

The Critical Role of Discourse in Education for Democracy

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This paper is concerned with the empirical and theoretical literature that helps me conceptualize educating for democracy as one social practice within social life. While empirical research on democratic education and theoretical literature exists, I have not found any literature which examines the discursive production of ideology and hegemony in high school classes. I begin with a review of empirical literature relevant to educating for democracy and establish the need for additional analysis. The existing research literature overlooks the discursive aspects of educating for democracy. Examples of student discourse are used to demonstrate a discourse-related problem within the practice of educating for democracy. Discourse-related problems refer to the way that language is used to undermine the democratic purposes of the educational practice by sustaining hegemony and various ideologies.

Second, the theoretical contributions of Marx (1976, 1978, 1988), Gramsci (2000), Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), and Fairclough (2003) are explored to develop an understanding of ideology and hegemony and their discursive functions in social life. Some critical theorists have paid close attention to the function of language and share certain Marxian concepts as a common starting point in their research projects (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). Thus, I begin the construction of my theoretical framework with an explanation of my reading of Marx.

I focus my examination of Marx on his contributions toward an understanding of the ideological and hegemonic function of language. Marx's historical materialism provides a context in which the social structures that shape discourse can be understood. Marxism, however, has been modified and revised in ways which place a greater focus on language and discourse. Therefore, after establishing the primacy of material conditions in social life, through Marx, I include analysis of Gramsci (2000), and Fairclough (2003) to further explain the role of discourse in producing, sustaining, or transforming ideologies and hegemony. Most important in establishing this framework is detailing the ways that discourse mediates social structures (e.g., democracy and capitalism) and social events (e.g., what happens in schools).

Third, the function of the discourse-related problem of educating for democracy in a classroom is explained. Althusser's (2001) conception of schooling as the most important ideological State apparatus is explained and positioned within this study. In addition to Althusser's essay, the works of Dewey (1916/1944) and Freire (2003) are used to explain my understanding of how discursive problems operate in the practice of educating for democracy. Dewey's clarification of the difference between training and education is explored for the impact that training-based schooling may have on educating for democracy. Freire's description of schooling as practiced through the banking-method of education is also drawn out in this paper. Both Dewey's and Freire's work enable me to understand potential discourse-related problems associated with educating for democracy. For example, Dewey explains how language can be used to train rather than educate while Freire describes how language can be used didactically rather than dialogically to maintain oppressive educative relations. Both authors provide possible ways past this problem.

The fourth section of the paper revisits Dewey (1916/1944) and Freire (2003) to explain possible ways past the discourse-related problem of educating for democracy; essential to this are their conceptions for educating for democracy and educating for critical consciousness. In the case of Dewey's work, there is a clear explanation of the types of communicative acts necessary to educating for democracy. Freire, too, provides direction for humanizing education through which the development of critical consciousness enables the construction of democratic interactions. Both Dewey and Freire help me situate the role of dialogue and discourse in the context of educating for democracy. In section four I connect my understandings of Dewey and Freire to construct an overarching framework for my teaching in an attempt to provide an empowering and democratic experience for the students.

Literature Review

Public schools have historically been responsible for the development of democratic citizens. Several mainstream organizations have contributed to a recent resurgence of interest in educating for democracy in the United States including the *National Governors Association*, *Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools*, *American Youth Policy Forum*, and the *Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development*. They have pointed to evidence of decreased civic participation in their calls for attention to the education of engaged democratic citizens (National Governors Association, 2004; Gibson and Levine, 2003; Boston, Pearson, and Halperin, 2005). These organizations have suggested that civic learning needs to become a priority in school reform and that democratic skills, knowledge, and dispositions be integrated into the curriculum. They have also indicated the need to improve training for teachers and administrators and collaboration between communities and schools.

Research on Education for democracy

The demand to increase attention on the democratic purposes of education by these groups is built upon a substantial body of evidence indicating the need for an increased emphasis on education for democracy (Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996; Baldi, Perie, Skidmore, Greenberg, and Hahn, 2001; Andolina, Jenkins, Keeter, and Zukin, 2002; Hahn, 2002; Levine and Lopez, 2002). For example, voting rates of those under age 25 in Presidential elections have declined steadily from 52% to 37% between 1972 (the first election when 18 year-olds were given the right to vote in a Presidential election) and 2000 (Levine and Lopez, 2002). Although the rate of young voter turn out increased to 47% in 2004 it is still far behind the 66% of citizens 25 and older who voted (Lopez, Kirby, and Sagoff, 2005). Roughly 25% of young people from 1960-1976 reported that they followed public affairs most of the time, but by 2000, that number had declined to 5% (Gibson and Levine, 2003). Furthermore, inquiry into other forms of participation, such as web-based organizing, volunteering, and protesting suggests that young people are not engaged in these kinds of activities either (Andolina, et al, 2002). Additional research concerning how students develop the capacities and commitments necessary for democratic citizenship has indicated a number of promising practices including increasing opportunities for volunteerism (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995), involving students in school-based democratic decision making (Battistoni, 1985; Sehr, 1997; Kahne, Chi, and Middaugh, 2003; Schimmel, 2003)

increasing opportunities to discuss diverse views (Kahne, Rodriguez, Smith, and Thiede, 2000), participation in service-learning (Kahne and Westheimer, 2004; Stroupe and Sabato, 2003; Billig, Root, and Jesse, 2005), and participation in democratic simulations (Stroupe and Sabato, 2003; McDevitt and Kiousis, 2004). Kahne and Westheimer (2004) found that when students were allowed to research and work on topics that mattered to them they exhibited significant gains in personally responsible citizenship, interest in politics, increased commitment to participatory citizenship, vision to help, and social trust. In addition they found classroom features that positively affected justice-oriented citizenship included learning about causes of problems in their community and learning about things in society that need changing (Kahne and Westheimer, 2004).

Research on discourse and civic participation, though promising is limited. Perhaps Hess and Posselt (2002) have come closest to analyzing discourse and civic participation, but their research does not go far enough. Beginning with the premise that democracy requires effective discussion and interaction, Hess and Posselt (2002) researched how students learned from talking about controversial issues. They determined that, when provided with the opportunity to discuss meaningful issues in a classroom, students can become more effective discussants. What is missing from Hess and Posselt's work is an analysis of how the students used language to sustain or challenge ideology and hegemony. McDevitt and Kiousis (2004) found that increased opportunities to discuss political issues in the classroom significantly affected students discussion with parents, discussion with friends, willingness to disagree, listening to opponents, and testing opinions for response as well as their willingness to test others opinions in order to persuade. The positive behavioral impacts described by McDevitt and Kiousis (2004) are not established through analysis of the discourse. Therefore, their work does not enhance my ability to judge the ideological and hegemonic function of discourse in civic education.

Limitations of Existing Research

While a body of research exists which highlights what students know and are able to do as democratic citizens, the existing research is insufficient. First, it fails to consider the discursive aspects of educating for democracy. Second, the body of research is limited in its explanations of what happens inside of classrooms when the learning and teaching of democracy occurs. Third, it rarely acknowledges that classroom learning is just one social practice within a large network of social practices which overdetermine (Wolf and Resnick, 1987) students' opportunities to learn democracy. Finally, the functions of ideology and hegemony are under-theorized in the body of literature and often serve to sustain the hegemony of personally responsible or participatory democracy without dialogically engaging possibilities of justice-oriented or critical democracy.

What is problematic in the current research literature are the questions left unanswered. Even if students learn to participate more in democracy, what types of activities will they participate in? In a comprehensive review of civic education related research, Gibson and Levine (2003) detail a list of desirable civic practices including a commitment to participate, intention to vote, being informed enough to vote, civic skills, social and political trust, political knowledge, and political interest. None of this focuses on whether practicing civic education sustains, resists, or transforms ideology and hegemony. The glaring omission from the research concerned with education for democracy is an explicit focus on discourse including its ideological and hegemonic functions. Without paying attention to the ways that classroom practices perform ideological tasks or sustain hegemony, education for democracy may be little more than hegemonic practices for sustaining current relations of

oppression, domination, and exploitation. For example, if education for democracy simply trains students to operate within existing electoral practices without critically examining who benefits and who suffers from those practices, it is unlikely that students will participate in transforming the ways that wealthy candidates and corporations benefit from current campaign practices. Where research concerned with education for democracy does not focus on the discursive function of ideology and hegemony to mediate social structures and social events, Marxian theory provides insights which prove useful to building on the existing body of literature and advancing the discussion about the best ways to educate for democracy.

I define critical democratic citizenship as active, informed, and engaged democratic citizens capable of critically analyzing and addressing the root causes of economic, cultural, and political problems that afflict their communities and are empowered to act in an effort to improve their communities. In my own classroom, I have found discursive problems in need of exploration concerning how the students struggled with the differences between the way they described existing democracy and ideal democracy. Along with providing answers about how to better educate for democracy, this project reveals a problem which has been previously overlooked in the literature – the discourse-related problem of educating for democracy.

Identifying a Discourse-Related Problem

Early in one high school class that I was teaching, students were engaged in small group discussions about the differences between what they thought democracy *is* and what they thought democracy *should be*. These discussions demonstrated a discourse-related problem in the way that the activity constrained rather than enabled democratic education. To make my point I will provide three brief examples of discourse-related problems. In the following examples the students were supposed to be discussing the contradiction between what democracy *is* and what it *should be* while also considering what can be done to change democracy. The discourse-related problem is that students use language to represent the dilemma of democracy as unchangeable rather than identify possible solutions to the dilemma. I read their representations as ideological. Each transcribed line is numbered and the parenthetical citations refer to specific portions of the transcript.

1. *The difference between what democracy is and what it should be 09/12/2005.*
 - 1.1. *Erin:* In our government upper class upper middle class ...
 - 1.2. *Samantha:* have more say
 - 1.3. *Erin:*...they have more power more say and they have influence to change it
 - 1.4. *Samantha:* and they're favored by...
 - 1.5. *Alex:* and like big companies and special interest groups they have a lot of pull
 - 1.6. too like NRA
 - 1.7. *Carmen:* people who don't get what they want are the lower class people who
 - 1.8. don't have the opportunity don't have the money don't have the...

- 1.9. *Samantha*: I feel like that's the way that our government works
- 1.10. *Carmen*: then there's no way that you could really change that

These students struggled with the relationship between wealth (1.8), class (1.1; 1.7), voice (1.2; 1.3; 1.5), and agency (1.3;1.7;1.10). Another group struggled with the same issue and one student concluded the exchange with the following comment:

2. *The difference between what democracy is and what it should be 09/12/2005.*
 - 2.1. *Oliver*: What happens with the money thing is they get the people into the
 - 2.2. whole system that they want so when they're gone and whole thing is
 - 2.3. basically controlled. I mean there are new people who come in and
 - 2.4. stuff like that but the problem is it starts at the beginning basically and
 - 2.5. its hard to fix now because it is so far down the road. I mean there are
 - 2.6. like mass problems the same thing they already have the money and
 - 2.7. they already have for generations circulated the people they want in and
 - 2.8. its hard to get in if you're from the outside.

Finally, the third group's struggle with this same issue included this student's comment:

3. *The difference between what democracy is and what it should be 09/12/2005*
 - 3.1. *Katie*: I think you were talking about religion I think social class should not
 - 3.2. play a role either like rich and powerful have more rights in a way like
 - 3.3. they have more like flexibility on their rights than like uhm like
 - 3.4. someone who's on welfare

In their discussions, each group of students struggle with the issue of class (2.1;2.6; 3.1-4) and democratic empowerment (2.7; 3.2; 3.3). At least one student in each group expressed the sentiment that "there is nothing we can do about it" (1.10) which went unchallenged by other students. I saw these types of discussions as problematic. In a course designed to educate for critical democracy, the students should be able to identify social problems, which they did, and then explore alternatives, which they did not do. My dilemma was to understand the function of discourse in educating for critical democracy.

The students' conversations early in the class redirected my attention to the discursive problem of educating for democracy. In their own conversations the students identified contradictions within democracy yet reached conflicts concerning if or how those contradictions could be overcome. It was those conflicts that became of central interest to me. If students recognized potential problems with democracy operating the way they thought it *should* but could not discursively construct alternatives to the problems of democracy and the way it *is*, then education for democracy might approach irrelevancy. At

best, students may learn how to operate within the currently constructed practices of democracy, which they had already established as compromised by the capitalist class process. At worst, lacking the language of possibility, hope, and transformation, students could recognize the contradictions of class and democracy but disengage from the political process because "there's no way that you could really change that" (1.10). One of the purposes of educating for democracy is to overcome this problem by ensuring that students develop efficacy while simultaneously learning how to effect change.

Discourse as Mediating Social Structures and Social Events

Social life depends on discourse and the ways it functions. Through discourse certain things are made relevant while others are minimized, shared understandings of common problems are constructed or contested, identities are enacted, and the distribution of social goods are negotiated (Gee, 2005). The ways people talk about political, social, economic and cultural issues can provide insight into how they think about the world (Lakoff, 2002). Discourse may also operate ideologically to explain away apparent contradictions and hide problems in society making solutions more difficult to obtain (Fairclough, 2003). Discourse can also function hegemonically to gain consent for particular positions of power (Gramsci, 2000) through the types of discourse a "general politics' of truth accepts and makes function as true" (Foucault, 1980, p. 131). Foucault referred to this as a "regime of truth" which is the "rules by which discourses are formed, rules that govern what can be said and what must remain unsaid, who can speak with authority and who must listen" (McLaren, 2003, p. 209). What is allowed to be said and how discourses are regulated changes overtime. This change occurs when the systems of power which produce and sustain truth are challenged by the "possibility of constituting a new politics of truth" (Foucault, 1980, p. 133).

It has been argued that the politics of truth in the United States at the beginning of the 21st century are governed by neoliberal discourse which privileges the economic over the social and cultural thereby extending advantages to the haves over the have-nots (Fairclough, 2000; Harvey, 2005; Hursh, 2007; Klein, 2007). Neoliberal hegemony aims for the reconstruction of society in accordance with the demands of unrestrained global capitalism and opposes conceptions of a just democratic society which would enact the abolition of all forms of oppression (Bourdieu, 1998, Hursh, 2007). Fairclough (2000) has called for a coordinated campaign against neoliberalism by critical language researchers because language is central to the types of social changes which are required for the expansion of global capitalism by the neoliberal project. I make my entry into this larger project through the practice of educating for democracy. If consent for neoliberalism is achieved discursively, as Hursh (2007) suggests, then education for democracy must ensure that discourse is considered in the educative process. Education for democracy must deal with the ways that students engage in discursive practices while they contemplate their role as democratic citizens.

Discourse is one element of social life which mediates the relationship between social structures and social events (Fairclough, 2003). According to Fairclough (2003), "social structures define what is possible, social events constitute what is actual, and the relationship between potential and actual is mediated by social practices" (p. 223). Social practices articulate, or join, discourse with other social elements. The other elements linked with discourse include social relations, individuals with beliefs, histories, and attitudes, actions/interactions, and the material world (Fairclough, 2003). Classroom teaching can be seen as a social practice which articulates together the ways that students use language "with the social relations of the classroom, the structuring and use of the classroom as a

physical space, and so forth" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 25). The possibilities of democracy (an abstract social structure) and the realities of social life (concrete social events) can be mediated by the social practice of schooling which brings together various social elements including students and a teacher with their own ideas and experiences, the material conditions of the classroom, the social relations among the students and teacher, and of course discourse. As these social elements are situated within the complex relationship between social structures and social events it is important to understand the social structures which shape and are shaped by this process. My classroom, as one site of social practices, operates in relation to several social structures. The most dominant of the related social structures may be capitalism as it influences the production and distribution of texts, tests, standards, etc. while also influencing the democratic process of regulating schools, certifying teachers, and instituting particular reform models. Marxian theory helps me develop an understanding of one social structure that influences and is influenced by networks of social practices, capitalism.

Ideology and Hegemony

The importance of Marx's work to my research project may seem peculiar to some considering that I claim to focus on an analysis of education for democracy. When the material conditions of life are considered, however, Marx's contributions to understanding social life are supremely important to my work. We do not live and labor in a democratic society alone, but also in a capitalist society. Marx provides a useful critique of capitalism, including its production and maintenance. Marx also begins to explain how capitalist ideology is produced and how it functions to maintain dominant relations. In addition to his critique of capitalism, Marx provides possibilities for moving beyond oppressive relations toward community relations that have the potential to make "personal freedoms possible" (Marx, 1978, p. 197). Through Marx, I am forced to consider the relationship between the material production of life and the ideological process of being aware of life. While Marx does much to help me build a theoretical framework for this study there are areas of his work which leave me with unanswered questions and problems to be further explored. Both the contributions and limitations of Marx's work as they relate to my project will be discussed in this section.

In *The German Ideology* (1978), Marx breaks away from previously constructed notions of ideology. Marx critiques the Young Hegelians for their position that "conceptions, thoughts, ideas" are the "real chains of men" (p. 149) and that emancipation requires "exchanging their present consciousness for human, critical consciousness" (p. 149) which would thus remove the chains limiting men. Marx criticized the Young Hegelians' assertion that replacing one form of consciousness with another form of consciousness as simply a matter of fighting against phrases and in no way changes the material conditions of the world. Marx counters that material conditions determine people's lives, not ideas, and that "life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life" (Marx, 1978, p. 155).

Social life is produced through human interaction as the conditions necessary for humans to live their lives are produced by humans and it is these conditions which determine consciousness (Marx, 1978). In his materialist analysis of history, Marx places a significant emphasis on the division of labor in his description of how material conditions determine consciousness. This division is important to the domination of some social groups by others. The ruling class must justify existing social relations in order to maintain its position so that "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas" (Marx, 1978, p. 172). The division of labor into material and mental productive practices facilitates this

process. In order for the ruling ideas to be accepted by those outside the ruling class, the ideas need to take "the form of universality" and must be represented "as the only rational, universally valid ones" (Marx, 1978, p. 174).

Marx seems to make a clear point that the domination by one class of others is achieved through ideology and hegemony, both of which result from the material conditions of social life and are produced by human interaction. The division of labor, into material and mental production, creates the conditions where one class is dedicated to producing the material conditions for social life and are subsequently left with less time to "make up illusions and ideas about themselves" (Marx, 1978, p. 173). Another class, however, has as its social task the responsibility of engaging in mental production of the ruling ideas. The ruling class is able to produce the ruling ideas because they "regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age: thus their ideas are the ruling ideas of the epoch" (Marx, 1978, p. 173).

The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. (p. 172)

Here Marx makes the point that the owners of the means of production, the capitalist class, control the ideas available to other classes. But the question remains, how do members of the non-ruling classes sustain, resist, or transform ideology and hegemony?

The relevance of Marx's work to my project should be clear from this description of Marx's work in *The German Ideology*. I am interested in determining how students engage in hegemonic struggles in the classroom. Marx makes the case that hegemony is established by the ruling class as it owns and controls the means of production and thus produces ideas about social relations which justify the ruling class' position and are the only ideas available to other classes because they are so busy producing material life that they lack the time and means to produce mental life. As schooling is one site which socializes students to the ways of social life, the process of ideological and hegemonic inculcation in schools should be a significant focus of those concerned with understanding class differences in society.

Marx's work provides some insights for this study but also leaves other problems to be considered. For example, Marx argues that the ruling class is able to dominate because it produces the ideas about social life to which other classes are subject and defends that assertion with the claim that "the individuals composing the ruling class possess among other things consciousness, and therefore think" (Marx, 1978, p. 173), implying that non-ruling classes do not possess consciousness and do not think, that they are in fact slaves to the ideas produced by the ruling class. This seems to contradict Marx's contention that life determines consciousness. If it is the case that social life determines consciousness then why are non-ruling classes subject to the ideas of the ruling class? The proposition that non-ruling classes are dedicated to material production and thus lack the time or materials for mental production is weak. If social being determines consciousness, then non-ruling classes should be able to construct class consciousness regardless of the ruling class ideology. This problem is complicated by Marx's assertion that all forms of consciousness can only be transformed by changing the material conditions which produce consciousness (Marx, 1978, p. 164). It seems as if Marx has constructed a vicious circle from which there is no avenue of escape.

According to Marx those who are members of non-ruling classes are too busy producing material life to think and thus are subject to the ideology and hegemony produced by the

ruling class and their only way out of this social relationship is to transform the actual material conditions, but this begs the question: if the ruling class produces ideas which sustain its dominant position, and the non-ruling classes are subject to these ideologies, where do the non-ruling classes get the idea to begin a social revolution?

When Marx briefly addresses how the contradictions of the material productive forces of society lead to social revolutions, in the preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1978), he provides a clue that may resolve the idealist / materialist contradiction. Marx states:

In considering such transformation of the economic conditions a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic -- in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out (p. 5)

Marx seems to imply that there is a difference between material production and ideological production. If there is a distinction between the two, what is it? Exactly how do men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out?

Marx's vague explanations of how humans develop consciousness and fight against oppression are insufficient. Marx makes a strong case for how the ruling class produces ideas which sustain its dominant position but he provides little in the way of understanding how non-ruling classes can reach emancipation, with one exception:

The transformation, through the division of labour, of personal powers (relationships) into material powers, can not be dispelled by dismissing the general idea of it from one's mind, but can only be abolished by the individuals again subjecting these material powers to themselves and abolishing the division of labour. This is not possible without the community. Only in community [with others has each] individual the means of cultivating his gifts in all directions; only in the community, therefore, is personal freedom possible. (Marx, 1978, p. 197)

Here Marx provides an entry point for my work which is concerned with how to educate for critical democracy so that students learn how to enter into these relationships with the community. The possibility of one class within society dominating other's ideas requires questioning how ideology and hegemony are produced and sustained. That is why I focus on the ideological and hegemonic functions of discourse in a school setting. Despite providing this entry point, Marx had little to say about ideology in his later works and thus I now turn to more contemporary authors.

Althusser (2001), unlike Marx, assigns responsibility for the production of ideology to State apparatuses. He explains ideology as a representation of "the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" and that, in a negative representation of ideology, these "world outlooks" do not correspond to reality (Althusser, 2001, p. 109). "The representation given to individuals of their relation to the social relations which govern their conditions of existence and collective and individual life" (p. 111-112) is a product of the ideological State apparatus. That is, in order for the dominant elites to exercise their power without resorting to force they must do so through ideology and use the State to accomplish this task. Althusser (2001) names the educational ideological apparatus as the dominant ideological State apparatus because it has the power to construct the world views of the students and teachers operating within schools. Althusser's explanation of ideology brings me closer to an understanding that works but it is complex and by itself does not

easily provide an explanation of ideology that helps further my project because he represents the ideological function of schooling as unchangeable. If I am always already interpellated (Althusser, 2000) how can I, as a critical educator, work against the ideological function of schooling?

Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) provide a concise and useful interpretation of ideology when they define ideologies as "constructions of practices from particular perspectives (and in that sense 'one sided') which 'iron out' out the contradictions, dilemmas and antagonisms of practices in ways which accord with the interests and projects of domination" (p. 26). The relationship between domination and ideology presented by Chouliaraki and Fairclough builds on Marx's and Althusser's interpretations. This interpretation supports my reading of Marx that ideology is produced to explain or justify the relations of domination. People must become conscious of ideology in order to transform their material conditions (Marx, 1978). Likewise, Althusser (2001) contends that "we have to outline a discourse that breaks with ideology" (p. 117) in order to recognize when we are being "hailed" by ideology so that we may interrupt the reproduction of the relations of production and the exploitative relations which result from them. This is consistent with Foucault's (1980) point that contesting ideology is not about changing people's consciousness but "constituting a new politics of truth" by reconstituting "the political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth" (p. 133). Material conditions, including the material conditions of classrooms, must be reconstructed if the production of ideology is to be challenged.

Marx's and Althusser's interpretations of ideology are based primarily on a materialist conception of society. I do not intend to base my work solely on a materialist or economic foundation. Rather, I will continue to follow the lead of Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) who describe the discursive activities of ideology and expand beyond materialist conceptions to remain open to the ideologies which support domination based on a multitude of other factors including gender, sexuality, race, as well as class. That is not to say however that the capitalist class process (Marx, 1976) is not vital. In fact, contemporary democracy in the United States is always functioning in relation to capitalism as my students pointed out in their early discussions. In that sense a materialist understanding of social life is vitally important though not deterministic.

Ideology and discourse are connected in this study to examine the ways that ideology functions to support the interests and projects of domination. I will return, for a moment, to the discursive problem identified earlier in this paper, where the students struggled with class and the ability to practice democracy. If schooling sustains Carmen's claim that "there's no way you can really change that [the lack of power among non-ruling classes]" (1.10) or Oliver's (3.1-8) arguments that the long established practice of moneyed interests having exclusive rights to power then schools may in fact function as ideological apparatuses (Althusser, 2001). Without the opportunity to explore the contradictions that the students themselves identified, the ideological function of schooling to "iron out" the contradictions of contemporary society will continue to prevent education for democracy. By explaining away the contradictions schooling will enable training and banking education but not democratic education.

As students learn to become active and engaged democratic citizens they are continually faced with contradictions inherent in early 21st century democracy including: the advantages of wealth in running for office, the conflict between the ideal of the government deriving its powers from the people and the reality of the people being subjected to the power of the government, just to name two. Rather than educate for democracy, the ideology of democracy may function in such a way as to preserve the current political system through

hegemony in order to achieve the consent of present and future generations for the maintenance and reproduction of the current relations of domination.

Throughout this project I refer to dominant ideologies not a dominant ideology. This is intended to emphasize that ideology is not a unified and cohesive phenomenon. What is known is *the* dominant ideology consists of many oppressive and exploitative ideologies. Sometimes these ideologies work in tandem to sustain existing relations of domination and at other times they contradict one another and provide opportunities for dialectical analysis. In their discussions, the students sometimes challenge one ideology while sustaining another.

Hegemony refers to the manner in which consent is garnered from the masses so that social relations based on domination appear to be normal and natural (Gramsci, 2000). Antonio Gramsci (2000) theorized that the dominant social system is imposed on the general population through hegemony and direct domination. According to Gramsci, the dominant group exercises hegemony to extract consent from the portion of the population which is not part of the dominant group. Those who are not persuaded through hegemony are subject to direct domination through the legal state apparatuses used for enforcing discipline. Of course, their legality is a result of the dominant group's control of the political / legal system. In this sense, Gramsci's conception of hegemony is consistent with Althusser's (2001) representation of the relationship between repressive State apparatuses and ideological State apparatuses and Marx's (1978) contention that the ruling class produces ideology.

Leadership, according to Gramsci, is a prerequisite for gaining political power and the leadership responsible for hegemonic domination rests with those who act as intellectuals for the dominant group. Here, Gramsci is approaching Marx's contention that ideology begins with the division of labor into mental and material production. Gramsci's solution to the problem of the ruling class controlling mental production is the development of organic intellectuals from within non-ruling classes (Gramsci, 2000).

Every social group has its "own stratum of intellectuals" (Gramsci, 2000, p. 251). This is not to say that some people are intellectuals and some are not; Gramsci is careful to explain that all people are intellectuals but the social function of some is purely intellectual. Said another way, some people's relation to society is to produce material goods or services, and others provide "intellectual and moral leadership" (Gramsci, 2000, p. 249). The intellectuals of the dominant group play a significant role in hegemonic dominance, especially when social, political, and economic crises arise. If hegemony were not able to garner consent then direct domination would be required, or at least its use would be more visible (Gramsci, 2000). When such crises reach a climax it is the role of the intellectuals within oppositional groups to exercise "intellectual and moral leadership" (p. 249) in order to gain political power (Gramsci, 2000). Organic intellectuals, developed from within non-ruling classes, have the potential to provide leadership roles within these movements as they can help other members of their class build class consciousness of the hegemonic representations used to justify existing social relations (Gramsci, 2000).

The United States may just be at such a critical juncture in the early part of the 21st century. The contradictions of the crisis of the conservative restoration and the expansion of the global neoliberal project are beginning to become clear as the United States is engaged in a perpetual global war, the gap between the haves and the have-nots increases, inequality based on race and gender persists, and the environment continues to be destroyed. During this time the political forces of the dominant group struggle to conserve and defend the existing social structure for their own benefit (Gramsci, 2000). Meanwhile

the intellectuals of the dominant group construct discourse which normalizes government support of corporate hegemony and abolishes the role of the government in achieving social justice (Harvey, 2005). It is in this historical epoch that the social groups opposed to domination must rely on their own organic intellectuals to provide intellectual and moral leadership for the transformation of society. While these intellectuals may operate in many sites, the primary site for challenging hegemony and for the development of organic intellectuals may exist within schools.

Function of the Discourse-Related Problem of Educating for democracy

Educating for democracy within public school settings is confronted with problems related to discourse. The function of the discourse-related problem of educating for democracy is connected to the use of schools for training (Dewey, 1916/1944), the mode of "banking" education (Freire, 2003), and the ways schools function as ideological State apparatuses (Althusser, 2001). Schools are positioned as a State apparatus where the State regulates schools, teachers, curriculum, assessment, and funding (Hursh, 2007). This has a significant, though not determining, impact on what and how subject matter is taught and learned. The discourse of school reform directs the purposes of education and shapes the practice of educating. The State does not determine schooling, in an essentialist manner, partly because autonomous individuals operate in relationships within the confines of the school. Teachers, administrators, parents, and students, through their interactions, construct school experiences in relation to the context of the State's direction but also find ways to operate outside of the determining affects of the State's control. If schools function as a State apparatus, to train rather than educate students, or position students as passive recipients of banking education, schools can be little more than sites where ideology and hegemony are produced and reproduced.

The discourse function of training

John Dewey (1916/1944) claims that one obstacle to education for democracy is the use of schooling for training purposes rather than educative purposes. Dewey critiqued training as non-educative because it does not allow learners to respond to new and varied situations. On the other hand education for democracy, according to Dewey, requires that citizens be able to engage in

conjoint communicated experience so that each [person] has to refer his own action to that of others and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to his own (1916/1944, p. 87)

In being trained, students do not participate in shared activities they simply respond, in learned and reinforced ways, to stimuli. Yet, it is the shared common activities which are essential to education for democracy (Dewey, 1916/1944).

Training becomes a discourse-related problem when the use of language in learning is considered. When schooling is reduced to "pouring in, learning by passive absorption" it neglects the "active and constructive process" of learning (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 38). Dewey points out that the use of language should not be decreased "but that its use should be more vital and fruitful by having its normal connection with shared activities" (1916/1944, p. 38). Using language to simply tell someone what exists is different, and will

elicit a separate type of learning, than when one understands the *meaning* of what something is. For example, Dewey explains the difference between unintelligent and intelligent action where unintelligent action, the result of training, does not consider the purpose for which we act – “it is blind and unconscious action” (p. 29). Intelligent action, on the other hand, requires a shared meaning created in relation with others in the community so that activities are purposefully rather than reactively undertaken. A teacher who transmits knowledge through language minimizes the potential of language to mediate shared experiences and it is these shared experiences, actually shared and/or discursively represented, which help construct shared meaning.

The use of language to “pour in” knowledge is further problematized when Dewey makes distinctions between “retrospective and prospective” conceptions of education (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 79). It is complicated further by Dewey’s criticism of the relation between “capital and labor” (p. 313) and “the perpetuation of industrial society” (p. 316). In these examinations of the purposes of education the ideological and hegemonic functions of school become clearer. Retrospective conceptions of education require assimilating the future to the past (Dewey, 1916/1944). That is they are conservative, in the sense that the past is perpetuated. Alternatively, prospective education uses the past as a resource for the future, not as an ideal that needs to be replicated but rather experiences which from which we can learn (Dewey, 1916/1944). As indicated earlier, Dewey saw training as problematic when language was used to transmit knowledge and remains disconnected from common shared experiences. Thus he argued that societies which have the ideal of change (prospective) as their goal will have “different standards and methods of education from one which aims simply at the perpetuation of its own customs” (p. 81).

The connections between language, training and the goals of education are apparent when Dewey argues against “perpetuating unchanged the existing industrial order or society, instead of operating as a means of its transformation” (1916/1944, p. 316). Retrospective schooling trains students to adapt the present to the past; when contradictions occur during the perpetuation of society teachers use language to ideologically iron out the contradictions thus effectively training students how to reactively respond to contradictory experiences in the future. My understanding of Dewey (1916/1944) indicates that the discourse problem of educating for democracy is when schooling becomes training, language functions to transmit knowledge rather than actualize relationships, and discursive training perpetuates existing social relations in such a ways that the common human interests are secondary to industrial interests. Dewey points out many possible obstacles to education for democracy including the use of language to train rather than educate, the danger of retrospective conceptions of education, and the caution of perpetuating existing society. Dewey also provides possible ways around the discourse-related problems of educating for democracy. These will be taken up in the next section after the obstacles presented by Freire and Althusser are considered.

The discourse function of “banking” education

Paulo Freire (2003) criticized the “banking” concept of education as an instrument of oppression. The banking method of education is another function of the discourse-related problem in the practice of educating for democracy. As Dewey was concerned with the language function of education being reduced to the practice of training and transmitting knowledge through talk rather than using language to mediate shared experiences, Freire claims that education suffers from “narration sickness” (Freire, 2003, p. 71). Freire describes the narrative activity of education as one where teachers tell the students what

needs to be memorized. He also employs a metaphor similar to Dewey's to describe the process. Dewey criticizes "teaching by pouring in, learning by passive absorption" (1916/1944, p. 38) while Freire describes passive students as "containers" and "receptacles" to be filled (2003, p. 72). Both metaphors remove the student from the active and constructive process of creating knowledge required for either "conjoint communicated experience" (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 87) or the participation in "transforming action that can create a new situation" (Freire, 2003, p. 47).

The banking model of education is oppressive because it represents a world with "deceptive words" while dehumanizing teachers and students (Freire, 2003). The description of words as "deceptive" can be understood as the ideological function as their deception is intended to hide contradictions in social life. Banking education is the practice of domination as it "anesthetizes and inhibits creative power" (Freire, 2003, p. 81). Training and banking education share a common problem in that they disassociate individuals from shared common experiences. Dewey argued that learning is not only the external accumulation of knowledge handed down by books and teachers (similar to banking education) but is also "an active personal affair" (1916/1944, p. 335). For democratic societies, the two must connect experiences to ensure that each experience "is made available in giving direction and meaning to another" (p. 345). In banking education, "students are not called upon to know [in the sense that Dewey describes knowledge as the method of making one experience available in giving direction and meaning to another] but to memorize the contents narrated by the teacher" (Freire, 2003, p. 80). In this sense schools become State apparatuses for training rather than education when the use of language is limited to training and oppressive practice.

Both Dewey and Freire condemn the limited use of language in education which serves to train students to instinctively react to stimuli or familiar situations and "bank" away knowledge for future withdrawal. These descriptions of schooling indicate that the use of language to train or deposit is one discourse-related problem in the practice of educating for democracy. Dewey and Freire both value communication and dialogue as possible ways around the obstacles of educating for democracy. For Dewey communication makes community possible and for Freire dialogue enables people to engage in transformative activities. The commonalities of Dewey's and Freire's work do not adequately explain the function of schools as an institution within society. Both take on the task of whether society should be perpetuated or transformed but neither sufficiently deals with the role of the State in the educative process. Althusser (2001) addresses the function of the discourse-related problem of educating for democracy in a different though equally important way.

The function of schools as an ideological State apparatus

Althusser (2001) claims that "the realities of the class struggle are 'represented' by 'ideas', which are 'represented' by words", he continues:

In scientific and philosophical reasoning, the words (concepts, categories) are 'instruments' of knowledge. But in political, ideological, and philosophical struggle, the words are also weapons, explosives, or tranquilizers and poisons. Occasionally, the whole class struggle may be summed up in the struggle for one word against another word...words are the site of *ambiguity*: the stake in a decisive and undecided battle (p. 8).

Thus, Althusser positions language squarely in the realm of ideological struggle. For Althusser, the site positioned as the dominant ideological State apparatus is the educational ideological apparatus. Although Althusser makes his claim solely in relation to the

reproduction of the means of production, it is possible to understand how ideology functions to reproduce gender, sexual, racial, and other forms of domination as well.

Schools subject individuals to the political State apparatus or “democratic ideology” (Althusser, 2003, p.104). To extrapolate this point we can consider the point made by Kahne et. al (2003) that “most courses in US government appear to help students understand *what* government is but not *why* or *how* they should be active in civic life” (p. 1). In relation to Althusser’s point, the ideological function of this type of democratic education reproduces the relations of production necessary for capitalism by limiting the type of democratic engagement that could be used to challenge existing relations of domination and possibly restructure the relations of production. It may be worth briefly returning to the research literature to ask if the diminished civic engagement reviewed earlier corresponds to the rise of the neoliberal ideology. If that is the case, schools perform the “democratic ideology” well. Schools also act in concert with the “press, radio, and television” to inculcate “every ‘citizen’ with daily doses of nationalism, chauvinism, liberalism, moralism, etc” (Althusser, 2001, p. 104). Schools are not the only ideological State apparatus, according to Althusser, but they are the most powerful one because no other apparatus in society has the “obligatory audience of the totality of children” (Althusser, 2001, p. 105) for the amount of time required of school attendance.

The ideology that schools are “a neutral environment purged of ideology” (Althusser, p. 105) has been carefully and thoroughly dismantled by scholars other than Althusser including Apple (2000), Giroux (2001), McLaren (2003), Hinchey (2004), Kelsh and Hill (2006) and others. Through the adoption of textbooks, sanctioning of certificated teachers and administrators, annual assessments, accreditation processes, curricula, standards, grade span expectations, and allocation of funds, the State has significant power to influence what and how subject matters are taught. Hursh (2007) has argued that *No Child Left Behind* is one social policy through which “George W. Bush has solidified neoliberalism as the dominant approach to policy making in the United States” (p. 495). The function of schools as ideological State apparatuses operate through constructing ideological representations of the New Right (Apple, 2001), post-9/11 geopolitics and the culture of fear (Giroux, 2003), neoliberal globalization (McLaren, 2005), American Imperialism (McLaren and Martin, 2005), and the militarization of public space (Giroux, 2005). Those who are concerned about the dangers of these ideological constructions are called to “rescue education from the influence of the ruling class” (Marx, 1988, p. 71). Despite the disdainful manner in which Althusser describes the function of schools he “asks pardon of those teachers who, in dreadful conditions, attempt to turn the few weapons they can find in the history and learning they ‘teach’ against the ideology. They are a kind of hero. But they are rare” (Althusser, 2001, p. 106). Paths for these types of heroic teachers can be found in the works of Dewey (1916/1944) and Freire (2003).

Ways Past the Discourse-Related Problem of Educating for democracy

Dewey and Freire advocate specific discourse-related approaches to educating for democracy. Dewey’s (1916/1944) philosophical extrapolations center common communication as essential to democratic education. Freire (2003) theorizes dialogic education as the path to emancipation and liberation for teachers and students alike. In relation to this project Dewey’s work informed my understanding of educating for democracy in a number of ways, while Freire’s work, especially as it has been re-presented by Shor (1992), provides a followable, though not prescriptive, way to organize my practice as an educator.

Dewey’s democracy and education

Dewey's (1916/1944) conception of education for democracy is centered within a philosophical context of democracy itself where

Democracy stands in principle for free interchange, for social continuity, [and] it must develop a theory of knowledge which sees in knowledge the method by which one experience is made available in giving direction and meaning to another (p. 344-345)

As I have explained earlier, experiences are not made available to give meaning and direction to another if knowledge is simply told in a didactic manner. Rather, democratic education must have at its core the practice of communication which "links up the net results of the experience of the group" (Dewey, p. 217) so that each would "know what the other was about and would have some way of keeping the other informed as to his own purpose and progress" (p. 5). The implication of free exchange and communicative action provides an alternative path to the obstacle of training. If schools are to socialize students to democratic ways of life then they must educate, rather than train, for democracy.

Early in his conception of democratic education Dewey makes a similar (though not the same) break from idealism and allegiance to materialism that Marx made in the *German Ideology* (1978) when he states, "we cannot set up, out of our heads, something we regard as an ideal society. We must base our conception upon societies which actually exist" (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 83). Here Dewey argues for consideration of material reality, the world as it exists. He continues to explain that "the problem is to extract the desirable traits of forms of community life which actually exist, and employ them to criticize undesirable features and suggest improvement" (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 83). Similarly, Marx (1978) argued that the transformation of society requires the utilization of the best developments available in existing society. Furthermore, Dewey and Marx share similar commitments to community as Marx claims that "only in community [with others has each] individual the means of cultivating his gifts in all directions; only in community, therefore, is personal freedom possible" (Marx, 1978, p. 197). Dewey also contends that association of individuals is necessary so that "all [are] cognizant of the common end and all [are] interested so that they regulate their specific activity in view of it" (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 5). Retrospective education, one of the obstacles identified by Dewey that I described earlier, gives way to prospective education when society, as it actually exists, is critically examined and used to improve upon the desirable traits of society so that the community may provide freedom for all individuals.

Dewey's conception of democratic education is important to the way that I attempt to educate for democracy. Central to this is a critical examination of the "undesirable features" of democracy. The examination of the "undesirable features" of democracy began with the students' first discussions in response to the following prompt: What is the difference between what democracy *is* and what democracy *should be*? Also drawn from Dewey's work was the incorporation of group discussions because "in order to have a large number of values in common, all members of the group must have equable opportunities to receive and take from others" (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 84). Thus the frequent use of paired, small group, medium group, and whole class discussions were incorporated into the classroom. These discussions were intended to provide a "variety of shared undertakings and experiences" (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 84) though the analysis demonstrates the discussion groups became sites of ideological and hegemonic struggle as well as sites for the construction of shared values. Furthermore, in order to avoid educative experiences in which students were "engaged in activity which is socially serviceable, but whose service they do not understand and have no special interest in" (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 85) I attempt to draw the object of our study from the lives and experiences of the students.

Following Dewey's description of the democratic ideal, I attempt to use group discussions and student generated topics to provide "more numerous and more varied points of shared common interest" and "freer interaction between social groups" (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 86). Sometimes the students choose the groups in which they participate and at other times I purposefully assign groups in an effort to vary the points of view and the interactions of students. Education is one way of socializing students into society; in this practice of socializing them into democratic society, I am not interested in inculcating the "democratic ideology" (Althusser, 2001) which sustains voting as the primary function of citizens but to introduce Dewey's point that:

A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living of conjoint communicated experience. The extension into space of the number of individuals who participate in an interest so that each has to refer his own action to that of others, and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to his own is equivalent to the breaking down of those barriers of class, race, and national territory which kept men from perceiving the full import of their activity. (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 87)

My classroom is a mode of associated living where we consider our actions in relation to others as we cooperatively determine the content of our study, the processes in which we participate in the course, and the ways we demonstrate what we learn. Dewey's contributions to my practice do not stand alone. They were integrated along with contributions made by Freire's work in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2003).

Freirian Pedagogy

The most significant obstacle to educating for democracy may be the use of education to mediate the relationship between the oppressor and oppressed (Freire, 2003). "The banking concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits" (Freire, p. 72) is one obstacle to educating for democracy because it does not allow for communicative, shared experiences. This can also be linked to Althusser's (2001) conception of schools as *the* ideological State apparatus because what is banked can be seen to only support ideological and hegemonic representations which sustain existing dominant relations. Freire (2003) provides possible ways past the obstacle of banking education and toward education for democracy.

Freire's work shares commonalities with Dewey (1916/1944) and Marx (1978) concerning the need to critically examine reality. The banking method of education places the educator in the role of teller and depositor, thus preventing students from "develop[ing] the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world" (Freire, 2003, p. 73) because students will never be called to "critically analyze reality" (p. 74). In order for education to have transformative, emancipatory and liberatory impacts, educators must enter into humanizing and revolutionary relationships with students which resolve the contradictions of banking education where the teacher is active and all knowing while the student is passive and ignorant (Freire, 2003). If schooling is reduced to training (Dewey, 1916/1944) or inculcates ideology (Althusser, 2001) it can only serve the ruling class (Marx, 1978) or the dominant elites (Freire, 2003). To transform training to education, challenge ideology and consider reality, and use schooling as a practice of freedom requires dialogue.

Dialogue is central to the transformative and emancipatory pedagogy described by Freire.

Freire's point that "dialogue is the encounter among men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world" (Freire, 2003 p. 88) can be linked with Fairclough's (2003) description of discourse as mediating social structures and social events. While banking education does not enter into dialogue, it simply tells, emancipatory education must be dialogic so that teachers and students can enter in humanizing relationships where they can communicate their positions and needs among one another, build shared meaning, and cooperate in the (re)construction of their world, while at the same time using experiences of the world in the process. The humanizing and dialogical aspects of Freire's pedagogy overlap with Dewey's reliance on communicative action. Education for democracy must include dialogue because "to glorify democracy and to silence the people is a farce" (Freire, 2003, p.91). Dialogue is essential to replacing ideological and hegemonic schooling. Dialogue replaces banking education with conjoint communicated activities (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 87) and can overcome the ideological function of school because "it is not our role to speak to the people about our own view of the world, nor to attempt to impose that view on them, but rather to dialogue with the people about their view and ours" (Freire, 2003, p. 97).

When the teacher/student relationship is transformed from a Subject/object relationship to a collaborative venture, and uses dialogue to examine and explore reality with the intention of transforming the world it provides opportunities for critical consciousness. Freirian pedagogy provides transformative ways past the obstacles of ideological schooling which trains and banks. Such "transformation is possible because consciousness is not a mirror of reality, not a mere reflection, but is reflexive and reflective of reality" (Freire and Shor, 1987, p. 13). Centering dialogue in classroom practices aimed at educating for democracy allows students and teachers together to consider the reality of existing society and does not reduce schooling to simple telling or repeating ideological constructions of reality. Through the types of communication described by Dewey (1916/1944) and the dialogue described by Freire (2003) students can examine the ideological and hegemonic representations of the ruling classes described by Marx (1978), Gramsci (2000), and Althusser (2001). According to Freire the process of becoming critically conscious occurs when:

As conscious human beings we can discover how we are conditioned by the dominant ideology. We can gain distance on our moment of existence.... We can struggle to become free precisely because we know we are not free! That is why we can think of transformation (Shor and Freire, 1987, p. 13)

In Freire's work I found ways beyond the limitations of existing social relations described by Marxian theorists. The sense of hopelessness that "you and I are *always already* subjects" of ideology (Althusser, 2001, p. 117) is replaced by a hopefulness that I can construct classroom practices which are transformative for both me and my students.

Conclusion

The way that education for democracy is practiced is essential to the forms of democracy which exist in society. Existing research on education for democracy has shown that participation, with few exceptions, in traditional democratic practices such as voting has decreased in recent decades. The body of research also indicates that there are some educative practices which may improve democratic participation among youth. Research that examines the role of discussion in education for democracy does not analyze the function of discourse in sustaining or transforming hegemony. On the whole, research related to education for democracy is limited in its ability to provide understandings of the

function of discourse in mediating democratic activities within current social relations.

This study draws upon two different but connected bodies of theoretical literature. A theoretical framework was constructed to explain the production and function of ideology and hegemony in capitalist societies, how obstacles exist in current schooling practices to educating for democracy, and possible ways past those obstacles. The contributions of key scholars in the Marxian tradition were examined in an attempt to explain the production, process of sustaining, and possibilities of transforming ideology and hegemony. Marx's (1976, 1978, 1988) work was used to demonstrate the material conception of social life and the ways that the ruling class can control mental production to produce ideological representations which justify existing dominant relations. Gramsci's (2000) work was used to demonstrate how hegemony universalizes particular ideological representations thus achieving consent and making those representations hegemonic. Althusser's (2001) work linked the conceptions of ideology and hegemony to the practice of schooling which he called the primary ideological State apparatus. Simply understanding that ideology and hegemony exists does not necessarily help to construct educative practices which transform the condition in which ideology and hegemony are produced. There are obstacles in the way of this type of educative practice.

The contributions of Dewey (1916/1944) and Freire (2003) were examined to understand some of the obstacles to educating for democracy. To Dewey the obstacles include using schooling to train students to instinctively respond to certain stimuli in such a way that students will be able to perpetuate society as it exists. Dewey cautioned about a retrospective approach to education, warned about the dangers of reproducing current social conditions, and argued instead for education based on communication and shared experiences. Similarly, Freire critiqued a banking method of education which dehumanizes students and separates them from active construction of their world. Both training and banking education serve to maintain existing social relations of domination. But education need not be practiced this way.

Beyond describing the obstacles to education for democracy, Dewey and Freire also provide possible ways beyond these obstacles. Dewey (1916/1944) argued in favor of a type of democratic education which enables students to participate in common activities and build shared meaning through communication in order to construct better communities. Likewise, Freire (2003) placed dialogue as a primary importance in education for democracy. According to Freire dialogue enables humanization and critical consciousness because teachers and students can cooperatively examine their understandings of the world thus exposing ideological constructions and providing opportunities for action.

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