leaves the students often alienated, disinterested, learning shallowly and without deep critical reflection, treating education as an imposed chore and not something that is important and relevant for themselves. The students, in other words, do not readily develop ownership of their own education, do not take educational responsibilities, do not accept educational commitments, and avoid educational activism.

The approach may minimize the asymmetries in power relations preexisting in the argumentative debate, once it recognizes them as a way of overcoming the existing game of forces in an argumentative dialog. That model that bears resemblance to the idea of negotiated syllabuses in foreign language learning (Breen & Littlejohn, 2000) focuses on

engagement with decision-making in areas directly affecting the students. Deliberative pedagogy, on the other hand, «is a democratic educational process and a way of thinking that encourages students to encounter and consider multiple perspectives, weight trade-offs and tensions, and move toward action through informed judgement» (Longo, Manosevitch, Shaffer, 2017, P. XXI).

One can say that decision-making is the point in common between dialogic and deliberative pedagogy, the latter concentrating on the ways in which decisions are made. Deliberative pedagogy makes the connection to political life more explicit, «concerned primarily with the role of education in democracy, making pedagogical issues related to civic education and experiential learning central, while also firmly grounding this work in deliberative democracy and practice» (Longo, Manosevitch, Shaffer, 2017, P. XXI).

A dialogue may precede deliberation, according to Levine, Fung Gastil (2005) «the dialogic phase does not resolve moral disputes or advance policy goals; rather, it prepares group members for the necessary but challenging process of making common decisions together despite, deep, underlying differences». In this sense, dialogue is defined as a conversation in which individuals take turns in a movement that includes the use of arguments and questions. It is also worth mentioning that for argumentative dialogue to be maintained, it requires a sequence of questions and answers that can be used in response to those arguments. Thus, to ask the right questions in a dialogue and to respond appropriately is an important aspect that makes dialogue to continue» (Walton, 2006, p. CLXXII).

Concerning the dialogic practices and the teaching-learning process, the role of the teacher-mediator in the argumentative process is to create spaces that enable learning based on communication among the peers, seeking

the expression of ideas, emphasizing the investigation and confrontation of such ideas and points of view. In order to bring participants together in a more direct and democratic way, the deliberative dialogue also encourages collaboration and sharing of responsibilities. This may favor, through dialogue, the (re) construction of knowledge in a joint way.

It is worth underscoring the centrality of dialogue in these approaches. In Applied Linguistics, scholars within the sociocultural tradition have already argued that the critical, collaborative education of teachers is crucial for the development of dispositions towards the Other. They place language at the heart of social transformation. Authors such as Liberali (2013) and Mateus (2016) have argued that critical-dialogic or collaborative argumentation are language practices that create opportunities for meaning-making based on ethics and care, where a dialogic attitude is essential. Argumentation, in this sense, presupposes openness to listen to diverse perspectives. Fiori and Mateus (2017) report on a case study of a group of English language teachers engaging in what they call «practical argumentation (or deliberation)», that highlights the importance of dialogic teacher education.

In the next sections, we will present two instances of introducing deliberative dialogues as part of English language education.

### **Global issues: an extramural course**

In order to exemplify attempts to create a democratic culture in schools and universities, one of the authors was involved in an extracurricular course whose purpose was to raise awareness about global issues and, at the same time, develop language skills through engagement in a different kind of dialogue. The 30-hour course was open to anyone interested in discussing global issues such as social justice, poverty, multiculturalism, through the creation of a safe space

for free expression of ideas. The methodology was adapted from the Open Space for Dialogue and Enquiry methodology (OSDE), developed by the Center for the Study of Social and Global Justice, at the University of Nottingham, England, with insights from public deliberation practices as put forward by the Kettering Foundation through deliberative forums<sup>1</sup>.

The OSDE is a pedagogical tool that enables people to question their assumptions and understand other people's assumptions. As the website existing at the time of the project ([osdemethodology.org.uk](http://osdemethodology.org.uk)) described, an open space is «a safe space where everyone is welcome and different perspectives can be explored. Nobody establishes the boundaries of what one should think or do in their lives. In an open space for dialogue and enquiry, participants are not committed to an identity, to an ideology or to achieving consensus, but to a process of self-transformation through the encounter with difference». This leads to dialogue, understood as an encounter of different worlds. The objective is to view others, the world, from a new perspective, through the eyes of others and ourselves. Those who establish this kind of dialogue engage questioning their assumptions, how they have been constructed and what are the implications of their ways of seeing and being.

Deliberation, on the other hand, involves dialogical attitudes such as those reported by Mateus (2016, p. 51, cited by Fiori & Mateus, 2017, p. 41): «(a) the willingness to analyze different points of view; (b) the commitment to consider all voices legitimate; (c) the care to ensure the full participation of different perspectives and the creation of safe spaces; (d) the commitment to seek relevant and valid common meanings for the community; (e) willingness to recognize the

<sup>1</sup> Deliberative forum is a genre capable of combining the development of language skills in students as well as educating for democracy. As postulated by Kettering Foundation, forums have the potential to develop civic attitudes towards an issue, since it assumes that everyone has the same chance to express their ideas and points of view from the framing of a social issue, leading to more democratic dialogical practices.

other as someone who knows and who has something to say; (f) willingness to review own positions and «be displaced», and (g) valuing of the difference.

Deliberation has the goal of reaching common ground that will enable the group move forward (in their understandings or in their actions) and the role of dialogue is to bridge the linguistic, social and epistemological gaps between different subgroups of a deliberative community. The participants examine different angles on the issue, consider them from perspectives that they do not necessarily agree with, and understand other people's point of view and the consequences of different approaches to a common problem.

Both the OSDE methodology and the principles of deliberation converge towards promoting greater understanding of other people's views before embarking on collective action. Although action may be the desired outcome of deliberative forums, in OSDE the aim is to lead to independent thinking. If this leads to action, then it is a positive result, but not one that the methodology itself advocates. Both proposals rest, however, on the value of creating an atmosphere of trust and confidence to talk freely about the different and alternative ways of thinking about the problem. In other words, the OSDE methodology provides a safe space for dialogue, although not necessarily focusing on decision-making in order to take collective action. However, one of the key assumptions of this methodology is that «More accountable reasoning (is and prompts) more responsible action. Understanding where we are coming from (the social-cultural conditioning of our ways of seeing) and the potential implications of what we are doing is necessary if we want to try to avoid reproducing the mechanisms that might have created the problems we are trying to 'solve' in the first place (in which case our intervention might worsen the situation)».

In the paper published in 2011, the focus was on the experience with higher education students and professionals

who participated in a course that had the purpose of raising awareness about global issues and, at the same time, the development of their language skills through engagement in a different kind of dialogue. As a conclusion:

There was a very strong positive response from the students about the impact the course wanted to create. We felt the objectives were achieved in terms of the principles and procedures suggested by OSDE. There were, of course, some adaptations to the steps suggested but that did not affect the methodology itself. The students' evaluation of the course revealed that it was possible to use the English class as a space for the development of an attitude of respect for different viewpoints and willingness to examine one's own opinions. Considering that this is fundamental for the creation of a political culture that values dialogue instead of debate, the results suggest that it is possible to develop political literacy in the language class. (p. 59).

### **Power and language in a teacher education program**

The second publication we refer to is a chapter published in a collection on deliberative pedagogy in higher education (Shaffer, et. a., 2017). Gimenez&Molinari (2017) report on the experience of introducing deliberative forums in an oral production and comprehension course in an English teacher education program. They saw «deliberative forums as one genre with the potential to combine the development of oral skills with education for democracy» (p. 205). Like the first illustration, there was an attempt to combine language skills with democratic practices. In this case, this combination was enacted through three forums on educational issues (Youth and Violence, higher education, bullying).

The genre «deliberative forum» was characterized according to Table 1:

*Table 1. The Deliberative Forum Genre*

Stage	Moderators' Language	Participants' Language
Welcome	Greeting, purpose of meeting	Greeting response, introductions
Ground rules	Questions and statements	Agreement and disagreement
Starter video/initial information	Statements, different points of view, problem posing	—
Personal stake	Questioning: <i>How has this issue affected you personally?</i>	Extensive use of personal pronouns, narrative of past experiences, references to other people's experiences
Approaches	Questioning: <i>What things are most valuable to people who support this option? • What is appealing about this approach? • What makes this choice a good idea – or a bad one? • What would result from doing what this approach proposes? • What could be the consequences of doing what you are suggesting? • Can you give an example of what you think would happen? • Does anyone have a different estimate of costs or consequences?</i>	Interdiscursive references, hypothesis formulation, modal verbs, opinion markers, acknowledgment of points of view, agreement and disagreement, evaluative comments, verbs expressing material processes

<p>Individual reflections</p>	<p>Questioning: <i>How has your thinking about the issue changed?</i> • <i>How has your thinking about other people's views changed?</i> • <i>How has your perspective changed as a result of what you heard in this forum?</i></p>	<p>Personal pronouns (I), verbs expressing mental processes, evaluative comments</p>
<p>Group reflections</p>	<p>Questioning: <i>What do you see as the tension between the approaches?</i> • <i>Where are the conflicts that grow out of what we've said about this issue?</i> • <i>Why is this issue so difficult to decide?</i> • <i>What are the gray areas?</i> • <i>What remains unsolved for this group?</i> • <i>What didn't we work through?</i> • <i>Can we identify any shared sense of purpose or direction?</i> • <i>What trade-offs<sup>1</sup> are we, or are we not, willing to make to move in a shared direction?</i></p>	<p>Personal pronouns (we), verbs expressing mental and material processes, evaluative comments</p>
<p>Next-step reflections</p>	<p>Questioning: <i>What do we still need to talk about?</i> • <i>How can we use what we learned about ourselves in this forum?</i></p>	<p>Personal pronouns (we), verbs expressing mental processes</p>

*Source: The authors, based on a moderator's guide ([https://www.kettering.org/sites/default/files/product-downloads/too\\_many\\_children\\_mg.pdf](https://www.kettering.org/sites/default/files/product-downloads/too_many_children_mg.pdf))*

The researchers were interested in «assessing power in a context where deliberative forums were integrated into the

curriculum of a language teacher education program» which meant looking at «the ways in which student participants resist or challenge the framing proposed by a predefined issue book, have more opportunities to express their own views, and engage in argumentative processes» (p. 212). By focusing the analysis on one forum, the conclusion of the study was that it «showed signs of transition from authoritarian to egalitarian contributions» which could be explained by placing it into the wider context of interactions lived by the participants in the same program and the inexperience in this kind of dialogue. Fiori & Mateus (2017, p. 51) reached a similar conclusion about their study: «the internal configuration of deliberative dialogues is directly related to the specific institutional context we analyzed».

In their concluding remarks Gimenez&Molinari (2017, p. 213) expressed their belief that

...by experiencing interactions in which students themselves can feel the right to ask questions, to challenge assumptions, and to subvert the roles prescribed by the social genre, they can start imagining other possibilities and create alternative worlds that, balanced against their actual world, will help them move toward more egalitarian and respectful dialogue.

### **Challenges to democratic engagement**

Both reports presented here as illustrations of how democratic dialogues enacted in classrooms share the ideal of overcoming authoritarian or monologic ways of educating learners. According to Matusov & Marjanovic-Shane (2017), it is high time we democratize institutionalized education for it deepens democracy. The question is what kind of democracy. As we have tried to show, through dialogue that provides room for authorial agency while acknowledging difference and

conflicts it is possible to create opportunities for democratizing pedagogy. For those authors, however, the challenges are related to both «culture» and «self-failure» which led them to the «Opening Syllabus pedagogical regime», which is a hybrid of teacher and student led decisions. By documenting their trajectory in implementing both approaches, the authors conclude rather pessimistically, that our society may not be ready for this type of education, since it relies so much on instrumentalism.

Because their approach demanded decision-making and in the cases reported here that was not the main goal, we can say that the focus was on the process of arriving at a decision. Contrary to Matusov & Marjanovic-Shane, ours was not an Open Syllabus. The teacher and facilitators made most of the decisions. The students were encouraged to engage in deliberative argumentation, weighing the consequences of potential actions and their trade-offs. The development of language practices that invite questioning of assumptions, evidence-based opinions, expansion or reformulation of ideas, alternative approaches to solving problems, evaluating consequences, among others, can be the stepping stone towards fully-fledged democratic decision-making about the curriculum. The way we introduced it left no room for questioning the proposal itself, no matter how relevant it might be. In this case, it brings novelty but also requires conformity to the existing ways of developing the educational process.

Democracies around the world are facing difficult challenges and are being questioned in their capacity to engage people with the issues affecting them or others around the world; in other words, developing authorial agency. Education, understood in a broad sense, has a major role to play in creating new possibilities for citizens to reflect on the kind of world they want to live in and their co-responsibility in this process.

As socialization processes take place in institutional settings, educators need to reflect on how they are shaping citizenship. The cases illustrated here can be viewed as small windows into the potential of foreign language classes to strengthen democratic practices. However, there is still a long way to overcome the tensions in dialogic pedagogies that are also tensions in our institutions. In the extracurricular course, we found that students were happy with the results, but that satisfaction may be tied to visions of instrumentalism, since language learning was the main goal. The same can be said of the teacher education course where learning and assessment of English permeated the contributions. There is a long way to promote the valuing of «reasoning together to arrive at public judgement» at the same level of acquiring language skills.

### **Conclusion**

In this paper, we have presented two illustrations of how pedagogical practices can be turned into empowering opportunities for students to consider issues relevant to them and address the problem from different viewpoints. The OSDE methodology and deliberative dialogue were introduced in an extracurricular language course and in a teacher education program at the university with the purpose of integrating language and democracy in education. The experience revealed that it is possible to teach English and, at the same time, create opportunities for meaningful engagement with issues relevant to life in society. Foreign language classes can be places where students are socialized into democratic ways of relating to difference.

The two frameworks share the view that democracy can be learned through socialization processes provided by education that goes beyond knowledge transmission. For this purpose, we have reported experiences aimed at deliberative pedagogy, one that requires the freedom to speak and to be

heard and the consideration of alternative viewpoints, in the same way a deliberative forum allows people to consider the tough choices when making collective decisions.

The political ethos generated by schooling experiences can make a substantial contribution to counter the negative meanings associated with politics. Experiences that reinforce the difficulties of reasoning together with others, of considering the various angles of the issues and of examining the possible courses of action are invaluable in changing the apathy and disappointment that have been associated with traditional politics. Although the courses reported here did not go beyond providing a safe space for discussion, they can be seen as a first step towards creating a deliberative culture.

As we witness increasing polarization and alienation from political life, it is important to realize that we are all responsible for ways of relating to others which can be more responsive to difference while trying to join others in collective decision-making. Finding a voice and listening to other voices is part of a larger process of building social bonds to advance a happy life for all.

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**DEMOCRACY, EDUCATION AND DELIBERATION:  
THE IMPACT OF DELIBERATIVE PEDAGOGY ON THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRATIC VALUES  
IN ROMANIAN YOUNGSTERS**

*Iuliana Gabriela Georgescu\* , Carmen Gabriela Greab\*\**

**Introduction**

One of the most important elements in a democracy is to have an active, informed and involved citizenry, endorsed by democratic values and civic and political participation. In this sense, a devotion to democratic values together with the active participation help construct and maintain the bond between citizens and the political system they are part of. Still, democracies benefit from a diverse range of mechanisms and agents by which the process of political socialization takes

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\* *Iuliana-Gabriela Georgescu* lives in Romania and she has been an activist in the NGO sector for the last 22 years, working in the field of civic engagement, election monitoring and community development. Currently she is involved deliberative democracy projects, with a focus on introducing deliberation as a practice to K-4 kids. Education: B.A. (2002) Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca/Romania, Political Science, M.A. (2005), Babes-Bolyai University (Management of Political Organizations). Areas of expertise: Election Monitoring, Civic Engagement, Public Deliberation.

\*\* *Carmen Gabriela Greab* is a Researcher and Guest Lecturer at the Department of Political Science at Babe-Bolyai University in Romania. She is the Executive Director of Association Center for the Study of Democracy, a Romanian think tank that has as main goal the consolidation of democracy. Education: B.A. (2004) Babes-Bolyai University (Romania) B.A. (2003) Nottingham Trent University (UK) – Political Science M.A. (2005) Babes-Bolyai University (Romania) – International Relations. M.A. (2006) Corvinus University (Hungary) – European Studies and International Economics . Ph.D. candidate (2014 – present) Babes-Bolyai University – Political Science. Areas of expertise: Public Deliberation, Youth Civic Engagement, Education, Deliberative Pedagogy.

place. (Greenberg, 2009) A whole range of socialization agents (families, schools, media, peer groups, political elites etc.) exert their combined influence in developing citizens' democratic values and civic skills, within an ongoing process of education for citizenship. (Dewey, 1997; Nie et al. 1996; Niemi and Junn 1998; Gutmann 1999).

The issue is even more stringent in the context of newly established democracies, as it is the case with post-communist countries. In such contexts, the rearrangement of the institutions and channels that link citizens to the state brings along a need for changes at the level of citizens' attitudes and participatory behavior. Whereas remnants of the former establishment are more likely to affect adult population – already socialized within a non-democratic context – younger generations have a better chance to acquire democratic values and to learn participatory behaviors against a background yet un-altered by the experience of authoritarianism. (Howard, 2003; Sapiro, 2004).

This is particularly relevant in terms of research and potential intervention as adolescence represents an important period for the formation and internalization of participatory habits (Dawson and Prewitt, 1969; Hooghe, 2004; Campbell 2006). With regard to youth then, schools become one of the most relevant socialization agents, that exerts its influence on the one hand through transmitting political knowledge and civic attitudes and on the other hand through encouraging participation, involvement and a critical stance on issues.

Still, even though there is a large body of literature arguing for the positive effect of education on the quality of democracy, education levels have been rising, while political engagement of all sorts has been fallen in recent years. (Campbell, 2006).

The Romanian context, on which the current research concentrates, illustrates a similar situation. Romanians teenagers' scores on cross-national studies of youth's civic

education and political values support this statement. For instance, CivEd 1999, a study on eight-grade students in 28 countries, placed Romania close to the very bottom of the rankings in terms of civic attitudes and knowledge (only Colombian students scored, on average, in statistical terms, significantly lower than Romanian students).

Data collected within a survey based research on Romanian high school students in 2010 by the Soros Foundation reveal similarly disconcerting results. The data captured a diverse array of themes, from beliefs about democracy and, actual behaviors in terms of engagement in voluntary activities and associational groups, declared trust in different categories of people to aspects related to in-schools civic education teaching and encouragement of acknowledging and accepting diversity. Results reveal that youth are rather disconnected from voluntary participation, mistrustful about people. Moreover, whereas more than 90% reported that they studied civic education in school, about 65 percent admit that there is very little information they actually can recollect from such classes.

### **Theoretical background**

While we acknowledge that such results at the level of youth attitudes and behaviors may be the result of a complex interplay of family and school influence, in this research our focus is on the formative potential of school. Still, the most difficult and conflicting concern about school as a civic socializing arena is based on the understanding of the precise process through which civic socialization occurs in this context. The vast literature, treating this issue, focuses mainly on assessing the effects of either school or classroom climate on developing civic and democratic values in youth.

In this context, John Dewey is considered one of the most prominent and influential theorist that discusses extensively the link between education and democracy. In his work

from 1916, *Democracy and Education*, he emphasizes the importance of education by appealing to the higher purpose of democracy. At the heart of Dewey's conception was the pragmatist idea that democracy should not be viewed as a fixed set of institutions thus reducing democratic education to specific skills and values, but rather as something students live and experience in school.

In a similar manner, Biesta (2011), in «*Learning democracy in school and society*», mentions that one can learn about democracy in the classroom, not necessarily from the civic education classes, but from the ordinary interactions students have in their classroom and school. In addition, he argues about the importance of differences as a source of democratic enlightenment.

### **Literature review**

Indeed, much of the new trend in literature is based on a reevaluation of John Dewey's influential work on the role of education for democracy. Indeed, the importance of classroom environment and the cultivation of an open climate that encourages discussion is a recurrent theme in the literature (Hess, 2004; Hess and Posselt, 2002). Thus, the recent focus of classroom climate moved towards teaching pedagogies.

In this context, the progressive education scholars advocate for the so-called «*deliberative pedagogies*» through which students research, analyze, and discuss controversial public issues, and engage in simulations, debates, and decision-making. (Dewey, 1916; Gutmann, 1999; Strachan, 2006; Reich, 2007; Alfaro, 2008; Goodin, 2008).

Browsing through the vast majority of relevant literature, one can observe the various numbers of examples and approaches. Still, a general description of these pedagogies would claim that deliberative education is comprised of a set of techniques and methods that include discourse,

communication and deliberation. (Claxton, 2008) The most important examples of such pedagogies include discussions (controversial public issues) (Campbell, 2008), deliberation or simulations of deliberative forums (Gastil and Dillard, 1999; Harriger and McMillan, 2007), as well as debates (Keller, Wittaker and Burke, 2001).

Gastil (2004), in one of his articles, explored the development of democratic habits among students in adult civic education through the use of deliberative discussions. In his first study, Gastil used a quasi-experimental design to employ NIFstyle deliberation in one class (n = 76) and regular class activities without deliberation in another (n = 73). Students completed a survey at the end of the course to measure valuation and expectancy of political outcomes, political self-efficacy, political group efficacy, community identity, and civic duty. Participation in the deliberative discussions only significantly correlated with one political belief; group efficacy ( $r = -.18$ ,  $p = .048$ ). However, Gastil also suggested further research, to provide a better indication of the impact of deliberation.

To conclude, research carried from various perspectives revealed that classes with discussions, debates, and deliberation, with a climate open to expression of ideas encourage students' political interest, knowledge, competence and tolerance. (Morse, 2005; Strachan, 2006; Harriger and McMillan, 2007; Campbell, 2008)

Considering the vast literature briefly reviewed above, the current research focuses strictly on the impact of discussions and deliberations (as teaching methods) on students' civic values and competences. In this sense, the general objective of proposed research is to assess the formative effects of schools and democratic education on youth civic values and competences. Consequently, we seek to complement the narrow focus on civic education as distinct discipline

taught in school, and approach school-related activities and practices in a broad understanding that includes in-classroom environment. To assess the impact of changing classroom climate, the study proposes some controlled interventions – based on deliberative pedagogies – on the practices of forming students’ democratic values and civic skills. In this sense, the current study will use deliberative techniques, such as: discussing controversial issues, deliberating on finding a solution, simulations of deliberative forums...etc.

### **Data analysis and discussion**

The research design used in the current study was a quasi experimental design, and involved three teachers from three different classes in both secondary and high school. The classrooms are selected from schools in three different cities: Cluj-Napoca (a good school in a big university city), Turda (a rather modest school in a small and poor city) and Targu-Mures (a good school in a very diverse and multicultural city). The interventions happened during the civic education (for the secondary school) and English (for the high school) classes. The research followed several stages, starting with a pre-test before the implementation of the proposed pedagogies. The questionnaire aimed to measure democratic values, as well as civic attitudes. The same questionnaire was applied at the end of the semester. The second stage of the research focused on the deliberative interventions in the classroom, through either deliberative forums or discussions. Besides, in order to have a more in-depth analysis of the impact, interviews and focus groups were conducted with both students and teachers. In addition to the quantitative and qualitative research methods used, the teachers were trained to observe and assess the immediate impact on students. Consequently, the research used Reflection forms, to analyze the impact of activities on both students and teachers. Teachers were asked to briefly describe the type of activities, the reaction of students and the observed changes in students’ abilities and values.

One of the first things we were interested in was the assessment of students' perception of discussions and conflicts. The pre-testing shows that students are afraid of conflicts in a discussion and they prefer to give up arguing to avoid conflictual situations. In addition, they would rather spend time with people similar to them than in a diverse environment. These issues are extremely important since one of the results of deliberation is an increase in accepting diverse opinions, or diversity in general. Analyzing the post-testing, one can see that after deliberating, students realized the importance of discussion for avoiding conflicts. Moreover, the percentage of students that prefer to spend time with similar persons decreased with 11,5 %.

	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference
	Agree %	Agree %	%
It is better not to discuss some topics to avoid any conflicts	58.9	64,2	+5,3
It is better to let go your argument in a conversation to avoid upsetting the others	65.8	64,2	-1,6
I prefer to be with similar persons than with people from different groups	81.3	69,8	-11,5

Another surveyed topic was students' civic participation/ interest.

One can see that the most important change was in the case of voluntary work (+33,8 %). Students became more interested in helping the others.

	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference
	Yes %	Yes %	%
Did you do any voluntary work in a hospital, elderly asylum or in a similar institution?	9,6	43,4	+33,8
Did you help anybody except your family to solve a problem?	82,2	84,9	+2,7
Did you help anybody at school with the home works?	81,1	73,6	-7,5

Before deliberation, in students’ opinion, the most important characteristic of a good citizen is to respect the law (96.9 %), while the least important one is to participate in political activities (28.4 %). Still, when analysing the post-testing, students’ opinion change and they credit more helping the poor, as a characteristic of good citizenship (+0,9 %) and the voting in elections (+4,7 %), as well as participating in environmental protection activities (+0,7 %).

	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference
	Important and very important %		%
A good citizen should show support for the poor	85,9	86,8	+0,9
A good citizen should vote in elections	63,2	67,9	+4,7
A good citizen should respect the law	96,9	96,2	-0,7

A good citizen should involve in political activities	28,4	32,1	+3,7
A good citizen should participate in protests against the laws they consider incorrect	59,5	56,6	-2,9
A good citizen should take part in environmental protection activities	74,8	75,5	+0,7

A very important result of deliberation, as literature shows, is an increase in the level of trust. In measuring this impact, the survey looked at the levels of trust before and after participating in deliberative activities. The results were surprising, since more than 60% of the students had very little trust in any category of people, including students like them. In addition, they were extremely distrustful of Roma (67.1 % of student do not trust them at all). After deliberation one can see some changes in terms of the levels of trust. Students become more trustful with foreigners (+5,1 %), people with other religion (+0,9 %). Romanians (+8,8 %) and even with Roma (+4,8 %). The results are not that surprising since during deliberations students were socialized with other students' opinions, as well as the opinions of those that are missing from the classroom.

	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference
How much do you trust ...	Much %	Much %	%
other students in your school	28,8	20,8	-8,0
foreigners	2,8	7,9	+5,1

people with other religion than you	27,4	28,3	+0,9
people with other nationality than you	38,9	36,5	-2,4
Romanians	38,4	47,2	+8,8
Roma/gypsies	2,7	7,5	+4.8

Another focus of the study was directed towards the school and classroom climates, and the way students perceive this climate. What was surprising in the pre-test analysis was the fact that students generally feel encouraged to speak in classrooms, but at the same time feel that there is a gap between them and the teachers. After being socialized with deliberative pedagogies, students become more critical with their classroom climate. Consequently, one can see a high decrease in the perception that they are free to express their opinions in the classroom (-22,2 %), as well as in terms of the feeling that they are encouraged to form their opinions (-17,4 %).

	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference
	Agree %	Agree %	%
Students are encouraged to form their own opinions	74	56,6	-17,4
Students feel free to express their opinions in the classroom even when they have different opinions than the majority	69,4	47,2	-22,2
Teachers present more facets of the same subject when teaching	66,7	56,7	-10,0

Students do not have input in the way things are happening in school	50,7	51,9	+1,2
I feel treated correctly by my colleagues	73,2	57,7	-15,5
Students feel that are treated unfair by the teachers	66,7	84,6	+17,9

One of the most important changes that were identified after being exposed to deliberative pedagogies, was the way students see as important trait for democracy to work. After deliberation, students feel that for democracy to work, they consider that the protection of minorities is more important than the majority rule. (from 41,89 % in pre-testing to 50,94 % in post-testing)

As mentioned before, in order to have an in-depth analysis of the effect and impact of deliberative pedagogies in students' civic abilities and values, the pre and post survey was complemented with focus groups organized with students. In these focus groups, students were asked to assess the proposed deliberative pedagogies and to evaluate what they learnt the most from these. In terms of the general perception, most of the students mentioned that they enjoyed the proposed activities because they were interesting *«Very interesting and pleasant» and because it was a good opportunity to talk about everyday issues: «We were free to discuss and express our personal opinions, compared to other teachers where we are afraid to say anything», «I liked the activities because we discussed about life and everyday issues».*

A few of the proposed activities focused on identifying the students' own concerns and issues. The great majority of students declared that these were the activities they enjoyed the most, because they have very few chances for doing this: *«I liked very much the activity when we were asked to express our*

*concerns from our personal life and not only the ones related to school and classes», «I liked very much the activity when we talked about our concerns and problems. We had the opportunity to release our frustrations and to talk openly about it». In addition, when trying to understand why they liked these types of activities, the students mentioned that they had the feeling the teachers/instructors really listen to them, they had the feeling they could freely express their opinions: «We were listened, while other professors simply teach us», «We were encouraged to have initiatives and we could easily express our opinions».*

When asked about what the students think they learnt during the proposed activities, the great majority responded that they learnt to be better and to be more tolerant with others: *«I learned to be better and not to bully my colleagues, and not to judge people based on the appearance and without understanding them».* In addition, students mentioned that they learnt how to believe in themselves and most importantly how to use their imagination for solving problems *«I learned to be more confident and to express my opinion», «I developed new skills for thinking about and solving a problem».* Moreover, the students mentioned that while participating in the discussions and deliberations, they managed to improve their communication skills *«I learned to be more confident and to express my opinion»*, and in the same time they managed to find new things about their colleagues *«I learned a lot about my colleagues».*

When interviewing teachers about their perceived effects of deliberative pedagogies on students, the answers were similar to previous results. When asked about a general evaluation of the proposed activities, one of the involved teachers answered: *«What I found very interesting was the fact that through your activities you managed to involve all kids and to determine those that usually were less involved to be more active. They felt appreciated and those kids started contributing a lot also in the other activities that I did in that class or even*

*the extracurricular activities that I proposed. I have one very clear example». In addition, another teacher responded that: «The moment you start/try a more interactive teaching strategy, automatically they are more open, they want to engage and are happy to find new things in these classes».*

In terms of the abilities and skills that changed after being exposed to deliberative practices, one of the teachers mentioned that students learned to be more tolerant and less aggressive. Before these activities, one of the major issues identified by one teacher was that of verbal and physical violence among students. After being exposed to these new methods, based on discussions and deliberations, they realized they can solve conflicts through discussing and not necessarily through violence: *«They started to develop and consolidate certain types of competences and abilities, including the way they cooperate with each other. Some issues/problems that they had in the class were treated differently. For instance those that did any mistakes started to confess and admit them».* Continuing the same idea, one teacher mentioned that these methods are beneficial for school and teachers on one side and for students on the other side. Teachers are able to develop a better relation with students, they become more trustful, in the same time, students become more tolerant and consequently with less unsolved issues.

### **Conclusion and final remarks**

After briefly analyzing the data, one can state that deliberative pedagogies are efficient developing certain civic values and abilities. In this sense, the most important changes emerge in the way students perceive and accept differences. They become more tolerant and trustful with the others, even though they are perceived as very different. In addition, one important impact that was evident in all three types of data was that of being better. Students realize the importance

of being a better citizen, of helping the ones in need and valuing the rights of minorities better than the majority rule. Consequently, their definition of democracy changes from a focus on the majority towards a new focus on the minorities and the ones in need. This is a remarkable result, since most of the similar studies focus strictly on skills and abilities, forgetting about values. The study's results reveal that through socializing students with deliberative pedagogies, one can transform the students from strongly individualistic individuals to more empathetic ones.

In addition, another important result was that of gaining confidence and efficacy. Through encouraging students to express their opinions, they become more confident and trustful with their own competences. As a result, they become more civically engaged, as well as more critical of what happens around them. They are encouraged to critically assess the behaviors around them, but also to openly express their opinions and beliefs.

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**ELECTORAL ORIENTATION AND CIVIC EDUCATION  
AT HIGH SCHOOL – SOME EVIDENCE FROM ISRAELI  
TEACHERS ABOUT POLITICAL PARTICIPATION EDUCATION**

*Jacky Zvulun\* , Igal Harel\*\**

**Abstract**

The role of citizenship studies teachers at high schools could be effective for young students who do not understand the role of the political participation in democratic countries. One of the players that responsible for educating citizens to understand the meaning of political participation is institution such as schools. The tendency of low political participation among young people is a phenomenon that touches a lot of the democratic countries. This article will focus on the electoral orientation studies at high schools in Israel. It seeks to examine how teachers teach the civil education regarding to elections time. This study is a qualitative research that conducted nearly the 2013 Israeli national election. In this research they were

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\* *Jacky Zvulun* is a lecturer in political science at the Beit Berl College and the Wingate Academic College. He is also the head of Community Involvement at the Beit Berl College. His area research is civic education, political participation and local government. Education: B.A (1998) Bar Ilan University, Criminology and Sociology and Anthropology. M.A (2001) Bar Ilan University Public Administration and Local Government. Ph.D. (2009) Otago University, New Zealand local elections and Electoral Participation, the Department of Politics. Postgraduate Studies(2012 (Diploma) Teaching in Social Science and Citizenship in High Schools.

\*\* *Igal Harel* is a lecturer and a teacher educator in the Faculty of Education at the Beit Berl College. He is also a sociology and political civics teacher in high school and wrote material books for students and teachers. His area research is teacher education. B. A. (1994) Beit Berl College on formal education M. A (1996) Clark University. Management of Education. Studying for Ph.D. at Ben Gurion University in the area of autonomy in teacher education.

40 participants. Twenty teachers who have been interviewed and 20 student teachers who have been interviewed, in their practicum year who studying to be teachers in citizenship and social science degree. The findings show the level of political participation education is low and it gets a minority places in the syllabus. The findings may show that this contributes to the low electoral orientation among young people.

### **Introduction**

Verba and Nie (1972) defined the term political participation as an action of citizens that have a specific goal to influence on senior official. The classic scholars from the last century conducted that they are few forms of political participation, thus, elections, Party actions, activity in community and organization, activity from personal interests, and political actions with violence or non violence. Eventually, the terms talks about citizens who achieve to influence on elected people. According to Huntington and Nelson (1976), McGregor (1960) and also Milbrath & Goel (1977) political participation as the availability of suitable opportunities for people to take part in decision making.

Scholars from the 1990s, have changed little bit the definition. Pary, Moyser, and Day (1992) define participation as citizens' action intended to influence authorities decision-making. Participation can involve either altering attitudes of decision makers or protesting against a decision that has already been made. Birch (1993), extended the definition and identified more sport activity, games, dialogs deliberating democracy that can encourage the solidarity in the community. In fact political participation is a valid actions among citizens and the most important that the citizens obligated in away it's the election that they get responsibility for their public life (Aldrich 1993, Verba et al 1995, Gaventa&Valderrama, 1999). The citizen learns to use

the democratic tools and understand the meaning of political and social participation, and decision making both at the local and national levels.

Scholars from the 21<sup>st</sup> century define it as an action of citizens that the goals to influence on the regime and participating in elections (Blander&Waksman, 2002). So it can be understood that election has a huge opportunity to citizens to influence the regime. In this article, when talking about political participation, it refers to the elections.

The election subject in democracy should be a vital component in the formal education frame in the citizenship studies and also in unofficial frames such as youth movement. In both frames there are opportunities to do practicing about the election role, which is part of civic education, and having responsibility for the future (Mill, 1990). The question that comes does school contributes to the awareness of youth regarding the political participation?

This article seeks to understand the civic orientation of teenagers in school in particular about the election place by teaching and designing the meaning of election. The article will present a qualitative research, which 20 teachers who have been 15 years in the education system as citizenship teachers and 20 student teachers in their third year in Education College who do the practicum time as citizenship teachers. The study will examine the ability of teachers regarding the teaching orientation about political participation.

The article divided to three parts: first part, explaining the meaning and value of political participation and how it should be implemented. Second part, will show the study program and emphasizes what are the goals in the civil studies and how the election presented in the program. The last part will examine the link between the two theoretical parts by our research that conduct towards 2013 election.

## **Political Participation and Education**

There are research that shows the correlation between education and political participation (Lipset, 1959). In other words, education has some influence on political participation through different ways in democratic regimes (Dahl, 1971). For example, development of cognitive and knowledge skills (Mayer, 2011). Though, the more education the high chance that citizen will be involved in political participation (Campbell et al. 1960, Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996, Rosenberg 1988, Rosenstone and Hansen 1993, Verba Schlozman and Brady 1995).

Furthermore, it can be seen in the literature that the education role play a significant place while thinking how to implement civic engagement and the citizenship, as Mayer notes: «indeed the breadth of the consensus has led some researchers to conclude that education's role as a primary mechanism behind citizenship is generally uncontested» (Mayer, 2011, 633). Moreover, some evidence also show that education increase voting and political engagement, other formal political participation (Soudheimer&Green, 2010, Leonardi&Nanetti, 1994).

Having saying that with all the support and even the recent support from different scholars such as Sondheimer (2011), Green (2010) and Marshall (2015), it can be seen that there is opposites for that facts. Kam and Palmer (2008) argue that the relationship between education and political participation are unclear. These see weaknesses in the education affect and strengths in the parental factors and pre adults' characteristics. Support for that, can be seen also in Mayer (2011) work who argues that education has hardly effect increasing political participation. Other studies that show that education is not a clear variable for encouraging political involvement we can see at Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson (2005), Barro (1999), Castello-Climent (2008), Glaese, Ponzetto and Shleifer (2007) and Pa-Paioannou and Siourounis (2008).

So far it can be seen that there are two meanings for education through political participation, which one can contribute, and the second hardly contribute.

It will be interesting to look at the Israeli educational system as a case on how implementing these ideas as we mentioned above and the civic studies in schools as a contributor encouraging political participation in particular in elections time at school.

Research in Israel also seeks to examine the political orientation and what is the meaning to be a 'good citizen' (Ichilov, 1979, Ichilov, 1996). According to the finding of Ichilov (1979) who 1000 teenagers were participated in different schools between ages 14–18. It has shown that teenagers ranked the meaning of «Good Citizens» as first priority: «obey to the state laws», «loyal to the country», «make his duties». Furthermore only 10 percent of the participants rank the participation in election as most importance. Moreover, school in Israel to be conceived al place to develop and design the political identity among young people. Schools provide social opinions and through this the teenagers consolidate his political opinions (Ichilov, 1996).

Warman (2013), in his book «Citizenship between the Lines», argues that the political orientation in schools does not enough direct students to an independent thinking and enhancing the political terminology that students will understand much better the election meaning, political and social participation. The citizen in fact has to develop a political oriented consideration that will give him more theoretical knowledge but also in material that can be relevant as more practical (Warman, 2013).

### **Perception on the Israeli study program at high schools**

Political education, democratic and civic has done in different ways and in different frames in the Israeli system.

It comes with different programs and in particular in the field of civic studies. However, it also been educated through social lessons in school and in different frames such as special programs. In the curriculum citizenship studies (Ministry of Education, 2011) there is emphasis on the democratic regime in particular from the law view. Students learn concepts of ideas about the democratic regime.

Teachers less want to name and frame how does the formal system work in the political reality and usually the way democratic concepts are being implemented in the daily work in Israel. Though, there is a difference between what exactly been taught in schools to what has been going around through the real political issues.

In the curriculum program there is emphasize on the formal issues of democracy such as: majority decision, restriction on the regime and other principle of the democracy. For example, the subject refers to the rule of law, students learns on the procedural characteristics, and enforcement (Ministry of Education, 2011).

A recent study on young people's attitude towards politics, whether citizens have an influence on decision making conducted in the Knesset research department (2005). The research included young people age between 15-18 , found that third of them don't know how they can influence on decision making or believe that there is no ways to influence officials (Heler, 2005). Furthermore, this study has found that in general, teenagers believe that the individual or as a group there is no capacity to influence officials. Less than eight percent of the participants in this study claim that their friends' parents have the influence to change things. These details raise questions regarding the educational official system in Israel and the perceptions of political participation of young people.

An extended chapter in the program study dedicate to authorities and it been taught the rules of each authority in

the regime and the balance between different authorities. The program hardly touches in psychological and sociological aspects that describe the Israeli political cultural society. Subjects such as personal causes to participate or not, participation and involvement and political apathy, interests groups are not presented in this program. The understanding of government components and management are not giving to the young students a hall picture about the democratic political system, the Israeli society, the polarization and different slits, main processes that hardly presented in the curriculum.

Avnon (2013), shows the theoretical structure of the high school curriculum in the filed of civic studies compared with the old version. Avnon (2013) argues that in the existing program, there is still amendments to be done because of the big challenges that the Israeli society facing and the attitude of teachers towards class teaching in schools. The plot of the matriculation does not contribute to implement democratic values in Israel state among teenagers (Avnon, 2013). As results of, students have the difficulty understating the meaning of valuing to participate in a democratic country. Nonetheless, issues that encouraging deliberating democracy practicing, issues such as discrimination among different ethnic groups, socialization , creating structure to political participation , all are absence from the program (Avnon, 2013). In the current program, there is priority to discourse on the democratic principles , and the structure of the regime, rather, discourse about disagreements, political behavior and it gives more explanation about the law perspective than the sociological and behavior aspects.

Some of the teachers avoid themselves talking about actual issues and they feel difficulty dealing with teenagers opinions which sometimes opposite to them. Also there is difficulty with extremely students' opinions and parents who claim that teachers are involved in personal political perception. As a

result, the education system, tend to avoid arriving to practical political conversation issues on one side. On the other side they are required to teach political subjects such as the religion slit and the national slit. At the same time they are required to be objective and professional. In sensitive political issues there is difficulty to keep the objectivity and therefore, teachers avoid talking about these issues which they don't want that It will be understood as a personal opinion (Hofman, 2007).

In the curriculum for high school, citizenship studies refer to Israel state as a Jewish Democratic (Citizenship studies program, Ministry of Education 2011, Eden, Ashkanzi and Alfreson, 2001). In every component in citizenship studies program, the teaching focuses on key ideas which creates as called according to the authors «civic language». Most of the time the student engages on identifies ideas and the terms (of democracy) in different incidents and in different texts from the reality. Citizenship, if so, it's a field that is being analyzed events by technic orientation which used plot components. The matriculation exam indicates orientations towards civic education that students are required to be precisely how he or she addresses the terms and use it to explain different issues and cases.

This article suggest to integrate constrictive aspects in the teaching – learning process (Bruks, Bruks, 1997, Shafririe, Buzo, 1998). The main focus in the lesson will be the student, and he or she will be sent to different challenge missions which based on challenging thinking exercise. Instead of repetition or review of terms and definitions and identify them, the student will be required to analyze the political social reality while giving a critic opinion that he or she consolidates with different opinions. Indeed, the main lesson it is in the class, but to aim to the goals of civic education, the student has to be exposed to the civil society and be in touch through the media or other opinions such as meeting, workshops and trips. The citizenship

lesson has to lender in missions that bring the student with variety of the society and different opinions. The main goal is to design the citizenship identification that contributes to the state.

Few years ago, the Ministry of Education (2011) provided a unique type of program for students. The goal of the citizenship-teaching field in the election subject refers to two elements in the lesson (at class), plot and process. In the plot there are two main ideas the first emphasizes the affinity to the society and state, the importance of civil involvement, the protection of rights and law. The second emphasizes the protection of the social pluralism, deliberating democracy, the meaning of different ethnic groups, the achieve to multicultural society and skills that the lesson provide for better understanding the system.

The lesson changes the student to be analyst of the complex social reality and in special cases of civil problem in the everyday base. It has been expected from the student to be able independently in his thinking and capacity of learning and implementing, comprising, understanding, estimating and critics of text which describes social reality (the civil studying program Ministry of Education, 2011).

Most of the material in the citizenship studies curriculum focuses on the law and legal aspects of the political system: government institutions, their rules , the way the work and also the understanding of the democratic principles: the rule of the people, rule of law and restriction of power. Nonetheless, on response to these characters of study program, during the years, in particular at the unofficial frames, there were developed materials that focus on different aspect of the political system.

For example, Mrushak and Saver (2005) present a unique educational program that has seven concepts of democracy, start from liberal democracy and end by feminists democracy.

They show ten sessions of workshops, experiencing and emotional with deliberating democracy and based more on the emotional and cognitive sides. This program emphasizes the students actions compared with his passive status in the normal program at school.

## **Methodology**

### **Participants**

The research participants included two groups: 20 teachers in two high schools, experience of more than 15 years. These teachers are considered as the leaders in this field of citizenship teaching. They role are also as coordinators of this field and part of supervising new teachers who just finish educational college degree. The second group is included 20 student teachers to citizenship and social science teaching at educational college. Most of them are postgraduate students who came from different disciplines such as law, communication, High-tech and other disciplines and wanted to do some career changes and become teachers.

### **Instrument**

This study presents a qualitative research that was near the 2013 national Israeli elections. In this discourse there has been used a structured interview. There were three main questions that lead this interview: the way the case of election has been taught in schools and the second is the way that it should be taught the election subject. The questions that have been presented to the interviewees were three:

1. Soon will be election. How do you prepare for teaching this subject and way in terms of pedagogy
2. Place your self from 1–10 referring to the election, between the attitude towards election from formal perspectives such as electoral system teaching,

learning on the rules of elections and so forth and the attitude towards election contents, candidates, different dilemmas that coming from the reality and the experience activity of students, explain your preference

3. How do you place the «ideal» citizenship teacher attitude to the election subject on the same sequence (1–10) and why?

### **Procedures**

Participants were selected randomly in two high schools in center of Israel towards 2013 national election which have had an experience in teaching and can be positive being at kind of this study. Five teachers declined it and we remain with 20 teachers who were happily and enthusiastically be part of this study. The 20 student teachers that were interviewed have been asked and they were enthusiastic to be part of this study. All the interviews were conducted at the school area at lunch (break time) or the end of hour's school. Each interview was between half and hours to maximum an hour. The interviews were records with consent of the participants.

The research included personal meetings with each of the participants and comprehensive documented of interviews. The interviews were analyzed in a content analysis method. The answers were categorized and then it compared between answers of the participants of teachers and students. For all the participants have been remained the ethics principles which lead to the research in terms of privacy, the right to leave the study (interview) acceptance of recording and clearing explanation for what this research goals. In terms of the interview, it has been conducted face to face with each teacher and it was different from a regular interview. We actually interviewed the teachers and students who become teachers and not students, how they perceive the teaching regarding election time and the political orientation.

## **Data analysis**

The data analysis was conducted by content analysis of the textual material (interviews). We identified substantial themes during the interviews regarding the questions and the subjects that we directed the participants. During the analysis the textual material were selected to statements. These statements helped to the researchers to figure the main ideas and values of this program and what the most important issues were come.

## **Findings**

We have written our finding through the answers of the teachers. We will look at each question.

### **Question 1: Soon will be election. How do you prepare yourself to the election subject teaching, pedagogic and in terms of the content?**

In terms of the content 17 from 20 teachers inclined holding in the study programs while they hardly use active program. For example: «explaining the principles democracies during elections time», «I teach according to the program», «I teach and explain deeply the rule of the people», «I extended the election subject» «I am planning to talk about the election of any context regarding the study program and clarify the formal aspect and the essence around the elections». These teachers confirmed that the program included all the contents according to the Ministry of Education.

In the pedagogic aspect the teachers expressed an opening idea to the method diverse such as presenting media press and democratic dialogue, reading journal and texts regarding election and analyzed them for example: new Party that has been established and Party unification. Power point presentation, videos and classes dialogue in intellectual subjects. To note that with all these rich activities it has been noted that there are active action that students have to make a

research activity in the political reality. These findings sit with Warman (2013) study who argues that political orientation must be come tangible and not only theoretical. More, he argues that political orientation in schools is enough adequate that direct the students to an independent thinking. It might be that a require from the teachers side to more activism among students will strength this finding.

The students (those who becoming teachers in their third year) differently from the teachers, tend to integrate between the content and the pedagogy. Among these students 13 of 20 agree on that though, encouraging active actions outside from school. For example, integrating the two themes, emphasizing attractive activity to students and increasing awareness or stimulating the thinking. «I bring slogans, news, speeches», «will conduct election to the school committee simulation for election», «brings the question: what would it happen without election», «my emphasize is on election term definitions , material from the print media which explain the terms, presenting ideas of each government, observing, power points, press texts and intellectual material», I would arrange election in the class which included establishing Party, agenda marketing and publishing, «will arrange election practicing and I divided the class according to Parties and each group will establish propaganda and platform», «every lesson I will choose one subject to talk about such as Parties and their platforms , arrange election day with the Party's representatives», «will study different electoral system to be a smart voter». Only few stick to the study programs, for example, «It is important for me to provide expression to election democratic principles», «I will refer to the theoretical material».

From analyzing students' answers, it can be seen that there are more creative then the teachers , use original aspect, deeply , and the high thinking priority which makes to create relevant to subjects. The most popular actions among these

students were simulation of election that deals with Parties and media. The students in the interview expresses that political socialization happens even in unofficial places equivalent to the official places such as schools.

**Question 2: Place your self from 1-10 referring to the election, between the attitude towards election from formal perspectives such as electoral system teaching, learning on the rules of elections and so forth and the attitude towards election contents, candidates, different dilemmas that coming from the reality and the experience activity of students, explain your preference.**

Minority of the teachers (6 from 20) put themselves in the procedure formal as a conservative view and response to the time constraints. Here are some examples:

«It is a material that the students should know and be examined», «regarding the essence, I will dedicate less time because there is not enough time, as a teacher I will have to refer to ideological debates, and last but not least is the parents involvement. There were few incidents that parents heard about the opinion teacher and swift it to an ugly. It is better not to be involved on that».

The other teachers witnessed that they focus on the essence part of the program. «It is important to emphasize the democratic dialogue and the theme of young citizens involvement», «apart from the formal part of teaching the subject, we taught deeply in intellectual around election both Israel and the USA. In addition, the students experiencing voting of students committee in school and soon will be panel with fictitious elections in high school», «I am tending with my students to make a election simulation included election propaganda, but still all in plans. In this stage, I focused on the USA elections in the electoral system, the essence, and the wining of Barak Obama and its implications. From here I am

moving to the Israeli election, the platforms of Parties and analyzing referring to the economic and social attitudes and encouraging political participation». These statements strength Birch (1993) definition regarding political participation that he puts emphasize on deliberating and dialogues as substantial to encourage involvement.

From the student teachers answers, it has found that they more opt to go to the essence direction even more than the teachers. For examples, «the essence aspect contributes to the students and for his understanding the subject as a citizen», «another significant aspect is the intellectual», «these two aspects influence on the voter behavior and the political future», «the formal part is less interested by the students», «the essence part provides a significant understanding to the student developing his own thought and a social critics in the reality, that he or she lives and the ability to take active thoughts and be involve at the election time», «I would give a theoretical part and then deliver the essence parts», «by the essence parts it is possible to bring students further understanding and closer to the subject», «like that I would make the process as a lesson for life», «like that I would create involvement and concern for this subject». These perceptions of the students come with the ideas of Pary et (1992) that emphasize the initiative and the involvement as a substantial parts by designing the political individual.

The last question was referring only to the teachers as having the most experience in teaching.

**Question 3: How do you place the «ideal» citizenship teacher attitude to the election subject on the same sequence (1-10) and why?**

The ideal teacher for most of the teachers was on the essence side. Here are some of the answers that teachers responded: «I am not aware of the ideal teacher. It would

be interesting to look at this aspect. A reasonable teacher will dedicate a lot of time in order to promote these actions. This kind of teacher will dedicate also educational lessons and also 'free lessons'. The focus of the teacher will be on the essence dilemmas, rather than the regulations, although the regulations are also an important part. Forty percent will be dedicated to regulations and sixty will be dedicated to the essence of democracy». «On one side there is vast significance to election in citizenship studies lessons, on the other side, there are pressures and requirements to stand in the schedule and therefore, there is no option to slice the all information in the optimal way». «The citizenship teacher has a substantial role both at the knowledge level and the ability understanding the process of election, the ability to teach democratic election through experiences and implementation, that students will understand how election has been address and therefore students will be more active and be involved socially and politically». «In my opinion, a good teacher, is a teacher who adjusts himself to the abilities and challenges that his class facing him. Not for every class the same strategies learning are suit. Therefore, it is important as an advance to teach the basic requirement according to the matriculation program and beyond that to integrate learning strategies such as using videos, debates in different subjects and dialogues in intellectual reports». «I think that citizenship learning in election time inviting the teacher the possibility to implement the terms, the theories and contents in comprehensive way and this stimulates the election subject as core instrument in democracy. Every teacher who teaches in the election period has to give further reference to this subject in terms of the candidates, dilemmas, media, Parties and the active experience of the students. There is a problem of the teaching all the material in terms of time but my point of view that it has to be integrated the election subject in every opportunity». «Theoretically it will be more desirable to dedicate more time

to essences aspects, but the schedule is so full which does not give the time to go deeply on the Israeli situation. Therefore there are at least 'touching' by providing different subjects in the study program that relevant to that». Nonetheless, there was a different opinion: «in the election subject the teacher has to explain and clarify to students different issues that come up. In particular he or she has to focusing on procedural issues. The teacher does not have to get to the question does X will bring back Jerusalem, or Y will attack Iran. In other words the teacher has to minimize involvement in the election system and stay in the formal side». It can be summarized that teachers see the ideal teacher as a experienced teacher, knowledgeable, professional and a one who commit to bring current affairs to the class and not to miss the opportunity teaching the election subject. To strength this conclusion it can be seen on Yogev and Michaeli (2010) who referring to the teacher as an intellectual character that responsible for the political social orientation designing of the students. In addition, it could be seen that this kind of thinking it is part of the process of the necessary educational goals such as achieving theoretical knowledge and implemented, the ability understanding to process reality analysis (Cohen 2013).

### **Conclusion**

Arian (1973) describes the elections as the essence of democracy. And it could be argued that voting in election it is a political act, which describes the merit of the democracy. In the study program of citizenship, there is a significant value to the democratic elections. In the study program curriculum the election are come with the law context and it expresses the principles of the democracy. In this manner, it missed the opportunity to see other sides of the election aspects to understand. It should be learn other aspects such as political issues, media and social-psychological elements in

elections. The election provides us opportunities to practice in democratic processes and investigate these practicing in sociological and psychological instruments. The elections are also opportunity to engage in citizenship life through intellectual analysis. Furthermore, to emphasize more the political aspect in terms of election and less the regime and institutions. To make it through investigation and practicing or simultaneity game practicing and not by classic school learning. This is an opportunity to a civic education.

Programs that have students' activity have been written but have not been awarded as successful in the education system. The Ministry of Education put a lot of efforts for civic education through citizenship studies. The citizenship teacher works for preparing his students for the matriculation exam, which needs a deeply thinking, and the ability to use the right terminology and suit them to the situation.

Therefore, the center of the lesson will be the student who has been sent to challenges tasks that build on high thinking task. The student will be required to analyze social political reality situation through expressing critical opinion that he or she consolidate while deliberating in class. For achieving the goals of civic education, the student will have to be exposed to a civil society and be in continuing touch through the media and through meetings «workshops and tours». The citizenship lesson has to come with tasks, and variety of the society, different opinions which the main goal is the civil identity designing of student that contribute to the state.

The finding of this paper strength the perception that it has to been emphasized the essence aspect of the study program of the election and to more deliberate on that at class with all the students. The teachers, in fact, differently from the teacher students who are not experiencing the school environment on a regular basis, presenting the gap between what has been done and what should be done.

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## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

*Iuliana-Gabriela Georgescu* lives in Romania and she has been an activist in the NGO sector for the last 22 years, working in the field of civic engagement, election monitoring and community development. Currently she is involved deliberative democracy projects, with a focus on introducing deliberation as a practice to K-4 kids. Education: B.A. (2002) Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca/Romania, Political Science, M.A. (2005), Babes-Bolyai University (Management of Political Organizations). Areas of expertise: Election Monitoring, Civic Engagement, Public Deliberation.

*Telma Gimenez* is currently Associate Professor at Universidade Estadual de Londrina, Paraná, Brazil, where she teaches Applied Linguistics and English as a lingua franca in the undergraduate degree program and supervises postgraduate research on foreign language teacher education and educational policies. She is a researcher funded by CNPq. She holds a Ph.D. from the Department of Linguistics and Modern English Language, Lancaster University.

*Carmen Gabriela Greab* is a Researcher and Guest Lecturer at the Department of Political Science at Babe-Bolyai University in Romania. She is the Executive Director of Association Center for the Study of Democracy, a Romanian think tank that has as main goal the consolidation of democracy. Education: B.A. (2004) Babes-Bolyai University (Romania) B.A. (2003) Nottingham Trent University (UK) – political science M.A. (2005) Babes-Bolyai University (Romania) – International Relations. M.A. (2006) Corvinus University (Hungary) – European Studies and International Economics . Ph.D. candidate (2014 – present) Babes-Bolyai University – Political Science. Areas of expertise: Public Deliberation, Youth Civic Engagement, Education, Deliberative Pedagogy.

*Igal Harel* is a lecturer and a teacher educator in the Faculty of Education at the Beit Berl College . He is also a sociology and political civics teacher in high school and wrote material books for students and teachers. His area research is teacher education. B.A (1994) Beit Berl College on formal education M.A (1996) Clark University. Management of Education. Studying for Ph.D. at Ben Gurion University in the area of autonomy in teacher education.

*Andressa Cristina Molinari* – Department of Foreign Language Teaching, Londrina State University, Londrina, Brazil.

*Yaroslav Pylynskyi* is a senior scholar in the Legislation Institute of the Verhovna Rada of Ukraine and a senior scholar in the Institute for Pedagogical Education and Adult Education at the National Pedagogical Academy of Science of Ukraine. Pylynskyi previously worked as a scientific secretary of the Division of Languages, Literature and Art Studies, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. He is the former director of the Kennan Kyiv Project at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (1998–2014). Pylynskyi earned a PhD in philology from the Institute of Ethnology, Folklore and Art Studies, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (1989) He is also the author of *From the Nation of Migrants to the Nation of Patriots: How American Education Has Created the American Nation* (Kyiv, 2016) and *Deliberative Education in Decentralized Environment* (Kyiv, 2018). Areas of expertise: civic and democratic education, public deliberation, education, deliberative pedagogy.

*Timothy J. Shaffer* is Principal Research Specialist for the National Institute for Civil Discourse and is Assistant Professor of Communication Studies and Assistant Director of the Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy at Kansas State University. He is also associate editor of the *Journal of Public Deliberation*. Education: B.A. (2004) St. Bonaventure University, Theology (magna cum laude). M.A. (2006) University of Dayton, Theological studies. M.P.A. (2008)

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University of Dayton. Ph.D. (2014) Cornell University, Education. Areas of expertise: Public Deliberation, Civic Engagement, Education.

*Jacky Zvulun* is a lecturer in political science at the Beit Berl College and the Wingate Academic College. He is also the head of Community Involvement at the Beit Berl College. His area research is civic education, political participation and local government. Education: B.A (1998) Bar Ilan University, Criminology and Sociology and Anthropology. M.A (2001) Bar Ilan University Public Administration and Local Government. Ph.D. (2009) Otago University, New Zealand local elections and Electoral Participation, the Department of Politics. Postgraduate Studies (2012 (Diploma) Teaching in Social Science and Citizenship in High Schools.

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