Democracy, political literacy and transformative education

Comparative analysis from five North American samples

United States: Youngstown (OH), St. Louis (MO)

Canada: Montreal (QC), Orillia (ON), Thunder Bay (ON)

Paul R. Carr, Lakehead University (Orillia)
Research team

- **Principal Investigator:** Dr. Paul R. Carr (Lakehead University, Ontario)
- **Co-investigator:** Dr. Gina Thésée (Université du Québec à Montréal)
- **Collaborator:** Dr. David Zyngier (Monash University, Australia)
- **Collaborator:** Dr. Brad J. Porfilio (Lewis University, USA)
Research objectives

- To identify, analyze and compare the experiences, perceptions and perspectives of democracy (and education for democracy) of education students.

- To develop instruments, measures, policies and programs, and to support educators in developing transformative education for a thick democracy.
Conceptual framework

- **Transformative Education**: Focused on education as a political project, democratic engagement, and education for social change, challenging neoliberal, normative conceptions of education.

- **Political Literacy**: Ability to read and understand social dynamics, to participate and engage, and to be able to contextualize power relations.

- **Critical Engagement**: Predisposition to nuanced participation and involvement in matters that rightly concern people, and moves beyond normative education/schooling activities.

- **Thick Democracy**: Social justice, critical engagement, personal and societal commitment, empowerment and integrity aimed at moving beyond normative, representative, hegemonic forms of democracy.
Surveys

- Dissemination began in 2006 to education students in Ohio, US, then to other universities in the US, Canada, the United States and around the world
  - For this study, there are 4 universities (5 sites) involved
  - The Global Doing Democracy Research Project (GDDRP) has over 40 projects in a dozen countries with some 4000 participants

- Online questionnaire (Survey Monkey): voluntary and anonymous

- Comprised of 40 questions, open and closed responses, with a Likert scale (1 to 5), and a section for comments
  1) Demographic information
  2) Questions related to democracy
  3) Questions related to democracy and education
Questionnaire

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1. I am (Male/Female)

2. My age is

3. What education degree are you studying?

4. What year of study are you in for the education program?

5. What is your main course of study?

6. Choose one content area that best describes your area of teaching

7. What is your racial/ethnic origin? (check more than one wherever appropriate)

8. My country or region of birth is:

9. Are you an Indigenous or First Nations person?

10. What was your main language spoken at home during your childhood?
DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1. Father's highest academic qualification (please choose only one).
2. My father's main occupation during his working life (please choose only one).
3. My father's country or region of birth is:
4. My mother's highest academic qualification (please choose one only):
5. My mother's main occupation during his working life (please choose only one)
6. My mother's country or region of birth is:
7. Which religious group, if any, are you affiliated with?
8. Do you practice this religion?
9. How actively involved in politics were your parents when you were school-aged?
QUESTIONS ON DEMOCRACY

1. How would you define democracy?

2. Do you feel that Canada is a democratic country? (1=not democratic at all; 5=very democratic)

3. Do you feel that the United States of America (USA) is a democratic country? (1=not very democratic at all; 5=very democratic)

4. Do you feel that the following are democratic countries? (1=not very democratic at all; 5=very democratic)

5. In your opinion, how important are elections to democracy? (1=not very important at all; 5=very important)

6. Do you vote in elections for which you have been eligible to vote?

7. Are you (or have you been) a member of a political party?

8. Do you feel that you are actively engaged in democracy? (1=not engaged at all; 5=very much engaged)

9. What should/could be done to improve democracy in Canada?

10. Do you feel that Aboriginal peoples are a full part of Canadian democracy? (1=not at all; 5=very much so)
1. From your perspective, is the education system in which you were educated democratic? (1=not very democratic at all; 5=very democratic)

2. Did your school experience have an impact on your thinking about democracy? (1=not at all; 5=a great impact)

3. When you were at school did your teachers raise issues related to democracy? (1=never; 5=regularly)

4. Do you feel that teachers should promote a sense of democracy in students? (1=they should not at all; 5=they should most definitely do so)

5. Do you feel that teachers should teach about controversial issues? (1=not at all; 5=very much so)

6. What do you understand by the term Social Justice?

7. How important do you feel the issue of social justice is in relation to democracy? (1=not at all; 5=very much so)

8. Do you believe that the following are important for education for democracy? (1=not at all; 5=very important)

9. From your perspective, has your university education promoted an understanding of democracy? (1=not at all; 5=very much so)

10. If you are planning to teach in a school setting, how would you promote education for democracy?
In Montreal, the surveys were in French, and at all other universities in English.
1) Quantitative data tables: Drawn from an analysis of responses (scale of 1 to 5)

![Quantitative data table example]

2) Qualitative data: Drawn from open-ended answers according to the following criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Involvement and critique</td>
<td>Weak involvement and critique</td>
<td>Medium involvement and critique</td>
<td>Elaborated involvement and critique</td>
<td>Thick involvement and critique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of understanding</td>
<td>Unprecise answer</td>
<td>Simple echo to the question</td>
<td>Elaborated, subjective and involved argumentation</td>
<td>Advanced and nuanced argumentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No relevant answer</td>
<td>No argumentation</td>
<td>Weak argumentation</td>
<td>Complexified answers</td>
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<tr>
<td>No interest</td>
<td>Weekly-developed answer</td>
<td>Weakly-developed answer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3) Combined quantitative and qualitative data
Democracy, political literacy and the pursuit of transformative education

Montreal Sample:
Université du Québec à Montréal (UQÀM)

Gina Thésée (UQÀM) & Gary Pluim (Lakehead University, Orillia)
Quebec confederated (1864) under special status, largely acknowledging distinctness of language, religion and legal institutions

Quiet revolution, nationalism and independence movement of 1960s have significantly shaped perspectives of democracy

Université du Québec à Montréal (UQÀM)

- UQÀM is an urban, francophone university, founded in 1969
- Faculty of Education is the largest in Quebec with more than a thousand students registered in secondary-level B.Ed. program, others in primary-level, and graduate studies
- Known for its progressive approach to education with a mission centering on social justice.
Research sample

- Initial questionnaire (Nov. ‘07-Jan. ‘08):
  
  \[ n = 261 \text{ education students} \]

- Follow-up, “meta” questionnaire (Feb.-Mar. ‘08):
  
  \[ n = 158 \text{ education students} \]
Sample Profile: Montreal (2008)

- **Respondents**: n = 261
- **Gender**: Women: 61% Men: 39%
- **Ages**: Under 23: 52%; 23-30 years: 27%
- **Birthplace**: Canada: 83% (Quebec: 57%)
- **Ethnicity**: Canadian and European roots: 87%
- **Ethnic minority**: 13% (6.5% Arab; 4% Black; 1.5% Latin American; 1% Asian)
- **Location of education**: Canada (Quebec): 83%
- **Level of education attained**: 1\textsuperscript{st}-2\textsuperscript{nd} yr. B.Ed.: 52%; 3\textsuperscript{rd}-4\textsuperscript{th} yr. B.Ed.: 27%
- **Specialization**: Secondary education: 77%
## Coding for research participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Number</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>F = Female M = Male</td>
<td>1= &lt; 23 ans 2= 23-30 ans 3= 31-40 ans 4= 41-50 ans 5= 51-60 ans</td>
<td>NAf =North Africa As=Asia C=Canada EE=Eastern Europe WE=Western Europe US= United States</td>
<td>A=African Ar=Arab Au=Aboriginal C=Canadian E=European M=Multiple Origins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTES:**

1) For example, a code of #155-F-1-C-A would mean that respondent 155 is a woman under the age of 22, born in Canada with African ethnicity.

2) The quotations from the participants have been translated to English by the presenter from their original in French.
Responses I:

Selected responses related to democracy and education for democracy.

Initial Questionnaire
1. What is democracy in Canada?

Likert scale analysis (1-5)

- 77% have little or no satisfaction in election campaigns (1,2,3 / 5)
- 57%: “Canada is a democratic country!” (4/5)
- 67%: “Social justice is very important for democracy.” (5/5)

a) A privilege, but deterioted by dishonest elected officials (50%)

“It is not a given that in every country citizens have the right to vote for their choice of political parties. We must therefore consider ourselves lucky. However, our political leaders are often corrupted by businesses and companies that have money and power.”

(#36-F-1-C-C)
1. What is democracy in Canada?

Likert scale analysis (1-5)

- 77% have little or no satisfaction in election campaigns (1,2,3 / 5)
- 57%: “Canada is a democratic country!” (4/5)
- 67%: “Social justice is very important for democracy.” (5/5)

b) A demoralizing experience due to the loss of citizen power (40%)

“I am not at all involved in politics. It does not interest me and I find that no matter which party takes office, things are always the same.”

(#131-F-1-C-C)
3. From your perspective, is the education system democratic?

**Likert scale analysis (1-5)**

- 71%: The UQAM program poorly prepares one for education for democracy (1,2,3/5)
- 45%: It is democratic, even very democratic (4,5/5)

**a) The education system is as undemocratic as the civic system (40%)**

“The Quebec education system is based on the democratic governing principles of Canada and Quebec. Ultimately, the approach to democracy in our schools is identical to that used in the country.”

(#49-F-2-C-Ar)
3. From your perspective, is the education system democratic?

Likert scale analysis (1-5)

- 71%: The UQAM program poorly prepares one for education for democracy (1,2,3/5)
- 45%: It is democratic, perhaps even very democratic (4,5/5)

b) Neither democracy for education, nor education for democracy (25%)

“No courses are offered in these areas, and when I tried to take classes outside the program to broaden my horizons, I wasn’t permitted. Few teachers are openly critical of the system. *We are taught to teach in a manner that is uniform and conformist.*”

(#217-F-3-WE-E)
3. From your perspective, is the education system democratic?

Likert scale analysis (1-5)

- 71%: The UQAM program poorly prepares one for education for democracy (1,2,3/5)
- 45%: It is democratic, even very democratic (4,5/5)

a) Only at University (an mostly in extra-curricular activities) was democracy evident. (25%)

“The university is a microcosm for the exercise of democracy. The proof is that free and democratic elections were organized to decide whether a strike should be held to protest the increase in tuition fees. This decision will take into account the results from the vote of the students.”

(#106-F-4-NAf-A)
4. Did your previous university studies have an impact on your conception of democracy?

*Likert scale analysis (1-5)*

- 51%: They had a highly significant influence (4,5/5)
- 49%: Their influence was none to average (1,2,3/5)
- 71%: Religion has nothing or little to do with citizenship (1,2,3/5)

a) No, and this created a democratic deficit. (40%)

“The education system that I grew up in was never really democratic. It is not the people who decide the subjects that are taught at school, and certainly not the students. In class, the teacher does not really give the choice of activities to students. Rather, you have to follow the instructions to a T to succeed.”

(#53-M-1-C-C)
4. Did your previous university studies have an impact on your conception of democracy?

*Likert scale analysis (1-5)*

- 51%: They had a highly significant influence (4,5/5)
- 49%: Their influence was none to average (1,2,3/5)
- 71%: Religion has nothing or little to do with citizenship (1,2,3/5)

b) I’m not sure. (30%)

“I do not know if my conception of democracy has really come from my previous studies, or more so from my life, my experiences.”

(#167-F-1-As, Ar)
4. Did your previous university studies have an impact on your conception of democracy?

Likert scale analysis (1-5)

- 51%: They had a highly significant influence (4,5/5)
- 49%: Their influence was none to average (1,2,3/5)
- 71%: Religion has nothing or little to do with citizenship (1,2,3/5)

3. Yes (20%)

“CÉGEP* is an effective type of school. (...) We experimented with direct democracy, we participated in debates, we learned how to position ourselves, how to argue, and how to respect each other.”

(#217-F-3-WE-E)

*CÉGEP is the post-secondary college program which is exclusive to Quebec. It is a technical or pre-university program for students who have completed grade 11 that typically lasts two years.
5. As a future teacher, will you engage in democratic issues?

Likert scale analysis

- 76%: Involved to very involved (4,5/5)
- 62%: Teachers of primary and secondary education must base their teaching on issues related to democracy (4,5/5)

a) I would say yes, but this is the first time I’ve really thought about it. (40%)

“I am just beginning my degree, so I don’t have an opinion about that yet.”

(#115-F-1-C-C)
5. As a future teacher, will you engage in democratic issues?

- 76%: Involved to very involved (4,5/5)
- 62%: Teachers of primary and secondary education must base their teaching on issues related to democracy (4,5/5)

b) My teaching specialty is just science! (20%)

“I couldn’t understand why I was expected to teach civic and democratic education to secondary students. I just want to teach French literature, not ethics or politics (...) Above all, I believe that our teaching should be linked to our interests, and I’m not a person who is interested in politics.”
5. As a future teacher, will you engage in democratic issues?

Likert scale analysis

- 76%: Involved to very involved (4,5/5)
- 62%: Teachers of primary and secondary education must base their teaching on issues related to democracy (4,5/5)

**c) Of course! It is our responsibility to educate future citizens! (30%)**

“I believe that no matter the subject area, there is an aspect of *education for life* that is very important. We must prepare students to be good citizens.”

(#259-F-1-C-C)
Responses II:

Reactions and responses of a smaller sample to the initial questionnaire.

Meta Questionnaire
Conclusions and the meta-questionnaire (n=158)

Feedback on the initial questionnaire (%)

- Relevant: 25.4%
- Difficult: 18.6%
- Inspired reflection: 18.2%
- Engaging: 12.3%
- Premature: 7.6%
- Relevant: 5.1%
- Well-received: 5.1%
- Thorough: 4%
- Useless: 1.7%
- Biased: 1.3%
- Universal: 0.4%

Source: The Study’s meta-questionnaire
Conclusions and the meta-questionnaire  
(n=158)

62% felt the questions made them frustrated  
58% felt the questions surprised them  
64% felt the questions were thought-provoking

28% of respondents noted that, at least once, they had a total lack of understanding of the issue.  
“We are not informed, not experts on these issues.”  
“There was a lack of preparation to address these questions.”

63% were unable to express a clear position on democracy, citizenship and their relationship to education.  
“Embarrassment, discomfort, wariness; [I] have to confess my ignorance…”

17% of respondents explicitly noted their enthusiasm, that it probed further reflection.  
“We await answers and connections in our educational program.”  
“We need to insist on more enthusiasm for democracy,, especially in the classroom.”
Critical position of respondents of their invitation reflect on the themes of democracy and citizenship

Research on Education and Democracy: UQAM Faculty of Education students, 2007-2008)

Source: The Study’s meta-questionnaire
An assessment of perceptions and perspectives (cont.)

Misunderstanding (preparedness for reflection: 23% of responses)
“After thinking it over for a long time, and looking up each word in the dictionary, I was able to provide something that made sense.” (#39)

Reflection (but little elaboration): 21% of responses
“The question related to religion made me think about two types of society.” (#14)

Action (Reflection to act): 18% of responses
“The questionnaire made me realize even more that in addition to transmitting material, we have a **upcoming responsibility** to help students develop a critical approach to all these issues, but, without taking a position, by being as objective as possible.” (#74)
Affirmation (Reflection to re-define oneself): 17% of responses
“These questions inspired me to reflect, because I didn’t really think that these events had as much impact on my broader vision of democracy.” (#118)

Interest (will for reflection): 15% of responses
“It’s not every day that we stop to think about these kinds of questions, about issues of democracy. But in short, I found it interesting.” (#2)

Disinterest (i.e. no reflection): 4% of responses
“I do not like politics, so these are topics that do not inspire me.” (#144)

Critique (reasoned reflection): 2% of responses
“This questionnaire, and similar initiatives always get me thinking. What bothers me is that in my case my heritage is mixed – French, Irish and Mohawk. The answers provided do not take into account people of multiple origins, and even more interesting, they do not distinguish the origins between Canadian indigenous heritages. Do you see why I am so impassioned about this? It makes me wonder what exactly it means to have “Canadian” origins.” (#41)

Source: The Study’s meta-questionnaire
A significant increase in values and intentions for democratic issues and transformational education:

**Themes from the initial questionnaire:**
- Difficulty in developing reasoned and critical reflection on these topics,
- An educational and democratic deficit in relation to the state, the school, and citizens

**Themes from the follow-up questionnaire:**
- Evidence of participants’ desire to fill these gaps
- A notable inclination to explore and embrace democratic values -
Possible solutions

PERSPECTIVES of EDUCATION for DEMOCRACY

- **Provide a meaningful forum for expression and deliberative democracy** so engagement, critique and social can take place.

- **Nurture the concepts** of citizenship and democracy at an early age throughout the educational experience in formal and informal ways, inside and outside of classroom.

- **Provide examples** of, and a context for, robust, thick and critical thick democratic participation.

- **Facilitate democratic activities** in school (student consultation, educational activities, inter-school exchanges, service education, deliberative democracy, fora for the community).

- **Promote the benefits** of these activities to pupils, students, teachers, families, and the wider community with open, sustained and critical assessments of what democracy does and should look like.

- **Demonstrating and encouraging critical engagement** for democratic participation and social justice.

- **Promoting interdisciplinary education that is not constrained by disciplinary boundaries**, and is open to diverse epistemological thinking and perspectives.
Paul R. Carr (Lakehead University, Orillia), Brad J. Porfilio (Lewis University)
et Franck Potwora (Associate Researcher)
The Purpose of Schooling: K-20 USA

- To support the dominant interests in society (Chomsky, 1999).
- Universities are considered completely corporatized institutions (Tuchman, 2012).
- To control knowledge production
- Indoctrinate people to support dominant myths, values, ideals, and relationships
Hedges 2011: K-12 Schooling

...Prizes test scores above critical thinking and literacy. It celebrates rote vocational training and the singular, amoral skill of making money. It churns out stunted human products, lacking the capacity and vocabulary to challenge the assumptions and structures of the corporate state. It funnels them into a caste system of drones and systems managers. It transforms a democratic state into a feudal system of corporate masters and serfs.
As a result, the democratic mission of the university as a public good has all but vanished. And many of the (never fully realized) ideals of academic life – academic freedom (in my case, freedom of political expression), intellectual independence, collective projects, and pursuit of the common good – have been circumscribed or taken off the table altogether on a growing number of college and university campuses across North America. -
Undemocratic Forces in Higher Education in the US: Some Examples

- The Rise of the For-Profits and the Shutting of the “Revolving Door”
- Adjuncts make up over 70% of the professoriate class
- Growth of the administrative class
- Corporate leaders becoming university leaders
- Corporations controlling knowledge production
- Eliminating bodies and programs that may status the status quo
The social identity becomes an organizational identity. Instead of being defined in “two-way relations with other people, people become defined by the one-way definition of the organization’s architects and designers.”

Who we are socially is replaced by what we are to the organization (Hummell, 2005).
Saint Louis University: Characteristics

- Founded in 1818
- Welcomes 12,531 undergraduate students and 5300 graduate students from 50 states and 70 countries.
- Research One University
- Jesuit University
- Cost-$36,091
Education as a Humanizing Force: Students’ experiences with Democracy

- Despite the dominance of corporate and bureaucratic formations dominating K-20 schools in North America, schools do hold the potential to foster personal understanding and social transformation.

- Therefore, we unearthed whether students held some key insights surrounding democracy, despite being locate in an undemocratic social context and an oppressive educational institution.

- Many individuals did expose the oppressive reign of Father Biondi, even if they may have faced reprisals.
Respondents:

- **Respondents**: n=114
- **Gender**: women: 79%; men: 21%
- **Ages**: 21 and under: 75%; 22-30 years old: 16%
- **Place of birth and education**: United States: 96%
- **Ethnic origin**: White-European: 86%
- **Ethnic minorities**: 14% (Black: 7%; Asian: 3%; First Nations: 2%, Latin American: 1%; Arabic: 1%)
- **Educational level reached**: 1\textsuperscript{st} or 2\textsuperscript{nd} year of Bachelors degree in Education: 53%, 3\textsuperscript{rd} or 4\textsuperscript{th} year of Bachelors degree in Education: 25%, completed Bachelors degree: 3.5%, Masters: 7%, Doctorate: 6%
- **Major**: Education: elementary: 27%; secondary: 12%; Curriculum and Instruction: 9%; Special Education: 8%; Early Childhood: 8%
Participants’ critical Insights toward building a democratic Society
(using Likert scale)

What is democracy (in the US)?

- The citizen is an essential part of the democratic process: 12%
  - It's your civic responsibility to keep the idea of democracy alive (#18)
- Social justice and education issues are ignored: 26%
- Feel deceived due to the superficiality of the process of elections: 31%
- The power of citizens to govern collectively, the collective ideal: 22%
  - Political ideology that emphasizes citizen involvement and government "by the people (#S2Q1-3)
Participants’ critical Insights toward building a democratic Society (using Likert scale)

How can democracy be improved in the US?

- The State needs to fix the regulations in order to guarantee a balance of powers notably by limiting the influence of lobbyists and by favoring social and economic equity. The State must also favor representation for and by the people, particularly by changing the electoral system and expanding representation of political parties: 18%
  - Have more checks and balances (#S2Q16-22)

- Educating citizens, inclusively by the media, should be better developed in order to be sure that the information may render a more civic conscience: 11%
  - Make sure that all people are educated about the issues. (#2Q16-18)
Participants’ critical Insights toward building a democratic Society
(using Likert scale)

What does social justice look like in the US

- Democracy and power of the people and for the people, are understood as being untied and equitable. Both go together. (46%)
  - Democracy and social justice go hand in hand. We cannot have the empowerment of democracy without a feeling of social justice. (#S2Q10-1)

- Each individual has the same rights, and society has a responsibility to ensure that this endures. (But this isn’t the case today.) Participants expressed values that democracy should support: (34.5%)
  - The people have to be represented equally and treated fairly for a stable democracy. This means that all races and beliefs are of equal interest and representation. (#S2Q10-50)
Participants’ critical Insights toward building a democratic Society
(using Likert scale)

How did the university experience impact your conception of democracy?

- 58%: The influence was moderate to non-existent. (1,2,3/5)
- 42%: The influence was notable to strong. (4,5/5)
- 50%: Religion has nothing or little to do with citizenship. (1,2/5)
- 46%: My former highschool and/or middle schoolteachers were a factor and awakened or influenced me positively.
As a future teacher, how do you feel about the challenges of democracy?

- 66%: Teachers, if they are able, should talk to their students about democracy; they should explain how a democracy works and they must guide their students toward developing critical thoughts and self-affirmation.
  - Not only are they capable - I believe they have a duty to do so as teachers. (#S2Q12-1)
  - I think it is part of our educational system's (k-12) job to teach children about how our government operates. In that respect, students must learn about democracy but I also think they need to learn to think critically about it. (#S2Q12-3)
Participants’ critical Insights toward building a democratic Society
(using Likert scale)

As a future teacher, how do you feel about the challenges of democracy?

- 53%: Saint Louis University prepares me poorly to teach democracy.

- 2.1%: No, or a little; teaching methods or life on campus doesn’t lend itself to learning about it or not at least not yet:
  - I attending this university to increase my engagement in democracy and have not had professors encourage me to do so. (#S2Q13-3)
  - The school does not discuss social justice issues as often as it should. (#S2Q13-58)
  - I really do not feel like they have given us much opportunity to grow and learn in this area. (#S2Q13-12)
Undemocratic Leadership: Father Biondi
Saint Louis University: An Undemocratic Institution

- The Former university president silences dissent
- Eliminating structures, policies, and bodies to centralize control, including graduate studies, the tenure process and firing people without due process.
- Implementing policies and bodies to centralize control.
- Intimidation and retribution
SLU: Corporate and Ideological Control

- Merit Pay
- Wage freeze and hiring freeze (2008)
- The building of a basketball arena and closing of neighborhood schools
- Opening of charter schools
- Purge bodies who are not loyal Catholics
- Firing or intimidating faculty who fail to net grant dollars or critical of the institutional and wider status quo.
Undemocratic: Eliminating Dissent

- Sadly, those subject to the reprisals are among the most highly respected professors on campus, and the most devoted to the university’s core values. They include department chairs, program directors and a number of Jesuit priests (St. Louis Post, 2013).
....The fall semester was rough for him, with letters being leaked, alumni waving protest banners behind him at a Billiken’s basketball game, no-confidence votes coming from both faculty and student governing bodies, the new law dean bailing, and the chair of theological studies stepping down on moral grounds (Cooperman 2013).
Thoughts and suggestions on how to create a riche democracy at school and in society.

- Guide students and their interrogate dominant myths surrounding the US society.
- Promote individual expression so that the political message of some helps to fight against the social discrimination of others.
- Breakdown and teach the concepts of citizenship and democracy at an early age.
- Provide examples of successful participatory democracies.
- Lead democratic activities at school (consult students, pedagogical activities, interschool exchanges).
- Promote the benefits of these activities with students.
- Show and encourage critical engagement in favor of democratic issues and social justice.
- Favor an interdisciplinary education.
SLU Faculty Say President Biondi Is A Tyrant
LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY SAMPLE
THUNDER BAY & ORILLIA

Daniel H. Becker
Lakehead University, Orillia
Dismantle Hegemony

• If the effects of hegemony in society are to be dismantled, education must be part of the equation, and, importantly, teacher-education needs to be congruent with the types of change required.
Who are the Participants?

**Figure 3 – Participant Characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>First Generation University Student</th>
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<td>M=0</td>
<td>RM=9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4=3</td>
<td>D=0</td>
<td>W=143</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5=2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thunder Bay (n=118)</td>
<td>M=38</td>
<td>1=24</td>
<td>U=9</td>
<td>A=6</td>
<td>FG=57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F=76</td>
<td>2=58</td>
<td>P=72</td>
<td>M=4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3=20</td>
<td>M=26</td>
<td>RM=14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4=12</td>
<td>D=7</td>
<td>W=92</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5=0</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL SAMPLE (n=286)</td>
<td>M=60</td>
<td>1=107</td>
<td>U=84</td>
<td>A=12</td>
<td>FG=155</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F=221</td>
<td>2=119</td>
<td>P=162</td>
<td>M=7</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3=37</td>
<td>M=26</td>
<td>RM=23</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4=15</td>
<td>D=7</td>
<td>W=235</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5=2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Identifiers

• Identifiers are used to help the reader to picture and contextualize the respondent
• First variable – Participant #
• Second variable – Gender (M or F)
• Third variable – Age (1=22 &under; 2=23-30; 3=31-40; 4=41-50; 5=51+)
• Fourth variable – Program (U-Undergraduate; P=Professional year program; G=Graduate)
• Fifth variable – Race (A=Aboriginal; M=Mixed race; RM-Racial minority; W=White)
• Sixth Variable - First Generation University Student (FG = First Generation University Student)

Example: 162–F–1–P–W- FG

Would refer to Participant 162, who is female, in the 22 and under age group, in the Professional program, and is a White, First Generation University Student
What?

- A sample of **pre-service teacher perceptions** related to:
  - **Democracy and Education**
  - **Critical pedagogical framework**
  - Gage the **implications of hegemony**.
What?

• Survey with 3 Sections
  – Likert & open-ended

• Demographic Information
  – 19 Questions

• Democracy
  – 10 Questions

• Democracy & Education
  – 10 Questions
Definition of Democracy

- Themes:
  - Voting
  - Equality
  - Freedom

- “government that the people choose”
  (74-F-1-U-W)
- Democracy is equality in society, ultimately
  (90-F-1-U-W-FG)
- “The freedom to practice your religion, freedom of speech and freedom to live without persecution”
  (104-F-3-P-RM-FG)
Canadian Democracy

What should/could be done to improve democracy in Canada?

• **Systemic/Structural Change**
  - Orillia 44 of 99
  - Thunder Bay 52 of 81

  “Switching to system of proportional representation within parliament would be a good start. After that, it would behoove the government to be more open and transparent to its already disenfranchised constituents. Then maybe they might see better turnouts at the polls and more active participation in government from the people” (61 – M – N/A – P – W)

• **Greater Involvement of the People**
  - Orillia 29 of 99
  - Thunder Bay 31 of 81

  “People need to be involved, but they also need to be more aware.” (81 – F – 2 – P – RM)
United States Democracy

Do you feel that the USA is a democratic country?
(1=not very democratic at all; 5=very democratic)

• Themes:
  – Orillia
  – Same as Canada 25 of 102
    “I think the U.S.A. is similar to Canada for the same reasons, different circumstances”
    (63-F-2-P-W-FG)

– Not Very Democratic 52 of 102
  “I think that a democratic society all citizens should have a fair chance and I only see the wealthy getting more say in the US.”
  (75 – M – 2 – P – W)
United States Democracy
Do you feel that the USA is a democratic country?
(1=not very democratic at all; 5= very democratic)

• Themes:
• Thunder Bay
• Voting 17 of 76
  • “Every citizen is allowed a vote, and one vote only. Elections are held for most levels of government: municipal, state, federal.”
  (13-M-3-P-W)
• Not Very Democratic 48 of 76
  • “The notion of privilege is very obvious. The Christian White rule is very obvious in many cases and in many of the regulations that exist. Some aspects of inclusion are preached but rarely practiced or implemented.”
  (109– M – 3 – U – RM)
USA Democracy

- Perspective guided by the mainstream media from the United States
- Democracy is primarily about voting.
Do feel that the following countries are democratic?
(1=not very democratic at all; 5=very democratic)

- Brazil
  - Thunder Bay: m=2.8
  - Orillia: m=2.7
- China
  - m=1.5
  - m=1.7
- Cuba
  - m=1.6
  - m=1.5
- France
  - m=3.7
  - m=3.5
- India
  - m=2.5
  - m=2.2
- Iraq
  - m=1.6
  - m=1.6
- Japan
  - m=3.1
  - m=2.7
- Russia
  - m=2.4
  - m=2.3
- Saudi Arabia
  - m=1.6
  - m=1.7
- South Africa
  - m=2.7
  - m=2.4
Do feel that the follow countries are democratic?
On what basis do you make these choices?

- Responses ranged from “guessing” through to preconceptions presented by and through the popular media.

“A limited knowledge of world history and current events (I watch the news occasionally). Many are best guesses and remembrances” (25-M-1-P-W).
Aboriginal Peoples

Do you feel that Aboriginal peoples of Canada are a full part of Canadian Democracy?

• Respondents felt that Aboriginal Peoples were at a disadvantage within Canadian democracy.

69 of 96 Thunder Bay respondents felt as though Aboriginal Peoples are not a full part of democracy.

59 out of 75 participants in Orillia mentioned sentiments concerning the problematic relationship between Aboriginal Peoples and Canadian democracy.
Aboriginal Peoples

Do you feel that Aboriginal peoples of Canada are a full part of Canadian Democracy?

• “I don’t think they are, I feel the country overlooks aboriginal people. they should have more say than anyone this is their country” (62-M-2-P-RM-FG)

• “From what I have learned, their voice is not heard by the government and they have been forced into many things that have happened to them such as land treaties, laws” (65-F-3-P-W-FG);

• “No, they are not. They are an after thought of the government, band aid solutions to many of the problems faced by aboriginal people, they are not even the ones to choose the way they would like to be referred to.” (104-F-4-P-RM-FG).
Education and Democracy - Orillia

• From Your Perspective, is the education system in which you were educated democratic?
  (1=not very democratic at all; 5= very democratic)
  • 1= 12.1%
  • 2= 20.7%
  • 3= 44%
  • 4= 18.1%
  • 5= 5.2%
  • m= 2.8

• Themes:
  – Voting/Voice/Choice
    21 of 79
  – School Structure/Roll of Teacher
    21 of 79
  – Dissent
    32 of 79
Education and Democracy – Orillia

From Your Perspective, is the education system in which you were educated democratic?

• **Voting/Voice/Choice** 21 of 79
  “I don't feel like we vote for small decisions but big ones. I wish we could vote for small decisions that we care about” (72 – F – 1 – U – W)

• **School Structure/Roll of the Teacher** 21 of 79
  “It felt like the teacher had all the power” (92 – F – 3 – P – W)

• **Dissent** 32 of 79
  “i am almost sure that most students do not know how to even define democracy.” (18 – F – 2 – M – RM – FG)
Education and Democracy – Thunder Bay

• From Your Perspective, is the education system in which you were educated democratic?
  (1=not very democratic at all; 5= very democratic)
  • 1= 11%
  • 2= 25.6%
  • 3= 37.8%
  • 4= 20.73%
  • 5= 4.9%
  • m= 2.8

• Themes:
  • Voting/Voice/Choice
    29 of 70
  • Dissent/Problems
    29 of 79
From Your Perspective, is the education system in which you were educated democratic?

• Voting/Voice/Choice 29 of 70
  “Little say in what is being learned, how it is being taught and how it is being assessed.” (16 – F – 2 – U – W)

• Dissent 29 of 79
  “It was the industrial education complex. Not available to all, serving less and affordable to no one.” (82 – M – 3 – P – W)
Common Threads - Democracy

• **Common threads** that emerged from the responses concerning democracy included:
  • a focus on democracy being about, principally, **voting**;
  • a **limited understanding** of the extent to which other countries are democratic;
  • the role Aboriginal people play in Canadian democracy is problematic.
Relationship Between Knowledge & Power

- Participants had difficulty employing an effective language and argumentation required to frame critical dialogs and deliberative democracy to unpack the relationship between power and knowledge.
Critical Language

In order to unlock the transformative potential of education, teacher educators must begin to use the critical thinking, concepts and dialog that brings to light the nature of hegemony.
Conclusions

• Compatible with what we have seen in diverse international contexts

• **Widespread:**
  – Neoliberalism
  – Globalization
  – Apolitical educational experiences & relationships to social justice
Methods of Analysis

- Creating four sets of relevant questions from questionnaires with different themes from the research:

1. Thick democracy
2. Transformative education
3. Formal democracy
4. Formal education

Notes:

1. The questions were grouped together according to a comprehensive analysis of trends and results of related studies.

2. Overall, the questions were the same from one university to another. Language, context and research developments account for any rare adaptations.
Methods of Analysis

- A weighted average score based on the degree of quantitative and qualitative responses, including:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Youngstown</th>
<th>Montréal</th>
<th>Saint-Louis</th>
<th>Orillia</th>
<th>Thunder Bay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>12348</td>
<td>2212</td>
<td>4732</td>
<td>2473</td>
<td>1713</td>
<td>1218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>9901</td>
<td>1943</td>
<td>4923</td>
<td>1057</td>
<td>1082</td>
<td>896</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Score category</th>
<th>n=</th>
<th>Youngstown</th>
<th>UQÀM</th>
<th>Saint-Louis</th>
<th>Orillia</th>
<th>Thunder Bay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did your school experience have an impact on your thinking about democracy?</td>
<td>quantitatif</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>qualitatif</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>2.48</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>weighted average</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total weighted average: $2.68 = (109 \times 2.83) + (2.51 \times 97) / (109 + 97)$
Defining the 4 Axes

Axis 1: Inclination to change in favour of a thick democracy:

To what degree do respondents commit to democracy (the depth and enthusiasm of actions and human and social relations related to societal empowerment, social justice and political literacy)?

Questions

• After September 11, 2001, has your understanding of citizenship changed? (Y, M, S)
• How important do you feel the issue of religion is in relation to citizenship? (Y, M, S)
• How important do you feel the issue of racism is in relation to democracy? (Y, S)
• How important do you feel the issue of social justice is in relation to democracy? (Y, M, S, O, T)
• How are social justice issues related to citizenship? (Y, S)
• Do you feel that aboriginal peoples are a full part of Canadian democracy? (O, T)
• As a citizen, do you feel that you fully participate in your society? (Y, M, S)
• Do you feel that you are actively engaged in democracy? (Y, M, S, O, T)
• In general, do you consider that the students of [your university] are engaged as a citizens? (M)
• What should/could be done to improve democracy in Canada? (Y, M, S, O, T)
• Do you agree with this premise: « In my country, some have more rights than others? » (Y, S)
• How do you see the relationship between citizenship and racism? (Y, S)
• In your opinion, what is the importance of the relationship between the issues of discrimination and of democracy? (M)
• Can you be a good citizen without voting? (Y, M, S)
• In your opinion, are citizenship and democracy interlinked? (Y, S)
Defining the 4 Axes

**Axis 2: Inclination to change in favour of transformative education:**
-To what degree do respondents commit to transformative education (the depth and support for democracy in relation to social justice and critical engagement in education)?

**Questions**

Do you feel that primary and secondary education teachers should include issues related to democracy? *(Y, M, S)*

As a future teacher, to what extent do you think you will be concerned with education for citizenship? *(Y, M, S)*

Would you change anything with the way that citizenship education is practiced in schools in your province/state? *(Y, M)*

Do you feel that teachers should promote a sense of democracy in students? *(O, T)*

Do you feel that teachers should teach about controversial issues? *(O, T)*

If you are planning to teach in a school setting, how would you promote education for democracy? *(O, T)*
Defining the 4 Axes

Axis 3: Degree of commitment to formal democracy:

To what degree do respondents commit to formal democracy (voting mechanisms, elections, representation through elected officials, a normative understanding of democracy)?

Questions

In your opinion, how important are elections to democracy? (Y, M, S, O, T)

Are you (or have you been) a member of a political party? (Y, M, S, O, T)

Are you satisfied with the issues raised during elections? (Y, M, S)

Do you feel that Canada is a democratic country? (M, S, O, T)

Do you feel that the United States of America (USA) is a democratic country? (Y, S, O, T)

In general, are you satisfied with the quality of elected officials in your country? (Y, S)

Do you vote in elections for which you have been eligible to vote? (Y, M, S, O, T)

To be a good citizen, should you agree with the Constitution? (M)
Defining the 4 Axes

Axis 4: Degree of commitment to formal education:

To what degree do respondents commit to formal education (structured within the normative requirements of state education and highly influenced by neoliberal context)?

Questions
Has your pre-school to university education influenced your conception of citizenship? (Y, S)
Did your school experience have an impact on your thinking about democracy? (Y, M, S, O, T)
Would you say you are or have been well prepared at university to engage in citizenship education? (Y, S)
From your perspective, is the education system in which you were educated democratic? (Y, M, S, O, T)
From your perspective, has your university education promoted an understanding of democracy? (Y, M, S, O, T)
In general, do you consider that the students of the Faculty of Education [at your university] understand the issues and the foundations of democracy in their society? (M)
When you were at school did your teachers raise issues related to democracy? (O, T)
Analytical framework

- **Quantitative data**: Respondents’ scores

- **Qualitative data**: Degree of political literacy and critical engagement, according to the followings criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>No Involvement and critique</td>
<td>Weak involvement and critique</td>
<td>Medium involvement and critique</td>
<td>Elaborated involvement and critique</td>
<td>Thick involvement and critique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of understanding</td>
<td>Unprecise answer</td>
<td>Simple echo to the question</td>
<td>Elaborated, subjective and involved argumentation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No relevant answer</td>
<td>No argumentation</td>
<td>Weak argumentation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No interest</td>
<td>Weakly-developed answer</td>
<td>Weakly-developed answer</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**: The results obtained from the qualitative and quantitative responses of students reveal weak political literacy and critical engagement. **This is despite the fact that** those who could be considered most engaged were primarily those who took the time to respond to the qualitative, open-ended questions.
Analysis

Inclination to change in favour of a thick democracy

Engagement towards a thick democracy

Quantitative Data

Qualitative Data

- Youngstown
- Montréal
- Saint-Louis
- Orillia
- ThunderBay
## Analysis

**AXIS #1:**
Inclination to change in favour of a thick democracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Types de notes</th>
<th>n=</th>
<th>Youngstown</th>
<th>n=</th>
<th>UQÀM</th>
<th>n=</th>
<th>Saint-Louis</th>
<th>n=</th>
<th>Orillia</th>
<th>n=</th>
<th>Thunder Bay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Que pensez-vous de la relation entre citoyenneté et racisme?)</td>
<td>quantitatif</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>2,15</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>2,24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>qualitatif</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>moyenne pondérée</td>
<td>2,15</td>
<td>2,24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selon vous, quelle est l'importance de la relation entre la discrimination et celle de la démocratie?</td>
<td>quantitatif</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>4,19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>qualitatif</td>
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<td>2,57</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>moyenne pondérée</td>
<td>3,42</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peut-on être un bon citoyen sans voter?</td>
<td>quantitatif</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>3,23</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>2,99</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>3,49</td>
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<td></td>
<td>qualitatif</td>
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<td>2,79</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>moyenne pondérée</td>
<td>3,03</td>
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<td>3,49</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selon vous, est-ce que la citoyenneté et la démocratie sont interrelées?</td>
<td>quantitatif</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>3,59</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>3,75</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>qualitatif</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>2,51</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>moyenne pondérée</td>
<td>3,15</td>
<td>3,25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moyenne totale &quot;Engagement&quot;</td>
<td>quantitatif</td>
<td>883</td>
<td>3,29</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>1,16</td>
<td>1066</td>
<td>3,43</td>
<td>3,38</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>3,59</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>qualitatif</td>
<td>726</td>
<td>2,63</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>2,49</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>2,37</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>2,70</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>3,08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>moyenne pondérée</td>
<td>2,94</td>
<td>2,81</td>
<td>3,11</td>
<td>3,07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Overall difficulty to justify the respondent’s scores via qualitative responses (lines 51 Vs. 52)
- Specifically younger and less educated students: St. Louis
Analysis

Axis #1: Inclination to change in favour of a thick democracy

- Quantitative analysis: The values and perceptions in favour of a change towards a thick democracy were evident (lines 12 and 18) and even significant (lines 15 and 42), however, only moderate when connected to the matter of religion (line 9).

- Quantitative analysis: However, students perceived being weakly committed to democracy (line 27), but believed that they meet the necessary conditions to be a good citizen, (line 24) reducing the rate towards a thicker democracy.

- Qualitative analysis: Finally, reducing even more the momentum for change was the exceptionally low capability of students to express their values and perceptions, to argue, to conceptualize, to make connections, and to translate to reality (line 51 vs. line 52).

- Overall assessment: The engagement with democracy suffers from an incoherent notion of political literacy, poorly integrated with citizenship education, and even less so with teachers, the educators of future citizens.
Analysis
Inclination to change in favour of transformative education

Engagement towards transformative education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Quantitative Data</th>
<th>Qualitative Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youngstown</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>3.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montréal</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>3.04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saint-Louis</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orillia</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>2.89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thunder Bay</td>
<td>4.23</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AXIS #2
Inclination to change in favour of transformative education

Quantitative Data

Qualitative Data
Quantitative analysis: Students in **Montreal**, despite a persuasive score for transformative education (4.06/5), are less likely to justify and articulate this change in their written responses (2.89/5)

Quantitative analysis: This can also be explained in **Youngstown**, as the students are younger, and probably the least prepared to develop a critical, reasoned, and nuanced argument for transformative education
Axis #2: Likelihood of momentum towards a transformative education

Quantitative analysis: A strong adherence to the values of education for democracy and citizenship (lines 92, 95, 101, and 104), but again, the way that the exercise of transformative education is perceived remains very ambiguous, even compromised when students are not cultivated to be conscious of political literacy (lines 110 vs. 111).

Qualitative analysis: Moreover, the novelty for education students to have power and responsibility to prepare young people for civic life, the early stage of their education training, and their expressed weakness of previous democratic education all imply their lack of confidence, fear, tendency to conform, and a wait-and-see approach, rather than being assertive and innovative themselves (with the general exception of students from Thunder Bay, older students, and those who were about to teach.)

Overall assessment: The result is silence, detachment or rejection, all of which are particularly harmful to the requisites of citizenship/democratic education and the construction of a thick democracy.
Analysis

Degree of commitment to formal democracy

Engagement towards formal democracy

Quantitative Data
- Youngstown: 3.81
- Montréal: 3.26
- Saint-Louis: 3.46
- Orillia: 3.17
- Thunder Bay: 3.23

Qualitative Data
- Youngstown: 3.27
- Montréal: 2.78
- Saint-Louis: 2.90
- Orillia: 2.69
- Thunder Bay: 2.87
### Axis 3 - Engagement towards formal democracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Types de notes</th>
<th>n= Youngstown</th>
<th>n= UQAM</th>
<th>n= Saint-Louis</th>
<th>n= Orillia</th>
<th>n= Thunder Bay</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Considerer-vous les elections importantes pour la democratie?</td>
<td>quantitatif</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>254</td>
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<td>130</td>
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<td>3,36</td>
<td>4,35</td>
<td>4,32</td>
<td>4,38</td>
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<td>Etes-vous membre d'un parti politique? (traduite en note 5, 1 étant le minimum)</td>
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<td>114</td>
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<td>129</td>
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<td>2,96</td>
<td>2,59</td>
<td>1,36</td>
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<td>Etes-vous satisfait des problematiques soulevees pendant les elections?</td>
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<td>250</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>129</td>
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<td>2,96</td>
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<td>Considerez-vous que le Canada soit un pays democratique</td>
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<td>3,08</td>
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<tr>
<td>Considerez-vous les Etats-Unis comme un pays democratique?</td>
<td>quantitatif</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>qualitatif</td>
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<td>3,22</td>
<td>3,49</td>
<td>2,93</td>
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<tr>
<td>En general, etes-vous satisfait de la qualite des elus dans votre pays?</td>
<td>quantitatif</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>3,12</td>
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<td>2,45</td>
<td>3,12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avez-vous toujours vote aux elections auxquelles vous pouvez participer?</td>
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<td>114</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>92</td>
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<td>(traduite en note 5 pour Youngstown, UQAM et Saint-Louis)</td>
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<td>115</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>101</td>
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<td>3,67</td>
<td>3,49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pour un etre un bon citoyen, faut-il etre d'accord avec la Constitution?</td>
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<td>234</td>
<td>2,93</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Analysis

**Axis #3: Degree of commitment to formal democracy**

- **Quantitative analysis:** Institutional voting benchmarks and elections abound, suggestive of political inertia lending to formal democracy (lines 59 or 77).

- **Quantitative analysis:** However, it should be noted that in Canada (UQAM, Orillia and Thunder Bay) respondents are not members of a political party as they almost "automatically" are in the United States (line 62).

- **Quantitative analysis:** Finally, it is interesting to note that it was U.S. respondents (Youngstown and St. Louis), especially younger students, that most supported the formal, normative model of democracy and that older students least supported a formal model of democracy.

- **Overall assessment:** The incoherent political literacy of students reflects their difficulty in taking a position on a specific topic, and also suggests their weak civic engagement.
Axis #4
Degree of commitment to formal education

Analysis

Engagement towards formal education

Quantitative Data
Qualitative Data

- Youngstown
- Montréal
- Saint-Louis
- Orillia
- Thunder Bay

2.98 3.20 3.24 2.84 2.90
2.52 2.79 2.57 2.61 2.77
## Analysis

### Degree of commitment to formal education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Types de notes</th>
<th>Youngstown</th>
<th>UQÀM</th>
<th>Saint-Louis</th>
<th>Orillia</th>
<th>Thunder Bay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vos études antérieures aux études universitaires ont-elles eu une influence sur votre conception de la citoyenneté?</td>
<td>quantitatif</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>2,94</td>
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<td>2,84</td>
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<tr>
<td>Est-ce que votre expérience scolaire a eu une influence sur votre perception de la démocratie?</td>
<td>quantitatif</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>109</td>
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<td>Direz-vous que vous êtes ou avez bien été préparé à l'université pour aborder l'éducation à la citoyenneté?</td>
<td>quantitatif</td>
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<td>106</td>
<td>116</td>
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<td>79</td>
<td>70</td>
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<td>2,61</td>
<td>3,54</td>
<td>2,77</td>
<td>2,84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considérez-vous que le système d'enseignement dans lequel vous avez reçu votre éducation est démocratique?</td>
<td>quantitatif</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>2,84</td>
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<td>3,16</td>
<td>2,77</td>
<td>2,84</td>
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<tr>
<td>Considérez-vous que l'enseignement reçu par les étudiants en sciences de l'éducation à l'Université X leur permette d'être à leur tour de bons enseignants sur les questions relatives à la démocratie? From your perspective, has your university education promoted an understanding of democracy?</td>
<td>quantitatif</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>3,07</td>
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<td>2,72</td>
<td>3,05</td>
<td>2,90</td>
<td>3,11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De manière générale, considérez-vous que les étudiants de la Faculté des sciences de l'éducation de l'UQÀM comprennent les enjeux et les fondements de la démocratie au sein de leur société?</td>
<td>quantitatif</td>
<td>245</td>
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<td>When you were at school did your teachers raise issues related to democracy?</td>
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</table>

**Moyenne totale "Engagement"**

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<tr>
<th>Types de notes</th>
<th>Youngstown</th>
<th>UQÀM</th>
<th>Saint-Louis</th>
<th>Orillia</th>
<th>Thunder Bay</th>
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<td>quantitatif</td>
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<td>5,20</td>
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<td>3,00</td>
<td>3,05</td>
<td>2,74</td>
<td>2,83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Axis #4: Degree of commitment to formal education

- Quantitative analysis: The students' perception is that the school does not serve as a vehicle for or against transformative education: respondents are generally quite neutral. They tend to believe that the school (i.e. university) has not changed their notion of democracy or citizenship. Although they believe that school is generally undemocratic, their collective motivation to address these issues is little to none (line 142).

- Quantitative analysis: We can also note that while students in Montreal adhere to the formal model of education, there are also those that raise the most vehement criticism against it. In the same vein, while they would choose to sustain the formal model of democracy, they are also the most hostile towards it.

- Quantitative analysis: Meanwhile, students from Youngstown position themselves as very neutral with respect to the critical nature of the democratic components of their education, and are potentially the least likely to criticize it.
**Axis #4: Likelihood to commit to formal education**

**Overall assessment:** On one hand, we could conclude that the neutrality of perceptions of education could be reflective of the neutrality of the education participants received; and, on the other, that it opposes the expressed values favouring social justice for transformative education, which would exclude any influence of the educational system.

**Overall assessment:** On the other hand, we could conclude that students, especially the younger ones, above and beyond their neutrality, are confronted with their own progressive attitudes – consciously or not – that position them against the perceived illegitimacy of critical education in their role as young learners.
Education students’ critique involvement and political literacy

Schéma comparatif: 5 universités

Transformative education

Formal democracy

Thick democracy

Combined (qualitative/quantitative) & weighted average
Reflection

While it may seem unlikely, in these models it appears that the teacher education students’ perceptions and perspectives on transformative education and thick democracy almost perfectly superimpose on one another.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that these university surveys are in different contexts, including urban/rural, English/French, American/Canadian, and in the North, and over the past 8 year-period (2006-2013).
Analysis: DIFFERENT INFLUENCES ON RESPONDENTS’ PERSPECTIVES ON DEMOCRACY IN EDUCATION

- Education and parental involvement: connected to progressive democratic and educational perspectives

  - Parents’ higher levels of education and socio-professional status—especially of the father—explain the greater tendency of their children towards transformative education and commitment to a thick democracy.

  - Teachers must understand that there are many circumstance that affect the success and abilities of a student. We must be the cheerleader that believes in every child’s ability to contribute.

(T -12- Q34 - Mother and father have both completed their university education and both belong to socio-professional "Professional" category)
Analysis: DIFFERENT INFLUENCES ON RESPONDENTS’ PERSPECTIVES ON DEMOCRACY IN EDUCATION

Education and parental involvement: connected to progressive democratic and educational perspectives

- The political commitment of students’ parents when the students were children, weighed against how heavily they currently adhere to formal democracy.
  - Not very, I am what my parents are because that is how I was raised. (Y-85; ITEM 7)
  - I think so. But again, my parents are very influential and aspire to cultivate children who are interested in democracy and politics. (S-74; 2.13)
  - We never discussed this subject at school. My parents, who worked with the Government of Canada took care of my education and influenced the people who surrounded me. (M -138, 2.11)
The age of the students and their level of education is linked to their critical capacity and their capacity for empowerment

- Generally speaking, the older and more advanced the respondents were in their educational programs (PhD, Masters, Professional year), the more mature, the greater their political literacy, and the greater their likelihood to engage in transformative education and have a passion for thick democracy.

- Social Justice is realizing that people are treated unequally and that the balance of the world is uneven. From the homeless or less fortunate in our own community, to the farmers of cocoa and coffee and fair trade products. Children who are forced into child labour and not allowed to attend school or live with their families. There is an unjust balance or power and economy which has to continue to be addressed. (T-36-Q36- Master’s level student)
The age of the students and their level of education is linked to their critical capacity and their empowerment.

In contrast, those at a younger age and at the start of their university studies exhibited less willingness to change or pursue their ideals.

As a general observation, their critical capacity depended on their perceived need to comply with the official rules, to respect, defend and even appreciate them, in their reluctance to defy or critique authority.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM 15</th>
<th>Youngstown</th>
<th>2.16-UQÀM</th>
<th>S2Q16-Saint-Louis</th>
<th>2.9-Orillia</th>
<th>2.9-Thunder Bay</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What should/could be done to improve democracy in Canada?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>3.57</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age categories</td>
<td>&lt;22: 82%</td>
<td>&lt;23: 52%</td>
<td>&lt;22: 75%</td>
<td>&lt;23: 50%</td>
<td>&lt;23: 21%</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM 15</th>
<th>Youngstown</th>
<th>2.16-UQÀM</th>
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<td>What should/could be done to improve democracy in Canada?</td>
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<td>Age categories</td>
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<td>B.e.d. 3-4: 27%</td>
<td>B.e.d. 1-2: 53%</td>
<td>B.e.d. 3-4: 25%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B.e.d. 1-2: 28%</td>
<td>B.e.d. 3-4: 7%</td>
<td>B.e.d. 1-2: 17%</td>
<td>B.e.d. 3-4: 12%</td>
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<td>B.e.d. 1-2: 12%</td>
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</table>
Perception of hierarchical legitimacy and submission in society and at school: neutral and apolitical democratic impulses

- Cultural hegemony affects the developing minds of young students. Part of formal democracy is a rigid target, which requires an immersion in formal education.
- This call for formality does not necessarily harm their ideals of change and transformation, but it does jeopardize their initial assumptions and motives.

1) Thinking back to high school, would you say that you learned a great deal about citizenship in school? It did on a basis of learning the facts about our government and our country, but not exactly how I can actively become a good citizen. (S-71-S3Q6)

2) Do you feel that teachers should strive to inculcate a sense of democracy in school students? Yes! One of the biggest demographics that doesn't vote or participate in politics is ours. Teachers can help to change this! (S-71-S2Q12)
The perception of the hierarchical legitimacy and submissive nature in society and at school: neutral and apolitical democratic impulses

Furthermore, the hegemonic neutralization infiltrates citizen action at school (as a professionals teaching space) even more than in society.

The substantiation of these values would be even more dangerous and incriminating when it comes to being lax as a professional than as a citizen, considering financial risk, on one hand, and the comfortable isolation of citizens of the other.

Profile: We'll see when I get there; it will depend on how open my administration is. Once I get good and comfortable then I'll see what more I am able to do.
The perception of the hierarchical legitimacy and submissive nature in society and at school: neutral and apolitical democratic impulses

Should we improve democracy? if so, how?

- No, otherwise it would already have been done. (M -126)

Can one be a good citizen without voting?

- A good citizen will vote. It is the act officially established by the state for each person to exercising his/her right. (M -48)

Would you change anything about the way citizenship education is practiced in Quebec schools?

- I’ll see when I'm teaching. (M-3)
- I will start by adhering the curriculum. (M -65)
The philosophy of the school and its cultural environment: A spectrum between neutrality and transmission of democratic values

- The neutrality of students' perceptions with respect to education for democracy and citizenship – that they see as superficial (i.e. non-existent, or having no effect) – opposes the very values and intentions of transformative education.

- This would exclude any influence the education system has on the development of these values and of their intentions, and could help to accelerate the decline of democracy.

  - In a way because it has made me less involved in democracy and less interested in it. (O-85; 3.2)

  - There were a few times that school piqued my thinking about democracy, but overall it hasn't been significant. (T-84;3.2)
The philosophy of the school and its cultural environment: A spectrum between neutrality and transmission of democratic values

- By contrast, there is a positive perception of a university strongly committed to the adherence of these values (an outlier comment):
  - My studies in a private secondary school as well as my university studies have enabled me to examine in more depth some of the social and political aspects that have changed my perception of the world. (M -163, 2.9 / 5)
**Analysis: DIFFERENT INFLUENCES ON RESPONDENTS’ PERSPECTIVES ON DEMOCRACY IN EDUCATION**

- **The philosophy of the school and its cultural environment:** A spectrum between neutrality and transmission of democratic values

  - The ethnic diversity within the academic institution or even a single class could be a factor that favours perceptions to enhance social and environmental justice. For example, the Orillia and Thunder Bay samples had slightly higher rate of ethnic minorities than the other universities.

  - **Orillia:** Respondents from this university noted significance to multicultural (4.39/5), peace (4.27/5) and environmental education (4.23/5).

  - **Thunder Bay:** Respondents at this university noted significance to media (4.43/5) and political literacy (4.36/5).
The commitment of teachers and the specialization of studies: A spectrum between neutrality and transmission of democratic values

- When students report a weakness in education for democracy – that they see as superfluous, uninfluential or non-existent – they also struggle to develop a vocabulary for a thick democracy.

- This could suggest a correlation between these two variables: A model that could represent the school in the future of the citizen. The perceptions of the teacher and school’s critical weakness and political apathy are transferred, it seems, to citizens perspectives of the student, the teacher education student, their students, and the collectivity of all citizens who were once students.
The commitment of teachers and the specialization of studies: A spectrum between neutrality and transmission of democratic values

- In contrast, there is a positive perception of the influence of a teacher who strongly adheres to these values (outlier comments):
  - «I had a very good global education teacher and she helped me understand more and gain more pride in our government. » (Y-78; ITEM 10)
  - «My civics and careers class in high school taught me and the sociology class last year with Dr. Carr really opened my eyes to a lot about democracy» (O-124; 3.2)

- When there is a majority of respondents who are trained in Language Arts (35 %, n = 86) and Social Studies (22 %, n = 86), the importance of multicultural education is elevated: 4.37 / 5.

- These two curriculum areas are potentially more likely to discuss democracy, but more likely this represents a segment of respondents who are more literate, verbal, and expressive.
Analysis: DIFFERENT INFLUENCES ON RESPONDENTS’ PERSPECTIVES ON DEMOCRACY IN EDUCATION

- Other influences and observations: According to the participants, the formalism of democracy has not necessarily prevented its progress.

- Adherence to the structures of formal democracy has a varying influence on the likelihood to change in favour of a thick democracy.
Other influences and observations: The legitimacy of the state and the school is a foundation for their transformation (but not for their revolution).

- The variables of "formal democracy" and "transformative education" were those that evoked the most commitment.

- This could suggest a correlation between the two variables: the School and the State could be seen, by some, as being fundamental or even liberating institutional structures.

- Simultaneously, it is interesting to note that overall there is a strong correlation between a weak commitment to formal democracy and a stronger commitment to transformative education.
Conceptual Models
A FRAMEWORK TO UNDERSTAND DEMOCRACY IN EDUCATION, WHO’S INVOLVED, HOW, WHAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED, AND WHAT THE OUTCOMES COULD BE

Stakeholders

- Individual, family, community
- School
- Locality, city, region
- Nation
- World

Outcomes

- Critical content – Knowledge
- Critical reflection – Dispositions
- Critical action – Transformation
- Critical engagement – Re-conceptualization

Ways of knowing

- Experience
- Culture
- Encounters
- Education
- Varia

Levels of intervention

- Critical, engaged democracy & Education for Democracy

Methods of analysis

- Conceptual frameworks
  - Pedagogy
  - Curriculum
  - Institutional culture
  - Educational policy
  - Knowledge (epistemology)

Critical, engaged democracy & Education for Democracy

- Levels of intervention

Methods of analysis

- Conceptual frameworks
  - Pedagogy
  - Curriculum
  - Institutional culture
  - Educational policy
  - Knowledge (epistemology)

> CONTEXT
> POWER
> CULTURE
> HISTORY
> GLOBALIZATION
> NEOLIBERALISM
> CONFLICT
> IDENTITY

Paul R. Carr
**Measuring the spectrum of democratic education: Thick-thin model of critical engagement in Education for Democracy (EfD)**

Paul R. Carr

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thin Democracy</th>
<th>Thick Democracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Unlimited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrow</td>
<td>Deep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constrained</td>
<td>Open-ended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superficial</td>
<td>Tangible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apolitical</td>
<td>Political</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content-focused</td>
<td>Context-focused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unquestioning</td>
<td>Critical</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Linking Education and Democracy (Leadership)**

Nebulous, weakly articulated, uncritical, and unfocused.  

Explicit, engaged, multi-faceted and inclusive, aimed at openly cultivating critical forms of democracy.

**Experiencing Democracy (Vision)**

Cultivating voting, explaining the mechanics and the virtues of election is the focus; linkages to the community are not undertaken with a view to addressing problems; when there is service-learning, there is real no connection to the curriculum and the educational experience.  

Understanding that knowledge is constructed, rejection of the "banking model," and efforts made to have students engage with diverse groups, problems, realities, etc., outside of the mainstream media lens of society is fundamental; service-learning, for example, is linking to the educational experience, and is not simply an add-on with little pedagogical and epistemological value.

**Linking School and Society (Role of civil society)**

Not considered a key focus or priority, and there is concern about how to understand society; emphasis is often on employability, the labour market and preparing students for work.  

Direct and indirect linkages to civil society, and a focus on how to function in society, how to contribute to building a better society, and how to understand social problems; young people are not simply consumers but also, significantly, are contributors to re-producing or transforming social relations.

**Agenda Set by Mainstream (Hegemonic gaze)**

Is generally adopted and followed in an uncritical manner; textbooks are not generally critiqued for bias, misrepresentation, omission, etc..  

Is critiqued and contextualized in relation to other versions of reality, and corporate control of media is considered.

**Breadth of Study (Curriculum)**

Often concentrated in one course, subject or year (i.e. Government, Social Studies, Civics). Is understood to not be vigorously interwoven throughout the schooling experience.  

Is infused throughout the curriculum, and includes all aspects of how education is organized (i.e., assemblies, extra-curricular, staff meetings, parental involvement, hidden curriculum, awards).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study of Voting and Elections (Relativistic focus)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absolutely fundamental to the conceptualization of EfD here, and is a continual focus, although from an uncritical vantage-point.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study of Political Parties (Normative politics)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parties, processes and structures (content) considered the major part of the study of democracy.</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Related to Conflict, Patriotism, War and Peace (Macro-level content)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limited, uncritical, more in terms of conveying information in a static way, reliance on formal sources and official accounts.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Concern Over Teaching EfD (Conceptualization of pedagogy)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concern about “taking sides”, being &quot;biased,&quot; &quot;indoctrination,&quot; &quot;being political&quot; is evident, and leads to omitting, avoiding and/or downplaying controversial issues.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Deliberative Democracy (Engagement with controversial issues)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limited and contrived, aimed at comfort more than developing a mindset to critique, and act; students are often dissuaded from engaging with important and controversial issues and challenging texts; teachers limit exposure to alternative perspectives and themes.</td>
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</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>Orientation of Curriculum (Construction of purpose of learning)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narrow, limited, prescriptive, with little questioning of complicity, change and power; subjects are compartmentalized, teachers are not predisposed to critical inquiry, and there is virtually no assessment of democracy.</td>
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<th>Literacy (Expected outcomes)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Focus here is on political literacy, media literacy, what Giroux calls &quot;emancipatory literacy&quot; and democratic “conscientization,” in Freire's words, going well beyond the ability to read and write, seeking a more complex, nuanced and meaningful engagement with society; seeking to eliminate the notion that we must blindly follow the rules presented by elected officials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice (Connection to power)</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mainstream analysis of discrimination, marginalization of social problems with no real critique of systemic and fundamental problems is presented; broad contention that diversity is good, while critical analysis of identity is undesirable.</td>
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"But what can I do?" (Paul R. Carr)
1. Accept that No One Knows Everything, and That We Can Always Learn
2. Content Is Never Devoid of Context
3. Work Locally But Make the Linkage With the International Milieu
4. Media Literacy Is Not a Sound-Bite
5. History Is Not Uni-Dimensional
6. Culture Is More Than Sombreros, Tacos and Mariachis
7. Problematize War, and Fight for Peace
8. Humility Is an Unbelievable Virtue
9. Be Wary of Being a Follower
10. Accept That You Are a Political Being
11. Read and Write, and Seek Out Authors Far from Mainstream Culture
12. Problematize the Discrepancy in Wealth But Also the Importance of Money as an Indicator of Worth or Value
13. Consider the Proposition That There Is Hope
14. Examine Important Events, Personalities and Experiences in Your Own Education
15. Affirm That “I Can Do What I Can Do”
Comparative Conclusions

Youngstown (OH), St. Louis (MO), Montreal (QC), Orillia (ON) Thunder Bay (ON)
Conclusions

**PERCEPTIONS of DEMOCRACY**

- **Mythical and idealistic**: Freedom of the people to govern (“government by and for the people…”)

- **Formal and representative**: The structure enables representation through expression through voting and elections (rights)

- **Sovereign**: The State guarantees equality and security for all.

- **Hegemonic**: The health of society is institutionalized by the majority.

- **Social Darwinist**: The most virtuous deserve the benefits of society, even the power to rule society.
Conclusions

EXPERIENCES of DEMOCRACY

- **Weak**: Voting and elections are the most important elements of democracy. The quality of life is good here and worse elsewhere.

- **Disempowered**: Voting alone meets the requirements of good citizenship.

- **Perfectionist**: Means of expression are limited (especially for minorities), those who decide are few and authoritarian, representatives do not represent the entire population, and international issues are not discussed.

- **Cynical**: Politicians do not listen to the public; private interests prevail and manipulate public opinion through the media.

- **Selective**: Elitism excludes the weakest by justifying the hierarchy.
Conclusions: Perspectives of Democracy

- **Poor**: Political illiteracy impedes progress
- **Reproductive**: Political disengagement feeds the hunger for formalism
- **Constrained**: Ideals are offset by a fear of criticism by lobbyists or the perception of legitimacy
- **Docile**: Performance standards alienate education and draw citizens into a normative production cycle
- **Systemic**: The requirement to produce stifles creativity and constrains emancipation through consumption
Idealized: It is important to know the role of history in your country as well as to learn to be a good citizen.

Exclusive: This area of learning is considered important but seen only as voluntary for teachers. Integration with other subjects is rarely possible as teachers already have large workloads.

Objective: The curriculum of a professor or university must be seen as neutral so as not to bias the opinion of students.
Theoretical – superficial and disappointing:
The democratic educational experience is weak because it is unengaged, non-experiential, and non holistic. The weak disposition towards transformative education explains the neutrality towards criticism and debate, and the disengagement of students.

Realist – articulate and pragmatic:
Coming to University involves a conceptual cleansing and requires political literacy (as democracy and electoral politics are often framed as synonymous), which can be inspiring. The culture of the University and relevant events (i.e. the education strikes) are also provocative for students.
Administered or authoritarian: Decisions do not include those directly affected by education. The Ministry or the State Department of Education unilaterally manages the school, the teachers and the students.

Ambivalent: The education system does not generally satisfy students in relation to democracy. However this unsatisfactory experience is not highly criticized by students.

Outside of School: Family and personal experience have contributed at least as much as to students experiences of democracy as the school.
Conditional: The efforts aimed at conscientization, leadership and political literacy will affect students’ future degree of commitment and interest in democracy.

Optional: Low levels of conscientization reduce any potential for educational integration between learning areas.

Optional: Teacher education and leadership programs limit enthusiasm for other activities.

Optional: A willingness to integrate at school increases the need to comply with the curriculum, thus rendering personal initiatives as a liability.
Proposed solutions related to the analysis

Youngstown (OH), Saint-Louis (MO), Montréal (QC), Orillia (ON), Thunder Bay (ON)
Possible solutions

PERSPECTIVES of EDUCATION for DEMOCRACY

- **Provide a meaningful forum for expression and deliberative democracy** so engagement, critique and social can take place.

- **Nurture the concepts** of citizenship and democracy at an early age throughout the educational experience in formal and informal ways, inside and outside of classroom.

- **Provide examples** of, and a context for, robust, thick and critical democratic participation.

- **Facilitate democratic activities** in school (student consultation, educational activities, inter-school exchanges, service education, deliberative democracy, fora for the community).

- **Promote the benefits** of these activities to pupils, students, teachers, families, and the wider community with open, sustained and critical assessments of what democracy does and should look like.

- **Demonstrate and encourage critical engagement** for democratic participation and social justice.

- **Promote interdisciplinary education** that is not constrained by disciplinary boundaries, and is open to diverse epistemological thinking and perspectives.
Today, according to this comparative study, the most politically literate students, generally speaking, are:

- **Older** (at least 30 years old), more mature, less constrained by peer pressure

- **More graduate** level students, i.e. "Professional Year" or higher (i.e.: third year, Master’s, PhD)

- **Influenced by engaged professors** and universities who capture their spirits, and whose dynamic democratic enthusiasm inspires participation and commitment

- **Influenced by educated parents** with higher socio-professional status, especially the father

- Those from **cosmopolitan** universities and classes

- Those who hold a **weak/below average perception of democracy** of the current education system