NEO-LIBERALISM, GLOBALIZATION AND HUMAN CAPITAL LEARNING

Reclaiming Education for Democratic Citizenship

by

Emery J. Hyslop-Margison
and Alan M. Sears

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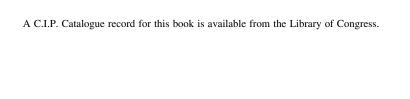## Reclaiming Education for Democratic Citizenship

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Printed in the Netherlands.

This book is dedicated to
Judy, Caitlin, Annie, Matt and Bekah for their inexhaustible love, support and patience.

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FOREWORD

Education for living or earning a living? To what degree should schooling be the same for all students? What is the critical part that school has to play as a core democratic institution in educating citizens who are ready to engage and commit themselves to the idea of social change and progress toward increased levels of social equality? The answers to these questions have preoccupied generations of philosophers, educational planners and practitioners. Recently, neo-liberal ideology has succeeded in focusing the answer on human capital preparation and instrumental learning as the panacea to the inequalities created by the present global economic order which serves the few at the expense of the many.

Through a careful analysis of the historical evidence and based on ideas from progressivism, liberal education and critical theory. The authors reclaim career and vocational education for *thick democracy*. This definition of democracy has at its core social and economic equality. It means that students have the right to an education that will give them the tools needed to participate in creating the conditions of their career and vocational experience as future workers and citizens.

This book places schooling, teaching and learning into a larger historic, cultural, economic, political and social context and challenges schools as well as the actors in these institutions to develop democratic structures and individual virtues for critical participation in social change. This means that teachers and students alike will learn to see the particular area of their human capital learning as both a field of study and an arena for social action.

In Chapter One, *Neo-Liberalism, Ideology and Education*, the authors, through a brilliant review of the literature, remind us first that the social structure of opportunity is a legitimate unit of analysis which the neo-liberal ideology strives to confound, and then they unveil the threats that this ideology presents for democratic learning and citizenship education. In this context they review a variety of mechanisms and reform ideas – such as school choice movement, standardized testing, character shaping education, loss of autonomy of teachers and critical thinking portrayed as technical rationality – as the main obstacles to the fulfillment of the dream for advancing Thick Democracy.

In Chapter Two, *Democracy, Citizenship and Social Equality*, the authors examine the idea of human agency as the core of the democratic society we construct and therefore advocate that students in democratic career education must view themselves as active players in creating the vocational and social conditions that shape their lives. The charge for schools and educators is to provide students with a deeper understanding of the historical context in which they live to recognize the ideological threats posed to democratic institutions, political liberty and intellectual autonomy. The macro level analysis, the institutional level analysis and the classroom level analysis are presented in a masterful summary and in comparative perspective. A brief mention is made of Asian models that are more and more prevalent along with the Australian, Canadian, British and U.S. models of democracy and their modern day co-optation and distortion by neo-liberal ideology as discussed in Chapter One. Most importantly, the central role of critical literacy, critical awareness and critical consciousness are underlined.

In Chapter Three, *Principles of Democratic Learning: Policy and Program Review*, the authors move from the macro level analysis to intermediate level analysis and address the role of human agency as related to actual classroom outcomes. This chapter enumerates the three principles that democratic career and work-related education should honour: a) a respect for student rationality; b) a disposition to entertain alternative perspectives; c) an appreciation for the distinction between social reality and natural reality. The authors are fully cognizant that these principles need to be respected and fostered in the face of difficult structural conditions. In other words the market metaphor put forward by neo-liberal ideology should not obscure the full range of educational and career choices before citizens. Democracy in education and education in democracy are not impossible dreams but are powerful concepts which open up windows for positive practice and professional satisfaction.

Building on the in-depth and vigorous historical, political and philo-sophical critique of the first three chapters, the authors focus on policy and curricular prescriptions in the next two chapters. The examples they propose are for illustration purposes and do not pretend to be exhaustive. In Chapter Four, *A Conceptual Framework for Democratic Learning*, the orientation privileged by the authors is the humanist strand of progressive education with an emphasis on student-centered and collaborative learning while fostering individual student voice. Several examples ranging from pedagogical practices and ideas such as linked classrooms and the respon-sible exercise of teacher autonomy, illustrate the importance of habituating students to foundational rationality and epistemic internalism in order to promote autonomous preference formation for effective democratic analysis

and action. Chapter Five, *Critical Thinking and Democratic Virtues*, is an excellent survey of critical thinking and problem solving. It provides a stinging criticism of the claim that critical thinking and problem-solving skills can be placed outside specific disciplinary and intellectual contexts. Personal qualities identified as epistemic virtues are special habits of the mind that serve students well in exercising their role of active participants in strengthening the roots of Thick Democracy. The readers are reminded that subject knowledge and understanding play a pivotal role in the interpretation of critical thinking advocated by the authors. Teachers are invited to examine and apply Aristotle's definition of intellectual virtues to include productive, practical and theoretical wisdom and thus to reclaim education for all, for democratic citizenship. This redefinition of teaching should move teachers to explore both content and pedagogy that would help them achieve this goal for all future citizens irrespective of their career choice.

Finally, it is noteworthy that Emery Hyslop-Margison and Alan Sears chose to disclose, in the last chapter of this book, that before engaging in their careers in academia, they worked for a number of years, one in private sector business and the other in public schools. Through the prism of their work experience and on the job socialization and learning, they have come to value the centrality of the concepts of autonomy, commitment and collaborative effort as essential elements in their professional practice as university professors. A wise observation is that democracy can be learned and advanced by practicing it. For example, they recommend collaborating with colleagues in taking responsibility for decision making about their own roles as professional leaders, curriculum developers, and active and critical participants in school governance. On a practical level this book has many implications that each reader will discover and pursue depending on the context in which they exercise their profession as educators and learners.

In concluding this foreword, I express the wish that the authors will collaborate on a book about the process of preparing preservice teachers as an example of a specific career education project. The goal will be to provide preservice teachers in university education programs or practitioners in adult education contexts in the workplace with opportunities for critical examination of the teaching profession and the role of teacher as public-intellectual. We need to prepare reflective teacher-practitioners who will in turn educate reflective practitioners in diverse career options ready to act critically and effectively on the issues raised in this book.

For citizens engaged in the field of human capital work, for professionals, teachers, trainers, policy makers and independent learners alike, this book provides an excellent summary for understanding the historical trends in democratic education in relation to human capital learning, and for critically

interpreting the implications of the human capital ideology in the reification and legitimation of the present economic order. Emery Hyslop-Margison and Alan Sears, two committed educators and true life long learners, present us with an open invitation to learn from the past and the present and to participate actively in building alternatives for democratic citizenship for one and all.

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CHAPTER 1

NEO-LIBERALISM, IDEOLOGY AND EDUCATION

1.   THE NEO-LIBERAL CONTEXT

The 1970s ushered in a dramatically shifting political and economic paradigm to virtually all Western industrialized countries. These nations, including the US, Canada, Great Britain and other countries of the then G7, were about to suffer a series of crippling recessions that continued throughout the decade. The series of devastating economic downturns confronted by all G7 countries were primarily caused by a period of rising wages combined with a falling consumer demand for available goods and services. For all intents and purposes, it was a classic over accumulation crisis following from the inherent cyclical limitations and practical short-comings of capitalist economies.

   In *Das Kapital* Marx (1933) accurately predicted that capitalism would experience inexorable and recurring crises of over accumulation that would result in unavoidable cycles of economic decline. In periods of over accumulation like the 1970s, capital is so plentiful that industry cannot dispose of its product profitably and production must be consequently reduced. The reduction in production and the tightening of consumer spending through increased interest rates ultimately results in widespread job loss. The economy eventually recovers from each over accumulation crisis but with recovery the entire cycle begins all over again with each subsequent collapse, according to Marx, more serious than its predecessor.

   Perhaps the most notable historic instance of an over accumulation crisis is the Wall Street Crash of 1929 that led to more than a decade of widespread international job loss and economic hardship. Of course, capitalism, for all of its foibles, has demonstrated a remarkable resilience to survive these downturns far beyond what Marx envisioned. Neo-liberalism, with its exploitation of a global labour market, its sustained assault on the economic

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status of all workers, and powerful mechanisms of ideological manipulation, has provided a bulwark against the complete collapse of capitalism predicted by Marx. However, neo-liberalism has achieved this objective only at the expense of exacting a tremendous price from the quality of life experienced by working class citizens.

The devastating economic fallout from the over accumulation crisis of the 1970s and early 1980s impacted negatively on many citizens of the world's industrialized democracies. As industry limited production and lending institutions tightened the reins on available capital, mass layoffs of workers occurred throughout the manufacturing and transportation sectors. Interest rates witnessed a significant jump that in turn prompted a dramatic increase in the number of personal and small business bankruptcies (Hyslop-Margison & Welsh, 2003). One noted economist describes the fiscal decline of the 1970s as "a disaster that would rival the great crash of 1929" (Mahar, 2003, p. 39). Many working class individuals lost their jobs, homes and savings as they struggled to carve out a new niche for themselves in the emerging leaner, and decidedly meaner, neo-liberal order.

Democratic learning, or education that encourages the meaningful political participation of citizens in public policy development, also came under attack as labour market needs began to define acceptable and valued schooling objectives. Schools were increasingly viewed as production facilities whose primary mission was providing industry with its required human capital. The role of the citizen within this milieu became one of political conformity rather than political engagement since the neo-liberal social structure was dictated almost entirely by market logic.

Once neo-liberalism was instantiated as the only possible option, the need for democratic choice became largely irrelevant. Smith (2004) describes this decline of the democratic citizen in Canada by observing that, "No longer were Canadians expected to relate to their government as democratic citizens; rather they were perceived as consumers" (p. 306). In this "bureaucratic" conception of citizenship "freedom to make private decisions is bought at the cost of turning over most public decisions to bureaucratic managers and experts" (Bellah, Masden, Sullivan, Swidler & Tipton, 1986, p. 150). In a neo-liberal order, the freedom of democratic citizens is limited to deciding between competing brand names, retailers or political options circumscribed by market economy principles.

Neo-liberalism has not only redefined the role of the democratic citizen but also the understanding of what constitutes the national or state interest. As the Cold War faded with a triumphant capitalist victory, the challenges facing Western democracies were increasingly described in economic rather than political or moral terms. Survival no longer depended on winning hearts

and minds from communism to capitalism but in maintaining the economic success and advantage of the corporate class. The demise of communism removed the only potential obstacle to unfettered market economics and with the spectre of socialism all but vanished from the political horizon capital was free to roam without any serious limitations. Within this milieu, schooling for the masses became education for human capital preparation while democratic education was essentially reserved for the economic elite.

There were major shifts in the focus and format of public education during this period. One noted British observer argues that within such a climate, "education in the national interest takes the pupil as raw material to be transformed into an efficient worker by means of a vocationally dominated curriculum" (Dale, 1989, p. 104). Education becomes a publicly funded means to develop human capital rather than promote democratic learning or citizenship objectives. Human capital learning views students as self-interested entrepreneurs seeking to maximize fiscal return on their investment. From this perspective, a "quality" education provides students with the necessary skills and knowledge for economic success within the prevailing labour market. Educational goals are determined by labour market conditions and, as part of the naturalizing thrust of neo-liberal ideology, critical reflection on structural issues is correspondingly eliminated. Social criticism is viewed as categorically counterproductive to the economic efficiency objectives consistent with market economy logic. We will revisit the impact of neo-liberal ideology on public education at some length later in this chapter.

There is reason to suspect that the dramatic economic downturn of the 1970s may have been at least partially precipitated by corporations as an excuse to launch a full-scale attack on the welfare state policies adopted by industrialized nations during the 1950s and 60s and on the labour movement (Hyslop-Margison & Welsh, 2003). The term *welfare state* describes a nation where the government accepts significant responsibility for ensuring its citizens receive necessary levels of basic goods and services. A welfare state commits public funds to meet the basic needs of its citizens in fundamental areas such as education, health services and, in some cases, governments even provide housing or housing subsidies. Antipoverty programs and a system of personal and corporate progressive taxation where wealth distribution is a central objective are also typical features of the welfare state. More generally, a welfare state attempts to balance economic growth with moral and social responsibility in order to meet the needs of all citizens, and tries to eliminate, as much as possible, the economic inequities and inevitable class divisions of vulgar capitalism. Before the onset of neo-liberal policies in Canada, for example, citizens

enjoyed a social safety net that was arguably the envy of the industrialized world.

In the two decades preceding the 1970s, governments from industrialized countries adopted a range of policies and programs that enhanced the quality of life for many of their most vulnerable citizens. In Canada, unemployment insurance programs, national healthcare and enhanced social assistance programs protected the most susceptible members of the nation's population from slipping below subsistence levels of income.

Throughout most Western democracies, similar policies and programs sought to enhance social equality by implementing legislation that protected workers and economically disadvantaged citizens from the potential ravages of unfettered capitalism. Even in the US, where the welfare state was slower to catch on than elsewhere and certainly far less instantiated in a national consciousness founded on rampant and romantic individualism, "from 1950 to 1970, in a period of unparalleled economic growth, Welfare Liberalism scored its success and created something close to a national consensus" (Bellah et al., 1986, p. 262). However, according to business interests, these policies, in spite of the noble moral intentions behind them, inappropriately interfered with the logic of the market, leading to inflation, an over accumulation of capital and ultimately the devastating recessions of the 1970s.

Before the onslaught of neo-liberal economics, working class citizens in the G7 countries had enjoyed considerable and sustained gains in salaries and benefits. In his classic analysis of the evolution of democratic citizenship during the 1950s British theorist T.H. Marshall was so sanguinely confident of the progress made in these areas that he predicted social rights would soon hold the same status in Western democracies as civil and political rights. "The modern drive to social equality," he wrote, "is the latest phase of an evolution of citizenship which has been in continuous progress for some 250 years" (Marshall, 1992, p. 7). During this pre-neo-liberal period, the labour movement successfully lobbied governments to provide improved protection against unemployment, to strengthen health benefits and to implement superior workplace safety measures. The 1960s emphasis on peace and social justice operated in conjunction with government and general populace sensitivity to economic hardship to create a kinder, gentler sort of capitalism where the fear of individual and working class economic annihilation was considerably reduced if not entirely eliminated.

Many of the considerable social gains accrued through welfare state policies were lost or substantially rolled back during the next two decades of trickle down economics. While the retreat from social welfare reforms was somewhat uneven across national jurisdictions, by 1990 the industrialized

world was a radically different sort of place where vulnerable citizens were often left without meaningful public mechanisms to protect them from the rather ruthless application of market economy principles (Giroux, 2003). This attack on the welfare state reflected not only a reduction in available social programs but also a much more fundamental shift in prevailing ideology and citizen beliefs. Since 1970, neo-liberalism in the US has gained virtually complete control over the political consciousness of Americans and enjoyed considerable success in convincing even those citizens victimized by its principles of its supposed merits (Bellah et al., 1986).

In the contemporary labour market, workers from virtually all industrialized countries continue to struggle to regain some measure of political voice in the global economy as the corporate attack on social fairness continues largely unabated. Mass sell-offs of state controlled resources and services, price gouging by international oil companies, union busting by major retailers and the accelerated relocation of manufacturing jobs to developing countries have led to a spiralling decline in quality jobs for workers. All of these trends are indications of the on-going neo-liberal drift that currently grips industrialized countries in its suffocating and dehumanizing stranglehold. However, there are some encouraging signs that the neo-liberal pendulum swing may have reached its apex. The recent rise of gasoline and natural gas prices in Canada and the US, combined with record and decadent profits in the oil and gas sectors, have rekindled concerns that some state control over essential resources is required and may not be an entirely negative national policy. There is at least a faint pulse of recognition that the best interests of the market may not always be necessarily in the best interests of the nation.

The welfare state polices of the 1960s and 70s were counterproductive to corporate interests because they interfered with the raw supply and demand labour market principles that form the foundation of unregulated capitalism, or what might be described as "capitalism with the gloves off" (McLaren & Farahmanpur, 2000, p. 26). For example, when workers are provided with the opportunity to choose between drawing sustainable unemployment benefits and working for an unsustainable minimum wage that guarantees them dropping below the poverty level, many understandably select the former. This outcome, coupled with the comforting impact of well-resourced social assistance programs, had the net impact of driving wages and production costs higher as competition between companies for qualified workers intensified. The upward pressure on wages caused consistently high inflation and some corporate profits stagnated throughout many sectors of the economy. It was an enviable situation for workers who finally witnessed significant wage increases and dramatic improvement in their

overall standard of living and quality of life. Given their political lobbying power and considerable control over the economic fortunes of industrialized countries, however, it was a situation that corporations and the captains of industry were simply unwilling to tolerate.

With the tide of public sentiment now effectively turned against the more liberal welfare state governments of the period, widespread corporate political support for candidates such as Margaret Thatcher in Britain and Ronald Reagan in the US contributed to their election and ultimate re-election. Reagan and Thatcher were both enthusiastic advocates of neo-liberal economic policies and embraced the logic of the market-place with the same reverence and sense of inevitability as the law of gravity. *Reaganomics* with its trickle down dregs to the poor became the order of the day as increased job growth, often in the form of low paying service sector positions, corresponded with a rapid drop in actual worker earnings (Hyslop-Margison & Welsh, 2003). Inflation was wrestled under control and corporate profits were restored largely at the economic expense and social standing of the most vulnerable citizens of industrialized nations.

To say this trend toward neo-liberal economic and social policy was exceptionally widespread across the industrialized world is not to imply it was uncontested in some isolated instances. While Britain under Thatcher and the US under Reagan and later Bush afford classic examples of neo-liberal successes, concerted action by citizens in some countries forced governments to moderate, at least to some degree, proposed neo-liberal reforms. The debate over public health care in Canada provides one such example. Devastating cuts to social spending by the Liberal Government throughout the 1990s threatened, and continue to threaten, the viability of the universally accessible public system but consistent public pressure resulted in a major federal-provincial health accord in the summer of 2004 that includes a significant infusion of additional financing. After years of government neglect and under financing, this funding is desperately required to salvage the state financed health care system from almost total collapse.

Education is another area in Canada where neo-liberal reforms have been occasionally resisted. For example, several conservative provincial governments have moved toward supporting the so-called educational choice movement by offering a range of public funding for private educational initiatives but others, the Province of New Brunswick being one notable example, have firmly resisted calls to support private or Charter schools. To point out that the advance of the neo-liberal agenda has been contested in some circles, however, is not to argue that it is not pervasive in influence and

ultimately successful in its mission. For example, Simon (2001) describes the multifaceted nature of neo-liberal reforms in Canadian education as follows:

The streamlining of school services through budget cuts, adoption of province-wide standardized testing, rewritten mandatory curricula with a focus on a profusion of fragmented learning outcomes, the cutback of teacher development support and preparation time, and the vast reduction in structures that enable local participation in school governance. (p. 11)

Further, the entire trend toward career education and human capital program curriculum development is an integral part of neo-liberal influence on both Canadian and international schooling.

With conservative, trickle-down economics firmly in place as industrialized countries entered the 1980s, "overpaid" and "inefficient" workers became easy scapegoats for the economic downturn of the previous decade. Relative wages dropped dramatically, massive layoffs occurred and, while corporate profits rose, the growing number of low paying and part time jobs increased the economic hardship confronted by many workers. The downward pressure on wages and benefits received by workers continues unabated today with minimum wage levels in most industrialized countries far below what it costs to live at or above the poverty level. In the US, perhaps the worst case example of appalling living conditions for the working poor, almost a quarter of the population, or approximately 60 million people – many of them working full and part time retail and service industry jobs – now live as members of the so-called underclass (Sadovnik, Cookson & Semel, 2001).

1.1   The Ideological Apparatus of Neo-Liberalism

With considerable practical ideological success, then, major corporations and their powerful lobbying institutions claimed that the recessions of the 1970s were the direct result of unwarranted government meddling within the economic arena (Young, 1990). Corporate directed organizations and think tanks such as the Fraser Institute, the Conference Board of Canada and the Hudson Institute in the US delivered, and continue to deliver, this message to both politicians and the general public. Indeed, lobbyists were so successful in their efforts to influence public thinking that they convinced many working class citizens of industrialized societies that they themselves were primarily responsible for their own financial hardship. In their book *The Right Nation: Conservative Power in America*, Micklethwait and Wooldridge (2004) argue that over the past 40 years the

political right in the US has built an intellectual infrastructure that now almost completely dominates public policy debates.

The prevailing public reasoning during the 1980s, reflecting mainstream media and ideological manipulation, suggested that workers had it far too easy, were making far too much money, and that this type of economic abuse simply could not be permitted to continue. The unavoidable class divisions consistent with vulgar capitalism required restoration and neo-liberal ideology, working largely in conjunction with governments and public education, became the perfect vehicle to achieve that objective.

Public hostility toward the working class combined with workers' own seeming self-loathing to launch a concerted attack on labour unions that increasingly found themselves under siege from corporate owned media, political conservatives and complicit politicians. These various groups, well funded and well coordinated in their scathing critiques, maintained that the demands of labour were responsible for driving industrialized nations to their economic knees. Conservative ideologues in US from intellectual William F. Buckley to radio talk show host Rush Limbaugh and the offensive, homophobic neo-conservative Ann Coulter effectively used this claim to manipulate public opinion in favour of their corporate allies. The corporate lobby convinced the general public that countries could not expect to be internationally competitive unless unions and workers accepted significant labour market reorganization. The race to the bottom, at least as far as quality of life issues for many workers was concerned, began in earnest. It was an artful manipulation of public opinion that even reluctant union leadership eventually accepted. A new era in politics, economics, ideology and education was gripping the industrialized world, and workers and the entire labour union movement were in active retreat.

With the widespread collapse of the welfare state, governments from industrialized nations were forced to redefine themselves to justify their new role in the emerging neo-liberal global order. They achieved this objective by cooperating fully with the demands of free enterprise (Young, 1990) and reducing all public policy decisions to questions of market economy logic. Morally acceptable policies were those that followed the principles of laissez faire capitalism regardless of their impact on citizens. The sanguine moral assumptions supporting the social justice objectives of welfare state policies had failed to deliver on their promise and industrialized governments increasingly removed themselves, at least in any meaningful way, from public policy development. The role of government within neo-liberalism became that of creating optimum conditions for the practice of global economics in a social order totally committed to the logic of the marketplace. This commitment not only affected the quality of employment workers

might expect to find in the shifting and unstable conditions of the new labour market, but also influenced environmental spending, social programs and the focus of public education. Let the market dictate the social policy rules, or so the prevailing reasoning went, and all citizens around the world would be, at least in the long run, substantially better off.

The problem, of course, is that most citizens of industrialized nations are still waiting, and will continue to wait, for this neo-liberal nirvana to arrive. Instead, the economic recessions of the 1970s and the emergence of neo-liberalism have left in their wake increased numbers of homeless individuals, a plethora of low paying and part time jobs (many at subsistence levels with little to no benefits), and a moral vacuum in adequate social programs to protect the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of industrialized nations. Obviously, some people have done exceptionally well economically in the neo-liberal order, but most members of the working class within industrialized nations have witnessed a significant decline in their actual earnings and quality of life. In the US in particular, the economic chasm between social classes is growing at an alarming rate, and free market principles have never delivered on their economic promise of providing a better quality existence for all citizens. While corporate profits have escalated, we have simultaneously witnessed growing alienation among the nation's youth with political movements such as anarchy now attractive to disenfranchised portions of the population. But the die has been cast and according to neo-liberal enthusiasts we have reached the best and end of all possible economic worlds. Ironically, vulgar capitalism has appropriated the Marxist assumption that we have achieved the terminus of social history, an idea, as we illustrate later in the text, perpetuated throughout much of contemporary human capital and career education curricula, and an idea in direct contradiction to the basic tenets of democratic learning.

One cornerstone of neo-liberal economics is the globalization of capital. The over accumulation crisis of the 1970s prompted widespread recognition that markets required significant expansion if economic growth was to continue. As a result, capitalism has spread to every corner of the world, often under the guise of disseminating democracy. An astonishing number of free trade agreements have been signed since the 1970s including the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the formation of the European Economic Community (EEC). These various trade agreements and economic organizations, vended to the general public as necessary conditions of economic prosperity, have actually cost thousands of quality manufacturing jobs in the US and other developed industrialized countries, and place additional downward pressure on workers' salaries. Neo-liberalism, as Young (1990) points out, has failed quite miserably to deliver on its

economic promises and reduced the powers of duly elected democratic governments to a level of virtual political powerlessness:

> The limitations of the state in both the political sphere of regulating class conflict and the economic sphere have become increasingly obvious. The state has been unable to protect its own economy against international economic influences and the policies of multinational capitalism. Internally, it has been unable to satisfy either its clients – or the capitalists whose cooperation has been necessary for the welfare-state compromise to work. (p. 9)

In the global neo-liberal economy, many corporations routinely relocate manufacturing facilities to whatever country provides cheap sources of labour, and rejects any meaningful set of labour regulations and environmental laws. Indeed, Friedman (2005) clearly demonstrates this outsourcing is quickly spreading beyond manufacturing to include knowledge industries as well.

The neo-liberal approach to globalization, then, has led to the widespread outsourcing of jobs from developed countries to Pacific Rim nations such as China, Indonesia and South Korea. A trip to the US retail giant Wal-Mart, now ruefully the single largest employer in that country, reveals the impact of the exploding Chinese manufacturing sector on American jobs. A US consumer is hard pressed to identify a single item in a Wal-Mart store that is not "made in China," and this supposedly "communist" power, once entirely unwilling to accept Western or capitalist values, is now the bulwark of the entire neo-liberal and globalization movement. The sweatshop employment conditions confronted by many Chinese workers offer corporations a virtually inexhaustible source of cheap production. The US, reeling from an escalating national debt caused by recent misguided military excursions and a rapidly declining dollar on international markets, suffered a 124 million dollar trade deficit with China in 2003 (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2004). The presence of cheap dependable labour in the communist country suggests the US trade deficit will grow as industry continues to exploit Chinese workers. The net effect on jobs in developed countries restricts real wage growth, reduces worker benefits, and generally undermines even further any reasonable hope of occupational stability for workers.

The dominant political and educational discourse suggests that the logic of the neo-liberal market is irrefutable. This logic is expressed ideologically and validated as "common sense" by powerful institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Mike Harris, the former neo-liberal premier of Ontario, Canada rolled to power in 1995 by asking citizens in that province to join him in a "Common Sense Revolution" premised on significant cuts in four areas: taxes; government spending;

barriers to job creation (including workmen's compensation premiums and progressive labour legislation); and the size of government (Harris, 1994). One of his government's most notorious suggestions to address poverty was voiced by an Ontario government cabinet minister who implied that the poor should learn to spend their meagre finances more wisely. Such is the moral compassion of the neo-liberal order.

The most influential neo-liberal institutions actively lobby for state implemented policies intended to reduce labour costs, limit public expenditures on social programs, and make workers and work more flexible. The World Trade Organization (WTO) now routinely dictates to governments on the "legality" of their domestic policies with regards to their potential interference with unfettered global market practices. One of the foremost experts in the study of ideology and how it influences social thinking, Terry Eagleton (1991), argues that making problematic assumptions part of common sense thinking is a familiar ideological strategy. The naturalization of neo-liberal ideology is also expressed throughout contemporary curricula that typically describe present circumstances in terms that suggest their inevitability to learners. In Chapter Three, we illustrate the magnitude of this deepening threat to democratic learning and participatory citizenship.

The neo-liberal order draws its ideological strength from the political power of those whose interests it serves. This group includes influential stockholders, industrialists, financial operators, media magnates, political pundits and other powerful individuals and organizations who stand to gain increased economic return from laissez-faire economic policies. Neo-liberal ideology removes the economic sphere from moral or social discussion by portraying these latter realms of discourse as entirely dependent on the former. In other words, appropriate social and moral action is determined by what works for the market, and what works for the market, according to the prevailing logic, is neo-liberalism. All other spheres of life are correspondingly designed to address the needs of the marketplace and any interference with market logic becomes unthinkable let alone possible. Sadly, for younger students who have lived "inside" this worldview their entire lives, their ability to even imagine a different social structure is barely perceptible.

The power of ideology in opening political space for neo-liberal economics is critical to understand the movement and to grapple effectively with its tremendous impact on education. For example, although the generic employability skills approach that dominates career and human capital education programs is supposedly intended to prepare students for the challenges of a global labour market, it is far more directed toward shaping student consciousness in a manner to circumscribe envisioned social possibilities beyond the strictures of the neo-liberal marketplace. Human capital

and career education achieve this objective in a variety of ways that we outline in the ensuing sections of this chapter and the remainder of the book.

1.2   Neo-Liberalism and Education

With the revised role of government in neo-liberalism reduced to that of creating optimum conditions for the marketplace, many public policy development areas came under concerted attack during the final two decades of the twentieth-century. As we mentioned previously, nationally owned resources and services were routinely sold to the private sector predicated on the view that such sell offs would necessarily increase productive efficiency. Public education did not escape the shift toward privatization as evidenced by the growth of the school choice movement, especially in the US. Consistent with the unquestioned faith in competition and accountability to correct all possible social and economic ills, neo-liberalism demanded that schools and teachers be held directly responsible for student academic fortunes through the onslaught of standardized testing. As an ideological mechanism, these tests effectively mask the structural causes of academic underachievement and unemployment. With complete disregard for resource inequity and economic disparity, the belief developed, encouraged by private enterprise, that public education could be improved by creating a parallel system standing in direct competition to public schools.

The school choice movement combined with escalating accountability measures to effectively distract public attention away from the structural causes of academic inequality, then, and instead blamed poorly paid teachers, under funded schools and harried administrators. Not only was the movement a manifestation of neo-liberal capitalism with its focus on accountability, privatization and competition, it provided the added bonus of an effective ideological instrument to insulate an unfair social structure from serious public scrutiny. With the blame for academic failure laid squarely at the feet of teachers and schools, the social structure of opportunity as a unit of critical analysis was entirely removed from public radar. However, there were much earlier warning signs that education would be seen through a decidedly different lens by neo-liberal policy developers, a lens that dispensed with democratic learning and citizenship preparation in favour of a generic and instrumental skills acquisition strategy based largely on human capital assumptions.

Perhaps the leading and earliest international proponent of neo-liberal schooling reform was the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). More recently, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Bank have taken an equally active interest in shaping international

education policy. The OECD represents the world's 31 leading industrialized countries and seeks to enhance international conditions for market economy growth through policy development and implementation in a range of areas. Its educational wing, the Centre for Educational Reform and Innovation (CERI), communicates directly with OECD member countries in order to influence international education policy development. The organization's influence is reflected by the fact that education policy, especially in the area of career and work preparation, is virtually identical among all OECD member countries. The education policy developed by the OECD is primarily interested in schooling as a means of providing students with so-called generic employability skills that are supposedly transferable between different occupational domains (Hyslop-Margison & Graham, 2003).

As early as 1979, the OECD urged all levels of education, including tertiary schooling, to place greater emphasis on these so-called "employability skills". These skills, or so it was argued, would have direct applicability in preparing students for the dynamic jobs, shifting working conditions and the unstable labour market milieu consistent with the emerging global economy. In truth, the transformation of public and higher education has turned virtually all career education programs, at least at the level of policy formation, into narrowly construed forms of attitude adjustment and ideological manipulation. The initial OECD education policy development marked the beginning of a sustained challenge by global institutions to traditional liberal and more democratic learning practices. In the absence of proposed alternatives to *invisible hand* market principles and logic, schools became active proponents and participants in the ideological drift toward neo-liberal capitalism. Public education in the neo-liberal order, then, is simply one component of a larger economic system, and the focus of education policy and curriculum development is directed accordingly.

In spite of their traditional status as the gatekeepers of intellectual freedom, universities have not escaped the educational drift toward human capital preparation and other demands of the marketplace. Faced with huge public expenditure reductions, universities are increasingly becoming institutions focused on technical training and skill development rather than on creating informed and engaged democratic citizens (Giroux, 2003). In the US, for example, a significant number of research chairs are entirely corporate sponsored with an attending obligation to direct research agendas toward issues that pay corporate dividends. Magnusson (2001) traces the same trend in Canada arguing that, "clearly, Canadian universities are being discursively reconstituted within a neoliberal political-economic formulation" (p. 108). The reductions in general public funding have been replaced with intense competition between faculty for private and public grants. The

awarding of these grants is largely skewed toward areas and practices that pose little challenge to the neo-liberal order because they either neglect social structure as a unit of analysis or manifestly accept prevailing human capital objectives. The idea that a university experience is about intellectual growth and democratic dialogue has been almost completely usurped by the neo-liberal objectives of consumerism, technical training and instrumental learning. In the current university milieu, students are viewed as customers and faculty are often reduced from their traditional role of engaged intellectual to entrepreneurial researcher, or even to the level of clerical proletariat labour (Aronowitz, 2001).

As neo-liberalism clutches the entire world in its rather chilling and often dehumanizing grip, it dramatically reduces the amount of state intervention in public administration and policy development. Neo-liberalism is dehumanizing in the sense that the role of human beings is reduced and objectified to serving the economic system rather than the economic system being designed to serve human beings. The accompanying ideology influences the acceptable moral discourse about what is valued within our societies, including what is valued and practiced within public education and in our universities. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation in the US, for example, does not contain a single reference in its narrative about the importance of public education to either democracy or democratic citizenship.

An education system designed to respond to the needs of the marketplace predictably appears radically different from one focused on preparing students for the responsibilities of democratic citizenship. As we suggested previously, human capital learning, with its narrow instrumental teaching and learning practices, dominates contemporary educational discourse. Students are increasingly portrayed as submissive, or at least passive, objects being prepared simply to play out their predetermined role in the burgeoning global economy. Part of this preparation, of course, requires convincing students they must adjust their own existential dreams and aspirations to a lifetime of unstable working conditions by accepting the present labour market situation as an unavoidable condition of social reality.

The assumption that occupational uncertainty is an inevitable feature of contemporary working experience is conveyed to students in a variety of ways. For example, the tacit message naturalizing labour market instability is reflected in The World Bank's (2004) problematic view of lifelong learning as instrumental job retraining:

In the 21st century, workers need to be lifelong learners, adapting continuously to changed opportunities and to the labour market demands of the knowledge economy. Lifelong learning is more than education and training beyond formal schooling. A comprehensive program

of lifelong-learning education for dynamic economies, within the context of the overall development framework of each country, encompasses all levels. (n.p.)

The concept of lifelong learning has an enduring history in educational thought beginning with Plato's (1973) metaphoric journey that moves learners from the darkness of the cave toward intellectual and moral enlightenment. Dewey (1938) conveyed a vision of lifelong learning that included personal, intellectual and social development, as well as technical skill acquisition and vocational preparation. Neo-liberal education policy, on the other hand, reduces lifelong learning to a discursive ideological apparatus that encourages student conformity to market economy dictates by advocating self-regulated training in response to job displacement.

Neo-liberal culture, with its unstable labour market conditions, is naturalized to students in public education as an unchangeable social reality rather than critiqued as an ideological movement imposed by special interests on citizens of industrialized democratic societies. Outside the strictures of the global market, education in the neo-liberal order conveys to students there are simply no longer any meaningful choices to be made. Throughout contemporary career education curricula in particular, and in a variety of ideologically manipulative ways, students are expected to prepare for an uncertain occupational future and are discursively convinced that such conditions are beyond the scope of political agency. As a result, schools fail to prepare students as democratic citizens who possess the ability to decide politically between various social possibilities. Instead, students are portrayed as mere objects in history and inculcated with a worldview devoid of imagination, hope or possibility.

Dale (1989) argues that neo-liberal states have three core educational problems related to the promotion of capitalism: "Support of the capital accumulation process; guaranteeing a context for its continued expansion; and legitimating the capitalist mode of production, including the State's own part in it" (p. 28). Correspondingly, curricular documents and policies from various industrialized nations indicate that neo-liberalism has three primary objectives related to education focused on addressing each of these core requirements. As we argued above, the central aim of neo-liberal schooling is to prepare students as politically passive and compliant workers for the dynamic labour market conditions consistent the global economy. This preparation is attempted through a range of policy and curricular practices that collectively indoctrinate students toward a neo-liberal worldview focused on creating consumers as opposed to citizens. The aforementioned construct of lifelong learning espoused by the World Bank provides one such example. As we illustrate in Chapter Three, neo-liberal economic policies and the social conditions they generate are presented to

career education students in an ahistorical manner that effectively insulates them from evaluation and critique. Students are tacitly encouraged to view the world as something created by others, and to see their own role as self-configuration to a series of externally generated expectations and requirements.

The second educational objective of neo-liberalism involves introducing market economy principles such as competition and consumerism directly into public education. The rapid growth of voucher programs and charter schools, a movement predicated on the market economy logic of competition and consumer choice, wrongly assumes that these two elements will necessarily enhance the quality of education. Finally, the standardized testing movement and accompanying accountability measures represent the third objective. This strategy operates as an effective ideological distraction that deflects responsibility for disparate academic outcomes from issues of social inequality and instead blames teachers, schools and administrators. As we noted above, standardized testing and the plethora of teacher accountability measures effectively eliminate the social structure of opportunity as a legitimate and primary unit of analysis, with neo-liberalism naturalized to students in the process. Hence, students are discouraged in a variety of ideologically sophisticated fashions from thinking about social, economic and vocational issues outside those parameters established and endorsed by the marketplace.

National standards and the tests that accompany them constrain the curriculum and focus it in particular directions while also inhibiting the actual democratic nature of schools themselves. Schools cannot teach for democratic citizenship if they are not, in fundamental ways, democratic institutions themselves. This not only includes how the teachers operate in the classroom (Sears & Perry, 2000) but also how the institution treats the professionals who work there and the range of community members who depend on schools. Dale (1989) points out that in times of economic restructuring capitalist states move to restrain the autonomy of teachers and students in order to orient their work in service of that restructuring. The neo-liberal reforms of the 1980s and 1990s did exactly that. As Hargreaves (2003) argues,

In standardized reform teachers are treated and developed not as high-skill, high capacity knowledge workers, but as compliant and closely monitored producers of standardized performances. Teachers with over-examined professional lives complain of eroded autonomy, lost creativity, restricted flexibility, and constrained capacity to exercise their professional judgment. (p. 5)

Policies such as centralized curricula development enforced by rigid testing and teacher accountability are designed more to constrain teachers

than they are to define and measure student achievement. American political scientist Benjamin Barber (1992) argues that in democracies educational standards should be democratically developed with wide participation from both teachers and citizens more broadly: "'Leave teachers alone!' and 'Let teachers teach!' should be the mottos of those who care about education" (p. 101). Teachers have been largely absent from key debates about national and regional standards as well as the content and focus of related testing programs (Portelli & Solomon, 2001). Obviously, it is difficult for teachers to encourage democratic participation among their students when they are generally excluded from shaping the conditions of their own professional practice.

Neo-liberal policies have not only constrained the professional and democratic participation of teachers in shaping educational policies and practices, they have also limited the nature of public participation in school governance. Many jurisdictions in Canada, for example, in the name of 'efficiency' have gone through a process of amalgamating school boards and creating "super" boards that have less power and are further removed from the people and communities that elect them. One Canadian province, New Brunswick, eliminated democratically elected school boards for a time by replacing them with much less powerful parent advisory committees. This move not only limited the opportunity for local people to influence schooling, but greatly limited 'the public' in public education by restricting participation in local governance to parents with children currently in school. This type of centralized control affords government greater jurisdiction over content and practice while undermining the democratic organization of education.

By restricting interest in schools to parents, the province implied that those without children, or with children too old or too young to be in school, have no real interest or stake in the quality and nature of public education. Obviously, such a view is highly problematic since it underestimates the impact educational design has on all citizens in a democratic society. Stewart (2004) correctly observes that, "constituencies public schooling serves [include] parents, communities, employers, post-secondary institutions" (p. 5) and all stakeholders ought to be involved in establishing the priorities for public education. The concerted effort to centralize authority over schools to constrain professional and public participation in educational governance is part of what Griffith (2001) calls "the retreat from the democratic organization of schooling" (p. 89). We are convinced that schools and their administration processes that do not operate democratically will not nurture democratic citizenship in either teachers or students. We are not alone in this conviction. There is a growing worldwide consensus

among citizenship educators that school context affords a powerful force in education for democratic citizenship. For example, a recent report produced for the Council of Europe states,

The most powerful lessons that teachers and schools teach their pupils arise from the way they act and behave, not from what they tell them. Teachers and schools are individual and corporate role models. They are public and powerful manifestations of the values and beliefs that shape their thought and practice. And it is these actual practices that have the most powerful effect in forming the values and dispositions of the young people themselves. (Harrison & Baumgartl, 2002, p. 33)

This is a battle that continues in virtually all industrialized democracies and it is a battle, for the sake of protecting democratic learning, teachers and others concerned with promoting democratic ideals simply cannot afford to lose.

The effort to convince students that education is primarily about work rather than democratic citizenship pervades much of contemporary curriculum. The idea that schools ought to prepare students for their vocational lives is one we readily accept, but this objective must be achieved in ways that do not threaten or eliminate other curricular aims consistent with democratic ideals. As part of their effort to indoctrinate students toward a particular worldview, neo-liberal education programs have appropriated many of the traditional concepts associated with liberal and critical education. For example, critical thinking is now often portrayed as applying business principles within occupational contexts to arrive at decisions consistent with protecting market economy efficiency. This practice stands in stark contrast to the more traditional view of critical thinking as social and structural critique that explores the hegemonic forces operating to protect and reproduce social and economic advantage for certain segments of the population (Hyslop-Margison & Armstrong, 2004).

When critical thinking is portrayed as technical rationality students are encouraged to view problems from a limited perspective that ignores wider workplace, labour market, and socio-economic issues that bear directly on the nature and conditions of vocational experience. Learning approaches that tacitly or openly discourage students from engaging the social and economic forces shaping their contemporary vocational experience undermine their democratic right to participate in directing these forces.

Brookfield (2005), adopting the position developed by Frankfurt School critical theorist Max Horkheimer, describes this type of formalized or technical reasoning as "a dominance of means-end thinking. Reason is applied to solve problems of how to attain certain short-term social and economic objectives" (p. 71). The net result of this "critical" approach is to insulate foundational issues such as the economic and social structure

from investigation and transformation. In Chapter Five, we propose a pedagogical alternative to critical thinking as instrumental reasoning based on foundational rationality and various intellectual virtues for application in democratic learning. This approach not only respects the epistemological and dispositional components of an effective critical thinking model but also encourages the structural critique and political engagement required for meaningful democratic participation.

Citizenship education, ostensibly an area of education designed to foster critical engagement in civic life at all levels, has enjoyed increased interest concurrent with the rise of neo-liberalism and career education. Most Western and many non-Western countries have focused considerable attention on studying the state and level of citizen engagement – particularly among young people – and on the development of programs to address what has been widely termed a civic deficit (Sears & Hughes, 2005; Sears & Hyslop-Margison, 2006). Although as we point out later in the text many reforms in citizenship education are encouraging, some of what is occurring in the field at the level of policy and program development represents both a narrowing and a taming of the idea of citizenship. It is narrowing in the sense that the scope of appropriate citizen involvement is limited to partici-pating in current political and social structures and taming in the sense that proper civic engagement is seen as enhancing rather than critiquing and challenging social and political institutions. As Osborne (2004b) argues, schools have depoliticized citizenship by equating "the good citizen with the good person, the man or woman who helps others, respects other people's rights, obeys the law, is suitably patriotic and the like" (p. 13). In spite of this problem in a good portion of current citizenship education programs, some important work in citizenship education is also being completed to counter this trend. Indeed, we will return to the more positive developments in citizenship education to help democratize learning in career and human capital education during our discussion in Chapter Three.

The trend toward a depoliticized vision of citizenship can be seen in a number of areas in citizenship education such as education about diversity and community service learning. For example, Joshee (2004) has traced shifts in educational policy from teaching about diversity in Canada to the "ideal of assimilation" through "cultural diversity and citizenship" and "focus on identity" to "social justice and education" and, more recently, "social cohesion" (pp. 138-46). She describes the most recent trend that focuses on social cohesion as a retreat from the more activist anti-racist, social justice oriented curricula of earlier decades which sought to make explicit inequities in political and social power relations and open spaces for teachers and students to address them. Sometimes, of course, a socially

cohesive society is neither a democratic nor morally acceptable one and some type of political activism that may rupture social cohesion is morally and democratically justified.

With the rise of neo-liberalism governments questioned the focus on diversity and "social cohesion [was] invoked as a corrective measure that can help to increase social solidarity and restore faith in the institutions of government" (Joshee, 2004, p. 147). Joshee argues that, "Citizenship, within this framework would be reminiscent of the depoliticized variant that educators were trying to propagate in the period after World War I" (p. 148). The rhetoric of social cohesion is ubiquitous in policy documents among industrialized countries and the kind of citizenship education that follows from it does not encourage the critical participation crucial to democratic citizenship or social justice, but rather focuses on being polite, presumably docile, and maintaining social peace. The concept of social cohesion in citizenship education, then, provides an additional ideological mechanism that subverts political activism and insulates neo-liberalism from critique and transformation.

In community service learning, the public service offered *pro bono* by students is designed to form the basis of their learning (Wade & Saxe, 1996, p. 333). In service learning programs students are placed with a community organization of some sort and earn school credit for their contribution. This volunteer service is not always volunteer, and may or may not – depending on the program – be accompanied by academic work and discussion around the issues dealt with by the organization. Students assigned to work in a soup kitchen, for example, may also do some reading and participate in seminars about homelessness, poverty and government policies in these areas. Although the potential to stimulate social critique is present, most of these programs pursue a far more superficial approach to address the economic inequality of neo-liberal capitalism.

Service learning is a pervasive feature of recent reforms in citizenship education in the US, Canada and other Western nations (Wade, 1997; Torney-Purta, Schwille & Amadeo, 1999). In their review of service learning, Wade and Saxe (1996) identified two types of programs in the area. "The first," they wrote, "emphasizes civic duty, voluntarism, and the value of altruism. The second focuses on critical refection about social policies and the acquisition of skills to exert influence on public affairs" (p. 347). Osborne (2004b) correctly points out that most service learning programs fall into the first category and "resemble old-style charity work, in which students seek to ameliorate social problems without asking why these problems exist in the first place or engaging in political action to correct them" (p. 15). Rather than challenging the economic and political

status quo that creates this level of disparity this model of service learning in citizenship education simply enlists students in the support of neo-liberalism by helping ease its worst and most visible abuses.

This type of misdirected short-term amelioration of structurally instantiated injustice is what Freire (1970) terms *false generosity*. False generosity occurs when paternalistic forms of assistance are bestowed on individuals to ameliorate their situation a little, or to lessen the impact of unequal economic and social opportunities. Lankshear (1993) describes a paradigm case of false generosity:

A model case of false generosity is where well-to-do people make their services available to unemployed or poorly paid workers to teach the latter how to budget their inadequate finances. The presumption is that the problem of poverty lies within the individual – in the low or underpaid worker – not in the economic structure. (p. 103)

True generosity consists not in fighting poverty by offering temporary relief to neo-liberalism's most visible victims, but rather challenging the social and economic structures that marginalize individuals in the first place. As Freire so eloquently observed, "True generosity lies in striving so that these hands – whether of individuals or entire peoples – need be extended less in supplication, so that more and more they become human hands which work and, working, transform the world" (p. 75).

From Australia to Canada, and from Britain to the US, curricula in all industrialized countries, and in virtually all subject areas, increasingly focuses on formal reasoning practices and human capital preparation (Hyslop-Margison & Graham, 2003). The idea that education, including higher education, ought to prepare students as democratic citizens by encouraging general intellectual growth and social critique is rapidly disappearing as a faded democratic dream. Over the past two decades, for example, universities have experienced a tremendous upsurge in the number of technical training programs with many new institutions, or pseudo-universities, entirely devoted to instrumental learning, credential building and occupational preparation. We believe this trend is educationally misguided and represents a clear and present danger to our societies by undermining the opportunity and available public space for the debate so central to democratic citizenship.

Even if we were to accept the neo-liberal assumptions supporting human capital learning, rapidly changing labour market conditions suggest preparing students for some prognosticated job market, dynamic or otherwise, is not apt to prove a very successful strategy. What appears to be a necessary occupational skill in a contemporary sense may turn out to be obsolete by the time students complete their program. In fact,

past experience clearly indicates that this type of educational strategy is a not a particularly successful one (Goldstein, 1981). The ineffectiveness of this approach, well documented in the available academic literature on the subject, further suggests the motives for an employability skill strategy in public education is far more ideological than practical in basis. The idea that increased employability skills are required by workers is also demonstrably inconsistent with present labour market trends. These trends actually reveal that most job growth within industrialized nations is centred in low skilled service sector occupations such as retail workers and short order cooks, an occupational drift that is not expected to change in the foreseeable future (Hyslop-Margison & Welsh, 2003). We elaborate on this misrepresentation of actual labour market conditions in career and human capital education policy during our review and analysis in Chapter Three.

More generally, the imperatives found in career education curricula from a range of industrialized countries offer telling insight into the ideological preoccupations of neo-liberal schooling. As we mentioned previously, many curricular documents seemingly value learning only to the extent it connects with the demands of the labour market. We are especially concerned that narrow technical training impacts deleteriously on principles of democratic learning, that is, education practices designed to prepare students for the broader intellectual and dispositional demands of partic-ipatory democratic citizenship. The neo-liberal approach to schooling too often reduces education to instrumental learning that fails to raise funda-mental questions about appropriate schooling aims and practices in a plural-istic and democratic society. In the absence of such questions, education becomes an uncritical accomplice in the uncontested cultural drift toward neo-liberalism, globalization and technological jingoism.

There are more subtle diversions present in curriculum that encourage students to conform passively to neo-liberal dictates. Many career preparatory programs stress the importance of students adopting certain ideologically driven attitudes and dispositions under the aforementioned heading of employability skills. Of course, attitudes and dispositions are not skills in any meaningful sense and such conceptual disregard simply encourages the unquestioned adoption of certain beliefs by students as a form of moral indoctrination. One common attitude that students are asked to accept is developing a positive attitude toward change. Such character shaping under the guise of career preparation rides roughshod over the contextual nature of human responses to change and when connected to occupational preparation encourages, once again, passive student acceptance of unstable labour market conditions. We categorically support the idea of character and moral education, but reject the present indoctrinary and

ideological methods currently employed by most human capital and career education programs.

The second prong of the neo-liberal attack on education, the school choice movement, also leads to considerable distraction from the real issues and structural problems confronting public education. The school choice movement, especially in the US, suggests to the general populace that public schools are failing in their charge and are directly responsible for the failure they experience and even for the failings of neo-liberal society. Although many US children unquestionably fail to experience a quality education, this circumstance is primarily linked to the neo-liberal policies and the economic disparity they generate. As we previously noted, school choice, once again reflecting the so-called logic of the market, also introduces the idea that competition and consumer choice in all areas of public life inevitably generate the best possible outcome.

Standardized tests, as currently employed and reported, represent yet another attack on the credibility of public education by further challenging the professional autonomy and integrity of teachers. The tacit assumption supporting such tests suggests to the public that academic underachievement is the result of poor quality teachers and incompetent administrators. According to advocates of this approach, if teachers are held "accountable" for student results, then the quality of public education will necessarily improve. As we pointed out earlier, this entirely misguided perspective ignores voluminous empirical data collected over the past forty years indicating that academic achievement and attainment are largely determined by the social structure of opportunity (Sadovnik et al., 2001). By deflecting attention away from this fundamental understanding of education, neo-liberal schooling reforms insulate the unfair economic system, with its growing gap between rich and poor students, from meaningful critique or transformation.

1.3   Summary

In this chapter we have mapped out the neo-liberal ideological context for current human capital and career education practices and identified their threat to democratic learning and citizenship education. We have reviewed a variety of mechanisms neo-liberalism employs to direct public schools and restrict the range of possible political choices offered to students. Such naturalization of the status quo is patently inconsistent with democratic learning since it denies the legitimate right of students as future workers and citizens to participate in creating the conditions of their vocational experience. In the next chapter we wish to outline the historical and

theoretical basis for democracy, and explore the idea of social change as a fundamental tenet of genuinely democratic societies.

One of our central aims throughout this book is demonstrating how contemporary human capital education policies and programs among industrialized nations reproduce, in anti-democratic and anti-educational fashion, the neo-liberal and socially unjust conditions we have described above. However, pointing out these defects will not transform them, and, hence, our ultimate objective is to provide teachers, students and others genuinely concerned with democratic learning concrete classroom strategies to challenge the neo-liberal assumptions dominating contemporary education. The task may seem a daunting one, but if we are truly committed to the ideals and imperatives of a democratic society, it is a challenge we must willingly accept. Giroux (2003) quotes the recently deceased Jacques Derrida to emphasize the importance of imagining a different social and moral reality than the one we currently confront: "We must do and think the impossible. If only the possible happened, nothing more would happen. If I only did what I can do, I wouldn't do anything at all" (p. 192).

CHAPTER 2

DEMOCRACY, CITIZENSHIP AND SOCIAL EQUALITY

2.   INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter we reviewed the present ideological context in which human capital education is situated and considered, at least initially, the numerous challenges this context poses to democratic learning and participatory citizenship. In spite of our affinity for democracy, there are competing historical perspectives on its preferred form and even on its actual political efficacy. Our vision for reforming human capital and career education includes encouraging schools to adopt fundamental democratic learning principles and preparing students for active democratic citizenship as primary objectives of schooling. Hence, in this chapter we are compelled to defend an inclusive and progressive vision of democracy and democratic citizenship against a range of potential criticisms.

   We begin the present chapter by tracing the history of democracy and democratic thinking, focusing on seminal figures in political philosophy. In the second section of the chapter we explore the contested nature of democracy and democratic citizenship to identify the most effective model in the contemporary struggle against neo-liberalism. Since we believe that education is critical to the preparation of a politically engaged citizenry, this chapter initially considers the type of knowledge students must acquire, and the skills and dispositions they must develop to participate fully as democratic citizens.

   We argued in Chapter One that contemporary neo-liberal ideology, with its de-historicizing and de-politicizing impact on education policy, seriously erodes the opportunity for students to entertain alternative social visions. These alternative visions include democratic societies that emphasize social justice, economic equality and sustainable development rather than rampant individualism, unbridled consumerism and systemic competition.

The pursuit of social change toward greater measures of social justice is a fundamental democratic precept because equality of political opportunity, a basic requirement of any meaningful democratic society, hinges on equal access to economic and social power. Finally in this chapter, then, and following Dewey (1916), we underscore the importance of social progress toward increasing measures of social equality as a necessary tenet of democratic life. We explain why such a vision, obviously contrary to the increased social stratification of neo-liberalism, should be a central theme in both democratic societies and democratic learning practices.

2.1   A Brief History of Democratic Thought

One of most prevalent ideas in the historical analyses of democracy is the persistent assumption that many segments of the population are incapable of meaningful political participation. In the case of ethnic minorities and women, of course, this perspective was staunchly held by many industrialized democracies well into the twentieth-century. The history of the African American and female struggle for political rights should alert us to the fact that concerted efforts have been historically made to exclude significant segments of the population from full democratic participation. In a more contemporary context, groups such as young people, those who find themselves incarcerated for one reason or another, and non-citizen permanent residents are barred from voting in many jurisdictions. The idea that sex, ethnicity, reasoning ability and social and economic status afford suitable criteria on which to judge citizenship status was germinated in Greece more than twenty-five hundred years ago.

   The intellectual ferment of ancient Athens contributed many fertile and influential political ideas to Western civilization, including much of the early thinking about democracy (Clarke, 1994). Many of the early analyses of democracy were far from flattering in their conclusions. Athenian philosophers such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were generally dismissive of democracy, and extremely wary of its assumptions and potential implications for state governance. In the *Republic*, Plato (1973) argues in favour of a *philosopher king*, or a benevolent despot, who is specifically trained through a rigorous education to administer state affairs. Plato worried that government based on mass public opinion was an unacceptable and perilous political folly that would inevitably lead to a series of disastrous consequences for the state. The disregard for citizen participation in state politics, then, primarily achieved through ideological means in contemporary democracies, has deep roots in Western political philosophy.

In his political philosophy, Plato (1973) argues that democracy based on general citizen participation is only one small step from totalitarianism because democracy relies on manipulation of the masses to achieve electoral support. He argues that democracy, by its nature, encourages the mass manipulation of the general populace since aspiring politicians inevitably appeal to public sentiment rather than reason to gain popular support. In Plato's view, the ability to reason effectively is a quality possessed only by certain individuals, while he considers the masses intellectually inferior and therefore incapable of contributing to the administration of the state. Guided primarily by emotion rather than reason, then, the affective predilections of the general population allegedly promote political disaster because they subvert proper and rational political decision-making.

Plato was certainly not alone in holding the view that democracy was an undesirable political structure because the general population was incapable of making reasoned judgments on matters of state administration. The conviction that most individuals are inherently incapable of making reasoned political judgments pervades much of early Greek political philosophy and, as we pointed out above, was used to exclude mass participation in state politics for centuries. However, the perception that many citizens should be excluded from civic participation reflects the misguided assumption that human intellect and political expertise are entirely inherited functions that mirror some naturally stratified social order. Although somewhat sheepish on the point, Plato (1973) was willing to substantiate this perspective through his interlocutor Socrates via the former's notorious *noble lie*:

Well then, I will speak, although I really know not how to look you in the face, or in what words to utter the audacious fiction, which I propose to communicate gradually, first to the rulers, then to the soldiers, and lastly to the people. Some of you have the power of command, and in the composition of these God has mingled gold, wherefore also they have the greatest honor; others he has made of silver, to be auxiliaries; other again are to be husbandmen and craftsmen he has composed of brass and iron; and the species will be generally preserved in the children. (p. 105)

More correctly, differences in political knowledge and understanding are the inevitable result of an unnecessarily stratified social order and arise from disparate educational opportunities that deny some individuals access to intellectual culture. Woodruff (2005) makes this same point about early democratic thinking by arguing, "The great failure of Athenian democracy, in my view, was its failure to extend access to education beyond the moneyed class" (p. 169). When students are denied access to the intellectual capital acquired by the cultural and economic elite, and fail to gain the knowledge and participatory dispositions required to polit-ically engage and transform society, schools help to create entire classes

of politically disenfranchised citizens among economically marginalized groups.

According to Plato (1973), the ruler or rulers of the Republic, his idea of a political utopia, must be *philosopher kings* who are educated to understand moral truth in a way that other citizens, such as the guardians and the artisans, are supposedly incapable of attaining. Grounded in the so-called noble lie, Plato's political philosophy divides humans into three classes of individuals; the rulers, the guardians and the workers, with each class possessing inherited rational abilities and emotional tendencies. He argues that the natural distinctions between these classes must be considered when assigning their political and social responsibilities. Many individuals, most notably those from lower social classes, were therefore excluded from full political participation. Democracy, at least in its most inclusive form, is an obvious deviation from Plato's ideal state because its fundamental principle of political equality fails to reflect his tripartite division of individuals based on presupposed innate intellectual and, *ergo*, political capacities.

Plato (1973) was committed to the idea of an underlying natural order where the majority of the people, because they were presumably largely ignorant, unskilled and lacked the necessary intellectual capacity to reason effectively, would always make inappropriate political judgments. His contempt for popular belief led him to reject categorically that the sort of "knowledge" available to ordinary people was in fact knowledge at all. What members of the lower classes mistook as knowledge was often poorly informed opinion based on misguided and dangerous conjecture. He condemned democracy because this type of popular conjecture fails to provide the type of epistemic and moral foundation required for the effective administration of state affairs. For all of its intellectual bluster, and in spite of its noble intentions, we see in Plato's account, then, an early and impoverished rationalization for the centralized authority figure and military culture that has proved so politically catastrophic for many nation states. However, we also believe that some of Plato's concerns about democracy are worthy of serious consideration. We will now address those issues and discuss how some concerns are manifested in the contemporary neo-liberal context.

Plato was concerned that when the selection of a state ruler was left to the class of citizens primarily driven by emotion, they would inevitably select a powerful and convincing individual as their political champion. His practical experiences within this period undoubtedly exacerbated his concerns. Many of the Greek Sophists, Plato's Athenian political and philosophical adversaries, were primarily interested in the teaching of rhetoric, or the oratorical art of political persuasion, rather than enhancing understanding of moral truth. Plato believed that an individual elected on the

basis of rhetoric, and driven solely by personal ambition, would eventually transform the electorate into little more than civic slaves who could be easily manipulated and controlled by an elected leader. As a result of this manipulation, the democratic state would become a disguised oligarchy, a political arrangement where an elite group of individuals control and direct state administration to their own advantage.

An examination of current neo-liberal political trends suggests Plato's concern over the mass manipulation of public opinion that led democracies to slide toward disguised oligarchies is not without significant foundation. Recent leadership candidates for the two major political parties in the US such as George W. Bush and John Kerry clearly represent the country's economic elite. Major corporate financing is a necessary condition for contemporary political success in many industrialized countries. As a result of their financial indebtedness to their political allies, the winners of democratic elections are extremely responsive to the lobbying demands of the corporate elite. Under the present circumstances of ubiquitous corporate political control, it is virtually inconceivable that an individual of meagre means, in spite of his or her intellectual ability, could rise to the highest political office of any major industrialized democracy.

The control over media, easily the most pervasive and influential source of political information in contemporary culture, by major corporate interests ensures the on-going ideological manipulation of the general public. For example, Chomsky (1999) correctly observes that,

The business press exults in "spectacular" and "stunning" profit growth, applauding the extraordinary concentration of wealth among the top few percent of the population, while for the majority, conditions continue to stagnate or decline. The corporate media and the cheerleaders of the American Way proudly offer themselves as a model for the rest of the world. (p. 112)

This situation underscores the pressing challenge for public education to create a politically sophisticated citizenry capable of decoding the ideological messages it receives. In fact, the numerous neo-liberal and human capital curricular reforms, with their naturalizing of the prevailing social structure, generate precisely the opposite outcome by undermining social criticism and the possibility of democratic change.

While we believe that Plato grossly underestimated the capacity of most citizens to participate actively and effectively in state government, there are some more contemporary voices raising similar concerns. Lukacs (2005) advances a compelling case that in their rush to cast off traditional checks and balances on popular sovereignty, or what he terms "mixed government," modern democracies have begun a descent toward a dangerous, nationalistic populism that he refers to as the "new barbarism" (p. 242). US citizens in

particular, he contends, have been manipulated by superficial appeals from political elites of both the left and right based on American exceptionalism and nationalism. Whether this demagoguery is perpetrated in the name of anti-communism or in the more recent so-called war on terror, it has been "at the expense of private thinking and self knowledge" (p. 146). Both of these qualities are essential ingredients in creating informed, reflective and participatory democratic citizens who carefully sift through the plethora of ideological messages they confront.

Benjamin Barber (2003) shares to some extent the concern expressed by Plato and Lukacs on the potential for demagoguery, particular that based on nationalistic notions of exceptionalism, to distort democracy. The answer, he argues, does not lie in the current return to aristocracy or oligarchy as the controlling political force, but in the development of a critically structured education designed to enhance the ideological and political sophistication of citizens. We share Barber's belief that an appropriately designed education can make a significant contribution in this regard by developing critically conscious students who understand social structure as a primary unit of reflective investigation.

In the final analysis, then, what Plato mistook for a naturally stratified order actually reflects, at least in large part, the social structure of opportunity and the unfortunate intellectual disenfranchisement of many economically disadvantaged citizens. As we shall argue throughout this book, a properly engineered program in career education can provide students as future citizens with the required knowledge and critical perspectives necessary for meaningful democratic citizenship. Whereas Plato argued that only the most capable should receive the best possible education, we share with Barber the belief that all citizens should be provided an education that enhances their political sophistication.

Another well-known Athenian philosopher, Aristotle (1996), similarly rejected the idea that individuals without power, influence and material means should participate in state politics. Since political life was a *techne*, art or craft, it demanded, in his view, an expertise that most individuals living in a *polis*, or political community, simply did not possess. Aristotle's preferred political state was an aristocracy governed by citizens whose degree of supposed excellence, achievement and property ownership made them capable of leadership. As we pointed out in this chapter's introduction, the model of limited democracy Aristotle advocates was practiced virtually without question or challenge well into the 19th century in both the US and England where property ownership, ethnicity, gender and wealth were prerequisites for citizen political participation. In a very real sense and in spite of near universal suffrage, contemporary democracies, as we

have suggested, remain under the control of elite individuals and groups. Althusser (1973) points out, for example, that powerful ideological mechanisms, especially public education, were instituted after universal suffrage to ensure the aristocracy maintained its political control over the masses.

As a result of profound changes in the political landscape during the seventeenth-century, the debate over democracy heated up again. Although Thomas Hobbes (1970) held a different view on the most appropriate form of government than Plato or Aristotle, he shared their rejection of democracy as an acceptable political system. In 1651, Hobbes wrote his most famous and influential work, *Leviathan*, in which he argues that citizens, or subjects, are inherently wicked, uncontrollably self-interested, and therefore incapable of the self-governance required by democracy: "No account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short" (Hobbes, 1970, p. 100). This decidedly bleak view of humanity obviously influenced the development of Hobbes's political philosophy by undermining his confidence in the ability of the general population to look beyond narrow self-interest.

Hobbes (1970) argues that an absolute monarchy, a government that bestows absolute administrative power on a king or queen, offers the only viable method to direct, control and protect citizens from their own destructive inclinations. He maintained that humans are selfish creatures who, when left unrestrained, would do virtually anything to better their position to the detriment of the state and the remainder of the general population. According to Hobbes, democracy is politically and socially unworkable because the general population, motivated entirely by self-interest, cannot be trusted to make reasoned and fair decisions in the interest of the state. Instead, the people must willingly place state administrative power in the hands of a monarch who possesses absolute authority over all citizens.

Hobbes (1970) argues that government was created to protect people from their own selfishness and evil, and the best government was one with the virtually unlimited power of a leviathan, a mythical and all-powerful sea-monster. Since most citizens are only interested in promoting their narrow self-interest, an assumption seemingly adopted by contemporary neo-liberal ideology, he concludes that democracy will never work since there is no conception among citizens of a collective or common good. Interestingly, many contemporary voices have raised concerns with the similar threat that self-interested individualism, and the accompanying alienation from civic life, pose to existing industrialized democracies (Barber, 1992; Bellah et al., 1986; Putnam, 2000). Although offering a different solution to

the perceived problem, then, Hobbes's position represents another example of the prevalent theme in Western political philosophy, germinated by Plato, that the general population is intellectually and morally incapable of reasoned political judgment.

British philosopher John Locke represents a decidedly welcome shift in political thinking from the previous ideas we reviewed in this chapter and toward far more democratic forms of governance. The political follies of seventeenth-century monarchs significantly influenced the development of his political theories (Youlton, 1977). Throughout his writings, and in an obvious departure from Plato and Hobbes, Locke argues that people possess the capacity to reason effectively and, hence, to participate in administering state affairs. Finally, after centuries of exclusion, there was a growing confidence that education could prepare citizens to assume a far more participatory and effective role in government. Education, in Locke's view, should provide citizens with "the skill and knowledge needed to order our actions in accordance with the laws of nature; to treat our possessions and persons responsibly, and to avoid coming under the absolute control of others" (Youlton, 1977, p. 16).

Locke (1956) rejected any form of government that sought to control individuals against their will by arguing that, "Every man being naturally free, and nothing being able to put him into subjection to any earthly power but only his consent" (p. 68). He also believed that women possessed the capacity to reason effectively, a capacity that therefore entitled them to an equal political voice, an unpopular and progressive idea during this period of history. Locke's revised psychological analysis of humankind, captured in his idea of *tabula rasa*, or blank slate, also abandoned Plato's understanding of some naturally stratified intellectual order and class system. The English philosopher suggested instead that the vast majority of humans, given the knowledge and the opportunity, could actively and effectively participate in state politics.

Thomas Paine was another political theorist who exercised a tremendous influence on the development of contemporary Western democracy and represents the final figure in our historical analysis. Paine's major political preoccupation involved freeing human beings from what he viewed as various forms of institutional oppression (Foot & Kramnick, 1987). In a manner similar to Locke, Paine was confident in the reasoning ability of the general population, and argued that states must eventually recognize the fundamental right of all citizens to participate democratically in the political process. Following the War of Independence, Paine wrote his most famous and influential work, *The Rights of Man*. The book's political message was exceptionally powerful in its advocacy of sweeping democratic reforms. All

individual human beings, according to Paine (1992), are endowed with equal rights that cannot be justifiably violated by another person or by the state.

Paine took special exception to the absolute monarchy advocated by Hobbes, arguing that hereditary monarchy is morally illegitimate since it denies the current generation the right to choose its own leadership. The right to choose one's own political leadership was, in Paine's view, not simply a political right, but a fundamental moral and human right. When the Frenchman Alexis De Tocqueville (1984) toured the new United States of America it was clear to him that Paine's idea was at the heart of American democracy. He observed, "From their origin, the sovereignty of the people was the fundamental principle of most of the British colonies in America," and "the people reign in the American political world as the Deity reigns in the universe" (pp. 56-57).

Paine (1992) recognized that democratic citizens have duties and responsibilities in addition to their natural and legislated rights. For example, citizens have a duty to respect and protect the rights of fellow citizens, but they also have an obligation to improve, enrich, and benefit society. The obligation to improve society, contrary to current neo-liberal trends, includes the duty to eliminate poverty as much as possible. In fact, Paine actually proposed a system of social welfare designed to achieve this objective. He realized that economic and social inequality ultimately results in the inevitable political disenfranchisement of some citizens and, hence, undermines their right to participate democratically in the political life of the state. With the views of Locke and Paine now present in the political consciousness of Western societies, the idea, if not the promise, of democracy became widely recognized.

2.2   Competing Models of Citizenship

In contemporary political philosophy, democracy remains very much a widely contested concept. However, the idea of popular sovereignty, as advocated by Locke and Paine, is central to all contemporary conceptions of democracy. Kymlicka (2001) points out that a number of related ideas "underlie the operation of Western liberal democracies," including "the rule of law, freedom of the press, freedom of conscience, habeas corpus, free elections, universal adult suffrage" (p. 13). While there is great consistency at the level of fundamental principles and ideas, the institutional and social mechanisms that operationalize those ideas vary widely. We will examine some of these differences by exploring three questions regarding the nature of contemporary democratic citizenship: Who counts as citizens? How are those who qualify as citizens expected to exercise their citizenship? And,

finally, what are the purposes or ends of democratic citizenship? Democratic theorists and societies offer a range of answers to these questions and these different answers have important implications for democratic learning in career education and elsewhere throughout the curriculum.

Before we begin to address these three questions a conceptual clarification is required. The term citizenship is employed in at least two different ways. First, it denotes a legal status obtained by birth or naturalization and indicated by the possession of a passport or similar documentation. Second, the word is also used to connote the reciprocal set of rights and responsibilities between and among individuals, groups and the state and revealed in various kinds of civic engagement. While there are obvious areas of overlap such as the ability to engage in some forms of civic activity being constrained by legal status, our primary concern in this section is with the second meaning of the word rather than the first. For example, when we ask, "who counts as citizens?" we do not simply mean who has met the necessary criteria for legal status, but rather who counts in terms of meaningful participation in shaping the collective life and institutions of the state. In almost all democratic states it is possible to engage in various kinds of civic and political activities, including voting in some jurisdictions, without holding the legal status of a citizen. Citizenship for us, then, means preparing people for critical political participation rather than simply meeting naturalization requirements, and this conception of citizenship has direct implications for the type of democratic learning in career education we advocate.

First then, who counts as citizens? The answer to this question has varied widely over time and across contexts. In ancient Athens, widely acknowledged as the first democracy (Woodruff, 2005), those considered citizens, that is, propertied males, represented a minority of the total population while women, foreigners and slaves were arbitrarily excluded. In the US and Canada, while a much larger percentage of the population is entitled to play a role in selecting a government, still not everyone is included. For example, under the Canada Elections Act voting is restricted to citizens over the age of 18 who meet particular residency requirements. There are a number of individuals and organizations, in the US, Canada and elsewhere, who believe that current age restrictions excluding younger people from legitimate participation in their own governance should be lowered. Recently two 16 year-old Canadian girls attempted to take their case for lowering the voting age to the country's Supreme Court. While ultimately unsuccessful at getting the court to hear their appeal, they managed to garner significant public support and some Canadian Members of Parliament have since taken up their cause (The Canadian Press, 2005). There are also ongoing debates in Canada about whether or not landed immigrants, permanent resident

non-citizens, and inmates in federal prisons should have the right to vote. The voting restrictions placed on youth are connected to the early Athenian concerns we described above that some individuals lack the rational capacity to participate effectively in state politics.

While years of struggle have broadened the scope of individuals with legal entitlement to citizenship, many structural barriers continue to hinder substantive participation by various groups. A range of scholarship has demonstrated that women and minorities, while legal citizens, often feel socially excluded from full participation in civic life. Walker and Walker (1997) describe *social exclusion* as any dynamic process that shuts out other people fully or partially from a social, economic, political or cultural system that determines the social integration of a person in a society. When human capital and career education is designed in a manner that undermines political voice and disposes students toward political passivity it qualifies as a process of social exclusion.

Theorists have long made the distinction between what they alternatively term formal and informal, or conventional and non-conventional means of civic participation (Norris, 1999; Torney-Purta et al., 2001). The former, largely regarded as public engagement, includes activities such as voting, joining political parties, or running for office. The latter, viewed as private engagement, includes fund-raising for charitable organizations and volunteering in community kitchens, food banks and other related civic activities. Some feminist scholars have convincingly argued that women have been largely excluded from formal political participation and have engaged, for the most part, in the private realm of community building through informal politics (Dillabough & Arnot, 2000). These critics contend that narrow conceptions of citizenship and the depoliticizing of these community-based, grassroots activities effectively limit the understanding and acceptance of women as full democratic citizens. As Pateman (1989) observes:

Democratic theorists have not yet confronted the implications of the patriarchal construction of citizenship and so they provide little or no help in elucidating or solving the complex dilemma facing women. It is taken for granted that for women to be active, full citizens they must become like men. Women are expected to don the lion's skin mane and all. There is no set of clothes available for a citizen who is a woman. (p. 14)

Chareka (2005) documents a number of substantial barriers to democratic participation, both formal and informal, perceived by women, immigrants and African-Canadians. Some of these are structural, such as the lack of role models from particular groups represented in public institutions, and others reflect more subtle cultural barriers. One African Canadian Chareka interviewed indicated that he would not consider running for office because

he would have to "become a White Black man." When pressed to explain
what he meant by this claim, he referred to the ubiquitous nature of the
dominant culture in civic life saying that in order to be successful in politics,
"You should start thinking like a White man. You can no longer think like
a Black man. Your whole outlook should be like a White person. Even the
way you speak, you have to change your essence somehow to conform to
the expectations" (p. 167).

In summary, then, while democratic societies all enshrine some notion
of popular sovereignty, the ability of people to participate fully as citizens
is constrained both by legal status and identifiable social structures. In
our view, civic engagement ought to include but also extend well beyond
the formal political mechanisms of voting, joining political parties and
running for public office. One of the objectives of democratic learning in
career education is underscoring the importance of participating at both
levels of citizenship since showing up at the ballot box once every four
years hardly represents serious political engagement. As revealed in our
discussion of feminist perspectives on the issue, citizenship should also
include those activities in the so-called private realm such as volunteering,
building community support networks and institutions, and advocating for
political change and social improvement. In order to be truly democratic,
societies must develop avenues that encourage the widest possible partici-
pation of citizens in the full range of these social and political activities. All
citizens should be able to participate as themselves and not feel pressure to
become *de facto* members of the dominant culture. This broad civic partic-
ipation can be encouraged in career preparatory programs by underscoring
social dynamics rather than portraying the role of students as mere structural
adaptation. This leads to our second question; how are democratic citizens
expected to participate politically and socially?

The nature of citizen participation is no less contested than the question
of who is actually included or defined as citizens. In both theory and
practice there is a range of conceptions about appropriate expectations for
civic engagement. While ancient Athens severely restricted the range of
individuals with access to citizenship, those who did qualify as citizens were
to be engaged fully in that office (Barber, 1992; Woodruff, 2005). In his
famous funeral oration, Pericles is reported to have stated about Athenian
citizenship responsibilities: "We do not say that a man who takes no interest
in politics is a man who minds his own business; we say that he has no
business here at all" (cited in Barber, 1992, p. 238). Political experience
and citizenship, as Pericles suggests, are unavoidable elements of human
interaction within democracies and, hence, elements that all democratic
education programs must address.

The Romans structured citizenship in the two classes of patricians and plebeians. While both classes enjoyed the legal status of citizenship and the accompanying rights and privileges of their respective designation, including the protection from arbitrary legal proceedings and unhindered movement across the empire, only the patricians were accorded full participation in the governance of the republic. Clarke (1994) refers to this distinction in citizenship forms as "active and passive citizenship concepts" (p. 8). We are concerned that current approaches to human capital and career education promote the passive form of democratic citizenship by encouraging compliant student adaptation rather than civic engagement. In some sense, then, the distinction between patricians and plebeians remains instantiated through educational programs that deny some students in democracies access to the epistemic and dispositional requirements of full political participation.

Barber (1992) argues that the contemporary model of American democratic citizenship that emphasizes rights but not civic obligations, and therefore breaks with the vision advanced by Thomas Paine, is akin to the early Roman citizen structure. The good citizen from this perspective is most concerned about his or her private liberty and is not viewed as someone who engages with others in shaping society but rather "as the productive capitalist or the efficient worker" (Barber, 1992, p. 241).

Contemporary conceptions on the role of citizens in a democracy range across a continuum from passive to active. The passive conception, partially rooted in the political philosophies of Plato and Hobbes, holds a pessimistic view of ordinary citizens and their ability to be politically informed and participate productively in state affairs. This negative view posits a compliant, private citizen whose highest civic function is seen as voting for appropriate representatives every four or five years. Alternatively, the active conception of citizenship, the model consistent with the democratic learning approach we support, construes citizen engagement much more broadly. Ultimate sovereignty in this conception resides not with parliament but with the people who engage in various types of participation in the formal political system as well as in more informal community settings.

Active citizens created through an education that promotes their agency do not wait for elections to engage important political issues. Neither do these citizens necessarily defer to politicians when working toward potential solutions. In fact, they often organize political action of various kinds, such as demonstrated like the infamous Battle in Seattle, in order to push politicians in particular directions. As we write this chapter, G8 leaders are beginning meetings in Gleneagles, Scotland focused on providing aid to Africa and addressing global climate change. This meeting has been

the subject of various kinds of political action including rock concerts in strategic cities around the world designed to raise public awareness about Africa's grinding poverty and underdevelopment at least partially induced by debt to developed countries. This public protest movement includes lobbying by key world figures such as Nelson Mandela, Stephen Lewis and a myriad of professional musicians, as well as widespread street protests near the venue itself (Clark, 2005). These actions are all examples of citizen engagement in the political processes that extend well beyond the ballot box and, when they occur on a large enough scale, make critically important contributions to transforming political agendas. We see this type of political activism as a crucial element in transforming the neo-liberal context into a far more robust democratic environment.

As we have previously pointed out, much of the contemporary neo-liberal discourse in career education emphasizes the importance of social cohesion, that is, workers as citizens conforming to prevailing social expectations, far more than advocating active citizen involvement in shaping the conditions of vocational experience.

The danger with passive citizenship and indirect democracy, a concern outlined by Plato in his critique, is the possibility that nations will collapse into either an oligarchy or a totalitarian state. When democratic nations are entirely controlled by a two or three party system, as is the case in the US, England and Canada, the dominant economic interests tend to appropriate control of all political parties. In these situations, the democracy is simply a disguised oligarchy because the political choices available to the electorate are largely illusory and uniformly represent the interests of the economically privileged class. The recent presidential election in the US, although seemingly hotly contested at one level, raised precisely this concern among some political groups. The grass roots anti-Bush organization moveon.org, for example, criticized the Democratic Party for soliciting campaign donations from the same major corporations that supported George Bush and the Republicans. William Ayers (2004) recently mocked the lack of ideological distinction between the two mainstream US political parties by conflating both groups under the disparaging name of "Republicrats."

Massive amounts of financial capital are required to operate a successful presidential election campaign in the US and, as we noted previously, the vast majority of these funds typically come from wealthy individuals, rich lobbying organizations and major international corporations. But there is, of course, a political price to pay for accepting such support. The financial contributions inevitably secure a considerable measure of party influence and, hence, indirect and passive democracy often fall victim to the economic power and political interests of the dominant social class.

As we suggested in Chapter One, neo-liberalism, as an all-encompassing ideology, blurs the traditional policy differences between the political right and left as the entire political spectrum swings toward conservatism. Only candidates who attract major corporate sponsorship, with the attending corporate allegiances, stand any meaningful chance of election, and these individuals must support the neo-liberal economic paradigm. For democracies to exist in any meaningful sense of the term, or reflect what Apple (2003) refers to as *thick democracy*, the electorate must enjoy a real choice between different political parties based on clear policy or ideological distinctions. The single worldview adopted by mainstream political parties in industrialized nations has severely limited political debate, and reduced most career preparation and other schooling programs to capitalist indoctrination, human capital learning and social reproduction.

Another major concern with passive democracy, once again reflected in Plato's critique, is the opportunity for a demagogue, skilled in rhetoric and soliciting popular appeal, to manipulate the general population. Perhaps the worst manifestation of this concern in modern history involves Adolph Hitler who, after being elected by a minority of Germans in 1935, promptly disbanded the democratic political institution, or Reichstag, and declared himself dictator. However, current US President George Bush, exploiting simple moral binaries between good and evil to generate public fear over terrorism, has similarly exercised his executive political power to significantly undermine the civil liberties of Americans by promoting legislation such as the Homeland Security and Patriot Acts. This legislation grants virtually unlimited powers of search, seizure and detention to a range of US government authorities. The constant threat to political freedom in democracies illustrates the need for citizens not only to be continually politically engaged and vigilant, but also to be both informed and respectful about the importance of the pluralistic qualities and principles that allow democracies to flourish.

A thick conception of citizenship raises questions about the mechanisms through which citizens can engage more fully in public life. One possibility involves direct democracy in the form of repeated referenda or some other similar mechanism. From a practical perspective, it is obviously cumbersome and expensive to poll an entire population on every policy issue that arises before the state. When practiced in the extreme, direct democracy may actually promote a certain measure of administrative paralysis by delaying policy decisions while the government continuously consults the electorate. Direct democracy may also prove prohibitively expensive since organizing the constant polling of the general population is extremely demanding on a given society's resources. Perhaps most importantly, we must also

entertain Plato's concern about whether the general populace is adequately positioned to make informed judgments on all matters of state administration. Indeed, a direct democracy was in place in Athens during Plato's life and provided the context for his scathing critique of this political approach. However, the constant and formal polling of citizens is not the only method through which individuals may be perpetually engaged in the political life of the state.

Some scholars have seen potential in so-called new social movements such as feminism, human rights activism, and environmentalism as models for enhancing wide and enriched civic participation. These movements create associations and non-governmental organizations that open up the potential for citizen engagement through civil society. Describing the civic work of these movements, Resnick (1997) writes, "moving beyond referendums, there is a further sphere of political activity, at the local or sub-national level, but equally at the national, which lends itself to direct participation" (p. 36). Boulding (1988) argues that most people have a network of voluntary affiliations, including religious, social or community organization, with the potential to provide for building a global civic culture offering the opportunity for substantive citizen involvement. This observation prompts our final question in this section of the chapter: What are the purposes or ends of democratic citizenship?

There is wide agreement that human liberty is a central end of democratic citizenship. The French Revolution greeting of 'citizen' indicated the transition from being a subject of the crown to enjoying a new status as a free person. As Barber (1992) points out, however, there are very different understandings of what liberty entails. He observes that the ancients posited a "public or positive liberty" (p. 241) that included the opportunity or obligation to participate in shaping the community through involvement in state governance. This was a high privilege but also an onerous obligation that required attendance at assembly and participation in other civic institutions such as councils and courts. Citizens were free men in ancient Athens but not free from their obligation to the state and the common good. This is an active conception of citizenship where the primary purpose is the participation of all citizens in the shaping of common life and civic institutions.

Barber (1992) contends that in modern democratic states liberty, rather than being seen as the freedom to govern, is seen in the more negative sense of freedom from government. He suggests that the US has become,

A place where individuals regard themselves almost exclusively as private persons with responsibilities only to family and job, yet possessing endless rights against a distant and alien state in relationship to which they think of themselves, at best as watchdogs and clients and, at worst, as adversaries and victims. (p. 232)

This is a very passive notion of citizenship in which "democratic politics has become something we watch rather than something we do" (p. 235). The widespread public retreat from civic engagement referred to by Barber is a concern among many contemporary scholars and policy makers (Bellah et al., 1986; Civics Expert Group, 1994; Torney-Purta, Schwille & Amadeo, 1999).

The promotion of liberty as a central tenet of democratic experience is also contingent on the protection of student autonomy in education. The political convictions and beliefs that determine the political perspectives of citizens must be formed in the absence of undue ideological interference to qualify as autonomous and democratic. Obviously, a manipulated or coerced decision is not an exercise of liberty or consistent with basic democratic requirements. The ideal of autonomy, a fundamental requirement of democratic liberty, requires that citizens select their political preferences in an informed, reflective and non-coercive manner. Unless students as future citizens are disposed through their educational experience toward achieving these particularly conditions of liberty, realizing democratic citizenship in any meaningful sense is practically impossible.

The public retreat from citizenship is a complicated issue driven by a range of social, economic, ideological and educational factors. We are concerned that many individuals may often feel politically disenfranchised because they perceive no substantive difference between mainstream parties or leaders in many industrialized nations that are uniformly committed to neo-liberal ideology. We are also concerned with an education system that fails to foster a sense of political empowerment among students and produces instead adults lacking the dispositional and epistemological requirements of meaningful political engagement. Further, many citizens of industrialized countries lack the intellectual capital and political understanding afforded by a quality education they simply cannot financially access. Clearly, in democracies, the education system has a critically important, and currently unmet, obligation to create knowledgeable, informed and politically engaged citizens. By emphasizing student agency and encouraging the development of political voice, by being part of the solution rather than part of the problem, career education can contribute directly to meeting this obligation.

We share Barber's (1992) concern that passive conceptions of citizenship both in their limited view of citizen engagement and narrow, selfish sense of the purposes of citizenship are democratically bankrupt. Without the significant engagement of citizens in the shaping and reshaping of common life, the very liberties we enjoy, as indicated by legislation like the Homeland Security Act, stand in immediate peril. Since the kind of

thick democracy we aspire toward requires independent, informed and autonomous decision-making by citizens, the potential for ill-conceived career education programs to undermine active democratic citizenship is especially problematic. We believe there are a number of practices to pursue through career education and indeed all subject areas to encourage informed, reflective and autonomous decisions by students. The dispositions generated and the knowledge and understanding acquired as a result of these practices will promote the future political engagement of students as reflective and informed democratic citizens.

2.3   The Contested Nature of Democracy

In the previous section we pointed out that citizenship is a contested concept taking a range of forms and approaches depending on who is accorded citizenship status, how citizens exercise the office, and the ends toward which they work. We have argued elsewhere that democracy itself is not a natural or static form of government but a choice made by human agents at a number of levels (Sears & Hughes, 2005). It is, first of all, a choice at the macro level of national constitutions. The people in all democratic states at some point in their history made the conscious decision to be democratic citizens. In Russia, for example, that decision happened in the late 1980s and early 1990s culminating in December of 1993 with the adoption of a new constitution that stated, in part, "The Russian Federation – Russia, shall be a democratic, federal, rule of law state with a republican form of government" (Russian Federation, 2004). However, a democratic constitution does not guarantee that democratic policies and principles are in general practice. Neither does a constitutional democracy ensure that citizens possess the spirit of democracy required to participate fully in the political life of the nation.

Democracy is also a choice at the level of institutions. Like most abstractions, democratic principles and ideas are both complex and fluid and may mean different things to different people at different times. Sometimes those differences exist across time or contexts but often the same concept can be understood somewhat differently by people in the same time and place; that is, it can be conceptually contested. For example, take the idea of democratic government as the "the consent of the governed". Almost everyone agrees that rule by "the people" is a necessary condition for democracy but there is wide disagreement about what precisely that means.

As discussed earlier, one area of contention involves who actually constitutes the democratic citizens whose consent is required? In ancient Athens, widely acknowledged as the first democracy, those who actually qualified

as citizens represented a minority of the total population: women, foreigners and slaves, although certainly governed, were not asked for their consent. In contemporary democracies a much larger percentage of the population is entitled to play a role in governing or selecting its representatives but some individuals are still excluded by reason of age, legal status or occupation, and these barriers are often contested by advocates for excluded groups (Sears & Hughes, 2005).

There is also a wide range of ways in which citizens may give their consent. In Canada the consent of the governed is generally obtained through the election of representatives to various levels of government. At the federal and provincial levels of government these representatives are selected using a "first past the post" electoral system that often leads to the election of individual representatives and entire governments who receive much less than 50% of the popular vote. In fact, it is extremely rare in Canada to have a government elected with more than 50% of the popular vote. The US Electoral College system creates the controversial situation where an individual – a recent example being that of George W. Bush in 2000 – may even win the presidency with less than 50% of the popular vote. These questionable approaches may be at least partly responsible for growing voter apathy and consequently record low turnouts at the polls because the end results are sometimes not reflective of the majority will of the people.

Other national jurisdictions such as Italy and Israel elect representatives proportionally with parties gaining seats based on the percentage of the popular vote they receive. This frequently creates minority and coalition governments, but is seen by some as more fairly representative of citizen choices and, hence, more democratic. At the present time several Canadian provinces have commissions examining the electoral system and may make recommendations that will significantly transform the way Canadian citizens give their consent. To reiterate, then, the consent of the governed is a necessary condition for democracy, but that consent can be obtained in different ways that impact directly on the relationship between citizen choice and political representation.

A structural challenge confronting virtually every modern country is how to balance concern for national unity with respect for the rights of minority groups, particularly so-called "national minorities" (Kymlicka & Opalski, 2001). Indeed, there is a tension between autonomy and democracy since the latter concept, at least to some degree, constrains the possibility to act beyond the bounds of majority dictates. Castles (2004) points out that policies and practices in the area of diversity in democratic countries in terms of citizenship and citizenship education cover a wide range of disparate approaches. Some countries such as Canada promote diversity and support

high levels of autonomy for particular minorities, while others focus on promoting unity and greatly limit political and social autonomy for minority groups.

Most democratic societies are rooted in core principles or concepts such as the rule of law, the consent of the governed and the right to dissent, some ideal of the common good, a respect for diversity, and the right to privacy and equality. These ideas are core or universal democratic values, but individuals and societies understand and institutionalize these principles in a wide variety of ways. As Schöpflin (2001) points out, "It is vital to recognize in this connection that Europe has generated a very wide set of practices and concepts of democracy, all of which are acceptably democratic" (p. 111). Once a society decides to be democratic it must then decide what institutional form the democracy will take. These choices require democratically educated citizens who understand possible political alternatives and can make reasoned judgments among them.

Finally, democracy is a choice at the level of personal contribution. Countries might have the most democratic set of laws and institutions imaginable and still not be democratic if there is no commitment to the principles and practice of democracy by the politicians, schools and/or the people. This is precisely the problem with many career education programs that routinely violate the democratic principles of learning. Russian Alexander Ossipov (2001) reflects on the situation in his own country by observing, "I do not believe in the miraculous force of a piece of paper. A law or treaty is nothing more than a well-meaning wish unless the government and society respect it" (p. 176). For a democracy to function it is not only essential that democratic ideas are enshrined in constitutions, schools and institutions but also that the people embrace them as their own and understand the responsibilities and requirements of democratic citizenship. The education system in democratic societies is crucial to ensure students are prepared as informed, politically engaged and reflective citizens. Career education programs have an important role to play in this regard, then, by encouraging students to consider the social and economic forces that impact on their present and future vocational experience.

Tsilevich (2001) contends that one of the difficulties new democracies in Eastern Europe face is the importation of democratic ideas developed over many years in the West. He writes, "Post-Communist countries [are] consumers, rather than co-authors, of this modern and generally accepted liberal democratic political philosophy" (p. 156). The importation of democratic ideals formulated beyond a particular cultural context creates certain tensions for individuals habituated to different political practices and expectations. A personal commitment to democratic ideas is fostered by an

educational approach that promotes personal ownership of the democratic ideas and practices influencing the lives of students. Once again, career education can facilitate this ownership by creating students who are agents in the construction of social reality rather than mere objects of neo-liberal and human capital aims.

The understanding of history as an evolving process directed by human agency, and themselves as historically situated beings within a socially constructed context, is crucial to convey to students the distinction between social reality and natural reality. In democratic learning, students appreciate that the vocational and social conditions they confront are the direct result of conscious human decisions, actions and political policy. Whether one accepts or rejects neo-liberal principles and practices, it is critical in democratic learning that current conditions are not presented to students as the inevitable consequence of some unchangeable historical, economic or social evolutionary process.

It is painfully ironic that with the near complete demise of Marxism as a global political force, the burgeoning neo-liberal order has adopted the deterministic elements, or historicism, of dialectical materialism. Marx argued that the ultimate resolution of the historical class antagonisms, communism, was the inevitable result of an inexorable, scientific and historically predetermined process. The policies supporting neo-liberalism, presented to students in this same predetermined context, are advocated by certain special interest groups such as global corporations and these policies are implemented uncritically into practice by government decisions. The discourse supporting the entire neo-liberal movement portrays this economic paradigm as the end result of scientific laws that presumably hold the same sway as the law of thermal dynamics. Human agency is at the core of the society we construct and students in democratic career education must view themselves as active players in creating the vocational and social conditions that shape their lives. In democratic career education, then, students understand that social reality is the direct consequence of human agency and political lobbying and, hence, can be legitimately transformed in precisely the same fashion.

2.4   Education for Democratic Citizenship

The conception of citizenship that a society adopts inevitably shapes that society's approach to education. Elitist and passive conceptions of citizenship lead to conservative and didactic forms of education while more active conceptions of citizenship require education that is contextualized, dynamic, fluid and politically empowering. Models of citizenship education

vary across a continuum with differing orientations toward epistemology, students, teaching and learning, and society and social institutions. This continuum is illustrated below in Figure 1.

Passive approaches to citizenship education see knowledge as fixed, final and ahistorical; students as broken – or at least potentially broken – and in need of fixing or repair – the deficit, from this perspective, is found in the individual rather than in the social structure; teaching and learning are authoritarian and didactic processes; and society is depicted as static, and something students should be socialized to accept. Active approaches, on the other hand, see knowledge as contingent and culturally bound; students as citizens and social agents; teaching and learning as a progressive or constructivist enterprise which is dynamic, fluid and contextual; and society as in flux and in need of positive citizen involvement in its reshaping and transformation.

With Smagorinsky and Taxel (2005) we recognize that binaries are often "overly simplistic, reductive and unproductive except heuristically to establish points on a continuum" (p. 314). However, we also believe

Passive Approaches	*Active Approaches*
Knowledge/Understanding	**Knowledge/Understanding**
• Fixed, focus on right answers	• Fluid, focus on diverse perspectives
• Universal	• Contextual/cultural
Students	**Students**
• Tending to depravity	• Tending to positive engagement but vulnerable
• Recipients, empty vessels	• Active builders of knowledge and understanding
• Compliant, passive	• Agents of change
Teaching and Learning	**Teaching and Learning**
• Authoritarian	• Authoritative
• Didactic	• Constructivist – attention to prior learning, culture, multiple perspectives, dissonance and variance in outcome
• Rote	
• Single perspective and outcome	
Society and Institutions	**Society and Institutions**
• Stable	• In flux
• Generally acceptable/right – at least in traditional forms	• Always in need of re-examination and reformation
• Students are to accept and fit in	• Students understand and participate in reshaping

Figure 1. Approaches to Citizenship Education

these distinctions effectively elucidate the pedagogical distinctions between practices that create compliant student dispositions compared to practices that generate political voice and activism. In education, the means employed in the classroom and the achieved ends are inextricably connected in very intimate and important ways. We are not suggesting that any particular education programs match exactly with those depicted in the table since most are hybrids at some point along a continuum, but we wish to emphasize categorically that democratic citizenship is indisputably affected by the range of classroom practices students experience. We propose that the instructional approaches on the right side of Figure 1 have direct applicability to career education focused on promoting the meaningful democratic engagement of students.

Examples of education policy and practice close to the extreme ends of the continuum can be seen in the US in the conflicts around the social studies curriculum, or what Evans (2004) dubs the *social studies wars*. For a century these disputes have pitted conservative and passive views of citizenship and citizenship education against more active and progressive ones. Among the most virulent of these "wars" was the fight over national standards for American History in public schools that historian Gary Nash and his colleagues (Nash, Crabtree & Dunn, 1997) locate in the so-called culture wars gripping American society. Similarly, Smagorinsky and Taxel (2005) describe current clashes over character education in the US as fundamentally about approaches to citizenship and part of the larger culture wars. They set out a continuum of approaches to character education in Figure 2 that mirror the approaches illustrated above on citizenship education.

The kind of engaged, critical citizenship that we advocate demands an active approach to career education, an approach that must be reflected in both the policy design and practice of the developed programs. Correspondingly, we see democratic societies as fluid and evolving; the dynamic subject of ongoing discussion, debate, reform and improvement. As Osborne (2001) observes about Canada's democratic experience, "Perhaps the most fundamental fact about Canada is that it is a country that is continually debating the terms of its own existence. It has been doing so ever since 1763" (p. 54). Following Osborne, we see one purpose of democratic learning in career education as introducing students to the processes of discussion, debate and reform regarding vocational experience in an informed and critically reflective fashion. Once again echoing Osborne, we believe that for citizens "to participate in this debate, to avoid false solutions, to accept that there might in fact not be any once-for-all solutions at all, and above all not to turn one's back on it in frustration, is perhaps the ultimate exercise in democracy" (p. 54).

Didactic, Individualistic, Authoritarian Approaches:	Community-Based, Reflective Approaches:
Moral adults are viewed as the guardians of a set of universal ethical values and standards. They have an obligation to impress these values upon a generation of youngsters who are immersed in an increasingly coarse and corrupt culture. Young people are ever more tempted to succumb to the temptations afforded by a self-serving media and to defy the wisdom of knowing and authoritative adults. The United States of America is regarded as an especially virtuous nation. (p. 147)	A reflective-community-based approach to character education is designed to promote discussion among all participants about the process and effectiveness of the initiative. Furthermore, character is an issue taken up by the community as a whole, which is recognized as being composed of diverse constituents sharing an equal stake in the quality of community life. The community thus needs to create a caring environment – with exemplary behaviour modeled by adults – that in turn helps young people to internalize an ethic of care and a sense of agency in contributing to a better society through good citizenship. (p. 243)

Figure 2. Approaches to Character Education

There are a number of basic understandings that individuals must possess to become effective democratic citizens. In order for democratic citizens to make informed choices about the preferred direction of their society, they obviously require access to knowledge about possible social, economic and political options. To achieve this fundamental requirement of informed democratic citizenship, students must be provided with some appreciation for past and present historical and cultural contexts that promote consideration of social alternatives. Democratic citizens must understand that present social circumstances are the result of conscious human decision-making and action, and can be changed through precisely the same means. As educators, we must continually emphasize to our students that we have not arrived at our present historical circumstances by any other force than the force of our own decisions and those decisions made by others. Students who lack this basic democratic understanding will fail to envision the possibility of change and underestimate their own potential role as active agents in the reconstruction of society.

Any career education program should begin, then, by emphasizing to students that neo-liberalism is not a naturally occurring phenomenon, but an economic system designed and perpetuated by human agency. Students must understand that contemporary political and economic structures are human constructions and can be changed through both formal and informal political action. Osborne (2004a) correctly observes that this is a key reasons

for teaching history in schools: "One of the most persuasive arguments in defense of history is that it enables us to see through the conventional wisdom of the present by showing us times and places where things were done differently" (p. 78). History provides students with a sense of social movement and progress that contradicts the naturalizing discourse adopted by the neo-liberal ideology within contemporary career education. Given the ahistorical understanding championed by neo-liberal ideology, it is unsurprising that history is one subject engaged in a fierce struggle for its contemporary survival.

Sadly, another pedagogical feature too often lacking in educational preparation for democratic citizenship is instruction that provides students with a basic understanding of how ideology shapes individual and cultural consciousness. If our students are expected to make autonomous political choices about work organization and society more generally, then providing them with some understanding about the mechanisms of ideology and *false consciousness* becomes a pivotal career education objective. To remedy the present lack of attention schools pay to this problem, we suggest introducing the term *ideology* to career education students relatively early in their experience to empower them with a concept that names and exposes the manipulative forces in their culture. Ideology, especially in the current era of modern media and technological invasion, has a potentially profound and lasting impact on student consciousness and may correspondingly inhibit their ability for autonomous preference formation. Without providing students with some opportunity to examine the impact of ideology on consciousness shaping, the hope of achieving a meaningful, or thick, democracy is seriously undermined.

Although we have profound concerns with neo-liberal society, we do not believe in educating students toward any single worldview regardless of our own biases. Any form of indoctrination is counter to the tenets of democratic learning. Career education based on democratic learning encourages students to form their own opinions and viewpoints on the issues they confront, and continuously strives to provide them with relevant information on all sides of an issue or problem. To achieve this level of knowledge and understanding, however, they must enjoy access to the full intellectual resources of our culture. As we have argued above, we want to prepare career education students to enter the democratic conversation in a thoroughly informed and critically reflective manner, but we do not want to tell them what to think or say once they have arrived.

One effective pedagogical approach to open up student consideration of the ideologies that underlie contemporary Western society is to present historical or contemporary alternatives. As mentioned above, feminist

scholars have provided insightful critiques of liberal and formal democratic conceptions of citizenship and democracy (Arnot & Dillabough, 2000). As well, there is a considerable body of academic scholarship on citizenship emerging from Asia that challenges the privileging of individuals over communities and proposes alternative social and economic frameworks other than neo-liberalism for political and social organization in democratic societies (Lee, Grossman, Kennedy & Fairbrother, 2004). Either or both of these frameworks could provide valuable career education frameworks for opening up the taken-for-granted nature of existing labour market and working conditions.

Although one need not advocate vulgar Marxism in the classroom – again, we seek to avoid indoctrination of any kind – there are certain components of Marxist philosophy that we believe helpful in exposing the impact of influential social and economic neo-liberal forces on individual consciousness. Giroux (2003) underscores the potential contribution of Marxism in contemporary education by suggesting it affords an effective vehicle to highlight the ravages of neo-liberal capitalism. We concur with Smagorinsky and Taxel (2005) that although Marx, or at least his interpreters, may be inept at governance he "has proven to be an insightful social analyst" (p. 330). Unfortunately, these potentially valuable contributions are presently part of the *null curriculum* because of an economic and ideological context that views all components of Marxism in negative terms. The null curriculum is itself a powerful indoctrinating force that denies students access to available intellectual culture and manipulates them instead to value only that content contained in the *formal curriculum*. The ideological insights contained in Marxism will help provide students with a more sophisticated understanding of the interaction between economics, politics, social structure and individual belief.

Marx's base/superstructure model, arguably the foundation for much of what is currently referred to as *critical theory*, offers an excellent pedagogical device to illustrate to students how economic forces direct or control ideas within capitalist culture. The model reflects Marx's view that those individuals who control the economic base of society also control the dissemination of prevailing ideas and values. The economic base contains such elements as the means of production and distribution, the means of communication and the financial institutions that control capital. According to Marx, the individuals who control these various economic forces also control a culture's major ideas, and they shape these ideas to protect their own hegemonic and class based economic interests.

We believe that introducing the base/superstructure model to students can help them better understand how culture is saturated with ideas and values

emanating from powerful individuals, organizations and groups. It reveals in a very concrete visual way to students the relationship between economic power and ideological influence, and alerts them to how their own ideas are often the result of these intersecting forces. Within career education, for example, the entire trend toward employability skills development might be examined through a critical lens employing a base/superstructure analysis to reveal its socially reproductive implications. When students are encouraged to adopt a "positive attitude toward change" by career education curricula, which they often are, they could also explore how that attitude and other so-called employability skills actually serve hegemonic interests far more than their own.

Perhaps the most flagrant contemporary example of ideological manipulation occurs at the hand of some modern media outlets and the base/superstructure model is once again an effective mechanism to expose the relationship between power and media. In the US, Fox News Channel, for example, stands in obvious and direct contradiction to its rather laughable claim of "fair and balanced reporting" by advancing a monolithic neo-liberal and Republican Party worldview. Commentators such as Bill O'Reilly, a composite or amalgam of virtually all extreme conservative values, perpetually attack any position that challenges the current stratified class structure in the US, or criticizes recent US military expansionism. The entire mission of the television network, owned by Australian magnate Rupert Murdoch, is presenting information in a way that casts the Bush administration, its neo-liberal policies and corporate allies in the best possible light.

Whereas media outlets around the world reported the devastating number of civilian causalities during the Iraq War, Fox News and even other more moderate US news networks such as CNN virtually ignored the situation. When students understand how their ideas and beliefs are influenced by biased media reports shaped by corporate interests, they are far better situated to examine the causal history and development of their own viewpoints. Media analyses, then, should play at least some role in democratically structured career education. The base/superstructure model that we describe above illustrates to students how media often represents the interests of dominant economic groups to the detriment of labour and general working conditions. In his propaganda model of the press, Chomsky (1991) provides a compelling and contemporary analysis of how the mainstream media in liberal democratic societies works to constrain and simplify rather than broaden debate.

Popular culture is another area of potential classroom discussion in democratic career education. By analyzing film as public pedagogy, the

persuasive and often powerful ideological messages contained in movies and television programs become more manifest. Film is a powerful and pervasive force in shaping contemporary student values and we neglect these representations of mainstream culture, and the ideas they promote, in our classrooms at our students' peril. When films are analyzed for the stereotypes they perpetuate, the messages they convey about what's important, and what moral values or personal characteristics are favored over others, students become more critical consumers of cultural text.

The importance of literacy as a requirement of democratic citizenship has been generally well understood at least since Thomas Jefferson who saw it as the most fundamental building block to create a meaningful and participatory democratic society. For citizens to access alternative political viewpoints on various issues they must first be able to access and understand fairly sophisticated narrative accounts of competing positions. In public education generally and career education initiatives more specially, literacy is typically portrayed as an essential skill for labour market success. However, such an approach to literacy may actually increase student vulnerability to a range of indoctrinatory forces rather than promote participatory democratic citizenship.

The literacy approach we advocate for democratic career education involves far more than providing students with the ability to read, write and understand text, even if these abilities are mastered at a fairly advanced level. *Functional literacy* alone is inconsistent with democratic citizenship because students are not encouraged to grapple with the indoctrinatory power of text, or ask critical questions about the information it contains. Functional literacy presents textual information as objective, absolute and inevitably in the best interests of the learner rather than problematizing text as a potentially manipulative force. In functional literacy, for example, there is typically no consideration of how text emerges from the particular worldview of those controlling its dissemination. The implicit denial of literacy as a potentially indoctrinatory force in education contradicts the growing understanding among most educators that literacy is sometimes employed as a primary tool of ideological manipulation within neo-liberal contexts (McLaren & Lankshear, 1993). In democratic career education, then, all text becomes the subject of critical analysis.

Although Luce-Kapler (2004) avoids the term *critical literacy* because it "has several meanings and each of those meanings carries a certain weight of history," (p. 159) she supports efforts to denaturalize text by making manifest the underlying assumptions it entails. She employs the term *critical awareness* to describe the analysis of text where narratives are

"opened up, questioned, read closely, or even dismantled into lists of words" (p. 159). Another exercise Luce-Kapler proposes to reveal underlying textual assumptions is encouraging students to re-write fairy tales from a feminist perspective to deconstruct the fallacious but socially instantiated idea of males as the protectors and saviours of women. These types of strategies foster what Shor (1992) describes as "critical consciousness," a critical literacy objective that allows students to debunk the functionalist assumption that "rejects human agency, denying that people can transform their conditions" (p. 126).

There is also a range of dispositions, or character qualities, that students require to become participatory democratic citizens. Obviously, a disposition to participate politically within society heads the list of these personal characteristics. Regardless of how political activity manifests itself, students should be provided with some sense of political empowerment if they are to believe that their voices and actions can make a difference. In the absence of such a belief, there is little reason to participate politically and students are apt to become intellectually disinterested in the political life of the state. In a classroom that routinely denies students the opportunity to share their perspectives and insights, or routinely ignores their role in shaping the learning environment, students may not develop the necessary dispositional qualities to act politically.

If our classrooms are to become "laboratories for democracy," as Dewey (1916) so eloquently encouraged, then we must mimic in the classroom the conditions required in society for meaningful and engaged political participation. We believe the social transformation and more liberal elements of progressivism that encourage student-centered learning practices are helpful in creating a sense of political voice among students. Indeed, teachers who encourage active student participation in shaping classroom conditions or allow students to help select curriculum materials are far more apt to generate a sense of political voice in their learners. In Chapters Four and Five, we will elaborate on some student-centered practices for education to achieve this objective.

There are many other dispositions students must possess if they are to develop into effective democratic citizens. These characteristics include a sceptical attitude toward various forms of text and information more generally, an appreciation for their own epistemic fallibility, the courage to stand up for their convictions when they are convinced of their veracity, a tolerance and respect for the rights and opinions of others, and a willingness to entertain alternative points of view. In Chapter Five, we explain these dispositions in greater detail and offer classroom practices to help foster their development.

2.5   **Democracy as Social Transformation**

No other philosopher has advanced a more compelling case for the impor-
tance of democracy, and its relationship to education and the classroom,
than American pragmatist John Dewey. Following his arrival at Columbia
University in 1905, Dewey's primary mission was to reconstruct philosophy
by shifting its focus from the abstract problems of metaphysics to the
more immediate and relevant problems of society. Dewey's attempt to
make philosophy practically relevant developed from his belief that social
progress, hence the term "progressivism," is the actual end of philosophy
and education. If philosophy was to have a pragmatic, or practical, purpose,
it must address issues of human experience rather than pursue abstract
epistemological or metaphysical notions of truth.

   The promise of individual self-realization central to Dewey's philosophy
suggested that freedom in a democratic sense was the opportunity to fully
actualize oneself as both a social and vocational being. To achieve this
objective required the creation of particular social conditions where oppor-
tunity for all citizens was equalized since without the required social condi-
tions, self-actualization was impossible. At the heart of Dewey's democratic
ideal is the concept of "function," a term that identifies the relationship
between individuals and their social environment. Dewey insists that the
relationship between the individual and the environment must be based on
mutual adjustment and re-adjustment directed towards enhancing the oppor-
tunity for all individuals to achieve self-actualization. In fact, fitting into a
democratic society might legitimately and paradoxically involve radically
changing it, an idea he later used to justify extensive educational reforms:

> The kind of vocational education in which I am interested is not one which will "adapt"
> workers to the existing industrial regime; I am not sufficiently in love with the regime for
> that. It seems to me that the business of all who would not be educational time-servers is
> to resist every move in this direction and to strive for a kind of vocational education which
> will first alter the existing industrial system and ultimately transform it. (cited in Wirth,
> 1972, p. 215)

Dewey's democratic ideal is woefully absent in contemporary career
education where the entire onus, as we have pointed out, is placed on students
as future workers to adapt to the structural conditions they encounter.

   Formulated in Dewey's sense, then, democracy is understood as organic,
dynamic and evolving, rather than a static arrangement held together with
social structure determined by a philosopher king, some absolute authority
figure or neo-liberal ideology. A society is not a fixed entity to which
citizens conform, but composed of an aggregate of individuals who evolve
and transform the conditions of their collective experience to improve their

opportunity for self-realization. By extension, only a society that grows and evolves without arbitrary limits to provide this universal opportunity can be considered truly free and democratic. Dewey (1916) maintained categorically that the ultimate objective of democratic politics and citizenship is securing the structural conditions necessary for the self-realization of all individuals in a society, an objective whose achievement demands equality of opportunity.

Democracy was not so much a political system for Dewey as it was a quality or characteristic inherent within each individual who longed for a richer and more fulfilling human experience. The eventual selection of a vocation and the shaping of working conditions were integral components in achieving this self-actualization. In his view, democracy is a political system whose primary function is satisfying the inherent quest for freedom and self-determination sought by all human beings. While this idea did not go over well with many of his contemporaries, including social efficiency advocates David Snedden and Charles Prosser (Hyslop-Margison, 2001), Dewey remained committed to the view that humans would never be satisfied when externally directed and limited in their vocational aspirations. He believed the role of vocational education in a democratic society was to increase the range of social and occupational possibilities rather than to restrict them.

Following Dewey, we believe the ends and means of vocational experience in a democratic society involve the fulfillment of human possibility rather than the narrow preservation of the political status quo, or the simple reproduction of the economic and class stratification within capitalist society. The democratic ideal we support expects that all citizens will be provided with the opportunity for a lifetime of intellectual growth, vocational enrichment and social improvement. It is our contention that present neoliberal economic arrangements and the proliferation of instrumental human capital learning in career education seriously threaten the self-actualization of students, citizens and the very ideal of democracy itself.

2.6   Summary

Although there are some legitimate concerns with democracy as a political system, its potential benefits far outweigh the risks identified by Plato and Hobbes. Sadly, the concern with the mass manipulation of public opinion voiced by Plato has been realized in the historical practice of democracy. However, we remain convinced that current oligarchic and manipulative trends are reversible through an appropriately designed education. We are also committed to the idea that properly constructed career education can

improve citizen participation and move us increasingly toward the goal of achieving a thick, participatory and strengthened democracy. Perhaps the greatest mistake that Plato, Aristotle and Hobbes committed was viewing the "unschooled masses" as intellectually incapable and, hence, unable to participate effectively in the political life of the state. We have suggested that any differences in class stratification and political sophistication are more correctly viewed as the inevitable consequence of the social structure of opportunity.

We have briefly outlined in this chapter some of the learning objectives that form the foundation for meaningful democratic learning in contemporary career education programs. Many of these objectives seek to provide students with a deeper understanding of the historical context in which they live, and expose the ideological threats posed by various institutions to our individual and collective political liberty and intellectual autonomy. We believe that improving student understanding in these areas is critical to ensure the democratic choices our citizens make are based on knowledge, cultural literacy and significant critical reflection.

Finally, and following Dewey, we argued in this chapter that social progress toward social equality is a necessary condition of any meaningful construct of democracy. Hence, any educational program, vocational or otherwise, that ignores this fundamental precept is undemocratic because it necessarily limits the self-actualizing possibilities of some learners. In Chapter Three, we identify three critical principles for democratic learning in career education and analyze various human capital and career education policies and programs from several different countries to highlight their potentially anti-democratic impact on students.

CHAPTER 3

PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRATIC LEARNING
Policy and Program Review

3.   INTRODUCTION

In the preceding two chapters we have outlined the context for contemporary school reform and offered a number of important reasons on why protecting the underpinnings of a democratic society ought to be at the forefront of our educational concerns. We have also mounted a defence of democracy against a range of possible criticisms offered by historically significant political philosophers such as Plato and Hobbes, and explored competing conceptions of democratic citizenship. A properly structured democracy offers the best means to ensure the political and vocational experience of citizens is protected from administrative abuses of power. However, as we have argued, educational practices in all subject areas must protect and promote the democratic ideals necessary to meet this objective. We also recognize that thick democracy, in the sense where citizens exercise autonomous preference formation and substantive agency in terms of shaping society, is an extremely difficult political objective to achieve. We have argued that thick democracy requires social and economic equality and pursues continual progress toward achieving those objectives.

   In this chapter, we analyze the current threat posed by career education policies and programs that ignore the principles of democratic learning. We will also illustrate how many programs and policies in this area are completely asynchronous with citizenship programs that emphasize the development of civic agency and engagement. We identify the elements of programs in both career and citizenship education that respect the principles of democratic learning and suggest that career education, when appropriately conceived and implemented, can actually contribute to creating participatory and critically reflective citizens.

We begin the present chapter by identifying three fundamental principles of democratic learning and explain why these imperatives are critical to protect the autonomous preference formation and political voice of career education students. We then examine a range of macro and micro level human capital and career education policies and programs to explore their consistency with the principles we identify. At the macro level, organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO) and the World Bank express an interest in career education as a means to enhance economic development. UNESCO's approach is somewhat unique, and arguably more consistent with the democratic learning objectives we advance, because it views collective improvement in quality of life as the primary goal of its educational initiatives.

At the micro level, we explore career education policies and programs from Australia, Canada, and the US to highlight their similarities and differences, and evaluate the consistency of career education policies and curricula from all three countries with the principles of democratic learning. We conclude the chapter by offering some initial observations on our analysis, and summarizing the revisions necessary to ensure policies and programs at both the macro and micro levels respect the principles of democratic learning. We will also review some of the most progressive programs developed in the field of citizenship education to reveal the conflicting messages students receive about their political role in shaping democratic societies. By the end of the chapter we hope to provide an emerging vision of how career education programs that respect democratic learning practices might appear.

3.1   Principles of Democratic Learning

We begin this section with the pedagogical understanding that nothing about the content included or discussed in education ultimately determines whether learning is democratic or indoctrinatory. Although some scholars have argued that certain types of content are indoctrinatory by their very nature (Kazepides, 1989), we believe that any subject matter can be taught in a manner consistent with democratic learning. We have explained at some length elsewhere (Hyslop-Margison, 2005) the kind of policy and teaching practices that reduce learning to indoctrination by undermining autonomous belief formation. We will not rehearse those observations in this chapter, but indoctrinatory learning generally rejects student critique of subject matter, presents material to students as if it is beyond the bounds of reasonable criticism and denies students access to alternative opinions or worldviews. Generally, we maintain any learning experience that encourages students

to assimilate uncritically externally generated information and to fit into existing social structures under the guise of work preparation or social cohesion represents indoctrinatory learning.

Learning is indoctrinatory and undemocratic when students become passive objects in the classroom experience, or are subjected to what Freire (1970) terms *banking education*, a situation that occurs based on the style of classroom teaching, curriculum imperatives, or some combination of both. As illustrated by the passive approach to learning we described in Chapter Two, indoctrinatory models of career education are not only premised on students being passive in classrooms, but they ultimately foster compliance with and adaptation to social structures that lie beyond the classroom. Since truly democratic societies are by definition necessarily evolving and dynamic, democratic education must promote a corresponding understanding of social change in our students.

We must begin this chapter on policy and program analysis with an important caveat. We explicitly recognize the limitations of this work as representing only policy analysis and structural critique and, as such, it fails to address the role of human agency in determining actual classroom outcomes. Teachers and students are not mindless automata and policy analysis alone is therefore inadequate to understand the actual impact of current career education policies and programs on democratic learning practices and citizenship. Apple and Beyer (1983) correctly observe that, "Students will not necessarily accept what the school teaches and we cannot take for granted that students or teachers are passive vessels who uncritically accept what curriculum documents entail" (p. 432). Ethnographic research conducted by Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wertsch (1998) confirms that human agency inevitably mediates between individual cognition and the impact of the formal curriculum. There is also a considerable range of other scholarship over a number of years that demonstrates wide variation in citizenship education between the formal and enacted curriculum (Hodgetts, 1968; Sears & Hughes, 1996; Cleaver, Ireland, Kerr & Lopes, 2005).

No policy and program analysis of human capital and career education is complete, then, without investigating the actual classroom outcomes of career education curricula. There is important empirical work to complete at the level of classroom investigation to explore the genuine impact of career education programs on democratic learning, a research venture we hope to pursue sometime in the near future. Hence, we must begin this chapter by emphasizing that the principles of democratic learning we identify in this section are designed to counter policy and formal curricular imperatives that may encourage indoctrinatory teaching and learning practices. From a sanguine perspective, however, many teachers aware of the distinction

between democratic and indoctrinatory learning may already intuitively implement some of the strategies and ideas we identify.

We mentioned above that as teachers and teacher educators we are firmly committed to the view that any program of study can be classified as 'democratic' depending on the manner in which the material is presented to students and on the structure of classroom. For example, it is important that the teaching methods and classroom environment employed in democratic learning foster a sense of epistemological and political empowerment by encouraging student voice and autonomous preference formation. The classroom practices consistent with democratic learning promote the constant critical engagement of students during the learning experience.

There is considerable evidence that school structures beyond the classroom also have a profound impact on democratic learning. Sears and Perry (2000) have illustrated the negative consequences of anti-democratic policies and practices in school and education systems on the democratic ideas and dispositions learned in classrooms. They quote Canadian and UN diplomat Stephen Lewis who argued that we cannot expect students to become active, engaged citizens when "the democracy they are absorbing ridicules the democracy they are observing" (Sears & Perry, 2000, p. 31). The goal of creating more democratic classrooms, schools and school systems is a key component of some current reforms in citizenship education in England. For democratic citizenship education to be effective, English policy makers believe it is essential that both teachers and students find schools democratic places in which to work (Cleaver, Ireland, Kerr & Lopes, 2005). This idea must be extended into the domain of career education and the principles of democratic learning we propose in this section are designed to promote these essential ideas at all levels.

Benjamin Levin (1998), presently serving as the Province of Ontario's Deputy Minister of Education, proposes a series of pedagogical practices that he believes represent necessary imperatives to create a democratic classroom. These imperatives include situating moral principles and questions as primary over technical ones, ensuring that reason and knowledge take precedence over rank and authority, ensuring all classroom events are open to question and change, creating classrooms that respect divergent views, and designing pedagogical practices that encourage the active participation of all students (p. 64). These various principles and practices focus on the themes of promoting student political voice, conveying a genuine respect for student knowledge and reasoning ability, and protecting the autonomous preference formation of students.

We have identified three additional principles that a democratically structured education strategy must embrace, respect and practice

(Hyslop-Margison & Graham, 2003). The first principle of democratic learning that we propose is *a respect for student rationality*. As Aristotle (1985) argued almost twenty-five hundred years ago, humans are, by their very nature, reasoning sorts of creatures. More recently, philosopher Martha Nussbaum (1992) supports reasoning, or rationality, as the essential and distinguishing human quality, and maintains its universal presence among humans may be empirically demonstrated through standard observational means. She proposes an *internalist essentialism* that is inductively supported through observed behavioural patterns common to all humankind. Quite clearly, the ability to reason in a sophisticated manner and to employ reason in political, social and moral life distinguishes humans, at least normally functioning ones, from all other animals. Rationality comprises the single most defining component of our collective human ontology and its practice is therefore a defining element of our humanization. Paulo Freire (1970) applies this Aristotelian position to education by arguing that any classroom program or practice that interferes with the human capacity to reason constitutes an act of violence against students by denying their ontology and, hence, dehumanizing learners in the process. But what, then, is the relationship between rationality and democratic learning that prompts us to place a respect for student rationality at the forefront of a democratically structured career education?

When educators respect student rationality they treat learners as subjects in a dialogical exchange that expands the classroom conversation to consider various experiences and perspectives. A democratically structured career education classroom understands that differently situated individuals will often hold different priorities and perspectives. This respect for student rationality is juxtaposed to indoctrinatory teaching that treats students as objects who are directed toward particular and predetermined outcomes presented as beyond their realm of influence. In his seminal conceptual analysis, Peters (1973) observes that education is distinguished from other schooling practices such as training and indoctrination on the grounds that the former approach appreciates the right of students to demand reasons for accepting the information they encounter, and to question those reasons based on their own curiosity, knowledge and experience. Whereas indoctrinatory and anti-democratic teaching practices deny students the opportunity to critique curricular materials, democratic learning views such critique as fundamental to both education and participatory citizenship.

The commitment to rationality and critique must be present at all levels of the education system and accorded not only to students but to teachers, parents and community members as well. Several years ago Portelli and Solomon (2001) co-edited an important book on Canadian education,

The Erosion of Democracy in Education. The book grapples with the impact of neo-liberal reforms on education in Canada during the 1980s and 90s and in part argues that it is not only instrumentalist approaches to teaching and learning that have eroded democratic education in schools, but also the systematic exclusion of teachers from democratic professional processes and the reforming of educational governance to limit the input and control of local citizens and communities. The right to critique prevailing practices and content in education and propose alternatives must exist in classrooms, educational systems and also be extended into the political and social domains.

The ability and right to criticize public figures and government policy is obviously central to democratic societies. In the post September 11, 2001, US, it has become dangerously unpopular to criticize the Bush administration's current direction and decision-making on domestic and foreign policy. Those public figures and academics who do so, such as recently illustrated by the case featuring University of Colorado professor Ward Churchill, run the risk of either personal attack or, in this particular case, the almost complete ruination of one's professional reputation. Giroux (2003) refers to the present political context as *emergency time*, or a period during which the general public is easily manipulated through fear and anxiety to accept government action and policy that it would otherwise reject. Emergency time creates a period when criticism of government policy is rejected as being counter to a conception of a greater public "good," and civil liberties are typically undermined as well.

In *The Abandoned Generation: Democracy Beyond the Culture of Fear* Giroux (2003) cites the recent example of the City University of New York trustees and chancellor who openly condemned their own faculty members for identifying American foreign policy as one factor contributing to the September 2001 terrorist attacks. The concerted attempts to muzzle democratic dissent are especially troubling when endorsed by the wife of the vice-president, in this case Lynne Cheney, who publicly castigated the chancellor of New York City schools for suggesting that the "terrorist attacks demonstrated the importance of teaching about Muslim cultures" (p. 22). The democratic learning model we envision for career education understands schools and the programs they teach as the frontline defence against the erosion of all civil liberties including the freedom of speech. When the education system – especially institutions of higher education – is criticized for raising legitimate concerns about public policy, democracy is correspondingly and dangerously threatened.

The vilifying of opponents rather than the challenging of arguments has become a ubiquitous part of public and academic discourse in the US

justifying the moniker, 'culture wars.' Smagorinsky and Taxel (2005) locate disputes about character education in the US squarely in the realm of these wars and complain about being vilified by conservatives for challenging mainstream approaches to character education. They demonstrate how conservative rhetoric "assumes the marginality or foolishness of those whose ideologies follow from different assumptions about these matters" (p. 65). Any schooling approach or social doctrine that challenges the character or the integrity of those advancing counter perspectives on important issues is anti-democratic. It is anti-democratic because such a practice strives to truncate or terminate debate not on the merits of the argument, but rather on the basis of *ad hominem* attacks, or personal character assassinations. Too often, our debates at all levels of politics and education have been reduced to this low level of anti-intellectual and anti-rational discourse.

It is critically important that democracies respect and protect the right of individual dissent so long as that dissent does not threaten the well being of other citizens. The public space for social critique must be protected even when the dissent runs profoundly counter to mainstream or popular thinking. Obviously, no one is under obligation to accept Ward Churchill's controversial contention that the financial bureaucrats situated in the World Trade Center who succumbed to the unfortunate terrorist attacks are akin to "little Eichmans," but he deserves the opportunity to state that opinion and support it on the basis of some attending argument. To reject the position simply on the grounds that it is "offensive" or counter to generally held public opinion undermines the principles of democratic learning we advance.

As we write this book, the attack against Professor Churchill from the institutionalized administrative elements of the University of Colorado, politicians, and the mainstream conservative media continues. The attack on Professor Churchill symbolically reflects a growing and profoundly disturbing trend within the US that routinely persecutes or ridicules anyone who challenges neo-liberal ideology or questions US foreign policy. Within such a milieu, democracy is endangered because the scope of circulating ideas and public debate is narrowed to predetermined assumptions and objectives that comply with a single point of view. The democratic respect for rationality within education and society includes the right to critique all commonly held assumptions, and advance opposing viewpoints on even the most controversial of issues. A society that rejects this right, whether it hold elections every four years or not, is categorically undemocratic in form and practice, and risks regressing toward a totalitarian mindset that actively persecutes those holding counter perspectives.

In condemning teaching practices that undermine human rationality, Freire (1970) offers a helpful distinction between schooling that respects

student rationality and approaches that actively interfere with this democratic learning requirement. In *banking education*, the teacher basically perceives students as empty vessels into which the information deemed appropriate by politicians, administrators or the teacher is deposited for later withdrawal. The student becomes nothing more than a passive player, a repository, or bank, by simply accepting the delivered information, and unquestioningly applying it in a prescribed and predictable fashion. There is no element of subjective interaction with course content, and the democratic practice of students constructing knowledge based on personal understandings and experiences is actively subverted. In opposition to banking education practices, Dewey (1938) argued that learners experience information differently based on their individual experiences preceding the learning situation. He maintains that education for democracy must respect this knowledge construction process. We will elaborate on how constructivist teaching and learning practices might contribute to democratic learning in career education in Chapter Four.

Our most significant concern with banking type schooling approaches is that they undermine democratic learning by creating students who are more likely to become passive citizens in their future social and political experience. In other words, students learn through non-democratic schooling that knowledge emerges entirely from others, and their role is simply one of assimilating that information for application within a predetermined and externally generated social context. Rather than learning to critique and construct knowledge based on their own analysis and personal experience, and acquiring the political empowerment such learning entails, they become compliant learners and politically passive citizens. Political compliance is a personal quality obviously inconsistent with the considerable agency demands of participatory democratic citizenship. If we expect our students to be active political participants, then it is critical that their rationality be respected in the classroom from their earliest learning experiences to create the dispositions and the attending sense of political voice required for engaged democratic citizenship.

The idea of political voice being successfully fostered through learning is perhaps best reflected philosophically in the work of John Dewey (1916) who argued that the goal of education within democracies is not social reproduction but rather reconstruction, or "a constant reorganizing or reconstructing of experience. It is that reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experience" (p. 89). Dewey (1916) observed that flexible and continuous adaptation is crucial to social and democratic progress toward creating the expanded opportunities

for self-actualization we described in Chapter Two. He suggested that democratic education is not simply learning about democratic forms of governance and political structures. It must instead inculcate personal habits such as cooperation, public spiritedness and conjoint or collaborative problem solving as central goals to promote democratic learning objectives. When functioning effectively, democratic education produces an organized community of individuals who address society's problems through experimental, inventive and politically engaged practices rather than through instrumental means. The development of democratic habits or dispositions, Dewey argued in *School and Society* (1900) and *Democracy and Education* (1916), must begin during the earliest years of a child's educational experience.

The second principle of democratic learning we have identified reflects the fundamental educational importance of *entertaining alternative perspectives.* When students are taught from only one perspective on an issue, or are exposed to only one worldview, they are being denied, intentionally or otherwise, the opportunity to evaluate that perspective against competing forms of knowledge and understanding. We argue that appropriately educated democratic citizens know something about the range of ways democratic ideas have been understood and operationalized over time and across contexts. They are then able to use that knowledge to make informed choices about the type of society they wish to create (Hughes & Sears, 2004). The capacity to make such decisions and take such action relies on exposure to knowledge about alternative social and economic models and priorities, both historical and contemporary, and on introducing students to critiques about the manner in which our present neo-liberal society is organized.

In our analyses of career education policies and programs we have been genuinely dismayed by the frequent absence of curriculum space dedicated to the views of labour, environmentalists and competing perspectives on a range of work-related issues such as neo-liberalism, sustainable development and acceptable working conditions. For career education programs to qualify as democratic, it is critical that students are exposed to competing viewpoints on the preferred structure of the economy, society and the labour market as well as on morally acceptable working conditions both at home and abroad. When students are denied access to relevant information on these subjects, they are indoctrinated into a worldview developed by others rather than educated to make their own informed democratic choices about the nature of their vocational experience.

Some of the current scholarship in education generally, and career education more specifically, commits the alternative sin of attacking

neo-liberal assumptions and related schooling reform without seriously entertaining the various arguments supporting the movement. We suggest that oppositional readings ought to be included in all subject areas to allow students to make up their own minds on the issues at hand. In democratic education, and regardless of our own personal perspective on an issue, we are compelled to include information and arguments that may often run counter to our own ideological commitments.

Since there is an obvious tendency among academics to believe that our views are inevitably the correct ones (why else would we hold them?) conveying alternative perspectives to students often presents considerable challenges. However, in the absence of such balance, career education that routinely advocates the unquestioned dismantling of neo-liberalism without including some discussion of its proposed merits remains indoctrinatory and anti-democratic in structure. In a democracy, individuals have the legitimate political right to make up their own minds about the type of society and economy they want to create. In order to make such decisions from an informed and reflective perspective, they must have access to sophisticated arguments on all sides of the issues being discussed. A primary role of curriculum developers and teachers within a democratic learning context, then, is ensuring students receive this information and subject it to a range of possible critiques when it is introduced into the classroom.

The third and final principle of democratic learning we have identified for application in career education is *an appreciation for the distinction between social reality and natural reality*. As illustrated later in this chapter, many of the programs in career education adopt a discourse and tone that imply to students that social reality is fixed and determined, and their role is simply to adapt or conform to the conditions they inherit. Democracy, as we pointed out in Chapter Two, is at least partially dependent on the idea of social change and progress, particularly progress toward increased levels of social equality. This is an objective only achievable if students view society as a dynamic and transformable construct rather than some static or inexorable one.

3.2   International Human Capital Programs

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was established on November 16, 1945 to help repair the economic and social damage caused by the Second World War. UNESCO's emphasis is primarily on education but its role also extends well beyond policy and program development to active implementation of various work-related programs in developing regions around the world. The organization

includes its regional objectives under the umbrella of a far broader vision that pursues the noble aim of creating a more peaceful and prosperous world: "The world urgently requires global visions of sustainable development based upon the observance of human rights, mutual respect and the alleviation of poverty, all of which lie at the heart of UNESCO's mission and activities" (UNESCO, 2005a, p. 1). UNESCO also seeks to formulate international agreements on emerging ethical and environmental issues related to economic development. By adopting this stance, its focus and agenda thankfully move far beyond that of simply representing the narrow economic interests of business and industry. The organization also serves as a distribution network and clearinghouse to share the information and knowledge it creates among its approximately 190 member nations and six associate members in the fields of education, science, culture and communication.

UNESCO strives to create dialogue between the world's nations based on a respect for peace and the inherent dignity of individual civilizations and cultures (UNESCO, 2005a). Similar to many other international organizations with an interest in economic development and enhanced global prosperity, however, UNESCO places a significant emphasis on the importance of technical and vocational education in achieving its various objectives. According to the organization, "Experts agree: skill training enhances productivity and sustains competitiveness in the global economy" (UNESCO, 2005b, p. 1). UNESCO not only assumes a primary role in promoting technical and vocational education, but also actively assists some countries in developing and implementing work-related programs. It is especially concerned with providing career education to those marginalized groups and individuals that are generally excluded from receiving sources of regular sustainable income. UNESCO's work in this area begins with the same commonly held assumption adopted by other human capital education advocates: that is, technical and career education necessarily enhances the productivity of a nation's labour force and improves its economic opportunities within the competitive global economy.

In response to the central role that technical and vocational education supposedly play in providing enhanced employment opportunities within the global economy, UNESCO established the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre in 2000 in Bonn, Germany, to act as a clearinghouse for a global network of institutions in the area. In a UNESCO-UNEVOC document published in 2002, the relationship between the organization and other international groups such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is immediately apparent. The UNESCO (2002) document, *Technical and Vocational Education and Training in the*

21st Century, begins by outlining the current context for developing and implementing career education policies and programs:

> The rapid technological developments we are witnessing in the early years of the twenty-first century, together with the forces of globalization, are likely to lead to radical changes in the world of work. In fact, the changing nature of work is already perceptible in both the urban centers and in rural communities. It follows therefore that human development, of which education is a vital part, must keep in step with these societal changes if people are to lead productive, peaceful and satisfying lives. (p. 5)

An almost identical perhaps well-intentioned but profoundly misguided preamble is found in virtually every policy and curricular document involving career education throughout the industrialized world. The growth of technology, globalization and the supposedly inevitably changing nature of work are consistently cited as the primary impetus driving career education and human capital development.

Unfortunately, this type of rhetorical narrative, in spite of its possible noble intentions, is cause for concern when related to the principles of democratic learning we identified previously in this chapter. For example, students in a democratic society are not mere witnesses to technological development but rather are situated as individuals who possess a legitimate right to develop, evaluate and apply technological advancements in a manner that they consider most appropriate. Technology is essentially a working tool and, therefore, as Habermas (1970) argues, potentially neutral in its possible applications. It can be used as a means to enhance democracy or, alternatively, as a means to simply disseminate information to advance functional ends that protect the social or economic status quo. When discussions and applications of technology are consistent with the principles of democratic learning, they respect student rationality by rejecting instrumental approaches to teaching and learning applications. We believe that the potential democratic applications of technology are considerable (Hyslop-Margison, 2004), and that these practices should be explicit in the work of UNESCO and other agencies developing career education policy and programs. This is especially the case given UNESCO's self-described advocacy of citizenship education.

Democratically minded teachers avoid using educational technology simply as a vehicle to transfer information that uncritically reproduces social and cultural norms. However, many structural critiques of technology fail to consider the primary role human agency plays in shaping possible learning outcomes. Educators who reject classroom technologies as inherently negative and reproductive adopt a regressive posture resembling the 19th century English Luddites. This group came together in a secret organisation dedicated to destroying the technologies developed during

the Industrial Revolution. In spite of their concerted efforts, the Luddites were largely unsuccessful at stalling or preventing the technology generated labour market changes of the period. Indeed, as history clearly illustrates, the Luddites were not the forerunners of an emerging working class consciousness, but a group of somewhat isolated individuals who resorted to archaic, and ultimately fruitless, forms of protest against technology.

Contemporary educators concerned with the political implications of classroom technologies should not repeat their mistake by rejecting technology outright, or by believing they can prevent or limit its introduction into schools. Educational technology is an inescapable feature of present day schooling. Teachers concerned with democratic learning must accept this reality to influence its classroom application. Rather than condemning educational technologies as instruments of social and economic reproduction, they should consider ways to employ them to achieve objectives that respect the principles of democratic learning.

Teachers should be appropriately concerned with technology replacing more human and critical forms of pedagogy, but also creative in developing practices that exploit technology to achieve democratic learning objectives. One of the most popular technologies employed within contemporary classrooms is the Internet, or World Wide Web. However, classroom applications of the Internet have been widely criticized for promoting corporate ideology and instrumental learning in schools. But the Internet is not simply a technology to manipulate students toward specific ideological ends. It also provides an effective medium to foster counter-hegemonic dialogue, political resistance, and participatory democratic citizenship. One obvious democratic advantage afforded by Internet based learning is the access it offers students to a range of competing subject viewpoints. The use of hypertext, which typically arranges information in various layers of complexity, enables students to self-direct their online problem solving activities by channelling their inquiry in a number of different directions. When utilised effectively, Internet based activities strengthen the depth and scope of student inquiries, and promote democratic learning by offering students access to different perspectives, values, and entire bodies of knowledge.

Collaborative Internet based learning is another teaching strategy consistent with democratic learning because it engages students in active learning while encouraging communicative dialogue and community problem solving. Working groups that include males and females, or a mix of cultures, learning styles, abilities, socio-economic status and age, create a rich and multi-perspective approach to classroom learning. The Internet facilitates collaborative learning by linking students who might otherwise be denied the advantages of a democratically structured classroom. For those

students who already interact with others, the Internet expands and extends these possibilities by facilitating out of class discussion. Chat rooms, where simultaneous communication occurs, message boards and email, where dialogue is more asynchronous, and listservers that enable designated groups to chat with each other represent additional Internet based technologies that connect learners and encourage group discussion. Of course, quality student participation in these virtual venues is not a necessary outcome of Internet technology, but must be actively facilitated by teachers through appropriate course organisation, instructional design, and active participation.

Another attraction of the Internet for democratic educators is its relative independence from tightly regulated administration and authority. Historically, teachers have been pretty much able to regulate what their students read, what viewpoints they encounter and, hence, channel students in very particular, pre-determined, and socially reproductive ways. Although some Internet material is of dubious educational value, there is a broadening girth of sophisticated, even scholarly, information now available on the web. These multiple perspectives provide students with a solid epistemic foundation to construct their own independent understanding and viewpoints. When used in this autonomous fashion, then, the Internet supports classroom practices consistent with the principles of democratic learning by respecting student rationality, and exposing learners to various perspectives (Hyslop-Margison, 2004).

This same UNESCO document suggests that a major gap exists between the skills workers presently possess and those required for employment in the emerging global economy. Similar claims are made by policy documents at both the macro and micro levels throughout the entire range of career education policies and programs. For example, compare the assertions advanced in the UNESCO policy document with the following views advanced by the OECD (1997):

As global competition and the effects of new technology rapidly change the nature of work, millions of individual workers in member countries are discovering that they need skills of a much higher level than in the past – or that the skills they do have are obsolete. (p. 13)

In point of fact, and contrary to these commonly espoused positions, there is no available empirical evidence suggesting that the supposed skill gap reported by UNESCO and the OECD actually separates workers from present labour market opportunities. We will not rehearse our findings here, but one of us has illustrated at length elsewhere that the presupposed skills gap separating workers from available employment opportunities is far more imagined and ideological than it is real (Hyslop-Margison & Welsh, 2003). The major trend in appreciable job growth presently occurring among

industrialized nations is primarily found in the lower skilled and poorly paid service industry sector. Csikszentmihalyi (1991) describes the situation this way:

Despite the endless rhetoric about how the jobs of the year 2000 will need employees with much higher levels of literacy [and skills], the greatest future demand in the labour market appears to be for armed guards, fast food preparation personnel, truck drivers, sanitation workers, nurses' aides, and other relatively unspecialized tasks. (p. 122)

It is important to consider why this apparent confusion about a so-called skills gap actually exists among organizations such as UNESCO that seek to prepare a work force for present and anticipated labour market conditions. We maintain that there are various intersecting factors contributing to this widespread misunderstanding about the relationship between education and the labour market. Governments of industrialized countries, and the organizations developing policy for these nations, recognize that many of the jobs eliminated by technology and/or being transferred to developing countries fall within the manufacturing and industrial sectors. This recognition creates an accompanying assumption that only high-tech employment opportunities are likely to remain viable among developed nations within such a technology driven environment. To acquire these jobs, then, policy developers and others – here we might assume much of rhetoric or rationale is simply adopted by some agencies from others – presuppose that high tech knowledge and skills are fundamental employment requirements for success within current and projected labour market conditions.

In capitalism, we must recognize that the primary motivation for technology development and implementation in the workplace is not job creation. In fact, many of the labour market positions eliminated by technology are never replaced. Workplace technology in neo-liberalism is intended to enhance profits by reducing the production costs of industry rather than augmenting the number of high-tech employment opportunities available to workers. Full employment is neither possible nor desirable in a high-tech labour market that values technology for its capacity to enhance profits by eliminating jobs to lower production costs while increasing profits.

Another serious economic challenge to developed nations such as Canada, the US, Australia, the UK, Germany and Japan involves the major loss of higher quality jobs to developing nations such as China, India, and Indonesia where cheaper sources of labour are readily available, and environmental and other industrial and manufacturing regulations are at an absolute minimum:

The relative importance of highly skilled workers compared to other productive advantages such as low wages, an absence of labour legislation and limited environmental regulations is highly questionable. The OECD reports that the major loss of upper level job loss among

industrialized nations is global competition in the form of manufacturing jobs being trans-
ferred to low wage countries. (Hyslop-Margison & Welsh, 2003)

In search of a labour supply marked by low wages, unregulated working
conditions and few to non-existent environmental laws, the manufacturing
and industrial sectors increasingly look toward developing countries as a
means to increase their respective profit margins. The ultimate objective
of business and industry in capitalist culture is not the creation of quality
employment, but the enhancement of profit margins often entirely oblivious
to the related human cost. The focus on improving the supply of skilled
workers, at least within industrialized countries, is unlikely to reverse this
trend in the foreseeable future since the loss of jobs to developing countries
is driven by labour costs rather than any skilled-based concerns.

Like so many other organizations and agencies focused on preparing
workers for the global economic changes consistent with contemporary neo-
liberal capitalism, UNESCO views the development of lifelong learning as
critical. Here's an example of the narrative that supports the development
of this particular so-called skill: "The changing nature of society today
will require a constant updating of skills and knowledge through a flexible
process of lifelong learning. The learning system must mirror the flexi-
bility of economic and societal developments" (UNESCO, 2002, p. 51).
Although the urgency reflected by such claims is arguably sincere, this
exceptionally limited perspective on lifelong learning threatens the principles
of a democratic education. As we have reiterated throughout this chapter,
students have a legitimate democratic right to transform structural conditions
through political activism rather than simply prepare to meet them. Hence,
the education system should not be presented as entirely reactive to these
conditions by simply "mirroring," as this particular document proposes,
economic and social developments.

The discourse espoused by UNESCO and other agencies on lifelong
learning places education, teachers and students in a passive and compliant
role within the structural conditions they encounter. On this account, the
world is something determined beyond what most citizens in a democracy,
certainly at least teachers, students and workers, may legitimately or realis-
tically transform. Within this predetermined world, the role of students as
future citizens and workers is that of conforming their existential aspirations
and expectations to those dictated by established labour market conditions,
the captains of industry and other political power brokers. This type of
message, whether conveyed to students implicitly or explicitly, is incon-
sistent with democratic learning because it undermines the right, or even
the obligation, of citizens in a genuine participatory democracy to entertain
progressive social change. Within a democratic context, students, as future

citizens, possess the inherent right to help shape the conditions of their work experience. This fundamental democratic right must be made abundantly clear to students in all discussions of lifelong learning in career education and elsewhere throughout the curriculum. To subvert this recognition clearly violates the third principle of democratic learning, promoting student understanding on the critically important distinction between social reality and natural reality.

Contemporary working conditions unfortunately include recurrent occupational displacement due to labour market volatility that undermines the job security of many workers in industrialized nations. The lifelong learning discourse consistent with human capital education is designed to ensure that students, as future workers, accept a passive role in dealing with the occupational uncertainty they confront within the new global economic order. Many career education programs, then, respond to contemporary labour market conditions by reducing lifelong learning to a discursive apparatus that directs students toward self-administered labour market adjustment. As Barrow and Keeney (2000) suggest, lifelong learning in public education has become little more than a rallying cry for industry to help answer the question: "Given the pace of technological change, the new information age and the globalization of trade, how can we be assured that we are producing competent and qualified workers who are prepared to meet the reality of the new economic order" (p. 191).

The World Bank represents another organization with a keen interest in the concept of lifelong learning. Although the World Bank's (2005) mission includes fighting poverty and improving the living standards of people in the developing world, it is also a bank in the sense that it provides loans, policy advice, technical assistance and shares knowledge with low and middle-income countries in an effort to reduce their international debt load. The World Bank also promotes economic growth to create jobs and, according to its mission, seeks to empower poor people to take advantage of various economic and labour market opportunities. Education policy development predictably provides one vehicle for the organization to achieve these objectives.

The World Bank is obviously not simply a "bank" in the traditional application of the term since its activities involve some overt measure of political and social activism. The organization represents one of the United Nations' specialized agencies and the interests of 184 member countries that are jointly responsible for how the institution is financed, operated, and how available money and other resources are ultimately spent. The World Bank (2005) focuses many of its efforts on achieving the Millennium Development Goals (United Nations, 2005) agreed to by UN

members in 2000 ostensibly aimed at sustainable development and poverty reduction.

The World Bank provides low-interest loans, interest-free credit, and simple grants to developing countries purportedly intended to improve the general quality of life of many citizens around the world. Since the world's low-income countries generally cannot borrow money on international markets or can only do so at extremely high interest rates, the World Bank offers these nations an available and affordable monetary supply. In addition to direct contributions and loans from developed countries, developing countries receive grants, interest-free loans, and technical assistance to enable them to provide basic services to their citizens.

Though repeatedly relied upon by impoverished governments around the world as a major contributor to their economic growth, the World Bank faces growing criticism from opponents of corporate-driven "neo-colonial" globalization who view the bank as a tool of corporate interest. Some critics of globalization such as Noam Chomsky (1999) blame the bank for undermining the national sovereignty of recipient countries through various structural adjustment programs that pursue economic liberalization in the form of neo-liberal policies. These policies include various free trade agreements that essentially tie the hands of nation states in the realm of international economic activity and domestic policy formation. Another important critique advanced by Chomsky maintains that the Bank is under the complete political influence of certain countries (most notably the US) that profit by advancing their own narrow economic political agendas through World Bank policies.

The World Bank openly operates under neo-liberal policies and principles that assume only the unrestricted market and competition can bring prosperity to developing nations. However, these neo-liberal reforms are clearly ineffective in many African nations experiencing political conflicts such as ethnic wars and border disputes, in those countries politically oppressed by dictatorships or colonization, and in countries lacking stable, democratic political systems. Many of these nations simply exploit cheap sources of labour to attract capital, with the financial return collected by a few politicians and developers. Hence, the wealth generated by World Bank involvement never reaches the general population. In situations where the World Bank favours the installation of foreign interests to manage economic affairs, the development of local economies and expertise also tends to get left out of the economic development picture (Chomsky, 1999).

In a manner similar to the UNESCO and the OECD, the World Bank (2004) endorses a concept of lifelong learning that advances certain assumptions about the need for workers to adapt, uncritically and passively, to

growing labour market volatility. From this narrow perspective, lifelong learning involves the constant upgrading of employability skills to make workers more responsive to contemporary labour market demands. The implicit ideological message, of course, is that workers adapt, but neo-liberal economies do not. The instrumental reasoning required to achieve this externally imposed objective is inconsistent with the rationality principle of democratic learning. By interfering with the historical understanding of students, that is, their appreciation for the role of human agency and politics in shaping history and social reality, the capacity of students to act as engaged and democratic citizens is correspondingly undermined. An education that falsely creates an ahistorical context through instrumental constructs of lifelong learning not only undermines student appreciation for the critical distinction between natural reality and social reality, but also on how citizens can democratically transform the latter.

A democratic model of lifelong learning encourages the intellectual, social, ethical and political engagement of students as agents of change throughout their entire life course. In sharp contrast to this position, the World Bank portrays lifelong learning in purely instrumental terms as a set of technical skills and competencies directed toward passive labour market adjustment. As we have argued, when social reality is naturalized to students in this fashion, their role becomes that of conforming to the material conditions that influence their lives rather than considering the possibility of progressive structural transformation. These instrumental learning practices may prepare students to meet the demands of industry, but they do not prepare them to become agents of democratic social change.

When the role of students is restricted to instrumental rationality, they learn that other individuals make the important decisions regarding the structure of society and the role of most citizens is limited to simply following a series of prescribed instructions. Obviously, this is a message with potentially devastating consequences for democratic citizenship and one that we believe is at least partly responsible for dangerously low levels of political participation within many democratic countries. Another problematic consequence of the widespread connection drawn between lifelong learning and labour market adjustment is the implication that education is only valuable when directly related to career preparation. This message undermines the importance of other educational objectives such as fostering democratic participation, promoting self-actualization, or encouraging political agency and social change.

Our review of the macro level policy developed by such organizations as the UNESCO and the World Bank raises considerable concerns with the current structure of career education policy. These groups, with their

primary focus on the instrumental adaptation of students to existing labour market conditions, fail to recognize the role of human agency in creating social change or transforming current working conditions through appropriate democratic avenues. The lack of appreciation revealed in these policies for human agency and democratic structural change underscores the importance of developing more concrete practices that respect the principles of democratic learning we outlined earlier in the chapter. We will now turn our examination to various international micro level career education and human capital policies and programs from Australia, the US and Canada to identify their respective strengths and weaknesses when compared against the principles of democratic learning.

3.3   International Micro Level Policy and Programs

In this section, we examine career education policies and programs from Australia, the US and Canada. These three nations, all members of the OECD, UNESCO and the World Bank, are representative of current career and vocational education trends among most industrialized countries. One of the most noticeable aspects of human capital and career education revealed through the analysis of international micro level policy and programs is their similarity to the initiatives emerging from organizations such as the OECD, UNESCO and the World Bank Group. These international organizations exert a significant influence over career education program development among their member countries. Similar to our analysis of the macro level policies in the previous section, we will examine these micro level policies and programs in light of the three principles of democratic learning identified earlier in the chapter.

In *Skilling Australia: New Directions for Vocational Education and Training* (Australian Government, 2005), the nation's Department of Education, Science and Training proposes, as the document's title suggests, a series of new directions for vocational education and training. Although vocational training is distinct from career education in that the former focuses on specific skill sets for particular trades rather than on generic employability skills, there is a strategic overlap between the two areas of human capital preparation. For example, this particular vocational education policy document emphasizes the importance of such competencies as lifelong learning, and stresses the importance of students acquiring employability skills. In the document's foreword, the Australian Minister for Vocational and Technical Education adopts the same familiar discourse of global competition and international economic success that pervades the macro level policy we previously examined: "Our vocational education and

training system has made an enormous contribution to Australia's economic success, Australian businesses need highly skilled, productive workers to compete even more successfully in the global market" (p. 4).

The introductory sections of this document cite an assumed cause and effect relationship between improved vocational education and Australia's supposedly declining unemployment rate. According to the document, Australia faced a 10% unemployment rate in 1992 while the current rate stands at 5.1%. Given the questionable methods commonly used to calculate these figures, however, it is far from certain that the quoted rates accurately reflect the number of individuals who cannot find employment in the country. In most industrialized countries, for example, the reported statistical data on jobless figures purposely exclude certain segments of the unemployed labour force. Apple (2003) points out that the lower unemployment rates reported by many nations, including the US, in support of neo-liberal policies follow from methods that limit the scope of the collected data:

Official unemployment rates in the United States appear lower only because the statistics do *not* include the extremely large numbers of people who are incarcerated in prisons and jails, the majority of whom are poor and persons of color. Factoring this in means at minimum the unemployment rate must rise by 2 percent. Thus, the production of official data by the state not only produces an economic reality that is decidedly "unreal" but it also makes invisible the hundreds of thousands of identifiable people whose lives and realities are expunged from the records of the classed and raced effects of the economy. (p. 10)

Unemployment statistics in other jurisdictions such as Canada similarly ignore the number of workers who have ceased looking for work, or neglect to include anyone not registered with national employment agencies. Such missing information must be revealed to understand the limited credibility of unemployment statistics and to evaluate effectively the practical impact of career and human capital education. When unemployment statistics are analyzed, then, it is essential to determine how the data is collected and what groups are excluded from the provided percentages.

Employment statistics such as those cited by the Australian Minister of Education also fail to provide information on the quality of national employment opportunities. The growing trend among all industrialized countries is toward low paying and low benefit work in the retail and service sectors, rather than quality high paying employment opportunities. Labour market projections in the United Kingdom, for example, indicate that small businesses, part-time work including clerical, selling, catering, cleaning, hairdressing, and personal services are the only job sectors where significant employment growth is anticipated (Keep & Mayhew, 1995). Over the past thirty years, European and North American countries, as well

as Australia and New Zealand, all have been transformed from industrial-based to increasingly low salaried service sector economies (Lipsig-Mumme, 1997).

Skilling Australia: New Directions for Vocational Education and Training includes what it describes as a series of "guiding principles" that provide the framework for future change in the area of work preparation. Some of these principles are quite revealing in illustrating the document's perceived role for both students as workers/citizens and the entire labour movement within a democratic society:

- Industry and business needs must drive training policies, priorities and deliveries;
- Industry and business directly influencing training policy and delivery – include a direct line of advice to the Ministerial Council overseeing the operation of the training system;
- Enabling industry and business to influence planning decisions – including through a clearly defined role for industry and business in developing the States' annual plans for training provision;
- Developing more flexible Training Package qualifications – explicitly incorporating "employability skills" and developing shared skill sets across industries to break down the silos in different industries' approaches to skills development. (p. 6)

The interests and expectations of business and industry ought to be represented in education and training programs intended to prepare students for the world or work. We absolutely agree that inclusion of these perspectives and genuine sensitivity to industry requirements are critical in designing meaningful and democratic career education programs. However, there are many other stakeholders outside of business and industry that deserve similar input into the design of contemporary human capital education.

To reiterate, we support fully the consultation with business and industry when designing vocational education in order to understand their educational needs and skill requirements. However, this particular document situates the human capital demands of private industry as the sole voice in shaping work-related education. By excluding the voices of other interest groups, such as those from the labour movement, an exceptionally narrow framework is provided through which students acquire the various understandings on what constitutes a meaningful vocational experience. The views of stakeholders primarily concerned with enhancing profit and protecting the interests of industry and business may not always be consistent with the best interests of either workers or a democratic society. We are not suggesting that democratically designed policy and programs should not consider the legitimate needs of business and industry, but in a democracy

no single sector of society ought to control the educational agenda related to work preparation. Indeed, the principles of democratic learning require providing students with alternative perspectives to ensure that all relevant voices are heard and considered.

Another salient concern with situating industry and business as the sole determiners of educational objectives in human capital and career preparation programs is that students may become passive citizens in the face corporate dictates. The discourse emanating from this and other similar documents reduces the role of students to that of complying with externally generated imperatives rather than evaluating those expectations on the basis of their own personal experiences, commitments and vocational aspirations. By situating the needs of industry and business ahead of those of workers and the labour movement, this policy document conveys implicit messages to students about who holds political power. The message received by students subjected to such programs is clear; the social and economic decisions that affect our lives are made entirely by those individuals holding positions of economic power and political authority rather than by workers.

Career education policies and programs that create these politically passive dispositions among students are inconsistent with the democratic learning requirements of entertaining alterative perspectives, respecting student rationality and understanding the critical distinction between social reality and natural reality. We therefore contend that vocational education policies and programs must include the perspectives and values of labour unions, environmentalists and anti-globalization experts to broaden the information students receive on contemporary vocational experience. These other voices should be included to ensure access to the broadest possible base of information on work-related issues and to ensure that career education remains a democratic learning experience.

The other guiding principle of *Skilling Australia: New Directions for Vocational Education and Training* that raises serious concern is the document's emphasis on "employability skills" (p. 6). As we have previously suggested, the widespread appeal of employability skills to employers and policy makers is easy to appreciate. Employability skills are generic and generally believed to apply across a range of occupations. Within current unstable labour market conditions, generic employability skills are thought to offer students and employers a significant training and vocational advantage because of their tremendous flexibility. Unfortunately, the entire employability skills discourse reflects a largely confused attempt to conflate different categories of academic and workplace competencies under a single heading. Serious education and democratic concerns arise when character

development objectives, cognitive competencies and job specific knowledge are conceptualized in this fashion.

In the area of character development, we previously pointed out that the employability skills discourse often cites objectives such as the need for students to develop a "positive attitude toward change" (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1995). This expectation provides an excellent example of why the principles of democratic learning – in this case the respect for student rationality – must be respected in character development in career education. From the standpoint of industry and business, workers who are willing to adapt to unstable workplace or labour market conditions without questioning these conditions offer a significant human capital advantage since they passively accept a vocational experience without any measure of occupational security. However, merely inculcating the view among students that occupational change ought to elicit a positive response is highly indoctrinatory and obviously anti-democratic. The rationality of students must be respected in all forms of moral education and this requires raising questions about the assumptions and implications of any proposed value or moral belief. For example, why should occupational change inevitably provoke a positive response from students, workers or citizens, especially if they are negatively affected, as many often are, by such a transition?

The employability skills discourse also ignores fundamental epistemic requirements regarding major cognitive competencies such as the ubiquitously demanded critical thinking and problem solving skills. These cognitive competencies are invariably dependent on specific knowledge about particular occupational domains and their generic application is, therefore, exceptionally limited. Educators might foster a transferable critical disposition in students, but learners must acquire significant knowledge about the subject matter in question. We will elaborate on this problem in Chapter Five and propose an intellectual virtue approach to critical thinking and problem solving for career education that capitalizes on the idea of transferable dispositions, but avoids the epistemic and conceptual errors present in the employability skills discourse.

Although we have identified numerous threats career education policy and programs pose to democratic learning thus far in our analysis, the story is not an entirely negative one. Occasionally, innovative and democratically minded curriculum developers design career preparatory programs that respect the principles of democratic learning. For example, in 1997 the Australian Capital Territory Department of Education and Training published the *Work Education Curriculum Support Paper* (Australian Government, 1997). This document outlines the various ways that secondary

level career education might be integrated across different curricular perspectives and subject areas. Generally speaking, we believe this policy document offers an excellent example, a prototype if you will, on how work-related experiences can be designed to respect democratic learning principles. The *Work Education Curriculum Support Paper* considers vocational preparation a broad educational approach to enrich the future work experience of students.

Rather than presenting work education in an ahistorical context that ignores the critical distinction between natural and social reality, this document encourages student analysis of the prevailing structural conditions that affect work. The policy also calls on educators to alert students to their potential impact on democratically shaping their vocational experience. For example, under the heading Critical Analysis and Challenging of Social Structures and Ideas, the document proposes the following pedagogical strategy: "Schools and teachers assist students in developing the skills to analyse critically the ways ideas are constructed and the practices and contexts that restrict effective participation in society of some groups. They learn to value and conserve as well as to work for constructive change" (p. 3). This pedagogical imperative reflects a dramatic shift in direction from that pursued by *Skilling Australia* where the social structure is presented as largely fixed and immutable. By encouraging this type of structural critique, the *Work Education Curriculum Support Paper* helps instil in students the democratic understanding that social change is a real possibility and they are active agents in the social construction of reality.

The power of discourse within career education policy documents and programs to shape and influence the ideas of teachers and students should not be underestimated. We are steeped in language and discourse impacts directly on our ability to frame, describe and transform the world we experience. The employability skills discourse in career and vocational education adopts an ahistorical perspective on labour market, economic, and social conditions that conveys powerful messages to students about both human agency and social change. The human capital discourse establishes artificial parameters on the boundaries of social reality by circumscribing transformative possibilities within the bounds of neo-liberal ideology. These ideological messages interfere with democratic learning by failing to promote student understanding that change and progress are critical components of democratic societies. By encouraging students to analyze the structures and ideas that form the foundation of contemporary Australian society, the *Work Education Curriculum Support Paper* avoids this undemocratic outcome by providing teachers and students with a clearer understanding of democratic citizenship roles, responsibilities and possibilities.

The Australian *Work Education Curriculum Support Paper* also encourages teachers and students to "critically consider the gender and social construction of work" while simultaneously advocating the development of "those personal, technical and social skills which enhance their performance as workers" (p. 6). We believe that this strategy is entirely consistent both with the principles of democratic learning and with the needs of private sector stakeholders who require workers with certain types of technical knowledge and understanding. The career education we reject is the instrumental approach that undermines democratic learning by refusing to acknowledge the social construction of working conditions recognized by this progressive Australian policy document. There is much to learn from the *Work Education Curriculum Support Paper* regarding its respect for the principles of democratic learning and the document reveals considerable sensitivity to many of the concerns we raise in this book.

The design of career and vocational education in Canada parallels that pursued by most other industrialized countries. One of the more striking aspects of contemporary curriculum patterns within the Province of Ontario involves the linkages between all subject areas and work-related objectives. In art education, a subject where a reasonable effort ought to be made to promote the aesthetic sense of students as a critical element in personal, intellectual and emotional development, the primary focus is instead on the practical job applications of learning outcomes; "Students can be encouraged to explore careers as artists, technicians, or arts administrators" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999a, n.p.). Although we anticipate that some limited number of art students may find eventual employment in one or more of these areas, we are concerned that linking disciplines such as art education to career learning undermines the non-vocational aspects of a balanced and democratic learning experience. Work is obviously an important element of life experience, but this portion of our lives should be balanced with more esoteric pursuits and humanizing objectives, and students should not be encouraged to view career applications as the most important or sole objective of all learning experiences.

The Province of Ontario's *Business Studies* curriculum is designed to "help prepare students for employment in such diverse areas as small-business creation, marketing, management, accounting, government service, and international business" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999b, n.p.). The curriculum is designed to afford students in grades nine and ten with a general understanding of how industry operates and provide them with employability skills ranging from keyboarding to critical thinking. Similar to many of the documents we have reviewed, there is a complete absence of discussion in this program about the role and rights of labour and women

in shaping Canadian business and industry. Whereas some members of the Australian government appear sensitive to the concerns of labour and women, there is a consistent pattern of neglecting these perspectives in the design of Canadian and US career and vocational education programs. A curriculum that respects the principles of democratic learning must include alternative and competing perspectives on subjects and issues, and most North American programs, as we illustrate below, require significant revision to meet this requirement.

Another major concern we have with career related curricula exemplified in this document, and one we have noted in our previous analyses, is the problematic reduction of critical thinking to a so-called skill. From an epistemological standpoint, when critical thinking is reduced to some generic mental process, or skill, the fundamental importance of background knowledge to facilitate subject specific reflection is correspondingly ignored. This means students are mistakenly instructed that some nebulous and illusive cognitive "skill" is widely applicable regardless of context or subject matter. Conceptually, of course, the term "skill" best denotes mastery over physical activities (Barrow, 1987) such as swimming or dribbling a basketball that can be perfected through proper practice. When the term is employed to describe mental processes it carries much of the conceptual baggage from this more traditional and appropriate use, and, hence, promotes the misconception that cognitive "skills" can be mastered through some form of practice in a manner similar to physical ones.

When educators speak of critical thinking or other cognitive competencies as skills they promote misguided assumptions that suggest mental processes, analogous to physical ones, can be perfected through some form of generic practice in the absence of specific subject knowledge and understanding. At best, the critical thinking skills discourse promotes a misguided pedagogy that is unable to achieve its intended objective of creating students who make informed and reflective judgments. At worst, this widespread misunderstanding potentially encourages students to make hasty judgments regarding complex issues and questions about which they possess far too little knowledge and understanding.

In 1983 the Canadian Province of Quebec introduced the secondary school curriculum *Career Choice Education*, a program according to its developers that is, "based on a new conception of the pupil, a new philosophy of psycho-education, and a redefinition of the role and aims of education and vocational information" (Quebec Ministry of Education, 1983, p. 3). Although this program is being presently phased out, these claims amount to a mere distraction from what is simply a reproduction of other career education programs and a recycling of antiquated educational ideas. In fact,

the entire rationale for the program is copied almost verbatim from the narrative advanced by the World Bank and the OECD on the inevitably changing nature of labour market conditions: "Pupils today are facing an increasingly complex and constantly changing working world" (p. 5). Once again, the dominant discursive themes expect students to adjust or adapt to the dynamic world around them. There is no mention of possible labour market transformation by students as future citizens, and only a brief passing reference to the role of labour unions and workers in shaping the occupational environment.

The generic employability skill discourse we criticize above dominates the introductory preamble in *Career Choice*, as does the perpetual expectation that students will subvert their existential plans to comport with industry demands and expectations: "Schools must provide the pupil with knowledge of his own self and of the educational and occupational environment, and with certain cognitive skills and attitudes that will enable him to complete the tasks required by society" (p. 5). Students are implicitly expected to relinquish their unique personal pursuits based on existential interests and capacities and, instead, become objects in the functional preparation of workers for a fixed social order. These expectations, based on functionalist social assumptions, are inconsistent with the principles of democratic learning because they undermine the idea of the student, worker and citizen as an agent of democratic social change in pursuit of self-actualization. Further, the claim that an individual may get to "know oneself" assumes that students possess some static essential identity rather than viewing learners as dynamic beings capable of intellectual, emotional and vocational growth. The idea of getting to "know oneself" also ignores the various structural and ideological forces that operate to construct personal identities and shape entire worldviews.

In light of its theme of "choice," the Quebec document's absolute lack of discussion about democracy is especially disconcerting. The absence of such a dialogue is revealed in the program's assumptions about student participation in directing social change through formal and informal political processes. Under the heading Conception of Society, for example, the document fails to mention civic, community or political participation as primary social goods. The authors of *Career Choice Education* also claim, without any supporting argumentation or evidence, that, "the occupational role is the most important role an individual can play, the most difficult to prepare for, and the most demanding" (p. 11). This claim is obviously problematic on a variety of fronts since it ignores the valuable contributions to society of other critical roles such as parenting, care giving, and active political and civic participation. Once again, the

recurrent theme suggests that work trumps all other human experiences, including the fading promise that education itself is intrinsically valuable and rewarding.

Given the pervasive international influence of organizations such as the OECD and UNESCO, it is unsurprising that US career education and human capital preparation programs mimic many of the same trends we have previously identified in this chapter. US programs in career and vocational education have been significantly influenced by the *Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills* (SCANS, US Department of Labor, 1990). This research group, funded by the federal government, was established to bridge contemporary labour market conditions with career-related study. One section of SCANS, Identifying and Describing the Skills Required by Work, underscores the need for enhanced career preparation in public schools by repeating the empirically unfounded claim that workers lack the necessary technical preparation for employment in the new global economy. As we pointed out earlier in the chapter, this position is based on fallacious assumptions that ignore the reality of present occupational trends moving toward low paying and low skilled work in the retail and service sectors.

SCANS solicits the views of corporate and business leaders to direct its planning on what skills ought to be taught students to prepare them for the contemporary world of work. This approach parallels that adopted in other countries, including Canada, where the Conference Board of Canada's (1992) Employability Skills Profile pursued a similar strategy to identify the skills most sought after by industry. In fact, Motorola "University," championed by SCANS as a panacea to the problem of employment preparation, represents the primary resource in identifying the employment skills included in the document. The authors of SCANS cite the university's observation that, "Not only must workers do multiple tasks, they must do them well" (p. 5) as the foundation on which to build successful career education programs. Further, the same underlying assumption that weaves its way through virtually all of the policies and programs we have reviewed in this chapter is also adopted by SCANS. The increased competition of the global economy demands greater worker flexibility and productivity in the workplace. Once again, the entire onus is placed on workers to adjust to these conditions rather than pressuring government and/or business to create a healthier and more stable working environment through domestic and international policy reform.

The SCANS report commits a number of the same conceptual and epistemological errors as the previously reviewed programs. For example, the serious misunderstanding about the relationship between problem

solving/critical thinking and content knowledge is reflected in the following narrative:

> Most K-12 education and work-based training programs operate on the false assumption that skills are building blocks. But people need not "learn the basics" or "first things first" before they learn specific technical and problem solving skills. In training production workers to handle a new production process, we often assume that they need to learn discrete facts about the process before they can begin to deal with the more complex problems surrounding it. (US Department of Labor, 1990, p. 7)

The conceptualization of problem solving as some generic skill is profoundly misguided from an epistemological perspective. At the most fundamental level, the ability to solve any problem requires knowledge related to the difficulty at hand and is inevitably linked to a particular occupational context. A worker at a nuclear power plant who averts a radiation catastrophe by employing certain procedural steps is obviously ill prepared to resolve an unexpected dilemma that occurs during a complicated neurosurgical procedure. As we have suggested, the identification of problem solving and critical thinking as generic employability skills may be rhetorically satisfying but is pedagogically misguided and practically worthless.

Similar to many of the policies and documents we have reviewed, SCANS also blurs the important distinction between personal characteristics, or values, and skills. For example, the document lists a range of attitudes, values and other personal qualities under the category of Effective Skills. This type of category error seriously undermines the moral reasoning central to democratic learning by suggesting to students that certain values can be abstracted from context or justification, and simply disseminated in the same way that propositional knowledge or physical skills might be taught. The moral education consistent with democratic learning is distinct from moral indoctrination on the grounds that the former encourages student critique of the very values it proposes. Not only is moral reasoning a fundamental requirement for democratic learning, its presence is necessary for students to internalize the discussed values into a coherent and enduring ethical belief system.

Perhaps the most striking element of SCANS is the exclusion of any individual or group representing the US labour movement, any critic of neo-liberal economic policies and practices, or even some advocate of workers' rights within a democratic society among its long list of so-called experts. The document is drafted entirely by individuals sympathetic to the needs and wants of industry without concern for the democratic principles of learning. It is worth reiterating that we are not suggesting these perspectives and expectations should be ignored – quite the contrary. However, in democratic

learning, and in a democracy more generally, it is critical that different perspectives are included among the voices shaping the curriculum, and that these contrasting viewpoints are evaluated by teachers and students in the classroom. Simply expecting students to accept the difficult impact of neo-liberalism and economic globalization on their vocational lives in the absence of any alternative discourse is democratically unacceptable. A democratic classroom in career education will include discussions about environmental concerns, sustainable development, labour unions, labour market alternatives, and consider the views of those individuals and groups who reject a monolithic worldview based on global capitalism and neo-liberal assumptions.

To illustrate the similarity between micro level curricula among most industrialized countries it is helpful to review briefly some of the previously identified themes present in various US state documents on career education. In Kentucky (Kentucky Department of Education, 2005), for example, the state standards for secondary career and technical education programs comply with the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act 1998 (US Department of Education, 1998). The Perkins Act defines vocational-technical education as organized programs that offer course sequences designed to prepare students for employment in current or emerging occupations. The programs based on the Perkins Act purportedly include competency-based applied learning that contributes to academic knowledge, higher-order reasoning, problem solving skills, and the employability skills necessary for economic independence as a productive and contributing member of society. The problematic concept of employability skills, then, pervades the career education discourse within the US in a manner similar to virtually all other industrialized nations.

Similar themes are revealed in New Jersey's Core Curriculum Standards for Career Education and Consumer, Family, and Life Skills. In particular, the document's rationale closely mirrors the rationale for career and vocational education espoused by the OECD and UNESCO. The New Jersey document also promotes the functionalist view of society that implicitly commands students to accept the prevailing social structure by conforming to structural expectations:

Rapid societal changes, including innovations in technology, information exchange, and communications, have increased the demand for internationally competitive workers and for an educational system designed to meet that demand. Today's students will be employed through much of the twenty-first century and will, therefore, need increasingly advanced levels of knowledge and skills. To obtain and retain high wage employment that provides job satisfaction, they will also need to continue to learn throughout their lives. (New Jersey Department of Education, 2001, p. 1)

There are a number of claims in the above quotation inconsistent with the principles and practices of democratic learning. Like so many of the other policies and curricular documents we have reviewed in this chapter, students are commanded to conform their expectations to meet the prevailing economic and labour market conditions as if these conditions were beyond the scope of possible transformation. There is absolutely no mention of democratically transforming society to ameliorate the described conditions, some of which clearly impact deleteriously on the quality of vocational experience. Consistent with the other documents reviewed in this chapter, the idea of lifelong learning is once again directly linked to occupational readjustment rather than described as an educational requirement for personal, social and vocational growth. This deterministic view of society is not only anti-democratic, but also inconsistent with some of the other educational policies developed during the same period and by the same organizations in civic education. We will briefly examine some of these more progressive and democratic policies from current citizenship education to consider what they might contribute to restructuring career education along far more democratic lines.

3.4   Lessons from Civic Education

Since the mid 1980s there has been an explosion of interest in citizenship and citizenship education around the democratic – and, in some cases, the not so democratic – world (Torney-Purta, Schwille & Amadeo, 1999; Kymlicka & Opalski, 2001; Banks, 2004). Many national jurisdictions including all the ones reviewed above, Australia, the US, and Canada, have launched significant initiatives in the field. International organizations such as UNESCO and the Council of Europe (International Bureau of Education, 1994; UNESCO, 1995) have also demonstrated growing interest in citizenship education. Indeed, 2005 was designated the "European Year of Citizenship Through Education" by the Council of Europe (Council of Europe, 2005).

Similar to developments in career education, the growing interest in civic education was largely a response to perceived critical deficits in the field (Sears & Hyslop-Margison, 2006). An interesting contrast, however, is the difference in approach between career and citizenship education with regard to respecting the principles of democratic learning: respect for human rationality; the presentation of alternative views; and appreciating the difference between social and natural reality.

We recognize that what happens in classrooms is often very different from policy statements, but at least some contemporary civic education policies around the world view students as rational beings who construct knowledge, are rooted in building understandings of alternatives views of the world and alternative models of social organization, and seek to foster a sense of political agency in students. These policies, at least at the level of theory, offer a startling contrast to those in career education we describe above. We will not explore these policies in the same detail as those in career education but we will merely highlight a few of the best examples to illustrate current educational understanding on the teaching and learning practices that might effectively prepare a fully engaged democratic citizen.

In 1995 The General Conference of UNESCO endorsed the *Declaration and Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy* that was adopted at the General Conference on Education a year earlier (UNESCO, 1995). Rather than positing global trends including increasing xenophobia, violence, and disparity between wealthy and poor countries as inevitable processes to which citizens much adapt, the *Declaration* emphasizes the importance of social change. It calls for education that will "promote knowledge, values, attitudes and skills conducive to respect for human rights and to active commitment to the defense of such rights and to the building of a culture of peace and democracy" (UNESCO, 1995, p. 4).

Rather than regarding society and social conditions as fixed and students as empty receptacles into which knowledge is poured, that is, the banking model of education, the Ministers of Education from participating countries declared that citizens must be prepared to "cope with difficult and uncertain situations, and [prepared] for personal autonomy and responsibility" (UNESCO, 1995, p. 9). In other words, UNESCO contends that student rationality in the promotion of autonomy needs to be respected and fostered in the face of difficult structural conditions.

Consistent with our own arguments above, the Ministers see the presentation of alternative viewpoints and the depiction of social reality as contextual and contingent, rather than fixed, as a critical and necessary requirement of democratic education:

Education must develop the ability to recognize and accept the values which exist in the diversity of individuals, genders, peoples and cultures and develop the ability to communicate, share and cooperate with others. The citizens of a pluralist society and a multicultural world should be able to accept that their interpretation of situations and problems is rooted in their personal lives, in the history of their society and in their cultural traditions; that, consequently, no individual or group holds the only answer to problems; and that for each problem there must be more than one solution. (UNESCO, 1995, p. 9)

Contemporary civic education programs developed by various UN agencies consistently focus on fluid and contested issues, present multiple view points and emphasize the fact that citizens, including young ones, acting alone and in association with others can and should shape the world for the better (UNICEF, 2005).

   Similar to career education there is an inconsistent design of civic education policy across various democratic jurisdictions. In some countries students are viewed as active constructors of knowledge, with a curriculum focus on the development of understanding and respect for alternative perspectives and worldviews. In other jurisdictions, as we pointed out in Chapter One, there is an unfortunately narrow construal of citizenship that advocates social compliance and cohesion. Some of the more democratically progressive documents suggest student agency is the desired end of civic education. Australia, for example, has poured millions of dollars into civic education programs since the early 1990s culminating in the development of a national program called *Discovering Democracy*. The Federal Minister of Education, Brendan Nelson (2005), makes it clear that the program's goal is to develop citizens who are knowledgeable about Australia's current system of government, how those structures came to be as a result of the work of historical agents, challenges to the system from marginalized groups such as Aborigines, and to create students who are disposed and able to take their place in the ongoing shaping of Australian society and government. In fact, the program adopts a decidedly constructivist approach to teaching and learning in citizenship education including:

- The use of focused inquiry including investigation, communication and participation;
- The use of historical narrative in students' critical thinking about past and present-day issues;
- Analysis and interpretation of primary and secondary source material including written texts, pictorial images, statistical tables, graphs and maps;
- Building on students' existing knowledge, skills, values and interests;
- Use of evidence in support of a particular perspective;
- Presentation of different interpretations of people, events and traditions;
- Active citizenship approaches both at school and in the community (Curriculum Corporation, 2005).

   In the US a report titled *The Civic Mission of Schools* has been seminal in focusing national work in the area of civic education (Carnegie Corporation of New York, & CIRCLE: Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement, 2003). The report maps out a series of goals for

civic education that include fostering the abilities to think critically about contemporary issues seeing them in both historical and cultural context, considering diverse points of view, acting politically "to accomplish public purposes," and believing "in the capacity to make a difference" (Carnegie Corporation of New York, & CIRCLE: Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement, 2003, p. 4).

Sears and Hughes (1996) conducted a survey of policy and curricula in civic education across Canada, and found official policy in the area heavily weighted toward the active end of the continuum we identified in Chapter Two: "Officially at least, good Canadian citizens are seen as people who are: knowledgeable about contemporary society and the issues it faces; disposed to work toward the common good; supportive of pluralism; and skilled at taking action to make their communities, nation and world a better place for all people" (Sears & Hughes, 1996, pp. 133-134). The orientation of the more enlightened Canadian civic education policy, then, is toward developing rational, autonomous agents who can and will participate with others in shaping and reshaping their societies. This is the approach that career education should pursue in order to respect the principles of democratic learning we identified earlier in this chapter.

Civic agency is at the very heart of recent initiatives in British Columbia (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2005), Alberta (Alberta Education, 2005) and Ontario (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005). For example, in the fall of 2005 British Columbia introduced a new civics course in grade 11 that includes the following key goal: "students will learn to become active citizens and responsible agents of change" (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 12). In the course students study what are termed "model citizens" including "Norman Bethune, Frank A. Calder, Craig Kielburger, Nellie McClung, Roy Miki, [and] Rosa Parks" (p. 35) with an aim to understanding the ways in which these people have become politically engaged to shape their societies.

Central to the British Columbia civics course is a required "Civic Action" component intricately connected to the other three components: "Skills and Processes of Civic Studies," "Informed Citizenship," and "Civic Deliberation." Throughout the entire course teachers introduce examples of "the types of civic action students could choose including organizing a demonstration, letter-writing or petition campaign, an advertising campaign, or participation in an existing organization" (p. 60). Individually or in groups, students are asked to identity an issue, assess the issue in terms of the civic components involved (who are the players? what are the different available views on the issue? what are the range of options available for addressing it?), make a plan for addressing it, carry out the plan, and reflect on the

entire process once it has been completed. Again, the underlying assumption
in these programs is that students can and should act as citizens in shaping
the social world.

We could provide more examples but our point on this issue is clear.
In the same jurisdictions where career education programs are presenting
an ahistorical view of social and economic circumstances and portraying
students as passive adapters to those conditions, the most progressive
programs in civic education are based on the assumption that those same
conditions and trends are the result of human decisions and activity.
Further, the programs recognize that educated citizens can and ought to
subject prevailing social and economic conditions to re-examination and,
where necessary, work democratically to improve them. It is almost as if
policy in these two areas has been developed in distinct universes with no
contact between policy planners, when, in fact, the contradictory work has
been completed within the same organizations and the same ministries of
education.

We argue that the obvious disconnect between policies in these two
areas, perhaps driven by different economic and political agendas, makes
no sense for the following reasons. First of all, it makes no sense in terms of
coherent approaches to education. It seems to us that regarding learners as
rational beings capable of engaging with others in constructing knowledge
and able to act on that knowledge in new and insightful ways in one
classroom, only to send them down the school corridor to another class
where they will be treated as passive receptacles for the received wisdom of
adults is pedagogically confused. These are mutually exclusive approaches
to teaching and learning that send mixed messages to our students about the
value of their political voice and they ought not to exist within the same
educational system. We believe that the policy approach evident in the most
progressive civic education programs is the one to adopt in career education.
Hence, we concur with the Ministers of Education from UNESCO when they
observed that, "Strategies relating to peace, human rights and democracy
must be applicable to all levels, types, and forms of education" (UNESCO,
1995, p. 10).

Second, we reject any notion, implicit or explicit, that the economy is
somehow part of natural reality and therefore beyond the scope of civic
engagement. Economic systems, like any other social or political system, are
shaped by human decisions and activities and, as we have argued throughout
this text, can be reshaped by the very same mechanisms. Students need to
be prepared to act as active democratic citizens in their workplaces just as
they do in all other areas of their lives. Bellah and his colleagues express
the dangers of separating work from other areas of life, arguing that in the

contemporary US "the citizen has been swallowed up in economic man. When economics is the main model for our common life, we are more and more tempted to put ourselves in the hands of the manager and the expert" (Bellah, Masden, Sullivan, Swidler & Tipton, 1986, p. 271). They argue instead for the idea of *public work* (Boyte & Kari, 1996) that holds, similar to other areas of life, vocational experience needs to become a site for the practice of citizenship both in terms of what different kinds of work contribute to the common good and workers acting as agents who shape both the nature and objectives of the work they do. In our view, career education ought to prepare students to exercise just this sort of agency and use the most promising expertise from citizenship education as a prototypical model on which to draw.

3.5   Summary

As presently designed, many career education policies and programs are inconsistent with the principles of democratic learning that create informed, reflective and politically empowered workers and citizens. These principles are designed to ensure career and work-related education respects student rationality, broadens their information base, and fosters their political agency. We believe the need to develop more democratic career education is obvious after reviewing the current initiatives in the area. However, as illustrated in the Australian Government's *Work Education Curriculum Support Paper* and in certain citizenship education initiatives, some valuable policy and program development is sensitive to the concerns we have expressed. In Chapter Four, we will offer a conceptual framework to democratize career education programs by providing a range of epistemological orientations and pedagogical approaches that respect the principles of democratic learning we have outlined in this chapter.

CHAPTER 4

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR DEMOCRATIC LEARNING

4. INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Three we discussed the general fundamental principles of democratic learning and considered a variety of ways that contemporary human capital education policy and curricula from the US, Australia and Canada potentially undermine their practice. In the final two chapters we will outline in increasingly greater detail some of the philosophies, epistemologies and practical strategies for human capital and career education that promote democratic learning practices.

We begin the present chapter by defending the student-centred elements of progressive education as essential components of democratic learning in education against a range of contemporary attacks. Progressivism and student-centred learning practices have been recently on the receiving end of concerted challenges from conservative critics such as Dianne Ravitch, E. D. Hirsch, Kieran Egan and a number of contemporary character education proponents for being pedagogically ineffective, conceptually confused and morally bankrupt. While we share Egan's concerns regarding the confusions present in some of progressive education's more popular concepts, we also believe the criticisms advanced by these attacks uniformly neglect the democratic dispositions achieved through the student-centred practices of progressive education. Hence, we will argue in this chapter that the character outcomes of progressive education provide essential ingredients in education programs designed to foster participatory democratic citizenship among students.

We will also explore in Chapter Four the constructivist classroom practices that create the dispositions among students required to meet the

agency requirements of meaningful democratic citizenship. The dispositions forged through progressive and constructivist learning approaches contribute to the critical engagement of learners and are therefore consistent with the democratic principles of learning we identified in Chapter Three. We explore different constructivist learning approaches and consider what each might contribute to a democratically structured career education classroom. Finally, we discuss the importance of epistemic orientation in creating a democratic classroom and propose an internalist epistemology to promote critical dispositions and knowledge ownership among career education students. Internalism requires knowing agents to possess an explanatory understanding of their various truth claims rather than relying on information provided by some external authority.

4.1   Progressive Education and Democratic Learning

Progressive education was founded on the promise of democratic social progress envisioned by Dewey and other socially concerned educators of his period. The movement has always had its critics – some of whom we will discuss later in this chapter – but recent conservative attacks on progressivism have gained a disturbing momentum in contemporary scholarship. Progressivism is presently under attack by noted scholars such as Dianne Ravitch, Kieran Egan and E. D. Hirsch as the major cause of low academic achievement and growing social stratification. Recently, and within the US in particular, some proponents of character education have added to this criticism by blaming John Dewey and progressive education for the general moral decline in American schools and society (Davis, 2003; Smagorinsky & Taxel, 2005). In this section we defend progressivism's student-centred learning practices against these charges based on their consistency with the principles of democratic learning we outlined in Chapter Three.

Ravitch attacks student-centred learning strategies as self-indulgent and lacking the required academic rigour and assessment procedures that she believes are necessary to afford students a quality academic experience. Hirsch regards progressive education practices as even more whimsical, suggesting they reflect an unrealistic romantic retreat into the model of childhood learning espoused by 18th century French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau. In *Getting It Wrong From The Beginning: Our Progressivist Inheritance From Herbert Spencer, Jean Piaget and John Dewey*, Egan (2002) challenges the developmental learning assumptions adopted by Piaget and Dewey, and highlights the confusion surrounding concepts such as active learning, rote learning and natural learning. Although some of the points Egan raises identify legitimate concerns about certain conceptual

confusions, an unfortunately widespread problem within education, he unfortunately ignores the democratic dispositions promoted by the student-centred practices of progressive education. Contrary to the views of Ravitch, Hirsch and Egan, we believe the pedagogical strategies based on progressive education can play a central role in democratically designed classrooms.

The beginning of the progressive education movement can be traced to the later portion of the nineteenth century, a period that witnessed a major shift in thinking about public education. It was a historical period precipitated by sweeping economic and social changes in the US: "Scholars trace the origin of the movement to three main figures: John Mayer Rice, Lester Frank Ward, and most commonly John Dewey. However, progressive education was inaugurated in the 1870s with the work of Colonel Francis Parker" (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubman, 1995, p. 103). Although Parker may have founded the movement, John Dewey rapidly became its iconic spokesman with his view that public education classrooms should become, above all other schooling objectives, "laboratories for democracy".

The rapid industrial development and growing urban population during the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries led to a vision of universal schooling as the best available means to address the range of social problems predictably related to these structural changes. The period was so dynamic in its influence on schooling reform that educational historian Lawrence Cremin (1962) describes the 1890s as a revolutionary decade for American public education. Although schools were increasingly viewed as the ideal institution to address social and economic problems, there was no general consensus on what particular education practices would prove most effective in meeting this aim. The resulting disagreements, most often between social efficiency and social equality advocates, were the direct result of competing visions on the role of public schooling within an industrialized democratic society. Social efficiency proponents such as David Snedden viewed schools as institutions whose primary responsibility was preparing students for predetermined social and vocational conditions. Social equality advocates such as John Dewey, on the other hand, believed schools offered the means to create engaged citizens who understood society as a dynamic and democratic process, and sought to improve it through public education.

In the US, then, progressivism began as a political movement in response to the nation's transformation from a country of small, independent farmers and trades people to one of employees and consumers subject to rapidly increasing corporate influence (Cremin, 1962). The industrialization of the late nineteenth and twentieth-centuries not only contributed to national wealth, but also created social and educational problems, many of them immediate and extremely serious. For example, increased immigration

during the period exacerbated the demographic shift toward rapid urban
population growth and the corresponding rise in poverty. Many of these
new residents, arriving with little more than the clothes on their back, were
in desperate need of the basic knowledge and skills afforded by schools to
facilitate their entry into American society.

The industrialization of the US economy created a range of other new
challenges for public education. Industrialization required immense amounts
of capital and American investors used this opportunity to increase their
wealth by offering financial support to industrial developers. The financial
return on these investments created tremendous concentrations of personal
wealth, but also severely aggravated class stratification by leaving a growing
segment of the US population without meaningful political input (Cremin,
1962; Hofstader, 1963). Political influence became increasingly dependent
on financial and class standing, and the shift toward Plato's feared oligarchy
gained considerable momentum. With its emphasis on social progress and
equality of opportunity, progressive education offered a sanguine response
to these conditions and, as Cremin (1962) points out, "began as part of a
vast humanitarian effort to apply the promise of American life – the ideal
of government by, of, and for the people – to the puzzling new urban
civilization that came into being during the latter half of the nineteenth-
century" (p. viii). It was not simply an educational movement, then, but a
decidedly social, political and moral one as well.

In *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms*, Dianne Ravitch
(2000) blames contemporary student-centred practices based on progressive
education ideals such as individual assessments and collaborative learning
for the general decline in US academic achievement compared against
international test scores. Like so many other critics of contemporary US
education, however, Ravitch fails to acknowledge that international quanti-
tative measures of literacy and math do not accurately capture the radically
distinct educational challenges confronting public schools in different
countries. For example, in a small culturally homogeneous nation such as
Finland, a country that typically scores exceptionally well on international
academic tests, the educational challenges are fundamentally different from
those in the US where as many as forty different languages are spoken
in some urban schools. To place the two countries in direct academic
comparison ignores their respective cultural contexts and challenges, and
draws unfair conclusions regarding the general quality of students, teachers
and education.

Ravitch, former assistant secretary of education under the exceptionally
conservative Reagan administration, also blames student-centred learning
practices for the economic inequality within American society. As we have

pointed out previously, progressivism at least partially developed in response to growing class divisions within the US, and we consider her claim on this point, at best, historically incorrect and, at worst, intellectually disingenuous. This type of unjustified attack on progressive education, especially from an educational historian of considerable intellectual stature who simply knows better, raises genuine concerns about the attempted ideological manipulation of public opinion. The misinformation contained in such assertions is ideological because it deflects public attention from the educational implications of a class based, racially discriminatory and widely inequitable American society, blaming teachers and teaching methods instead. It also provides an excuse to avoid the political and economic action required to address the problem of social inequality that leads to unequal academic outcomes among American students.

The Progressive Education Association (PEA), organized in the spring of 1919, sought to advance progressive views of education as a means to advance social progress. The term "progressive" was chosen by the association to emphasize its commitment to achieve social progress through public education. Generally speaking, progressive educators supported classroom experimentation, but the goals and practices they pursued were actually quite dissimilar. For example, progressive education included the following ideas and practices: 1) children should have the freedom to learn naturally; 2) teachers should not be task masters but facilitators; 3) physical and mental development should be studied scientifically and taken into account in the organization of schools; 4) a child's learning and development is affected by the context; 5) progressive schools and teachers should lead educational reform (Altenbaugh, 2003, p. 192; Cremin, 1962, pp. 243-245). These various imperatives also reveal the two competing strands of progressive education. On one hand, progressivism advocated the primary role of the student in shaping the educational and classroom experience while, on the other, the movement emphasized the role of science, particularly in the area of cognitive development, in determining learner potential and directing learning experiences (Hyslop-Margison & Richardson, 2005).

The initial progressive reforms introduced into US schools between 1890-1914 reflected deep-rooted and competing visions on the preferred structure of public education. These competing visions were especially evident in debates about the desired role and purpose of vocationally related study. Some high profile educators such as David Snedden and Charles Prosser promoted the *social efficiency* objectives of progressivism that sought social change through an education based on scientific principles that promoted instrumental reasoning and viewed social stratification as the natural outcome of biologically inherited intellectual

differences (Hyslop-Margison & Richardson, 2005). Consistent with con-servative thinking about education, the social efficiency strand of progress-ivism stressed bureaucratic order, scientism, accountability, and standardized assessment within traditional teacher-centred classrooms. From this scientific progressive education perspective, one that has tragically and almost completely engulfed contemporary education, science and scien-tific principles provided the best available means to enhance the quality of schooling for all American students.

The other strand of early progressivism was infused with a broad based *liberal humanism*, a perspective reflected most notably in the views of Colonel Parker and John Dewey, where the ultimate goal of education was to improve the general human condition by increasing economic equality and strengthening the ideals of a democratic society. From this viewpoint, classroom instruction should be student-centred to promote the political voice of all children and prepare them for active citizenship within a democratic society. It is this latter liberal humanist strand that we see as fundamental to promoting democratic learning in career education and elsewhere throughout the curriculum. The goal of education, Dewey (1900) argues in *The School and Society*, is encouraging students to discuss, plan and effect progressive social change by working together as a community. He suggests that education programs lacking this collaborative and trans-formative dimension produce egocentric individuals unable to fulfill the basic cooperative and reflective requirements of democratic living. The contemporary critics of progressive education often fail to recognize, or perhaps choose to ignore, the important distinction between the scientific and humanist approaches of the movement.

The calls for public school restructuring gained momentum in the 1920s as the multiple economic changes after World War I transformed the American social landscape. There was also a growing appreciation among some progressive educators during this period on the important connection between the structure of education and participatory democratic citizenship (Hyslop-Margison & Richardson, 2005). Lois Meek (1930), child study researcher at Teachers College, Columbia University, observed that: "The World War, automobiles, airplanes, radios, prohibition, women suffrage, congested cities, subways, jazz, talkies, rouge and lipstick, short skirts, women's smoking are only a few of the things that have helped to change our lives these last two decades" (p. 457). These changes altered student experiences and expectations, and influenced curriculum decisions to prepare students who were emotionally and epistemologically equipped to participate fully and democratically within a modernized social order (Hyslop-Margison & Richardson, 2005; Krug, 1972).

Although the contemporary critics of progressive education we identify choose to ignore the evidence, presumably because it does not support their particular line of criticism, an empirical study conducted in the 1930s suggested that student-centred learning was more pedagogically effective than lecture style classroom approaches. The most recognized PEA sponsored project during this period was the Eight-Year Study completed between 1933 and 1941. The Eight Year Study was a longitudinal national project designed to potentially transform the high school from an institution focused on traditional academic curricula to one with a more popular, democratic and socially oriented mission (Hyslop-Margison & Richardson, 2005; Lipka, 1998; Raubinger, 1969).

Wilford M. Aiken, headmaster of the John Burrough School in St. Louis, vehemently opposed the conventional admission policies required for college entrance on the grounds they were discriminatory and unnecessarily eliminated capable students from lower income brackets. He brought his complaint forward to the PEA on April 19, 1930 and the association agreed to strike a committee to investigate the problem. By 1933, 250 colleges were identified that were willing to admit students who did not meet the necessary academic qualifications. Thirty city systems of secondary education also agreed to participate in the project by admitting students with traditional credentials and some with unconventional qualifications to a longitudinal study (Hyslop-Margison & Richardson, 2005; Krug, 1972; Raubinger, 1969).

To varying degrees, these schools agreed to adopt a progressive curriculum and pedagogical practices that pursued student-centred learning practices, and were therefore optimistically identified as "unshackled". In other words, they were unencumbered by traditional pre-college pedagogy and academic courses that emphasized lecture, memorization and the classics delivered to students in the standard and longstanding subject-centred fashion. An equal group of so-called "shackled" schools formed the control group for the Eight Year Study because they followed a more conventional college preparatory curriculum that was almost entirely subject-centred. The colleges participating in the survey agreed to admit students from both shackled and unshackled schools so that their academic progress could be charted throughout the schooling experience. To the chagrin of subject-centred advocates, the study found that students who experienced progressive education learning practices in the unshackled schools academically outperformed the traditionally trained students by the time the two groups reached the college level (Hyslop-Margison & Richardson, 2005; Krug, 1972; Lipka, 1998).

The Eight Year Study concluded that the unshackled schools, that is, the schools emphasizing student-centred learning practices, produced students equivalent, or superior, to shackled schools and that the more progressive the unshackled school in terms of innovation, the more academically superior they were compared to traditional high schools. The results of the longitudinal portion of the Eight Year Study were published in five volumes between 1942 and 1951 (Chamberlain, 1942; Smith & Thayer, 1942; Chamberlain, 1943; Aikens, 1942). In light of growing condemnation of progressive education practice, it is both surprising and disconcerting that contemporary conservative critiques of progressivism overlook the Eight Year Study's favourable findings on "unshackled" and student-centred schools. The findings of the study clearly suggest that the academic efficacy of progressive education and student-centred learning practices is not nearly as negative in its implications as recent neo-liberal criticism contends.

In his latest attack on progressive education, E. D. Hirsch (2001) disregards the Eight Year Study's findings as well as Dewey's (1916) arguments on the relationship between dispositions generated in the classroom and the future democratic participation of students. Hirsch claims instead that although progressive education practices have been employed in schools for decades, a point itself in serious doubt, there is a paucity of empirical evidence suggesting their pedagogical effectiveness. Selective in his choice of examples, he cites the 1980s research of sociologist James Coleman who reported that Catholic schools achieve more academic success than their public counterparts because the former "follow a rich and demanding curriculum; provide a structured, orderly environment; offer lots of explicit instruction including drill and practice" (Hirsch, 2001, p. 49). This type of structured pedagogy, according to Hirsch (2001), stands in sharp contrast "to the progressivist ideals of unstructured, implicit teaching now predominate in public schools" (p. 51). Hirsch's entire argument against progressive education, then, relies on selected empirical data that reports students acquire more propositional knowledge within structured and rigid subject-centred schooling formats. However, he provides no accompanying analysis of what actually constitutes "academic success," or any evidence to support the contention that progressive education practices actually dominate contemporary schooling.

In fact, critics of progressive education have always overestimated its real influence on actual practice in schools and classrooms. Canadian educational historian Neil Sutherland (1986) illustrates this point in his examination of elementary schooling in Vancouver, British Columbia between the 1920s and the 1950s. In the mid 1930s a new Minister of Education in the Canadian province set out to transform BC's very traditional curriculum and by the

end of that decade "the philosophy of the new education – now generally called progressive education – lay at the heart of the new program" (p. 203). However, reporting on his investigation of actual classroom practice over the ensuing twenty years when progressive policies and curricula dominated the Canadian scene, Sutherland argues, "When one looks behind the curricula at what actually went on in classrooms one finds that formalism [subject-centred teaching] in Anglophone Canadian education was as strong in the 1950s as it had been in the 1920s" (pp. 175-176).

Evans (2004) reports virtually the same experience regarding social studies education in the US. He characterizes debates in that field over the past century as the *social studies wars* that have pitted conservative and passive views of social education against more active and progressive ones. Evans argues that even though for brief periods of the last century progressive education ideals were dominant in colleges and in establishing educational policy they had little to no actual impact on classroom practice. "Over the course of the twentieth century," he writes, "traditional history, chronological and textbook-centered, has dominated the social studies curriculum" (p. 5). There is in fact a plethora of evidence that within the school and at the classroom level North American schooling has remained very traditional by doggedly resisting a number of attempts at progressive reform (Goodlad, 1984; Hodgetts, 1968; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). If critics like Ravitch, Hirsh and others are right about their assessment of the poor quality of American education it can hardly be blamed on progressive education reforms that quite simply never influenced public schools in any general or sustained fashion.

Given the current accountability and assessment measures in place within the US – what Evans (2004) calls "the runaway train of standards reform" (p. 149) – the claim by Hirsch, Ravitch and Egan that progressive education or student-centred learning dominates contemporary public schooling seems a position oblivious to the truth. Even if they are correct in their claim regarding the academic efficacy of progressive education, they uniformly fail to address or even mention Dewey's arguments on how student-centred learning practices contribute to student political participation within democratic societies.

In spite of contemporary neglect, the relationship between classroom structure and participatory democratic citizenship was well understood by many early progressive education advocates. In the fall of 1933, a Commission on Secondary School Curriculum was established as a separate body by the executive board of the PEA. V. T. Thayer of the Ethical Culture School, chair of the commission, was especially concerned with promoting progressive changes in pedagogical styles and, in a manner similar to

John Dewey and Lois Meek, understood the important role of schooling in shaping democratic societies. In 1930 she wrote, *The Passing of the Recitation*, a narrative account supporting "active" learning in the secondary school as opposed to the traditional recitation by students of memorized material. Thayer (1930) was convinced that schools were a critical element in generating democratic social change:

School functions arise from changing conditions. As the community disintegrates and the home becomes confused, the school serves more and more as the focusing point for influences bearing upon the child. Upon it now rests the responsibility for developing the child's personality and for socializing the individual in the interests of the future. To meet this new responsibility the school itself is undergoing transformation. (p. 457)

In response to this growing recognition on the relationship between schools and democratic society, then, the PEA initiated a major survey of secondary school curriculum and literature as well as innovative approaches to pedagogy and curriculum to address changing schools in a changing world (Thayer, Zackery & Kotinsky, 1939; Committee on the Function of English in General Education, 1940). These programs generally accepted Dewey's contention that schools provide the most appropriate vehicle to foster the psychological dispositions required to create democratically engaged students (Hyslop-Margison & Richardson, 2005).

   From its earliest beginnings, as we indicate above, progressive education did not represent a unified body of thought, but operated under the general objective of "social progress" and developed disparate learning principles and practices supposedly engineered to improve the lives of students. The liberal humanist strand of progressivism, the strand consistent with respecting democratic learning principles, emphasized social equality, community problem-solving and democratic participation, while the social efficiency strand, far more subject centred and scientific in structure, sought to prepare students as human capital for a predetermined social order.

   The original principles associated with progressive education were obviously diverse enough to allow individuals with radically different educational priorities and social agendas to claim membership in the movement. For example, social efficiency proponent David Snedden adopted social Darwinian principles to argue that most working class students derived little or no benefit from an academically structured education and should be therefore streamed into vocational training programs (Drost, 1967). Psychologists such as Edward L. Thorndike (1949) pursued the pseudo-scientific elements of progressivism by advancing an entirely behaviourist approach to learning based on externally generated stimuli and, therefore, correspondingly viewed any amount of student-centred learning as being scientifically and pedagogically misguided.

In *Democracy and Education*, however, John Dewey (1916) charted a decidedly different and innovative course in mapping the direction of the progressive education movement. Although Dewey supported certain aspects of the emerging science and the scientific method as an effective problem-solving mechanism, he challenged the social efficiency assumptions and instrumental-learning practices advanced by Snedden and other social efficiency advocates. Dewey (1916) argued that the goal of education within democracies is not social reproduction or social efficiency, but rather reconstruction, or "a constant reorganizing or reconstructing of experience. It is that reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experience" (p. 89).

Dewey (1916) believed that the flexible and continuous adaptation of individuals is crucial to ensure social progress. This flexibility could only be developed in students who actively participate in shaping the conditions of their social and vocational experience. From his perspective, democratic education is not simply learning about democratic forms of governance, political parties and ballot box procedures since inert citizenship knowledge, what we would describe as *weak democracy*, contributes precious little to meaningful social change.

Dewey understood instead that the inculcation of personal habits or dispositions such as cooperation, public spiritedness and social critique must be central schooling goals to realize democratic learning objectives that create politically engaged and civic minded citizens. When functioning effectively, democratic learning produces a community of individuals prepared to address society's problems through experimental and inventive means rather than dogmatic adherence to the social and vocational expectations of the structural status quo. The development of these democratic habits or dispositions must begin during the earliest years of a child's educational experience.

While most modern industrialized societies are deemed democratic, democracy in a robust sense of the term, or what we described as thick democracy in Chapter Two, requires more than the simple right to cast a ballot during formal electoral processes. Although individuals may enjoy the freedom to vote for a particular individual or political party, they still may not possess the necessary dispositions, knowledge and sense of political empowerment to exercise that franchise in an engaged, critically informed and continuous fashion. There is broad recognition among political theorists that free elections alone provide no guarantee of democracy. For example, Young (1990), mimicking the concerns expressed by Plato in Chapter Two, suggests that electoral franchise in contemporary culture is

simply a manipulated franchise based on the mass management of public opinion. The prototypical personality type in democratic societies, one largely shaped by the public education system, domesticates individuals to be comfortable in relationships marked by domination and subjugation, rather than by the autonomy necessary for meaningful democratic decision-making. For example, the current ahistorical presentation of social facts is ideological because it reproduces material conditions that serve the interests of the most affluent social groups. De-historicized knowledge draws its ideological and indoctrinatory strength from the one-sided presentation of subject matter disguised as being in the interests of all or simply beyond the realm of human control. There is a range of intellectual practices and epistemologies that impact greatly on the quality and scope of democratic participation by citizens, and we will elaborate on these key components in the ensuing sections of this chapter.

Perhaps more than any other educator, then, Dewey (1916) understood that public education provides the best available means to prepare learners to achieve their full democratic, intellectual and vocational potential. He suggests this aim can only be achieved by simulating within the school environment the various conditions and requirements of an appropriately designed and fully functioning democratic society:

Upon the educational side, we note first that the realization of a form of social life in which interests are mutually interpenetrating, and where progress, or readjustment, is an important consideration, makes a democratic community more interested than other communities in deliberate and systematic education. Since a democratic society repudiates the principle of external authority, it must find a substitute in voluntary disposition and interest; these can be created only by education. (p. 87)

Dewey's fundamental point is that democratic citizens must be provided with the educational opportunity as students to develop a sense of political voice, understanding and empowerment within various social arrangements that mimic the political relations of democratic society. If students are not so disposed through an education based on participatory inquiry and collaborative decision-making, it is unrealistic to believe they will accept and fulfill their corresponding democratic citizenship responsibilities as adults.

Dewey (1916) rightfully rejected the notion that a child's education was merely coded or instrumental preparation for society during which various facts and ideas are conveyed by the teacher and memorized by the student to utilize sometime in the future. Schools are extensions of democratic society and students should be encouraged to operate as members of a community who collaborate with others to achieve some measure of social improvement. Democratic learning is a process of self-directed learning and community collaboration, combined with the cultural resources supplied by

teachers. Above all other considerations, Dewey (1916) believed that the role of education in democracies was fostering the psychological dispositions to create engaged, interested, collaborative and politically active learners prepared to pursue democratic citizenship ideals:

A society which makes provision for participation in its good of all its members on equal terms and which secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through interaction of the different forms of associated life is in so far democratic. Such a society must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder. (p. 115)

Although Dewey clearly rejects anarchical approaches to social change, he argues that for classrooms to function as laboratories of democracy, students must be provided with opportunities for conjoint collaborative learning and community problem-solving experiences. If students are not disposed toward these basic democratic citizenship requirements through schooling, they will be unable to meet the corresponding imperatives of meaningful democratic citizenship.

In summary, then, we voice our categorical support for the role of student-centred and progressive learning practices based on their respect for the principles of democratic learning. The character qualities required for the development of a thick democracy must be fostered through an education that creates a sense of intellectual agency and a political voice among our students. We encourage the application of the student-centred elements of progressivism in career education for their indispensable contribution in achieving these objectives.

4.2   Constructivism and Democratic Learning

We would like to begin this section of the chapter by expressing our concern over the rhetorical employment of the term *constructivism* in contemporary education. In our experience, many teachers and teacher educators are prepared to claim that knowledge is "constructed" without fully understanding what this claim entails from an epistemological or educational perspective. Constructivism represents a multifaceted and contested epistemological theory with important implications for classroom teaching, but it amounts to little more than a hackneyed educational slogan in the absence of clarification and elaboration. Hence, in this section of chapter we want to provide educators with some conceptual and epistemological clarification on what constructivism entails. In the process, we also propose some learning approaches emerging from constructivism that we believe will help create a more democratically structured classroom.

In his seminal article on the subject, "The good, the bad, and the ugly: The many faces of constructivism," D.C. Phillips (1995) provides a taxonomy

for classifying constructivism along three different dimensions: individual psychology versus public discipline, humans as creators versus nature as the instructor of knowledge, and knowledge construction by individual cognition versus social and political, or even ideological, influence. Phillips considers the emphasis on active participation by the learner to be the positive, or "good," implication of constructivism. The "bad" element of constructivism is the tendency toward epistemological relativism and the jettisoning of any substantial expectation for the rational justification of student beliefs. The "bad" outcome occurs when students make claims of fact that teachers routinely fail to question, or when teachers do not encourage students to supply some warrant or evidence to support their beliefs. The "ugly" side of constructivism involves the unfortunate tendency toward what Phillips refers to as *sectarianism*, or the distrust, even dismissal, of rival and other important epistemic theories in the absence of serious argumentation.

Our own experience in education suggests that most teachers tend to focus on the idea of knowledge construction by individual cognition but with considerable doses of the bad and ugly elements tossed in for good measure. We have observed that many of our students use their belief in this particular brand of constructivism as the foundation for holding on to one of two equally bad relativist premises: that is, either everything is true or nothing is true simply on the basis of equating beliefs with knowledge.

In evaluating constructivism as a useful epistemology for democratic learning, we need not accept the relativist position that one view is equally as sound as another or that we can know nothing for certain simply because knowledge is constructed on the basis of individual cognition. Neither should we readily accept that all knowledge is constructed through individual cognition since in some cases valuable information can be legitimately passed from teacher to student in a more traditional format. In such cases, however, student criticality still plays a pivotal role in establishing ownership of the acquired knowledge by understanding the warrant supporting the belief and truth conditions. We will elaborate on this point later in this chapter during our discussion of epistemic internalism.

In grappling with the potentially "bad" implications of constructivism, it is important to separate what factors distinguish belief from knowledge. Clearly, knowledge entails belief, but it must be true belief, or a belief supported by adequate and publicly confirmable evidence or warrant. For example, we cannot construct knowledge that the holocaust did not take place nor can we construct knowledge that $2 + 2 = 3$. We can certainly construct beliefs in both of these instances but those beliefs do not meet any reasonable criteria to qualify as knowledge. Some teachers who claim

that knowledge is inevitably constructed by individual cognition tend to lose sight of the community accountability that separates fact from fiction and the social epistemology of knowledge construction.

There is reason, then, to approach the "ugly" element of constructivism with at least some measure of caution. What does it mean, for example, to claim, as many constructivists often do, that all knowledge is constructed? We know that Caesar crossed the Rubicon in 44 B.C., but in what way have we personally constructed that knowledge? More correctly, we have accepted the warrant and evidence accumulated by various experts in the field of history who have sought to confirm the claim. Of course, this does not mean that students cannot evaluate the evidence in support of this claim, but the view that all knowledge is constructed loses considerable steam when subjected to the simple epistemological test of how we actually acquire and internalize much of the knowledge we possess.

In a more expansive sense, the idea that knowledge is constructed not only has implications for propositional knowledge such as $2 + 2 = 4$ or the fact that Caesar crossed the Rubicon in 44 B.C. but also with the way people understand or make meaning from those propositions. There may not be a wide range of ways to understand the former but the latter might be understood as a simple geographic description of a man crossing a river or, alternatively, as either an exemplary act of human courage and determination, or one of history's most grievous examples of treason. In this sense, the normative meaning of Caesar's act is constructed differently since it is a matter of historical interpretation and ethical debate, not an epistemological point of contention. Similarly, we may agree on all the facts, or knowledge, related to a case of abortion and yet disagree vehemently with the meaning of the particular event.

Gallie (1964) argues that democracy itself is a highly contested concept possessing different meanings for different individuals, a point we initially raised in Chapter Two. By that he suggests that most people understand democracy as being constituted by a similar set of elements or principles such as the sovereignty of the people, personal freedom, the rule of law, commitment to the common good and respect for human rights. They nevertheless often understand or construct these elements in very different ways. Libertarians, for example, place more weight on personal freedom and responsibility while communitarians emphasize concern for the common good and mutual obligation. Legitimate democratic systems have been constructed around each of these approaches and these approaches all adopt their own normative assumptions.

Our acknowledgement that people's understandings of the same historical events or contemporary concepts may be constructed differently is not to

fall into the trap of epistemological relativism discussed above. The ability to ground one's understandings and knowledge claims in solid evidence remains essential, as does the importance of appreciating the fact/value distinction. While historical evidence may allow students a range of ways to understand Caesar's march on Rome, or the significance of the Holocaust to European and world history, it does not allow for any understanding of these events. One cannot justify, for example, the position that Caesar acted in ignorance of Roman law and tradition when he brought his army into the city or the position that the Holocaust is a figment of the fertile imagination of post war Jewish conspirators.

Similarly, while a range of possible conceptions or constructed understandings of democracy is clearly viable, the range is limited by reasonable application of the essential or fundamental elements of the concept itself. The fact that North Korea calls itself a "Democratic People's Republic" does not make it so, nor do claims about democracy from many Western industrialized nations. These claims, to be taken serious and substantiated by evidence, must meet the normative criteria for the concept of democracy.

To understand the epistemological nuances of constructivism and the theory's implications for democratic learning we can turn to Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky and, once again, American pragmatist John Dewey. Vygotsky's position on knowledge acquisition is often described as *social constructivism*. Approaches to teaching based on social constructivism hold that knowledge is a socially negotiated product: "Words and ideas do not have inherent meanings apart from those created and negotiated by people in particular contexts" (Hughes & Sears, 2004, p. 260). Social constructivism moves away from the idea of individual cognition as the generating force in knowledge construction and more toward the idea of knowledge as a cultural or inherited artefact generated in cooperation with others. In other words, there is inevitable and inescapable community accountability in identifying acceptable knowledge claims.

From the social constructivist perspective, then, the mentor or instructor remains the pivotal figure in teaching by creating activities that lead students toward specific subject mastery and a certain level of cultural assimilation. Vygotsky implies that social and cultural reproduction is the primary objective of constructivist pedagogy, a potential but, as we shall illustrate, not insurmountable problem for democratic learning in career education that emphasizes individual agency and social transformation:

The internalization of cultural forms of behavior involves the reconstruction of psychological activity on the basis of sign operations. Psychological processes as they appear in animals actually cease to exist; they are incorporated into this system of behaviour and are culturally reconstituted and developed to form a new psychological entity. The internalization of

socially rooted and historically developed activities is the distinguishing feature of human psychology. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57)

Through language acquisition and carefully guided instruction, then, Vygotsky's model of constructivist learning leads students toward educational objectives designed to reproduce social and cultural conditions. From this perspective, knowledge is a cultural artefact passed from one generation to the next.

Kieran Egan (1997) adopts Vygotsky's approach to knowledge construction in the concept of cognitive tools, including mythic understanding, romantic understanding, scientific and ironic understanding. These various types of understandings follow the knowledge patterns developed through the various historic stages of Western civilization. Egan argues that the role of education is transferring these various cultural understandings from the society to the individual via imaginative forms of instruction. Although there are components of Vygotsky's work that are applicable to our present democratic mission, such as his emphasis on cultural literacy and knowledge as collaboratively negotiated products, we believe that the constructivism model advanced by John Dewey is more generally compatible with the democratic learning practices we identify.

Whereas Vygotsky emphasizes the importance of cultural assimilation as the aim of constructivist learning, Dewey is more interested in the educational process of constructing knowledge toward individual empowerment and social progress. Dewey appreciates the dependency of democracy on the autonomous capacity of individuals to participate in actively shaping or transforming their social and cultural experience:

The assumption that gives rise to the procedures just criticized is the belief that social conditions determine educational objectives. This is a fallacy. Education is autonomous and should be free to determine its own ends, its own objectives. To go outside the educational function and to borrow objectives from an external source is to surrender to the educational cause. (Dewey, 1938, p. 73)

Dewey's constructivist approach is far less focused on achieving precise objectives and cultural reproduction than it is on creating learning conditions during which students pursue objectives based on their own experiences, interests and concerns. Glassman (2001) elucidates this critical distinction between Dewey and Vygotsky:

Dewey sees the child as a free agent who achieves goals through her own interest in the activity. In contrast to Vygotsky, Dewey emphasizes human inquiry, and the role it plays in the creation of experience/culture and, eventually social systems. One of the main purposes of education [on Dewey's account] is to instil the ability and desire for change in experience, and possible resultant changes in social history, through individual inquiry. (p. 3)

Whereas Vygotsky's primary interest involves cultural transmission, Dewey's model of constructivism situates the teacher as a facilitator to help students as democratic agents design their own learning experiences in response to personal priorities, interests and objectives.

While the ultimate end of democratically designed career education is the creation of autonomous agents rather than compliant social, cultural and occupational conformists, some understanding of cultural norms and processes is a necessary end of democratic education because such understanding is required for effective agency. Following Engle and Ochoa (1988) we believe that democratic education is a process of both socialization and counter socialization. In order for students to critique and perhaps work to change current workforce conditions, for example, they will have to understand, in a fairly substantial way, what those conditions are, how they came to be, what possible alternatives might exist, and the social and political institutions and mechanisms that might be used to reshape them. Some of this understanding will inevitably come from the study of fairly traditional history, economics, philosophy, political science and sociology.

If students are concerned with what they perceive to be the excesses of global capitalism and wish to use the liberal democratic state as a means to curb those excesses, they will have to possess significant knowledge and understanding about both global markets and the mechanisms of liberal democratic governments (not to mention the skills and dispositions to engage state administrative bureaucracies). Students will, if you like, have to be socialized into the particular forms and processes of democratic governance. Put even more simply, they cannot launch reasonable and trenchant critiques of these various processes if they simply do not understand them. To be truly democratic, however, the socialization of students must not be conducted in a way that implies current forms of democracy are fixed, final and forever, but rather it should illustrate that these forms have evolved as the result of human decisions and actions, and remain open to question and reform. In other words, the socialization that inducts young citizens into current forms of democratic practice must contain within its practices the counter socializing possibility that those forms can and will be changed by human agents like themselves.

Martin Luther King Jr. provides an excellent example of this relationship between socialization and counter socialization, and how each element potentially contributes to eventually emancipating and transformative political action. King had a solid grounding in the central "cultural artefacts" of the US including the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and, in particular, the Bill of Rights. He used this traditional cultural knowledge,

however, not to celebrate the great accomplishments of his country but to call it to account for falling short of its promised ideals and principles. Without a solid grounding and socialization in American history and government, King might have been far less effective as a social reformer.

Similarly, Mahatma Gandhi used his deep understanding of British government and law to inform his efforts to challenge British colonial rule in India during the early twentieth-century. Virtually any effective democratic reformer must know and understand the social system, and enjoy access to its intellectual cultural resources as well as possess ideas of what social changes they wish to invoke. The role of cultural knowledge and understanding illustrates that Vygotsky's version of constructivism, with its emphasis on cultural acquisition, has an important role to play in conceptualizing democratic changes to career education.

The constructivist classroom environment favoured by Dewey promotes our aforementioned principles of democratic learning by viewing knowledge as an interactive process in which students construct knowledge relevant to their own social experiences. Obviously, student learning in a democratic environment requires interaction and interpretation rather than mere social assimilation. Within this type of classroom environment learning occurs through dialogue, discovery, experience and modeling, and meaning is negotiated democratically between learners who potentially hold diverse interests and perspectives. The perspective, experience and agency of the learner supply the main ingredients for knowledge construction, meaning making and potential social transformation. These outcomes, we believe, are fundamental to foster democratic dispositions among career education students who recognize their legitimate role in shaping the conditions of their future vocational experience.

Vygotsky's view that knowledge is a collaborative community negotiated product is consistent with Dewey's emphasis on collaborative learning as a precursor to democratic citizenship. Since democracy demands conjoint community-based problem solving, or problems resolved through community consensus, both positions contribute to democratic learning in career education. Based on our own constructed knowledge of constructivism, and the work of Hughes and Sears (2004), then, we have identified the following implications of constructivism for classroom practices that respect democratic learning in career education.

- Constructivist career education teachers involve students in collaborative consideration of problems or issues that are: focused on important ideas and/or processes; complex; require original thinking and interpretation; and the resolution of which will help in the acquisition of "concepts and principles fundamental to the theme under study" (Windschitl, 2002,

p. 145). By pursuing these practices students will develop complex under-
standings of key ideas related to career education and the range of ways
these ideas and positions have been understood over time and across
contexts.

- Constructivist teachers extend the dialogue about themes and ideas
  beyond the career education classroom, connecting students to diverse
  contemporary and historical thinking on neo-liberalism, citizenship, and
  labour market and working conditions. By broadening the dialogue in
  this fashion, students understand prevailing working conditions as a
  socially constructed situation developed through historic acts of human
  agency. Their recognition of the role human agency plays in the
  creation of vocational experience promotes student understanding that
  democratic decision-making can transform current labour market and
  working conditions.
- Constructivist teachers in career education also encourage students to
  explore the warrant or evidence supporting their claims of fact. Since we
  eschew the idea that the individual construction of knowledge inevitably
  leads to epistemological and moral relativism, students should be asked
  to support their truth claims with evidence by providing good reasons
  and sound arguments. A simple belief, regardless of the force of its
  conviction, does not equate with knowledge, and constructivism does not
  provide an excuse to neglect the importance of warrant and evidence in
  identifying what qualifies as truth.
- Constructivist teachers in career education are interested in pursuing the
  relevant interests and problems related to the world of work faced by
  their students. For example, the situation where a student whose parent,
  relative or friend who has recently lost her job to outsourcing could
  provide a rich opportunity to explore in a very immediate and experiential
  manner the impact of neo-liberal trade policies or other contemporary
  labour market forces on the vocational experience of many workers.

A key assumption underlying all of these suggested activities is that
people come to any learning situation with a well-structured store of prior
experience that has significant impact on new learning and the interpre-
tation of new information. We will now examine how to deal with this prior
experience in a way that will allow for the building of substantive new
understandings about neo-liberal labour market and working conditions.

4.3   The Role of Prior Experience

Constructivists hold that students come to any learning situation not as blank
slates but with a range of prior knowledge and experience that is critical
in shaping how they respond to new information. This prior knowledge

is described in a variety of ways in the literature on constructivism. For example, Piaget refers to these organized bodies of knowledge or belief as schemata (Anderson, 1977). Research in several disciplines suggests that these structures are epistemologically persistent, or resistant to change, and therefore play a key role in determining how students assimilate or accommodate new learning (Hughes & Sears, 1996). In other words, people do not like to change their minds particularly if that change includes considering radically different ideas from those they presently hold.

An analogy might help clarify how students organize the new information they receive that challenges some of their preconceived ideas and beliefs. Think of a student's cognitive schema as a modular bookshelf. The supports or braces and the shelves help to structure the existing pieces of knowledge that are represented by the books on the shelves. As the learner acquires new knowledge – new books – a number of things might happen. The newly acquired knowledge might fit well with what they already know and that particular book slides neatly onto the shelf beside the others (assimilation). On the other hand, the knowledge might be something almost completely new and require an entirely new shelf to accommodate it. Another possibility is that the knowledge is directly related to that on one of the shelves that already exists but does not seem to fit exactly into the corresponding shelf. For example, this might occur in a classroom discussion of neo-liberalism where previously unchallenged and taken-for-granted assumptions about capitalism are now under greater scrutiny. The oversized book will not slide neatly onto the shelf of the prevailing perspective that views capitalism as the only possible social reality.

In this case the learner has various options. A student can do what many of us might do with the oversized book and set it aside for the time being, perhaps putting it on the coffee table or the counter. Learners may decide not to deal with the new knowledge, at least not for now. Our own, at times, somewhat frustrating experience suggests many students adopt this approach, especially with a concept such as neo-liberalism that simply doesn't fit neatly with any of their existing schema, a good portion of which is provided by hegemonic culture. Another possibility is to turn the book sideways and slide it in on the shelf in that fashion. In other words, some students do not accept the knowledge in the way presented but manipulate or distort it so that it fits more comfortably with their existing perspective. This often means significantly reconfiguring and undermining the new information, or creating and adding misconceptions to make it more consistent with existing belief systems.

In his book, *Wonderful life*, recently deceased Harvard biologist Stephen J. Gould (1989) lucidly illustrates how some of the world's best scientists

engaged in this type of epistemological distortion during the twentieth century when they found a rich deposit of fossils that provided evidence countering much of what was previously believed about evolution. Instead of dealing with the implications of that evidence, the scientists manipulated it to fit accepted views of the evolution of life and it was not until much later when other investigators took a second look that accepted thinking about evolution began to change. The field of psychology has often been accused of similar practices that are termed the *file drawer effect.* In these cases, the evidence that undermines a presupposed theory is simply disregarded, or filed away, without attending to its implications.

Of course the last possibility for the oversized book that simply will not fit is to pull some pins in the bookcase and adjust the shelves so that it does fit. This process is difficult epistemological work, however, and often means adjusting not only the books on the shelf in question, or our entire conceptual framework – to escape from the bookshelf metaphor – but those above and below it as well. Sometimes it might require changing one's entire worldview as is often the case with the rejection of many neo-liberal assumptions. Obviously, most people would rather choose the coffee table option or turn the book sideways approach. However, eventually the coffee table fills up or the sideways books begin to interfere with putting other books on the shelf and students eventually confront the tough work of making the necessary adjustments.

In similar fashion, students often resist changing their minds until they become uncomfortable with their current way of thinking, until too many pieces of information no longer seem to fit. Part of what qualifies as good constructivist teaching, then, is discovering what students already think or believe and then creating the cognitive dissonance that leads to the hard work of adding new shelves or adjusting and reorganizing existing ones. Windschitl (2002) describes this dissonance as, "a puzzling even shocking experience that prompts an extensive reconsideration of their ideas" (p. 162). We see this kind of extensive reconsideration of taken for granted ideas – either those of the students themselves or society more generally – as a key component of democratic learning and a necessary strategy to encourage students to entertain alternative perspectives from those they presently hold. Patience and determination on the part of teachers is required, then, to help our students sift through their commonly held and ideologi-cally instantiated assumptions and consider more critical ways of viewing the world.

Vygotsky argued that people come to this kind of reconsideration through two kinds of activity, which he called interpsychological (among people) and intrapsychological (within ourselves) (Wink & Putney, 2002). In considering

the important implications of these ideas for teaching, we argue that teachers need to structure activities to promote interpersonal and intrapersonal dialogue about the concepts or ideas being studied. Interpersonal dialogue begins in the classroom between students and with the teacher but then should be extended to include consideration of the best ideas relevant to the issue being studied from thinkers well beyond the classroom. In a career education setting, for example, if students are discussing the appropriate relationships between employers and employees or, more abstractly, between capital and labour, they should engage in dialogue through readings or watch documentary films with the fullest possible range of thinkers from Karl Marx to Sam Walton on work-related issues. Through engaging in this type of dialogue they are constructing a base of information and knowledge about the range of ways these issues have been thought about and dealt with over time and across contexts.

Knowing how others think and have thought is important but, as we will discuss below, it is not a sufficient condition for meeting the epistemic requirements of democratic citizenship. Each citizen needs to be able to decide, in the kind of informed and reasoned manner described above, what it is they think, why they think it, and consider their views' implications for democratic society and vocational experience. That is, taking ownership of knowledge provides the essence of intrapersonal dialogue. Teachers need to envision, design and structure activities that will help students take what they have learned from their interpersonal dialogue, reflect deeply upon it, and develop their own position on the issue in question. Throughout this approach we need to remember that our role as teachers includes introducing students to the ongoing dialogue about important ideas and social questions in an informed way rather than indoctrinating them into a particular perspective.

There are particular strategies for fostering both inter and intra personal dialogue in classrooms, but one we have found particularly effective is anchoring instruction in what Wright (2002) calls "subversive stories" (p. 40). Wright uses the term to describe the New Testament parables of Jesus that, he argues, were firmly rooted in the language and experience – the world views – of his followers but contained twists designed to subvert assumed understandings about the world and the nature of faith. The stories were not, as is sometimes assumed, vehicles for communicating immutable truths but "they were ways of breaking open the worldview of Jesus' hearers" (p. 77) so those worldviews could be examined and rethought. Similarly, we also advocate using critical incidents, or subversive stories, in classrooms as both a challenge to the prior knowledge students bring with them to school and taken for granted societal assumptions about issues related to career

education. To act as effective springboards for this kind of study the stories should meet certain design specifications:

- They should be authentic. The best stories are ones drawn from history or current events. In career education critical incidents illustrating contradictions of current economic arrangements – the inherent unfairness, for example, of the whole idea of the "working poor" – or examples of individuals who acted as significant agents in reshaping economic/labour conditions such as union leaders could provide key examples. In our experience, contrived situations are often not nearly as compelling and interesting to students as actual circumstances.

- The stories or narratives should be presented in a vivid rendering. The situations are used as springboards to launch students into the middle of a debate about the appropriate form of democratic societies. To achieve this objective, the stories must capture and hold student interest and enthusiasm. There are plenty of stirring examples from labour history, or contemporary events across the world, where individuals and groups have acted to challenge assumptions about economic or labour arrangements. The fight for justice by US, Canadian and British coal miners during the early twentieth-century offers a compelling and heart wrenching non-fictional story that would both capture the interest of students and possibly provoke a re-examination of their views about unions.

- The compelling situations or narratives should be succinct. Recall that the situations themselves are not the focus of the learning but rather the ideas and concepts inherent in them. The purpose of the situation is to begin student inter and intra personal dialogue about these ideas, as well as provide a concrete context for this dialogue. Extended, rambling accounts that provide unnecessary detail distract students and undermine their interest in the story.

- The provided situations should be multidimensional. That is, they should allow for and promote student consideration of the ideas involved at a number of levels and/or from a number of perspectives. As we indicated earlier, most important ideas in the social world have a range of meanings and interpretations and the situations used as springboards should open up consideration of new perspectives and ideas.

- The stories and narratives should be deliberately ambiguous to allow independent decision-making by students. The purpose of the situations is not to provide answers but to stimulate questions. To achieve this objective the stories must be open ended and, hence, somewhat open to student interpretation. In Problem-Based Learning good problems are referred to as "ill structured," meaning that there is some question about what exactly the problem is and no clear direction about what the solution

or solutions might be. If the situations or problems are clear-cut and unambiguous, their subsequent consideration by students tends to be short and very limited. Since we are encouraging students to consider society as an appropriate unit of critical analysis, the scope of potential solutions to work-related problems must remain exceptionally broad. The ambiguity we propose also honours our commitment to students arriving, in the final analysis, at their own conclusions about the important issues and questions they discuss.

• Finally, the stories should be representative, or include within them features of the ideas or concepts that are common across a number of situations or contexts, and not unique to the specific incident in question. A study of elements related to globalization might be launched, for example, using the so-called "Battle in Seattle" as a critical incident or subversive story. The violent nature of the confrontation there and its sparking of similar incidents in Québec City, Genoa, Washington and Prague provides a context for exploring enduring questions around the legitimacy of states making international agreements without subjecting them to public scrutiny and raises important questions about the appropriateness of various means of protest and civic action.

Democratic approaches to classroom practice that include the elements we have outlined above challenge taken for granted assumptions about social organization and relationships. However, the consideration of structural alternatives and the promotion of student autonomy in reaching informed conclusions about appropriate forms democracy and democratic engagement are not nearly adequate in isolation from other required conditions.

If democratic classroom practice is thwarted by anti-democratic school structures then all of the democratic teaching in the world will be for naught. Schooling exists as a set of interconnected contexts that includes classrooms, schools, and school systems. Truly democratic education depends on the fostering of democratic values and practices across these various contexts. Students who study democratic civic engagement in the classroom but are then arbitrarily punished for raising questions about school policies or labour market organization will quickly turn away from civic engagement. As Stephen Lewis (2000), former Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations, points out, we cannot expect students to become engaged and active citizens when "the democracy which they are absorbing ridicules the democracy they are observing" (n.p.).

Several European countries have begun to pay considerable attention to the democratic nature of school contexts well beyond the classroom. In Belgium, for example, the "Missions" Decree of 1997 established the basic goals of compulsory education. Article 6 of the Decree identifies four

main aims, the first of which is to "prepare all pupils to be responsible citizens able to contribute to the development of a democratic, supportive, pluralistic society open to other cultures". The expectation of the Missions Decree was that this aim would be pursued in part through formal lessons and other educational activities but also through "the way daily life is organized at school" (European Commission, 2005, p. 3).

The Charter for Public Sector Education declares that "in their daily activities, public-sector schools should encourage transparency, dialogue and the practice of active and responsible citizenship – in a word, democracy" (European Commission, 2005, p. 3). At the same time, the Belgian Constitution states that education administered directly by the French Community must be ideologically neutral. Other key descriptors associated with this notion of democratic learning include the terms *objective* and *balanced*. Although we support these trends we also worry that neutrality as sometimes practiced in public education is simply code for protecting the status quo. The type of neutrality we support includes trenchant critiques of neo-liberalism that promote objective and balanced decisions on social structure design. While the process of education is to be ideologically balanced, the educational strategy aims at encouraging student concern for events occurring around them and to be "capable of mobilising the means required to change situations that do not suit them with due regard for the rules of democracy and human rights" (European Commission, 2005, p. 3). The implications of this approach point to maximal citizenship and thick democracy with a strong political participation ethos spread across various contexts.

In England there also has been growing emphasis that, along with including citizenship as part of the national curriculum, schools and school systems need to be more democratic. There are concerted efforts to develop school councils that include a substantive student voice and ongoing national monitoring of administrators, teachers and student perceptions of how democratic schools are constructed (Cleaver, Ireland, Kerr & Lopes, 2005). While more sporadic and localized in nature, there are also efforts in a number of US jurisdictions to substantially democratize schools for both students and teachers (Miller, 2004). Disappointingly for both of us as Canadians, we know of no systematic or administrative efforts to make Canadian schools and school systems more democratic in their organization.

The value of progressive education and constructivist learning practices extends beyond the amount of propositional knowledge students might accumulate through the pedagogies and strategies we have identified. Even more importantly, we are concerned with the kind of citizens our schools create. The progressive and constructivist learning approaches we advocate

foster student agency and political voice and, therefore, comprise funda-mental building blocks in any career education classroom that respects the principles of democratic learning.

4.4   Epistemic Internalism in Democratic Learning

With its unbridled faith in market economy principles neo-liberalism is the historical context in which contemporary career education is situated. It is the predominant global political and economic force, or prevailing ideology, that influences our lives and shapes our conceptions of society, ethics, and even personal happiness. One of the challenges confronting a democratic classroom in career education, then, is helping students sift through the various elements of neo-liberalism to ensure their decisions regarding its efficacy and acceptability are autonomous judgements rather than ideologically driven ones. This analytical process requires providing students with a considerable arsenal of epistemic weaponry to help them critique the ideological messages they receive.

McChensey (1999) makes the point that, "aside from a few academics and members of the business community, the term neoliberalism is largely unknown and unused by the public at large" (p. 1). This wide-spread ignorance regarding the current historical and ideological context threatens the ability of our citizens to make truly democratic decisions, that is, informed judgements that are the result of informed, reflective and autonomous evaluation processes. A challenge confronting a career education classroom focused on democratic learning, then, is to help students lift the ideological or indoctrinatory veil that masks the forces undermining autonomous preference formation.

We believe there is significant promise in the role *epistemic internalism* might play in helping students and teachers expose the ideological messages that manipulate their beliefs and opinions. Epistemic internalism encourages students to examine critically the discourses they encounter rather than simply accept them on the basis of external authority or some cultural and hegemonic imperative. Career education students committed to democratic learning should be encouraged to grapple continually with the evidence supporting the various positions related to a range of vocationally related issues. Alternatively, a student who habitually relies on external sources of information related to work may develop a dependency on such sources, a situation that leaves the student vulnerable to ideological manipulation or control.

Internalist justification requires three necessary conditions to be satisfied before a proposition qualifies as knowledge. Barrow and Milburn (1986)

explain, "To know in the propositional sense is generally taken to mean: (a) having a belief; (b) that the belief is true; and (c) that one has adequate evidence for the belief" (p. 165). Simply stated, then, for p to claim knowledge of q, p must satisfy the sufficient condition of justified true belief. Since internalism requires q to be justified by p if p claims knowledge of q, the knowing subject must supply the necessary bridge of evidence connecting the belief and truth conditions by providing the warrant supporting the proposition in question. From the internalist perspective, then, it is unacceptable to support a belief solely on the basis of an appeal to an external authority.

From the internalist perspective, the evidence providing justification for p believing q cannot be based on an appeal to authority or expert testimony, but must be a function of p's own understanding of the truth bridge connecting the knowledge and belief conditions. Externalists, those epistemologists who accept the tenability of appeals to authority, typically challenge this position by pointing out that most successful forms of knowledge are actually based on appeals to authority, and when the range and complexity of knowledge is considered, the internalist position appears entirely impractical. Indeed, the dictates of practical necessity often require that individuals rely on knowledge possessed by others. We recognize and appreciate the externalist critique, but view the dispositional implications of internalism as necessary components of successful democratic learning.

Within career education, as we have illustrated, politics and ideology are intrinsically related to content and instructional strategies. The epistemic orientation of a classroom conveys powerful messages to students that either advance or impede the principles of democratic learning. Implicit messages are conveyed to students via epistemic orientation about social order, political power, human agency and social change. The chronic epistemic dependence associated with externalism is inconsistent with democratic learning because it interferes with reflective consciousness by habituating learners to accept uncritically external sources of information.

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire (1970) argues that habituating students to accept knowledge claims on the basis of appeals to authority is more than a mere affront to their autonomy and self-determination, it is a form of active oppression and violence that threatens their humanization:

If men as historical beings necessarily engaged with other men in a movement of inquiry, did not control that movement, it would be (and is) a violation of men's humanity. Any situation in which some men prevent others from engaging in the process of inquiry is one of violence. The means used are not important; to alienate men from their own decision-making is to change them into objects. (p. 73)

Regardless of the reasons or intentions, then, denying students the opportunity to participate in the process of inquiry through knowledge ownership is undemocratic and, if we accept Freire's position, a potentially violent act of dehumanization. By pursuing the objectives of internalism and achieving the attending critical dispositions teachers can help move students toward greater levels of independent, autonomous and truly democratic belief formation.

The relationship between epistemic orientation and democratic citizenship is a crucial one. In a democratic career education classroom students learn that not all sources of information are reliable ones, and part of their challenge is to distinguish true and warranted claims from false and unwarranted ones. In domains such as science where broad general agreement between experts is commonplace, the educational challenges are somewhat less daunting than they are in the field of career education where politics, economics, history and labour market conditions all intersect in complicated sorts of ways. The breadth of this domain places a considerable burden on teachers to ensure students access the range of ideas and beliefs that potentially impact on their future vocational experience. In a subject area where so many intersecting and disparate opinions exist, it is prudent for teachers to promote a certain suspicion or even healthy skepticism among their students. This type of scepticism, albeit informed and reflective, is one of the epistemic virtues we identify and promote during our discussion of critical thinking in Chapter Five.

The epistemologically responsible career education student is guided by the view that he or she should arrive at a belief in a manner that involves a general desire to determine truth. In a general sort of way, this student regulates belief in two specific ways: a) The desire for true belief may inhibit other more negative desires such as the need for affirmation from playing a deleterious role in belief acquisition and retention; b) The desire for true beliefs may also serve to regulate the agent's actions in terms of seeking out additional sources of information.

The importance of these two general principles is more fully revealed by considering a specific example in career education. Suppose a student, because her father is the CEO of a multi-national corporation, is motivated by a desire to hold a belief about neo-liberal capitalism other than on the basis of evidence in its support or a desire for truth. Such situations may regularly arise when students are motivated by ideological or religious dogma rather than the desire for truth, or by a desire to seek additional information on a topic. The wish to protect one's belief system, a belief system that may adhere rigidly to the merits of capitalism and corporate hegemony, could

be so strong that it interferes with the capacity to evaluate other possible economic systems fairly and objectively. Similarly, one's commitment to socialism might overwhelm the measure of provided evidence suggesting its weaknesses. In either case, a commitment to belief potentially undermines the acquisition of new knowledge. To overcome this problem, we suggest encouraging students to seek and gather evidence in an honest and responsible manner. Consistent with the demands of epistemic internalism, they should be routinely asked to justify the beliefs they hold on the basis of reason and evidence rather than simply dogmatic commitment to previously existing belief.

4.5   Summary

In this chapter we have provided a conceptual pedagogical framework to help career education teachers and students protect and promote the principles of democratic learning. This framework supports the humanist strand of progressive education with its emphasis on student-centred and collaborative learning, and its desire to foster student voice. The dispositions created as a result of these practices will greatly determine the future readiness of our students to assume the rights and responsibilities of active democratic citizenship.

We also have emphasized the role constructivist epistemologies rooted in the views of Dewey and Vygotsky can play in promoting the democratic dispositions that prepare students for democratic citizenship. Finally, we have suggested that career education teachers committed to democratic learning practices habituate their students to epistemic internalism in order to promote autonomous preference formation and to liberate their belief systems from dogmatic commitment to prevailing ideas and perspectives. In the final chapter, we review some of the major problems with critical thinking in career education and provide an intellectual virtue approach that we belief holds great promise in the realm of democratic learning. We also consider the role teachers and teacher educators acting as public intellectuals might play in reclaiming education for democratic citizenship.

CHAPTER 5

CRITICAL THINKING AND DEMOCRATIC VIRTUES

5. INTRODUCTION

Given the numerous problems in current career education policies and programs, it is imperative that educators concerned with democratic learning, as we argued in Chapter Four, develop and pursue practices that provide students with the tools to reclaim the classroom education required for participatory citizenship. When appropriately designed, these tools will foster recognition that vocational experience is an arena in which worker agency may be employed to generate improved working conditions.

In this final chapter of the book, then, we provide some alternative strategies to the epistemologically weak and instrumental models of critical thinking that dominate the current career education landscape. We explore the importance of foundational, or non-instrumental, reasoning to democratic citizenship and consider how it might influence a democratically engineered career education classroom. We also propose an intellectual virtue model of reasoning that focuses on developing certain student dispositions to create critically reflective, informed and effective democratic thinkers in career education. Finally, we briefly discuss the role teacher educators and teachers might play as public intellectuals concerned with promoting democratic ideals. It is not enough simply to talk about and teach democracy. We must set an example for our students by practicing the critical and democratic public engagement we preach.

5.1 Foundational Rationality in Career Education

Consistent with the human capital requirements of economic globalization we have described in the previous chapters, many secondary level career education programs are supposedly designed to prepare students for the

formidable challenges marking contemporary vocational experience such
as employment instability and occupational transition (Hyslop-Margison &
Armstrong, 2004; Hyslop-Margison & Graham, 2003; Spring, 1998). In
order to meet this challenge, career education programs advocate teaching
students transferable, or generic, critical thinking and problem solving
"skills" that are intended to address the volatility of current labour market
conditions. In the present labour market, job security is largely an anachro-
nism, and the promise of transferable employability skills, assuming such
skills actually exist, entails obvious practical benefits for both workers
and employers. A worker possessing these transferable skills could shift
seamlessly from workplace to workplace without having to endure constant
retraining. Employers would save the considerable resources spent on
training new workers for their available occupations.

Unfortunately, as we have noted previously and in spite of this appeal,
there are significant pedagogical problems with the supposedly generic
construct of critical thinking commonly found in many career education
programs. In this section of the chapter, then, we identify the pedagogical
and democratic shortcomings of present critical thinking practices within
career education. We propose an alternative critical thinking construct for
career education based on foundational rationality. Critical thinking that
respects foundational rationality encourages students to explore the historical
context of contemporary vocational experience by considering other forms
of economic organization, and respects the fundamental principles of
democratic learning we identified in Chapter Three.

We begin this section by illustrating how the generic employability skill
approach to critical thinking suffers from serious conceptual and episte-
mological difficulties that negatively impact on both its practical effec-
tiveness and democratic appropriateness. We then argue that the emphasis
career education places on technical rationality in critical thinking violates
principles of democratic learning by disregarding the historical context of
vocational experience in favour of entirely instrumental problem solving
practices. The instrumental model of critical thinking is also inconsistent
with democratic education in the way it excludes students from considering
forms of social and economic organization different from those currently
in place. Finally, we propose a revised critical thinking construct based
on foundational rationality to remedy these problems, and offer examples
of concrete classroom strategies that protect democratic learning in career
education programs.

Secondary level career education based on human capital assumptions
generally categorizes critical thinking and problem solving as transferable
employability skills or cross curricular competencies (British Columbia

Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, 1998; Conference Board of Canada, 1992; John Hopkins University, 2003; New Jersey Department of Education, 2001). Unlike technical skills, employability skills – in this case the cognitive capacities of critical thinking and problem solving – are presented not as job specific, but as generically applicable across a variety of occupations or professions (Buck & Barrick, 1987). As we noted above, the idea of critical thinking and problem solving as transferable employability skills understandably appeals to many career education stakeholders. Transferable employability skills, at least in theory, prepare human capital for a labour market where many workers can expect to change occupations several times during their vocational lives (Crouch, Finegold & Sako, 1991). However, as we shall argue below, the belief that critical thinking is a transferable, or generic, employability skill confronts insurmountable conceptual and epistemological difficulties. These problems not only underscore the importance of developing an alternative critical thinking construct, but highlight the anti-democratic practices embedded in currently pursued strategies.

Critical thinking in career education is often characterized as a set of heuristics, or guiding principles, designed to provide workers with an effective problem solving strategy regardless of the existing occupational context. In addition to the arguments we enumerate below, many scholars investigating critical thinking have identified the epistemic problems with the generic skill approach (Barrow, 1987; Bailin, Case, Coombs & Daniels, 1999; Hyslop-Margison & Graham, 2003).

The New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards for Career Education and Consumer, Family, and Life Skills (New Jersey Department of Education, 2003) proposes a four step heuristic model of critical thinking to equip students with problem solving skills for application in various occupational and life circumstances. The steps include: a) recognize and define a problem; b) plan and follow steps to make choices and decisions; c) identify and access print and non-print resources that can be used to help solve problems; d) demonstrate brainstorming skills. British Columbia's secondary level Business Education (British Columbia Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, 1998) offers a similar, if somewhat more sophisticated, heuristic strategy referred to as the designing model: a) identify problem; b) determine parameters; c) conduct research; d) generate solutions; e) choose best solution; f) implement solution; g) test and evaluate; h) redesign and refine. Although advocates of this approach confidently extol the virtues of their particular model, heuristic strategies suffer serious epistemological shortcomings that are revealed simply by considering concrete situations where they might be applied.

The epistemic limitations of critical thinking and problem solving heuristics for career education are illustrated by considering different occupational contexts where a particular issue requires resolution. If an older automobile refuses to start without any obvious indication of why, the typical heuristic approach suggests the initial step is *identifying the problem*. However, for an individual lacking significant knowledge about automobiles – including fuel, ignition, and electrical systems – pinpointing the specific cause of the mechanical failure is apt to prove an extremely difficult enterprise. Even a youthful automotive technician trained in modern electronic ignition and fuel injection systems might be unable to isolate the problem in an older car equipped with a carburetor, points, and a distributor.

Our general point here is simply that while heuristic strategies for critical thinking and problem solving offer general procedural guidelines, they are practically worthless in the absence of sufficient background knowledge related to the specific applied context. This characteristic of heuristic approaches to critical thinking and problem solving, then, raises serious questions regarding their actual transferability between occupational contexts and emphasizes the need to develop alternative practices and approaches in the area.

Heuristic approaches to critical thinking, especially within career education, also impose strict limits on what might be thought about. They actually circumscribe critical thinking by framing problems in an excessively narrow and functionalist way within the boundaries of particular paradigms. In the predicament of the car that will not start, a heuristic approach mandates a focus on that specific issue and sees the solution as finding a way to start the car. What is not encouraged by such approaches is opening up the paradigm and, in this case, to think about the real possibility of finding alternative means of transportation to the car; alternative means that might be cheaper and far healthier for both the individual and the environment.

In his "propaganda model" of the press Chomsky (1991) shows how the narrow framing of debate consistent with instrumental rationality offers the appearance of democracy and democratic discourse but actually denies the substance of it. He argues that the popular conception of mass media in liberal democratic states is one of opening up and extending debate. The evidence, however, shows something quite different. The media, Chomsky contends, is essentially a big business enterprise that garners its profits from other big businesses, in the form of advertisers, and consequently has no practical interest in disturbing the status quo: "the very structure of the media is designed to induce conformity" (p. 10). Chomsky acknowledges

the presence of a variety of opinions and perspectives in mainstream media but provides examples demonstrating those opinions represent only a narrow range of possible views on the relevant issues; views that generally "reflect the perspectives and interests of established power" (p. 10). Mainstream media, then, according to Chomsky, gives the appearance of presenting diverse points of views on key issues while effectively doing the opposite. Thus, the type of critical thinking restricted by paradigms subverts rather than promotes both foundational rationality and democracy.

In career education this limited approach to critical thinking operates by framing critical thinking about employment within a neo-liberal context. Students are asked to think critically about what background and skills they might need to fit particular jobs in the current economy. However, narrow, problem focused, heuristic approaches do not allow for more fundamental questions about the appropriateness of the economic system or any consideration of possible alternatives to neo-liberalism. Again, we see the form of democracy as represented by the idea of critical thinking without substantive application of its most fundamental principles and requirements.

Since we have singled Dewey out for significant praise in this text, we must also note that he is somewhat responsible for the range of problems related to heuristic critical thinking constructs. Indeed, our current infatuation with heuristic strategies in career education is at least partially predicated on Dewey's (1938) approach to problem solving that originally proposed a series of stages and principles to guide student reflection: a) perplexity, confusion, and doubt; b) conjectural anticipation and tentative interpretation; c) examination, inspection, exploration, analysis of all attainable considerations; d) elaboration of the tentative hypothesis suggestions; and e) deciding on a plan of action. However, to his credit, Dewey also fully understood that procedural knowledge alone was insufficient to produce reflective thinkers as democratic citizens, and advocated fostering dispositions in students such as open-mindedness, intellectual sincerity and responsibility, wholehearted interest, and a critical spirit of inquiry. Unfortunately, the heuristic strategies adopted by many career education programs fail to emphasize the fundamental role character qualities play in effective critical thinking and problem solving. Obviously, career education students will not think critically unless they acquire the necessary corresponding dispositions to engage in such reflection in a meaningful and informed manner.

When critical thinking and problem solving are categorized as transferable employability skills, another potential pedagogical problem inevitably occurs. The concept of a "skill" traditionally denotes some type of physical or technical expertise that is mastered through repeated practice of the

capacity in question (Barrow, 1987; Hyslop-Margison, 2005). Skilled surgeons typically spend many arduous hours operating on cadavers to sharpen their surgical expertise and biological knowledge. Skilled airline pilots require considerable in-flight or simulator time to master aircraft controls and navigational guidance systems. However, this type of procedural or technical knowledge is categorically distinct from the type of propositional knowledge required for critical thinking and problem solving concerned with truth. Any meaningful construct of critical thinking seeks determinations of truth, evaluates relevant evidence, and justifies arguments, all epistemic objectives that procedural knowledge and practice alone simply cannot achieve.

Cognitive capacities such as critical thinking and problem solving depend on propositional knowledge, then, and contrary to the standard career education approach they clearly do not qualify as transferable skills mastered through generic practice. When teachers adopt the idea that critical thinking and problem solving are mastered through abstract practice, they are unintentionally misleading their students to believe they possess a skill that is unfortunately little more than a figment of their imagination.

Contrary to the generic employability skill approach, the most sophisticated constructs of critical thinking typically emphasize two essential elements. First, thinking critically about any issue or problem requires considerable background knowledge about the subject under investigation, a point we have emphasized and illustrated above. It makes no pedagogical sense to encourage students to think critically about career options, labour unions or labour market structure without relevant knowledge regarding labour market trends, working conditions, remuneration packages and alternative working conditions. In fact, when students are asked to think critically about an issue without sufficient background knowledge, it may instead simply provoke ill-informed or rash judgments on extremely complex questions and problems (Hyslop-Margison & Armstrong, 2004).

More than two decades of scholarship in history education demonstrates the context specific nature of critical thinking quite clearly. While rejecting history as simply the accumulation of bits of information, scholars in Europe and North American have produced an impressive body of important work on what they call historical understanding (Seixas, 1999; Stearns, Seixas & Wineburg, 2000; Wineburg, 2001; Barton & Levstik, 2004). A key element of this work is the rejection of historical thinking as analogous to critical thinking in other areas, particularly the natural sciences.

For example, Booth (1994) argues that, "the object of the historian's study – the human past – is incommensurably different from the object of investigation of the natural scientist – the world of here and now – and the

thinking it engenders is equally different" (p. 63). Elsewhere he elaborates more fully on this theme:

It can be claimed, therefore, that historical knowledge and the thinking it demands have certain distinct features; that it is concerned with the winnowing of evidence and the creation of a true, narrative account of events which have actually occurred. To assess this by means of an *a priori* framework that evolved in the first instance from children's language and thinking when dealing with problems in the natural sciences where the evidence was 'all in', would seem misguided; what is needed is an analysis of children's thinking in terms of the discipline's particular knowledge form. (Booth, 1980, p. 247)

Thinking critically about history, then, cannot be taught separately from the discipline itself. Similar to critical thinking in career education, it requires in-depth knowledge of both the substantive and procedural knowledge unique to the field. As Seixas (1999) argues, "content and pedagogy are inseparable in doing the discipline. Even conceiving of them as different categories that must be united is no longer helpful" (p. 329).

Second, a successful critical thinker inevitably possesses certain dispositions, habits of mind, or intellectual virtues, such as open-mindedness, a commitment to truth, an acceptance of personal fallibility, and a willingness to entertain alternative perspectives and viewpoints (Sears & Parsons, 1991). This dispositional component, an aspect of critical thinking that does transfer between different contexts, is ironically ignored by the generic employability skills approach. An effective construct of critical thinking in career education will emphasize the importance of these two requirement areas, that is, knowledge and dispositions, to students. In a later section of this chapter we propose an intellectual virtue approach to critical thinking that we believe grapples effectively with both of these necessary conditions.

To summarize, then, when critical thinking and problem solving are depicted as transferable employability skills based on some heuristic strategy, their crucial epistemic and dispositional requirements are undermined. The conceptual error that terms critical thinking an "employability skill" fallaciously implies to career education practitioners and students that it can be practiced in the abstract for successful application in distinct occupational arenas. Although personal dispositions are necessary for critical thinking and transferable between occupational contexts, the relationship between character qualities and reflective thought remains generally unrecognized by career education programs. In the following section, we suggest that these problems pale in their potential classroom implications, however, when compared to the anti-democratic ideological messages students receive from the technical rationality emphasis of current critical thinking constructs in career education.

5.2   Technical Rationality and Critical Thinking

Although respecting student rationality is frequently defended in educational discourse, there is often little attention devoted to its various interpretations, and their respective pedagogical and political implications. Rationality most generally refers to the abstract employment of reason, but the application of reason may be either instrumental or foundational in its approach with distinct implications for students. Technical, or instrumental, rationality denotes a series of actions organized to achieve predetermined goals. In other words, if the predetermined objective is "x", technical rationality charts the various steps leading to the realization of "x".

Within career education, for example, critical thinking conceived of as technical rationality refers to means/end reasoning that pursues human capital and business objectives with the maximum possible efficiency. A critical thinking approach consistent with foundational rationality, on the other hand, is not restricted to enhancing practical efficiency within predetermined and narrow human capital education frameworks. Foundational rationality explores the entire social, economic, and political context of the vocational problem or issue under investigation. Unlike technical rationality, critical thinking that practices foundational rationality is not merely managerial expertise focused on achieving predetermined objectives within limited paradigms, but evaluates objectives in light of possible alternatives, and respects the moral imperatives of a democratic society.

Critical thinking in career education is widely portrayed as an instrumental problem solving strategy to generate technical solutions within a naturalized neo-liberal market economy system. Five Steps to Better Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making (Guffey, 1996), a business resource created for teachers of career education, emphasizes the daily practical challenges that workers might expect to confront: "Some problems are big and unmistakable, such as the failure of an air freight delivery service to get packages to customers on time. Other problems may be continuing annoyances, such as regularly running out of toner for an office copy machine" (n.p.). Business Education (British Columbia Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, 1998) reflects a technical rationality focus more directly by suggesting that, "Critical thinking is an important aspect of all courses. Instruction should include opportunities for students to apply economic and business principles to particular circumstances" (n.p.). The Iowa City Community School District (2003) Career/Business Education high school curriculum describes problem solving as "an employability skill required by employers" (n.p.) The Missouri Department (2003) of Elementary and Secondary Education's Division of Vocational and Adult

Education suggests critical thinking skills help students "solve everyday, practical problems" (p. 1). These critical thinking constructs promote technical rationality by encouraging students to address problems from a limited perspective that ignores wider workplace, labour market, and socio-economic issues. If we recall the work of Chomsky (1991) discussed earlier in the chapter, one might call this a "propaganda model" of critical thinking in career education that narrows rather than extends the range of possible social and economic alternatives.

When students are tacitly or openly discouraged from engaging the social and economic forces shaping contemporary vocational experience, their democratic right to participate in directing these forces is correspondingly undermined. Indeed, as we have argued, the principles of democratic learning and moral imperatives of education within a democratic society require students to be provided with the necessary knowledge and dispositions to make informed choices about current working and labour market conditions, and entertain possible alternatives to improve these conditions. The application of instrumental rationality throughout career education is also inconsistent with the overwhelming focus in liberal democracies around the world on civic agency in the civics curricula we discussed in Chapter Three.

Kincholoe, Slattery and Steinberg (2000) recognize the problem with current critical thinking constructs by suggesting they limit student learning to "a modernist logic in which thinking is hyperrationalized and reduced to a set of micrological skills that promote a form of procedural knowledge" (p. 249). Critical thinking approaches in career education that advocate technical rationality view cognition "as taking place in a vacuum," (p. 249) and inappropriately disregard the various forces shaping contemporary vocational experience. Vocational preparation should not be taught in isolation from historical context because many of the occupational problems students confront emerge directly from social and economic conditions, and the neo-liberal political policies that create them.

The anti-democratic implications of technical rationality highlight the need to promote foundational rationality as the critical thinking approach within career education. A critical thinking construct based on foundational rationality encourages in-depth student examination of economic globalization and international trade agreements, explores current labour market conditions, and considers how general working conditions might be transformed to improve the vocational experience of workers. Without addressing these various forces and considering the means to mediate them, students are politically marginalized, and become workers merely responding to crises arising from the actions of others rather than critically engaged, participating citizens in a meaningful democratic society.

5.3   Critical Thinking in Democratic Career Education

We have heretofore argued in this chapter that current constructs of critical thinking and problem solving in career education are inadequate to meet the epistemic, dispositional, and democratic requirements of vocational preparation. We believe a more effective, politically empowering, and epistemologically coherent approach to critical thinking promotes student understanding of the various forces shaping contemporary vocational experience. This requires discussing with students issues such as globalization, neo-liberalism, international trade agreements, and the impact these agreements currently have on both domestic and foreign workers. It also involves an extensive examination of the role and obligations of business and industry in a democratic society, an open discussion of labour history, the organizing and bargaining rights of workers, occupational experience, and the relationship between a sustainable economy, occupational experience, and the environment. More generally, foundational rationality is practiced in democratic approaches to critical thinking about career and human capital education when and only when students are provided with significant information about the entire socio-economic context of their contemporary and future vocational experience (Hyslop-Margison & Armstrong, 2004).

The dispositional requirements of critical thinking in career education are inevitably linked with respecting the democratic right of students to participate in constructing the conditions that shape their working lives. This means, as we suggested previously, distinguishing between natural and social reality (Searle, 1995), and helping learners appreciate that labour market and working conditions are formed through conscious human actions and transformed in precisely the same manner. Critical thinking approaches in career education that practice foundational rationality and respect democratic learning practices portray students and workers as legitimate political participants in a democratic dialogue about economic, labour market, and working conditions. We also believe that encouraging the direct political participation, or praxis, of students as part of their critical thinking experience in career education helps them develop the necessary dispositions required for participatory democratic citizenship.

One place this type of praxis might occur is in the context of "school-career transition programs" (Educational Programs and Services Branch, n.d. p. 2). Depending on the specific program, these initiatives involve placing students in formal working contexts for periods ranging from half a day to a full semester or sometimes even longer. The Canadian province of New Brunswick has a number of these programs and they are basically designed to help students understand the world of work, the

educational requirements for particular career paths and enhance their ability to make the transition from school to work. These experiences should not be so limited, however, and have the potential to provide vehicles for a much more critical examination of the world of work. To illustrate this we will revisit an analogous set of programs in civic education referred to as service learning.

Service learning programs are widespread in the US, and comprise a key component of the new emphasis on citizenship in the National Curriculum in England. Service learning is also beginning to appear in a number of Canadian jurisdictions. In Chapter One we pointed out that while most service-learning programs focus on philanthropy, or "old style charity work" (Osborne, 2004b, p. 15), some programs engage students in significant democratic reflection including the broad consideration of historical, political and social contexts as well as alternative solutions to the issues involved.

Researchers at the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) at the University of Maryland argue that properly structured service-learning programs can foster this kind of civic engagement:

A gradually accumulating body of evidence suggests that service-learning helps students develop knowledge of community needs, commit to an ethic of service, develop more sophisticated understandings of politics and morality, gain a greater sense of civic responsibility and feelings of efficacy, and increase their desire to become active contributors to society. (Billig, Root & Jesse, 2005, p. 4)

But, they caution, all service-learning programs are not created equal: "The research shows," they argue, "that unless certain practices within service-learning are in place, the impact may not be maximized" (p. 3). These researchers draw on expertise from across the US to identify "essential elements" of quality service learning programs reporting that, "the service-learning cycle includes student planning, action, reflection, and celebration. In high quality service-learning projects, students have considerable voice in determining activities, and teachers facilitate knowledge and skill acquisition" (p. 3). It is clear from these essential elements that quality service-learning puts as much emphasis on learning as it does service. When applied to work education, then, the job experience students acquire becomes the subject of subsequent critical analysis in the classroom and school.

A vivid illustration of the two very different approaches to service learning shows up in programs in the Canadian provinces of Ontario and British Columbia. Several years ago Ontario mandated that all students "must complete a minimum of 40 hours of community involvement activities as part of the requirements for an Ontario Secondary School Diploma"

(Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, n.d.). Beginning in the 2005-06 school year students enrolled in the new Civics Studies 11 course in British Columbia will be required to "design and implement a plan for civic action on a selected issue" (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 31). While both of these requirements are premised on engaging students in and with the community outside of classrooms, they are very different in terms of their intent, scope, context, and orientation. It seems to us the Ontario program would largely fit Wade and Saxe's (1996) first category of service-learning which they characterize as simple philanthropy, while the British Columbia program clearly fits the second category of democratic civic learning.

The Ontario requirement is a stand alone initiative as opposed to being attached to any particular subject curriculum and has as its broad intent "to encourage students to develop awareness and understanding of civic responsibility and of the role they can play and the contributions they can make in supporting and strengthening their communities" (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, n.d., p. 1). The Ministry sets general guide-lines for the kinds of activities that are acceptable and individual boards are expected to develop specific lists of acceptable activities. Principals assume the responsibility of communicating board policy to students and parents who will collectively decide the activities in which individual students participate. The 40 hours must be completed over the four years of high school and the requirement can be met in a single activity or a number of different activities. Students are provided with a letter explaining the program and a form for supervisors to sign when the 40 hours are completed. There is no requirement for academic work such as essays, presentations or reflective journals that are related to this civic experience, and no assessment beyond a simple check to ensure students complete the mandatory hours.

The British Columbia requirement constitutes a part of the Civic Action component of the new Civic Studies 11 course and is intricately connected to the other three components: Skills and Processes of Civic Studies, Informed Citizenship, and Civic Deliberation. Students in BC are required to develop, implement and reflect on "a selected local, provincial, national, or interna-tional civic issue" (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 23). While the Integrated Resource Package (IRP) for the course suggests the planning for this experience should begin early in the year, it is essentially seen as a culminating activity which puts together the knowledge, skills, and dispositions developed through the course – what is called "civic mindedness" – providing students with the opportunity to act on what they have learned and reflect on that action in the context of their learning.

There is a definite progression in the British Columbia course from learning about key elements of democratic societies, including institutional and legal aspects, through examining case studies of particular "model citizens" (p. 55) and conducting simulations of democratic processes in class including mock trials, model parliaments and simulated elections to the requirement of taking action in the civic sphere outside the classroom. Teachers are asked to "discuss the types of civic action students could choose such as organizing a demonstration, letter-writing or petition campaign, advertising campaign, or participation in an existing organization" (p. 60). Using knowledge accumulated in the course, students, individually or in groups, are expected to identify an issue, assess the issue in terms of the civic components involved (who are the key players? what are the different views of the issue? what are the range of options available for addressing the issue?) make a plan for addressing it, carryout the plan, and reflect on the process once it is complete.

In terms of broad intent, these initiatives from Ontario and British Columbia have obvious similarities. Both are designed to address the pervasive concern that young people are increasingly alienated and disengaged from active participation in civic life by requiring involvement in community action of some sort. Both programs are based on the belief that such action will result in feelings of increased connection with the community as well as a heightened sense of efficacy among students that reverse the trend toward citizen disengagement. In addition to this attention to character shaping and dispositions, both programs are also premised on the belief that such action will contribute to the civic knowledge, participation and skills of students.

Based on Wade and Saxe's (1996) analysis and the growing body of research about service-learning, there are also very significant differences between the programs. The Ontario program clearly fits in their first category which, they argue, "emphasizes civic duty, voluntarism, and the value of altruism" (p. 333). Expectations for the program are stated in very general terms and there is no attempt to connect the community service requirement to any curricular outcomes even though concern for citizenship and community activism shows up several places in the Ontario curriculum, most notably in the grade 10 civics course (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005). The overriding impression is that the service should be community minded and apolitical as there is no mention of the students either trying to understand the issues surrounding their particular areas of service or making any attempt to address identified problems. There are no critical requirements for the students beyond putting in the necessary 40 hours and filing a record of the accumulated time with the school. Hence, it is exceptionally

difficult to see how any outcomes – in terms of either knowledge, skills or dispositions – could be monitored or assessed in this model. The implication is that simply completing the service, rather than critically engaging with the experience, will lead to positive outcomes.

The British Columbia requirement, on the other hand, fits very well into Wade and Saxes' second category of programs which focuses "on critical refection about social policies and the acquisition of skills to exert influence on public affairs" (p. 333). This approach to civics includes virtually every one of the essential elements of strong service-learning programs as described by CIRCLE researchers. The project emerges from the systematic study of democracy and social change and is built on careful analysis of the social and political issues involved in the area of engagement. The program requires students to attempt to foster change related to these issues. Students are expected to complete reflective academic work both in preparation for implementing their action plan and when they have completed their work. The IRP contains very specific and clearly articulated expectations in developing knowledge, skills and dispositions, and the requirement that students not only complete the project but submit related work provides mechanisms for assessing progress within these areas.

Most school-career transition experiences in career and work-related education programs resemble the philanthropic approach to service learning in civics education. They focus on limited, non-critical experiences and are designed to situate students in an existing labour market and workplace context. Workplace experience for students that respects the principles of democratic learning cannot be so narrow in scope. If workplace experience followed serious classroom study of the historical, social and political contexts of economic systems and particular jobs in those systems, and encouraged students to apply that knowledge critically to an actual examination of the specific contexts in which they are placed, the experiences could strengthen rather than restrict democratic participation in shaping the conditions of vocational experience.

Another effective career education teaching practice that respects the foundational rationality required by democratic learning is Freire's (1970) model of problem-posing education. In this approach students construct personal understanding through successive stages of critical inquiry. Problem posing begins by exploring the present perspective of students, and gradually assisting them to become more informed and critical social participants. Career education students could begin by focusing on local employment losses and expand their inquiry by considering the present global economic practices provoking such suffering. Foundational rationality in career education would utilize problem-posing techniques because

they elucidate the connections between self and society, and enhance student understanding of how structural forces influence individual vocational experience. When applied to career or human capital education, problem-posing might focus on the unequal power relations between workers and corporations, the substance and conditions of various collective bargaining agreements, social and labour market conditions, and the labour market treatment of underprivileged workers. Students could also investigate technology ownership, its general impact on employment, and question which social groups profit or get hurt by its development and implementation (Hyslop-Margison & Armstrong, 2004).

An example of the problem-posing approach to vocational education designed to enhance workers' autonomy is the Antigonish Movement that began in 1928 at St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia, Canada. It was designed to reform the impoverished fishing and farming economy in rural Nova Scotia through education that taught farmers and fishers basic skills, and involved them in the development of locally generated economic alternatives (Selman, 1991). The process began with large-scale community meetings to discuss issues facing the community that were then examined in detail by ongoing small study groups that met regularly. These groups were the vehicles used for teaching basic skills, examining economic structures and processes, and developing community based solutions to economic hardships faced by the region. One of the solutions emerging from this collective movement included the development of a significant system of cooperative enterprises. The movement garnered wide international acclaim and received funding from such unlikely organizations the Carnegie and Rockefeller Foundations. The organization also founded the Coady Institute at St. Francis Xavier, named after Father Moses Coady, a key intellectual leader of the Antigonish Movement and a well recognized Nova Scotia socialist. Selman (1991) claims "it was a dynamic and world famous means whereby people were assisted to exercise increased influence over the forces that shaped their lives" (p. 127). This and other community development projects from the early years of the adult education movement in Canada provide helpful models of problem-posing education put into actual practice.

Collaborative learning represents another career education practice that effectively promotes foundational rationality. This learning approach begins by examining the assumptions and beliefs held by students regarding various constructs, primarily social constructs, with the intent of bringing to the surface each student's knowledge, but eventually moving beyond individual knowledge. After initially establishing individual understanding, learners in a collaborative group begin to construct additional knowledge by considering how their collective experiences are shaped by social phenomena.

Students also compare their knowledge with that accumulated by other group members. Through reading, film, and utilizing electronic sources of text teachers can extend these deliberations to include people and ideas from beyond the classroom. Again, this learning approach provides an effective critical mechanism that illustrates to students their individual labour market difficulties are often directly connected to global and neo-liberal economic practices. This process of constructing new knowledge is consistent with democratic learning because it requires students to consider alternative viewpoints, knowledge and possibilities. It also promotes the communicative dialogue fundamental to democratic social experience.

The principal role of foundational rationality in career education is affording students the knowledge and perspectives that promote informed judgments and decision-making. For example, there are numerous ecological issues directly related to contemporary vocational experience that might be discussed during critical thinking activities. These include questioning whether the free market values of individualism and unconstrained consumerism can harmoniously exist with a respect for nature and sustainable development, or whether our present cultural values of unconstrained consumerism require significant readjustment. Smith and Williams (1999) suggest introducing students to employment alternatives that counter the dominant consumerism embodied within contemporary vocational opportunities. They suggest discussing with students occupational choices that protect the natural environment over the long term rather than simply exploit it for temporary profit and short-term economic gain. Students might investigate occupations such as sustainable forestry, or research community-supported organic farming, environmental cleanup, and energy efficient building construction as alternative career choices sensitive to pressing environmental concerns.

Career education programs adopting a democratic critical thinking approach based on foundational rationality, then, pursue the following principles of inquiry:

- Critical thinking that respects foundational rationality considers the social and economic context a legitimate/necessary unit of analysis;
- Critical thinking that respects foundational rationality encourages the political engagement of students in shaping the conditions that determine their vocational lives;
- Critical thinking that respects foundational rationality places career education and vocational experience in a historical/contemporary context;
- Critical thinking that respects foundational rationality provides students with alternative viewpoints on possible labour market and workplace structure;

- Critical thinking that respects foundational rationality fosters critical dispositions among students by providing continuous opportunities for social, economic, labour market, and vocational critique. (Hyslop-Margison & Armstrong, 2004)

5.4   Intellectual Virtue in Democratic Career Education

Although the idea of epistemic virtue has been largely neglected in education, we believe it provides career education teachers with another effective strategy to pursue democratic learning objectives. Perhaps the primary strength of epistemic virtue involves its avoidance of the conceptual confusions present in current critical thinking constructs. Whereas non-virtue theories of knowledge consider epistemic justification in terms of evidence requirements or evaluation procedures, virtue epistemology understands justified belief in terms of epistemic, or intellectual, virtues. Again, the intellectual virtues consist of personal qualities, character traits, and dispositions rather than problem-solving strategies, heuristics or meta-cognitive critical thinking skills. Since the intellectual virtues are dispositions and character qualities students can be habituated to their development through practice in career education programs and elsewhere throughout the curriculum.

Any pedagogical approach that successfully enhances the intellectual development of students, as we pointed our previously in this chapter, must include both an epistemological and a dispositional component. Unlike the employability skills discourse on critical thinking that neglects these requirements by emphasizing heuristic strategies and cognitive skill transfer, virtue epistemology reflects a coherent recognition of their combined importance. Montmarquet (1993) suggests, for example, that the epistemologically virtuous individual aspires toward three interrelated general objectives: to discover new truths, to increase one's explanatory understanding, and to hold true rather than false beliefs. By encouraging students to discover new truths and increase their explanatory understanding, the intellectual virtues initially compel students to expand their subject knowledge relevant to a particular problem.

An example of how this initial virtue might be applied could involve student discussion of neo-liberalism. Rather than a teacher simply lecturing, condemning or advocating the prevailing social and economic order, students would be encouraged to discover as much information as possible about neo-liberalism for themselves. What are the major arguments in favour of and against neo-liberalism, and what does the available evidence suggest on its efficacy? If students are habituated to accumulate such information in advance of rendering any decision or judgment on a topic, they can avoid

the rash opinions and *ad hominem* attacks that often dominate contemporary debates on key social and political issues. Instead, they understand that background knowledge provides the initial and foundational component to any meaningful reflective judgment and withhold judgment in the absence of adequate knowledge and understanding.

The intellectual virtues we advocate for application in career education cannot be understood exclusively in terms of a general desire to acquire additional knowledge and enhance explanatory understanding. Other personal qualities are obviously required for epistemic success since they impact directly on how evidence is interpreted. In addition to the general epistemic virtues, Montmarquet (1993) identifies a list of regulatory virtues, or second order virtues, and classifies them in three additional distinct categories: Virtues of impartiality include personality traits such as openness to the ideas of others, willingness to exchange ideas, and a lively sense of one's own fallibility; virtues of intellectual sobriety oppose the excitement and rashness of overly enthusiastic commitment to truth claims; and finally, virtues of intellectual courage include a willingness to entertain and examine potential alternatives to popular ideas, perseverance in the face of opposition from others, and the determination to see an inquiry through to the end.

We point out that these virtues not only afford a solid basis for critical thinking but are consistent with the underlying values – or virtues – of democratic practice. Barber (2003), for example, argues that the central democratic value is humility. "After all," he writes, "the recognition that I might be wrong and my opponent right is the very heart of the democratic faith" (p. 138). In writing about some of the fledgling democracies in Eastern Europe, Schöpflin (2001) makes a point similar to ours that both substantive knowledge and dispositions are essential to democratic practice. Having the form of democracy without an underlying commitment to democratic values leaves democracy largely unrealized. He observes that "post-communist systems were consensual, a consent that was expressed regularly in elections and through other institutions, but were not democratic in as much as democratic values were only sporadically to be observed" (p. 110). He proceeds to argue that societies have what he calls first and second order rules. "First order rules include the formal regulation by which every system operates, like the constitution, laws governing elections, procedures for the settlement of conflict and the like" – the substance of democracy. Second order rules are the informal tacit rules of the game that are internalized as part of the virtues of democracy. In a democracy these second order rules include "key democratic values of self-limitation, feedback, moderation, commitment, responsibility, [and] the recognition of the value of competing multiple rationalities" (p. 120).

These more specific second order virtues are designed to regulate the general objective of epistemic conscientiousness because, as Montmarquet (1993) observes, "Bare conscientiousness by no means guarantees a proper orientation toward one's own or others beliefs, and this is why the qualities we have been enumerating seem so necessary to intellectual inquiry and integral to our notion of a virtuous inquirer" (pp. 25-26). Although the personal qualities identified as epistemic virtues may be construed as habits, career education teachers and students must remember that they are not mindless habits, and this is where subject knowledge and understanding once again play a pivotal role. As Montmarquet (1993) explains, "one is trying to arrive at the truth [and most importantly] be guided by the evidence" (p. 41).

The problem, then, with the accumulation of knowledge and information in the absence of these other regulatory virtues is that dogmatic commitment to certain beliefs remains possible. If career education teachers or students, ideologically committed to neo-liberal principles, are wrongfully dismissive of evidence pointing to the tragic consequences of neo-liberal policies, then the impartial judgment consistent with intellectual virtue is unattainable. As difficult as it may be, even those of us against neo-liberalism must be open to the possibility that our beliefs are in error and remain perpetually cognizant of our own epistemic fallibility. However, in situations where we are convinced the preponderance of available evidence points in the direction we support, we must also possess the intellectual courage not to buckle under political or professional pressure. For example, our salvos against the critical thinking constructs developed by many of our colleagues may provoke unpleasant rebuttals and even personal attacks. Nevertheless, the evidence and required course of action from our perspective remains abundantly clear. The path to truth through the pursuit of the intellectual virtues is not always simple and rarely politically comfortable.

Some of the more sophisticated contemporary scholarship on critical thinking appears to be groping its way toward virtue epistemology. Case and Wright (1999) encourage teachers to foster such qualities as open-mindedness, fair-mindedness, independent-mindedness, a critical attitude and an intellectual work ethic in students. Harvey Siegel (1999), a pre-eminent scholar in the field of contemporary critical thinking, worries that the dispositional requirements of reflective thought remain a vastly under explored area in spite of their indispensable significance. These observations clearly support some currently unarticulated vision of virtue epistemology.

Unlike critical thinking, epistemic virtue represents an ideal to be strived toward rather than a measurable standard to achieve. The intellectual character developed through virtue epistemology will not appear after a single lesson or after an entire course, but reflects instead the likely educational

journey of a lifetime. Although we have provided a general framework for this approach, the epistemic virtues cannot be neatly compartmentalized for fragmented instruction, nor can they be clearly marked for easy assessment. Many career education teachers and students may find the amorphous and often inconstant nature of the epistemic virtues profoundly disturbing during an era marked by curriculum standardization and high stakes assessment. To those individuals, we might simply suggest that in spite of educational rhetoric to the contrary, there are no quick facile recipes to enhance the knowledge, understanding, and academic development of students. Like democracy, reflective and informed judgement can be a non-linear and sometimes messy process.

Critical thinking in career education, framed within an intellectual virtue approach, has the capacity to promote a more complete and democratic understanding among students of the various forces shaping contemporary vocational experience. When students develop such an understanding, and the necessary dispositions to transform that knowledge into practice, they are empowered as democratic citizens to influence the quality of their own occupational lives. Unfortunately, as we have illustrated, current models of critical thinking in career education are conceptually problematic, epistemologically incomplete, virtually ignore dispositions, and merely promote technical rationality aimed at improving human capital efficiency within difficult labour market and working conditions. The challenge for democratically minded career education teachers, then, is expanding the unit of analysis to explore the social, economic, and political boundaries of contemporary working life.

Truly democratic vocational educators are committed to pedagogical approaches that politically empower students in their personal working lives. A critical, liberating and democratic career education considers political participation and social justice, including the right to satisfying and financially rewarding employment, as fundamental democratic objectives. For critical thinking in career education to achieve its full pedagogical potential, it must encourage students to assume a far greater measure of decision-making power over the policies influencing their occupational lives. This means challenging the human capital assumptions and corporate dominated education reform movements that reduce critical thinking to technical rationality and a transferable employability skill, and correspondingly preclude serious critique of morally questionable social, economic, and labour market practices. We suggest that critical thinking respecting foundational rationality and pursuing an intellectual virtue approach can meet the pressing challenge of creating politically informed subjects in the democratic construction of vocational experience rather than mere objects of labour market efficiency.

5.5 Teachers as Public Intellectuals

Our role as educators concerned with promoting democracy and democratic citizenship extends far beyond the activities we pursue in our classrooms. As we have argued throughout this text, there is much we can do in the context of schools and classrooms, but we must also be prepared to establish a democratic standard for our students through the example we set in the wider political and social realm. We believe the reclaiming of human capital and career education, and all education for that matter, for democratic citizenship requires the active engagement of teachers as public agents of social change.

The term "public intellectual" was originally coined by University of California, Los Angeles, historian Russell Jacoby to distinguish between a disappearing brand of politically active academic and the academic as institutionalized scholar (Fink, Leonard & Reid, 1996). Whereas the institutionalized career education teacher focuses on satisfying bureaucratic demands such as following standardized testing policies and meeting formal curricular mandates, the career education teacher as public intellectual transfers his or her knowledge into public discourse and related political action. We therefore concur with Hargreaves (2003) that the idea of democracy should be extended beyond university-based academics and that "teachers must take their place again among society's most respected intellectuals" (p. 2). If teachers are to be public intellectuals action must be taken on two fronts: teachers' working conditions must support autonomous intellectual activity and teachers, both individually and collectively, must accept their professional responsibility to carry out serious intellectual work.

In the conclusion to the preceding section we wrote the following: "For critical thinking in career education to achieve its full pedagogical potential, it must encourage students to assume a far greater measure of decision-making power over the policies influencing their occupational lives." It seems to us completely inconsistent to expect teachers to foster this kind of decision-making power among students when they work in bureaucracies that often stifle their own autonomous, creative participation. Dale (1989) and Hargreaves (2003) both argue that the thirty years following World War II saw a considerable expansion in teacher autonomy and professionalism in Western democracies. The economic downturn and the election of neo-liberal governments in the late 1970s and early 1980s led to a significant reigning in or taming of the profession. Hargreaves (2003) describes the effects of neo-liberal reforms on teacher autonomy as follows:

Subjected teachers to public attacks; eroded their autonomy of judgment and conditions of work; created epidemics of standardization and over-regulation; and provoked tidal waves of resignation and early retirement, crises of recruitment, and shortages of eager and able educational leaders. The very profession that is often said to be of vital importance for the

knowledge economy is the one that too many groups have devalued, more and more people want to leave, less and less want to join, and very few are interested in leading. (p. 11)

If teachers are going to provide leadership in fostering democracy it is imperative that their own working conditions are democratic and permit the development of the characteristics consistent with the ideal of the public intellectual we identify below.

While developers of educational policies and employers of teachers have a responsibility to establish and maintain democratic working conditions, teachers themselves have an obligation to respond with high quality professional commitment to education as an intellectual pursuit. Contrary to neo-liberal theorizing and practice in education, professional autonomy enhances rather than undermines accountability. As a profession, teachers, and sometimes academics for that matter, have at times been guilty of eschewing autonomy in favour of the safety provided by structure and bureaucracy. It is often easier, if ultimately far less satisfying, to hide behind official policies and procedures than do the difficult and risky work of trying to break new ground. Hargreaves (2003) argues that teaching must become what he describes as a "grown-up profession, with grown-up norms of teaching where teachers are as much at ease with demanding adults as they are with problem children; where professional disagreement is embraced and enjoyed rather than avoided; where conflict is seen as a necessary part of professional learning, not a fatal act of professional betrayal" (p. 7). While we do not see the work of a public intellectual as an amalgam of discreet elements, there are critical, interconnected features that characterize this kind of activity. These features are described below and include the important qualities of autonomy, ownership, collaboration, and engagement.

Autonomy is at the very core of intellectual and academic work. It is manifested in universities as academic freedom, an idea that the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) (2005) terms "the life blood of the modern university." The CAUT defines academic freedom as "the right to teach, learn, study and publish free of orthodoxy or threat of reprisal and discrimination. It includes the right to criticize the university and the right to participate in its governance" (n.p.). It is exactly this kind of academic freedom that allows for the free and unfettered exploration of ideas and alternatives that is essential, we would argue, both to the creation of new knowledge and the development of democracy itself. The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) (2005), the largest professional organization representing social studies teachers in the world, makes the point that "the democratic way of life depends for its very existence upon the free contest and examination of ideas" (n.p.). However, the academic freedom of teachers and university faculty is increasingly challenged by a neo-liberal

order intolerant of resistance, or any alternative perspectives on social and educational structure.

The erosive neo-liberal forces that undermine autonomy are being especially felt within universities. Many institutions of higher learning confront considerable fiscal challenges prompted by reductions in public funding that impact directly on the structure of contemporary academic life. The growing number of technical training programs at many universities, the generally declining stature of the humanities, and research agendas often determined by instrumental government and corporate agendas circumscribe the scope of possible inquiry and action. The university has increasingly become an institution devoted to technical training, labour market preparation and instrumental modes of learning, and far less an institution devoted to fostering moral, social and political dialogue. The bureaucratic and growing authoritarian practices of universities in Canada and the US in particular encourage widespread passivity among many academics. The modern university, largely removed from meaningful public influence, is rapidly becoming a subsidiary instrument in the largely uncontested neo-liberal drift toward economic globalization and human capital learning.

Contrary to popular belief professional autonomy and academic freedom do not imply that there are no standards by which teaching and scholarship might be judged. Rather, they shift the location of those judgments from bureaucrats or politicians to the academic community and the means for exercising judgments from applying fiats to engaging in academic discourse. As Seixas (1993) argues, the community of inquiry becomes the basis for setting and applying standards for knowledge and learning. In its statement on Academic Freedom and the Social Studies Teacher the NCSS (2005) sets out the meaning of teacher autonomy and identifies the scholarly community as the vehicle for setting standards to judge teachers' work in the same manner other professions such as medicine and law evaluate their members:

A teacher's academic freedom is his/her right and responsibility to study, investigate, present, interpret, and discuss all the relevant facts and ideas in the field of his/her professional competence. This freedom implies no limitations other than those imposed by generally accepted standards of scholarship. As a professional, the teacher strives to maintain a spirit of free inquiry, open-mindedness, and impartiality in the classroom. As a member of an academic community, however, the teacher is free to present in the field of his or her professional competence his/her own opinions or convictions and with them the premises from which they are derived. (n.p.)

If career education teachers are going to teach for the kind of critical awareness and praxis we describe in this book then they must have the autonomy – the academic freedom – to think new thoughts and explore these ideas with their students and colleagues without the fear of recrimination.

Closely related to autonomy in intellectual work is the idea of vocational ownership. Both of us worked for a number of years before becoming academics; one in the public school system and one in private sector business. One thing that struck us upon entering university life was the way academics used possessive pronouns in talking about 'their' work. They used phrases like 'my' or 'our' work in ways we had not encountered before. We largely saw the work we had done outside the university as someone else's work we merely contributed to and sometimes felt alienated from. We consider our scholarship, teaching and service to be our intellectual property and not the university's. We decide what to do, when to do it and whom to do it with.

On the surface this idea of ownership may seem unimportant but one difference we also notice between our present labour and that we performed before entering the university is our degree of commitment. That is not to say we did not take our previous work seriously, we certainly did; but the sense of ownership we now have drives us to work harder, and be more rigorous in assessing what we do. We believe this leads to greater degrees of creativity, particularly in the development of alternative ways of thinking, and when generalized across the academic community it creates a multiplicity of interesting ideas and stimulates lively debates about potential social alternatives. Teacher autonomy should lead teachers to develop this sense of ownership about their own work, take personal responsibility for its impact, and increase their democratic jurisdiction over their profession and the schools.

The importance of collaboration by autonomous professionals comprises a fundamental element in expanding the scope of one's knowledge and understanding. The coauthored nature of this book should make it clear that we are deeply committed to collaboration. Even scholars who work alone on their research and writing recognize the centrality of collaboration to the generation of knowledge and therefore present their work at seminars, symposia and conferences as well as publish articles and books in order to subject their work to scrutiny and response from peers, and to push the discussion of ideas forward. Collaboration of this type is not always easy, nor even always pleasant, as we have sometimes found while writing this book, because it necessarily involves asking tough questions, performing incisive critique, and engaging in vigorous debate and disagreement, but we believe these activities are absolutely necessary to substantive intellectual development and academic credibility.

Hargreaves (2003) argues that neo-liberal reforms of the past twenty years, particularly the focus on competition in the educational market place, often stifle professional collaboration. "Competition," he argues, "prevents

schools and teachers from learning from one another. People keep their best ideas to themselves. Districts become the antithesis of learning organizations" (p. 168). He calls for the creation of "professional learning communities" that "put a premium on teachers working together, but insist that this joint work consistently focus on improving teaching and learning and use evidence and data as a basis for informing classroom improvement efforts and for solving school wide problems" (pp. 169-170). We believe fostering this kind of collaboration is absolutely essential if teachers are to develop as autonomous professionals and public intellectuals.

Finally, intellectual work requires engagement in two ways. First, it requires critical engagement with ideas. A key component of intellectual life is the constant critique of accepted knowledge and ideas. From this perspective, orthodoxy is suspect and knowledge and ideas are always open to re-examination. An illustration of this type of informed questioning is the way academic journals often publish substantive comment on, and response to, published articles. In this way research and scholarship are treated as ongoing conversations rather than fixed bodies of knowledge to be transmitted to the scholarly community and to students. Unfortunately, as Hargreaves (2003) points out, research and scholarly knowledge are often presented to teachers as something they must merely accept rather than something they might engage or critique. He argues that ensuring teaching is characterized by the autonomy and vocational ownership discussed above will create "strong communities [where] teachers can also have the competence and confidence to engage critically, not compliantly, with the research that informs their practice" (p. 29).

Although often rewarded by university administration practices, the growing and troubling academic myopia on many university campuses leaves faculty largely innocuous to political interests by diverting professorial attention from publicly influential scholarship and politically engaged activities. The increased standardization, non-autonomous accountability and growing applications of instrumental technology on campuses centralize control over course content, and acceptable teaching and assessment practices. Faculty who resist the reduction of academic life to clerical labour are sometimes marginalized or even labelled as political troublemakers. To employ Stanley Aronowitz's (2001) perhaps less than eloquent but largely accurate metaphor, "The administrators are the cat and the faculty the cat box" (p. 239).

We believe contemporary academic inquiry in education is too often divided between scholarship so abstract its practical implications are difficulty to identify and empirical research that employs sophisticated data collection and analysis methods but fails to consider foundational questions

about the legitimate aims and practices of education in democratic societies. Consistent with the role of a public intellectual, educators must move beyond the mere analysis, empirical or otherwise, of teaching and learning to participate in the struggle for power and resources within schools and society. This may require challenging the neo-liberal economics of school funding that ensure the continuous class impoverishment of socially marginalized students at all levels of public education.

Public intellectuals engage not only with ideas, then, but with the wider society as well. Robert Bellah and his colleagues (Bellah et al., 1986) argue convincingly that scholarship needs to be neither an ivory tower intellectual pursuit nor a body of expert knowledge to which the public and policy makers must submit. They reject the notion of a scholar as a detached authority and contend that intellectuals need to bring their specialized knowledge to the evaluation of important public issues in ways that invite discussion and debate rather than pronouncement.

The career education teacher as public intellectual provides the final, and arguably most important, link in the chain that connects human capital programs to democratic learning and political empowerment. Career education teachers who act as public intellectuals share an action-based commitment to democratize society by challenging the mechanisms both within and outside schools that undermine the informed and reflective choices of students. Public intellectuals realize that social and political change is possible and seek to propel their students and society toward that recognition through direct political engagement. The career education teacher acting as a public intellectual adopts a vocabulary of democratic ideals that links curriculum discourses to strategies of political engagement and potential social change. Career education teachers concerned with the principles of democratic learning view themselves as role models for their students and willingly embrace the responsibility and risks such modeling entails.

Knight Abowitz (2002) considers Cornell West the epitome of a public intellectual who has successfully translated scholarly influence into the public political realm. She argues that West effectively transcends the institutionalized confines of the university to "creatively address some deeply rooted social problems related to human oppression in American" (p. 293). Knight Abowitz also worries, however, that the public philosophy practiced by West risks commercial appropriation by a "market-driven, entertainment culture" (p. 298) more interested in the character than the message. She also warns that West's recent confrontation with the neo-conservative president of Harvard, Lawrence Summers, and West's eventual departure from that institution, highlights the occupational hazards academics assume when they

pursue public philosophy in lieu of more politically benign and university sanctioned activities.

The concern that intellectual rigour is necessarily compromised when academics enter into public discourse is a genuine worry deserving of thoughtful consideration. However, as Michael Berube (1998) suggests, public intellectuals need not abandon academic complexity when entering the public domain, but they must strive to make that complexity more comprehensible and more relevant to a far wider constituency. For example, Noam Chomsky's (1999) scholarship and frequent public discussions often focus on the disjuncture between US foreign policy and the political rhetoric doled out by the American government for public consumption. The complex craft of ideological persuasion is simplified by Chomsky's thoughtful employment of concrete historical examples that illustrate the political misinformation and manipulation present with American society.

In *The Last Good Job In America*, Stanley Aronowitz (2001) traces the career of C. Wright Mills to highlight the personal qualities that characterize an academic as public intellectual: "Mills exemplified a vanishing breed in American life: the radical intellectual who is not safely ensconced in the academy" (p. 239). Aronowitz views the public life of Mills especially relevant during a period when corporations and their powerful political allies are seriously undermining the quality of occupational experience for many American workers. Mills was highly contemptuous of the idea that academic investigation is somehow "obliged to purge itself of social and political commitment" (p. 239). Rather than hiding being false protestations of academic neutrality, the archetypical mantra of the social sciences, he openly and unrelentingly advocated democratic freedom, emancipation and social justice as primary political goals.

Public intellectuals, who are also academics, such as Mills, West and Chomsky share an action-based commitment to improve social equality by challenging the educational and social reproduction of a class-based, ethnically discriminatory and gendered society. Public intellectuals remain confident that moral progress toward greater degrees of social and economic equality is possible and seek to propel society in that direction through direct political engagement. Teachers and teacher educators acting as public intellectuals utilize their privileged position to raise public consciousness about social inequities and injustices that impact on schooling and vocational opportunities, and make manifest the neo-liberal ideologies and policies that give rise to these conditions. Public intellectuals enter the political realm by expanding the scope of their inquiry to include society, rejecting the chimera of political neutrality and the moral inertia it typically generates, and by pursuing public forums to communicate with a non-academic constituency.

5.6   Summary

In this final chapter we have offered some additional pedagogical practices and ideas to help promote democratic learning in work-related education programs. We have also suggested that isolated academic or classroom activities are woefully inadequate to challenge the neo-liberal assumptions rapidly transforming public education at all levels into technical work preparation and instrumental learning more generally. We sincerely hope our combined efforts in this book not only help educators in the field of career education but resonate more inclusively with the needs and concerns of teachers in all subject areas. The protection of democratic education must embrace the struggle by these teachers to protect the profession they practice from current neo-liberal challenges and limitations.

In some small way, we hope that this book provides all teachers and our colleagues with the knowledge, understanding, strategies and vision to counter the neo-liberal polices that threaten to turn our remaining public spaces in education into realms of human capital preparation. We must fully understand our inter-generational obligation to students and to future citizens, and protect the democratic ideals that lie at the heart of our way of life. We support the musings of William Ayers (2004) who beautifully articulates the responsibility teachers and teacher educators have in this regard:

We teachers stand on the side of our students. We create a space where their voices can be heard, their experiences affirmed, their lives valued, their humanity asserted, enacted. Students cannot enter schools as "objects" – thingified doohickeys and widgets – and emerge as "subjects" – self-determined, conscious meaning makers, thoughtful, caring, self-activated, and free. (p. 102)

The choice before us, then, is a relatively simple but critically important one for the future of our democratic societies: Do we create students as future citizens who view themselves as mere objects in history, or do we create learners who view themselves as dynamic political agents of personal and social improvement? From a career education perspective that respects the principles of democratic learning, the answer is abundantly clear and exceptionally compelling.

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