6

Learning How to Hope

When schools and civil organizations cultivate habits of hope, students and citizens learn how to hope, which may breathe new life into democracy. In this chapter, I move from a broader discussion of what we know about quality citizenship education and developing trends among our younger generation to looking at how habits related to democracy, in particular, can be taught in schools. This includes a call to develop communities of inquiry, nurture communication and deliberation, foster criticality and dissent, cultivate imagination and storytelling, view citizenship as shared fate, and build trust.

We teach citizens how to hope by cultivating pragmatist habits of hope and we revive democracy by connecting those habits of hope to learning complementary democratic ways of life. We cannot merely choose to have hope or be hopeful; rather, we need mechanisms that allow us to enact and sustain hoping across time, and habits provide those. As institutions intimately connected to democracy and spaces of citizenship formation, schools should be teaching the ways of life that enable and activate hoping within us and among us.

In this chapter I outline some approaches to teaching hope that may be most useful for developing durable and adaptable hope that simultaneously supports democratic life and attends to some of our current struggles. While they grow out of real circumstances, I have made my suggestions broad so that they can be adapted for an array of students, including those from various backgrounds and ages. But, due to the nature of needing more advanced skills of inquiry, understanding of culture, and use of language, some of the suggestions are targeted toward older children in K-12 schools and some even extend into the college classes of adults. Do not let my focus on older students be misunderstood; young children are capable of hoping and, indeed, are at an important age for fostering forms of hope that are sustainable well into the future. Teaching how to hope should not be reserved or held off only for older learners.

We should not view lessons and curriculum aligned with teaching habits of hope as extraneous—like an additional task heaped on top of the content

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knowledge teachers already work hard to impart. Teaching habits of hope can be integrated with other classroom content and activities and can align with other educational goals or curriculum standards. For example, a teacher might select a utopian story to introduce that genre of writing to students, while also using it to engage students in expanding their vision of what might be possible in their worlds, thereby building hope. Many teachers are provided a degree of flexibility in selecting the materials they use to develop writing, reading, and critical thinking skills; teachers should also have such flexibility when teaching habits of hope.

The environment a teacher creates in the classroom is also important to fostering hope. To the greatest extent possible, teachers must ensure that students' basic needs are met in the classroom and that they feel safe so that they can devote the energy and focus that hoping requires. And even though students' home lives may be burdened with daily worries related to poverty and other struggles, and even though they may encounter significant levels of despair among their family and neighbors, schools must strive to provide a supportive space where students can explore possibilities rather than be yoked with disabling constraints. Potential problems may arise when children are encouraged to hope in the classroom yet encounter significant despair at home. As a result, some children may come to see hoping as not genuine or even as naive, thereby driving them away from the practices of their school. Yet, despair at home seems to increase the need for teaching how to hope somewhere else so that students are given opportunities to overcome the limitations of their homes, and school is often the most logical location.

Teachers should avoid negative language—from themselves, students, or others in the classroom—that discourages agency or that doubts the abilities of students. Such talk dissuades action and predisposes students toward negativity and passivity. Alternatively, teachers can support the development of student agency through techniques that highlight positive action and praise the pursuit of possibilities. For example, a teacher may help students chart their own progress over time in traditional subject areas, showing them how homework completion and other efforts lead to increased learning, which may be indicated by test scores or other outcomes. And teachers can attune students to their strengths while helping them address their weaknesses—making students become more cognizant of themselves, their tendencies, and their capacity for change—key aspects of habit development. All the while, teachers can affirm the ability of those students to change themselves and the world by employing a language of possibility that is mobilizing.

Develop Communities of Inquiry

Learning how to hope cannot happen in a vacuum. Rather, teaching hope, like quality citizenship education, requires engaging with real issues and problems. It means starting in the midst of the indeterminate situations and struggles facing students and society. Teaching hope must begin with authentic experiences and concerns. Teachers can creatively bring those problems into the classroom through literature, science experiments, news stories, and more. Or, they can construct learning situations that formulate mini or related examples of the problem right in the classroom, so that students experience them firsthand—such as the famous blue eye/brown eye activity to simulate the experience of prejudice.[338] Aligned with the preferences of Generation Z, those examples should not be mere symptoms of other social matters, but rather should get at root problems or overarching issues that are significant and authentic. That is not to say, however, that young children should be tasked with solving complex or seemingly intractable issues, for the level needs to be age-appropriate, while still having genuine meaning for the children and their lives. That said, we can learn from children already hard at work on significant social problems. For example, twenty-one students ranging from ages nine to nineteen have brought forward a lawsuit claiming that manmade and government-caused climate change threatens their constitutional rights and violates the public trust.[339] Some of their like-minded peers across the country and world are engaging in protests to raise awareness and demand change, while others are actively working to stop or slow climate change through developing new technologies and engaging in conservation techniques.[340] Indeed, these children may model for other citizens the sorts of effort and inquiry needed to tackle large problems and to approach them with hope.

Next, teachers should model inquiry, lead inquiry, and/or engage in inquiry with the students, depending on the situation. That inquiry begins with identifying and naming the problem. This helps to give the problem clearer shape and meaning for the students so that they understand not only what the problem is about but also why it is significant to themselves or their community. Effectively describing a problem often requires obtaining multiple perspectives—seeing how the problem impacts different people, in different places, in different ways. Such rich descriptions may help to pull stakeholders into the inquiry, for it reveals how they are impacted. We live in a society where the tendency is to look out merely for ourselves, rendering us unable

to grasp the social aspects of the struggles we face and the common good that may be at stake. In response, teachers can work to emphasize the shared impact of problems and issues, which may develop a public around them.

Those connections are not always straightforward or similar from one person to the next. For example, many communities throughout the United States are currently considering whether to remove Confederate monuments. Many such historical figures are even housed on school land or inscribed in the names of the schools themselves. While such considerations often play out among politicians or in courthouses, many students, teachers, and school communities are impacted by the existence of the monuments and by contemporary responses to them. A teacher might bring these struggles to light for students, perhaps by challenging them to consider whether or not a particular Confederate monument on their own school grounds should remain. To do so, teachers must facilitate difficult conversations about the emotions and history invoked by the monument. At the same time, they must realize that some students may not even initially recognize or understand the significance of such monuments, while others may experience them as signs of respect and pride for Confederate soldiers and Southern history, while still others may experience them as devastating reminders of injustice and harm. Teachers should engage students in discussing the potential problems the monument or its removal poses for them, perhaps stymieing their learning or self-value in some way. The teacher should then encourage the students to gather feedback about how the monument impacts those both in and outside of their immediate school community. Students should work to understand the perspectives and rationales of those stakeholders, not merely collect a tally of proponents for various sides of the issue.

Teachers can demonstrate for students that echo chambers of like-minded perspectives are often insufficient for thoroughly understanding the challenging circumstances of the world. For example, proponents of either "side" of the Confederate monument issue may see opposing views in straightforward and simplistic ways, when they actually have a considerable amount of nuance, history, and cultural meaning to be unpacked. And clearly this particular topic is heavily tainted by the history of white supremacy that teachers may need to carefully reveal for and with students. Good inquiry involves social and emotional learning—beginning with self-reflection, seeking out multiple and conflicting perspectives, listening carefully to try to genuinely understand and, at times, empathize with those views, then collaborating and compromising to determine and achieve a shared or just end.[341]

The teacher may need to invite guest speakers or provide alternative and diverse literature to introduce differing perspectives on the monuments in a classroom that may be relatively homogeneous in its population or views. Engaging directly with outside people who hold opposing opinions through field trips, class speakers, or pen pals may provide opportunities for cross-cultural understanding or even new relationships to form across differences. By carefully listening to others, students would likely encounter significant numbers of stories from other citizens, especially those who may be descendants of those enshrined in the monuments or of those enslaved or killed by the memorialized leaders. As evidenced by testimonies provided during seventeen public hearings at the Charlottesville Blue Ribbon Commission on Race, Memorials, and Public Spaces,[342] those stories would likely expose how Confederate statues, flags, and plaques inhibit the flourishing of all people by establishing a climate where slavery is still celebrated through the commemoration of those who fought for it. As a result, some citizens are made to feel lesser than others, and some are left feeling unable to move forward because harmful and hateful elements of the past are still celebrated.[343] Those harms may outweigh the reasons provided by proponents for supporting the monuments or the harms they would incur by having them removed.[344]

Members of the community of inquiry should talk about what they hope for their community's future and the potential impact of the monuments on that future. They should seek to determine what best enables stakeholders to flourish. They should also practice setting objects and objectives of hope as ends-in-view. It can be difficult to determine which goals are realistic and realizable, so teachers should help students develop criteria for shaping and assessing their goals. In this particular case, an end-in-view might be removing a statue from school grounds, supporting students who feel harmed by a statue that is allowed to remain, moving statues to a museum setting where a fuller picture of their meaning is presented, or replacing narratives of cultural pride tied to such monuments with new stories. Teachers can guide students through determining whether those ends are reasonable, what positive changes and unintended consequences they may bring, and how they might be revised over time as circumstances continue to change.

Students should then be empowered to develop feasible, intelligent plans of action or hypotheses based on their knowledge of history, their concerns for the present, and their anticipated and desired future. The teacher should provide relevant information about formal governmental procedures

(such as how to petition for removing a monument) and age-appropriate political theory (such as theories on identity linked to these sorts of cultural markers). The teacher should then aid those students in carrying out their plan, helping them to test and refine it as they go through reflecting on its successes and shortcomings. Teachers should model hoping in cautious ways that are open to validation and criticism through ongoing experimentation. As a result, the students and/or the environment may need to be changed to ensure the well-being of the community or the better future the students envisioned.

Such a community of inquiry creates a space for students to view themselves as active agents and to grow their disposition toward possibility, as opposed to apathy or defeat. They may come to see themselves as having political views about the power and history invoked by the monuments, as well as the know-how to act on those views and to have an impact on their community as a result. In the final stages of inquiry, teachers should engage with students in reflecting on and critiquing their own actions and impact. Sometimes this is best revealed through reflections among the students, and sometimes teachers should demonstrate for students their own impact, showing it back to them. If, for example, the group of students concludes a monument should be removed from the school and decides to do so by reaching out to the local community, pursuing formal democratic processes via the school board or local ordinances, and more, the teacher should summarize those actions and their resulting impact for the students. Perhaps the teacher might also showcase them in a school newsletter or through a local media outlet. Such actions can foster feelings of agency—a sense of "we did it!"—attracting students to undertake similar shared work in the future. This affirms and strengthens habits of hope. Seeing hope change the world, changes us.

The teacher might also inform students about similar actions taken by students elsewhere to further bolster their sense of possibility and perhaps encourage them to join their community with others who have similar goals. Additionally, citizenship education scholar Meira Levinson explains that such guided inquiry through action civics work may form a feedback loop, wherein students' actions are affirmed and then repeated.[345] Indeed, students may experience higher self-efficacy—an individual's perceived ability to achieve an outcome, as described by Alfred Bandura—when they witness their own success. This perception then promotes ongoing effort and invocation of habits of hope.

Philosopher Victoria McGeer discusses how parents and peers often grow hope in children, adding an interesting dimension to how we might teach hope. While children certainly can learn some aspects of hope by mimicking the laudable behavior of others, McGeer suggests, "what we find instead are laudable patterns that others see—or prospectively see—in our own. We see ourselves as we might be, and thereby become something like a role model for ourselves. . . . Hopeful scaffolding can therefore serve as a very powerful mechanism for self-regulation and development."[346] Teachers and students might then strive to create such communities that scaffold children to envision and appreciate their own capacities, see themselves as hopers, and to shape their habits accordingly. Such a community is one where hope reinforces its participants, validating their visions of themselves and supporting them as they bring those visions into fruition. It is also a community where children can develop their disposition toward supporting other hopers. For instance, a teacher might describe signs of struggle and frustration or showcase examples in the lives of noteworthy hopers in order to help students identify those moments in their classmates. The students may also be equipped to respond by drawing attention to past successes of the struggling peer, noting strengths or special abilities, and more. Upon recognizing that another is having difficulty, the students may then respond in supportive ways that do not merely entail phrases of encouragement, but rather highlight skills, knowledge, and personality traits of the struggling student to help her see herself anew as she is and might be, thereby discovering courage and persistence within herself to sustain her hoping.

On occasion, communities of inquiry can be improved through exposing students to exemplars of hoping—real people or civil groups that have successfully engaged in hoping and have had an impact that bettered their lives or those of others. When teachers invite these role models into the classroom, they should not merely be celebrated as inspiring, though there are certainly worthy reasons for acknowledging such inspiration. Instead, role models should be encouraged to discuss the specifics of their situations, including oppression if applicable, and the habits that supported them in achieving their ends, so that students make personal connections to the models and learn from the struggles the role models faced during their own inquiry and experimentation. Such learning helps students see how hoping can be activated and supported, rather than merely celebrating successes of hope. And direct engagement with local hopers can help students see such a life as within reach for themselves,

as opposed to highlighting exceptional individuals elsewhere whose lives and circumstances may feel quite disconnected from those of the students. Teachers can highlight patterns of action and dispositions aligned with hope so that students are aided in identifying and nurturing similar habits in themselves. Focusing on habits of hope may not only attune students to the proclivities they are developing but also help them to differentiate hope as pragmatist habits from grit, more privatized hope, or passive forms of hope like optimism or wishful thinking.

Finally, in the community of inquiry, students can develop a strong collective identity based on working together to improve their lives or those of others. They may then come to feel a sense of belonging with those in the community—a sense of "we" and a feeling of security that they are surrounded by those who know and care about them. Such care is for their experiences and struggles, but also for scaffolding their self-efficacy. And that identity can be one based on being hopers together. Such care and identity can work against the feelings of isolation and being left behind currently experienced by sizable populations of Americans.

Nurture Communication and Deliberation

As hope has become increasingly privatized, it has been relegated to an internal monologue. Yet, hope, as part of vibrant democratic living, is best shared through discussion and deliberation with others about visions of the future and the best ways forward. As a story that we are writing over time, democracy is richest when all voices lend to its telling and craft its future. Finally, discussion and deliberation are central to good citizenship education, for "a large body of research finds that facilitated, planned discussions teach deliberative skills and increase students' knowledge and interest."[347] Yet, only about half of social studies teachers report regularly practicing skills of deliberation, and only a third report providing opportunities to reach decisions in small groups.[348] And some evidence suggests that substantially fewer teachers actually engage students in genuine discussions.[349] Despite that shortfall, Generation Z seems increasingly interested in taking and leading action on social and political issues. Social media and the 24-hour news cycle keep them abreast of world issues, but they need guidance when interpreting competing information and leading others in making wise decisions. Hence, teaching for hope and reviving democracy must emphasize discussion and

deliberation to help students know how to acquire and sift through multiple perspectives as they make choices themselves and with others.

Communication is itself a habit. It underlies good democratic living through making common—aiding in building publics and the sense of "we" that comes with them. Communication is also fundamental to Dewey's views of education and democracy. He states that "education consists primarily in transmission through communication. Communication is a process of sharing experience till it becomes a common possession."[350] So, for Dewey, the public nature of education lies in the process of working together to communicate shared experiences and the knowledge that comes from them. Much attention has been drawn to the first part of one of Dewey's most quoted lines from *Democracy and Education*, but look instead at the final clause: "A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience."[351] Democracy, then, is a way of life where people come together through communicating shared experiences. It is communication that enables us to make our lives, our experiences, and our ends-in-view common. Communication doesn't just transfer meaning between two people, it is an activity of cooperation that helps to form and enact communities.

Through conjoint communication we generate and share ideas. Located within communities of inquiry addressing shared problems, these ideas may be articulations of frustration, experiences of suffering related to the problem, proposals for change, or plans for action. Or, in Dewey's words, these ideas "are anticipations of possible solutions. They are anticipations of some continuity or connection of an activity and a consequence which has not as yet shown itself."[352] These ideas can lead us out of debilitating ruts, bringing growth and change. Generating and sharing ideas is also essential to a healthy democracy, where knowledge and viewpoints should be free and openly accessible. Dewey adds, "The experience has to be formulated in order to be communicated. To formulate requires getting outside of it, seeing it as another would see it, considering what points of contact it has with the life of another so that it may be got into such form that he can appreciate its meaning."[353] The formulation of experience and the exchange of ideas are central to the act of creating common identities and solving common problems. And efforts to see experiences as others do help us to make those hoping endeavors more inclusive.

Communication is an act of cooperation that forms not only beliefs but also relationships. Unlike recent trends to isolate ourselves among peers and news

sources that confirm our beliefs, communication is not an insular process. It should not be constrained by or confined to the group that makes up a public. Rather, communication must be directed outward; we have to seek out new information to confirm and challenge our beliefs. Communicating entails testing our beliefs against those who differ from us—a sort of experimentation that helps us determine whether we've got it right and how our ideas might impact others. Moreover, building relationships and commonality around experiences of problems can help other citizens understand and, at times, empathize with the struggles of others. This is a notable space where we may acknowledge and attend to the suffering of people of color, those left behind in society, and citizens in despair. And when those struggling citizens live in opportunity and civic deserts, teachers may create and open opportunities for social networks and community building that might not otherwise exist. Encountering the difficult experiences of others may also motivate some students with greater power and resources to expand and share those with struggling classmates and, more importantly, disrupt the injustice impacting their classmates.

For Dewey, communication is "the establishment of cooperation in an activity in which there are partners, and in which the activity of each is modified and regulated by partnership."[354] When both interlocutors come together in hoping and thereby share concern for improving life's conditions and for communicating across their differences, it may be helpful, but not necessary, for them to consciously reflect on their habits. When their habits are characterized by openness or are tentatively held, the responses that they make to one another can be sufficient causes for each to modify their respective responses in turn, hence altering themselves to better achieve a fruitful transaction. It follows that, for Dewey, communication "modifies the disposition of both the parties who partake in it."[355] Communication, as a process of making common, changes its participants and the public they constitute as it negotiates new meanings. In today's increasingly fragmented society, developing commonality through communication may help us affirm or build new identities and create improved ways of living together.

Deliberation entails solving problems alongside others through dialogue. It propels citizens to truly listen to and seek input from people different from themselves so that a wise course of action can be chosen. However, Green warns of

> American culture's tendency to substitute dismissal, ridicule, and even shouting down others' ideas for democratic dialogue of the kind that would

> actually allow people to listen to and learn from one another. Our culture fosters these shared bad habits through political talk shows that too often turn into shouting matches, political "debates" in which participants merely repeat "sound bites" and insult one another instead of proposing serious public policies, real-life events and reality-based dramas in which firms and families rely on the courts and adversarial attorneys to resolve their differences instead of talking with one another, and a pervasive popular culture motif in music, television, and movies of treating a willingness to resort to physical violence as the meaning of strength and personal resolve.[356]

Additionally, many Americans choose to wall themselves off from those they perceive to be different or a threat by withdrawing to rural retreats, living in gated suburban communities, confining themselves to locked urban apartments, or seeking ideological alignment in their virtual communities. They shy away from discussion and exchange with others, especially those who may hold different worldviews. These cultural conditions pose a sizable challenge.

Achieving healthy democracy requires openness to different ideas—ideas that may change the way we live and think. Dewey adds, "To cooperate by giving differences a chance to show themselves because of the belief that the expression of difference is not only a right of the other persons but is a means of enriching one's own life-experience, is inherent in the democratic personal way of life."[357] Schools, as spaces that often bring together students of differing backgrounds, can be an important foundational space for shifting our problematic practices around engaging with others, foregrounding the need for inclusive and civil dialogue from an early age and reaffirming it for the adults brought together through school activities. Even though schools too often reflect various forms of segregation along lines of race, class, religion, and more, mandatory attendance and opportunities for intermingling within them suggest that schools may be a more productive space for these sorts of endeavors than when left to optional outlets chosen solely at one's discretion as an adult.

Teachers should strive to provide conditions that spark conversations while modeling and calling for inclusive and transformational communication. This sort of learning is not confined to social studies coursework, but is also ripe for English courses that draw attention to the power and use of language, STEM courses that require the analysis of scientific problems

impacting society, and more. Teachers of all subjects can craft environments that require communication while focusing the attention of their students on their effectiveness and inclusiveness so that their communication can be improved for future endeavors. Good communication can become a habit through repeated use as well as environments and teachers who affirm its fruitfulness.

To dialogue effectively, students must learn to explain their ideas and to justify their reasoning orally and in writing. They must also learn to actively listen, to understand the speaker, interpret the speaker's emotions, connect with the experiences another person is sharing, and probe the logic of the ideas offered. Teachers can support students' growth in these areas through small- and large-group discourse. As they facilitate discussions, teachers also model how to respectfully question, clarify, and summarize ideas. In the midst of discussions, teachers can encourage students to pause or to slow the rush to jump in with their own ideas or emotional responses, checking in to see whether others have been genuinely listed to and understood first. Teachers can model the sorts of summarizing and follow-up questions that confirm an interlocutor has been heard and sufficiently understood. They may also use think-alouds to make metacognitive practices transparent.[358] Teachers who prioritize dialogue and written communication improve students' abilities to explain and justify, as well as to express emotion and convey embodied experiences that may be difficult to pin down in words. Students working to jointly solve problems use such skills to define and address problems so that processing of important information is clearer within the group and more persuasive to those outside of the group who may be implored to take action on the problem in some way.

During deliberation, discussions about the abilities of the participants to engage in resulting action should be discussed. In other words, is each individual capable of doing what might be required of him or her in the given course of action proposed? If not, this may be a time to acknowledge one's own limitations and turn to others for help or to scaffold the agency and self-efficacy of others. In the midst of crafting objects and objectives of hope and identifying avenues to pursue them, teachers might encourage the formation of joint commitments that help to not only bind students together but also give their connections substance and direction. Such joint commitments can reveal our obligations to others and remind us of reasons why we should engage in effort to ameliorate problems.

Students may be familiar with decision-making based on a majority vote, but teachers can extend their knowledge around other possible means for choosing a course of action. Using dialogue to uncover the merits of various options may help students creatively combine two or more strong ideas into a new, better option. Another approach may call for the enactment of a compromise with which no one holds strong opposition, asking, "Can we all live with this course of action?" Co-defining the end vision, and what results constitute success, should occur while considering which choice to enact. The end vision is negotiated and refined as students determine what embodies success. Informed decision-making considers not only the best course of action but also the plan that can be accomplished with the resources available and within the commitment level of the group.

Defining success through the process of deliberating about best courses of action also reminds us that failure is a possibility. To curtail an immobilizing sense of future failure, teachers should discuss this possibility with their students, helping them to recognize that commitment and follow-through increase the probability of success in the endeavor. Continuing to act while acknowledging the complexity of the situation and the barriers to success is an important component of pragmatist hope. "Even in situations where groups are defeated, the worthy act of trying to change something that is meaningful sometimes buffers the emotional low that comes from defeat."[359] Bolstering the ideal that forward movement in the face of an uncertain outcome is worthwhile is a core tenet of hope that builds sustainable engagement around the possibility of improvement.[360] And while failure is a possibility, within deliberations, teachers should work to emphasize possibility rather than improbability and to develop that tendency within students.

Evaluation is the final stage in the inquiry model, signaling completion of one or more ends-in-view and the need for reflection and critique. Students compare their results to the defined markers of success. Emphasis should be placed on recognizing the knowledge gained through the solution attempt.[361] Evaluating outcomes provides useful information for moving forward, and future intelligent action is founded on such information. Evaluating outcomes goes beyond a simple dichotomy of success or failure. A more nuanced reflection allows for deeper understanding that is valuable for future problem-solving attempts. For example, if the desired changes have been achieved, but sustaining them requires ongoing attention, students must determine whether they can continue to commit to such ongoing activity to maintain the positive outcome. Or if the outcome did not

fully match with the measures of success, but additional efforts seem capable of bringing about success, students may determine to add more time and effort into the project. If the outcome was deemed a failure, students need to engage with possible factors in that failure, considering whether a previously unidentified barrier blocked success but may now be overcome in light of the new understandings generated. If the failure seems related to the lack of full implementation or follow-through, students may resolve to reengage more fully or abandon the project as too costly. In the end, students receive new information as a result of their action, no matter the level of success. Moreover, developing such habits of hope changes the individual's identity, allowing each to see herself as possessing the potential to change their circumstances through focused action. Reflection not only enables us to restructure our worlds and our hopes but also can help us better understand our lives with others, our desires, and ourselves.[362]

The call to deliberation is especially important in light of the increased support for authoritarian rulers and the present climate of self-interest and distrust that is widespread in America. A noted champion of such deliberation, Amy Gutmann explains,

> The willingness to deliberate about mutually binding matters distinguishes democratic citizens from self-interested citizens, who argue merely to advance their own interests, and deferential citizens, who turn themselves into passive subjects by failing to argue, out of deference to political authority. Justice is far more likely to be served by democratic citizens who reason together in search of mutually justifiable decisions than it is by people who are uninterested in politics or interested in it only for the sake of power.[363]

The habit of using deliberation and its related habits of respectful listening, information seeking, and consensus building, are central to developing active, hopeful citizens who do not rely on or succumb to authoritarian leaders. We must take talking and listening, and the deliberation they contribute to, seriously in the development of good citizens who are capable of hoping together.

Foster Criticality and Dissent

Criticality taps into the reconstructive spirit of hope, identifying how our present life falls short of what we want, articulating the problem, and

putting forward alternatives. Criticality can be carefully honed so that it does not become bogged down in complaining or lead one to throw in the towel, believing that improvement is impossible. Teachers can develop critical thinking with a spirit of criticality, where such thinking is not merely thinking deeply or rationally, but rather goes further to identify injustice, interrogate power structures, and assert practices of democracy that enable citizens to flourish. Such criticality works against the status quo toward greater understanding of the complex systems within which we operate and how to change them. In this regard, the critical aspect of hope distinguishes it from just grit or perseverance, which leaves injustice and problematic conditions in place. Critical analysis should extend to even our most enduring principles of democracy, questioning their continued role and viability, enabling students to affirm those principles for themselves or revise them if needed.

Similar to Generation Z's emphasis on fixing root causes of problems, hope moves from recognition of problems to critical analysis of their contributing factors and conditions to dissenting or transformative action in light of them. Within schools, students can be sensitized to aspects of injustice or problematic constraints on liberty so that they learn how to identify them. And students can be supported through questioning and challenging those constraints or injustice in order to see that such action is worthwhile and can have a positive impact on the world. Teachers can nurture students' dispositions to question and challenge, rather than to accept and obey. At the same time, they can talk with students about the importance and, at times, even responsibility one bears for addressing such constraint or injustice. Such conversations can help students see that criticality and dissent are not about mere rebel rousing or attention seeking, but instead engage democracy and, at times, civil disobedience, to maintain freedom, fairness, and order. In Dewey's words,

> 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. [364]

Unlike cynicism, which drives individuals and democratic institutions apart, informed dissent through formal and informal avenues brings people together in a commitment to improving life's conditions.

Critical thinking and dissent rely on strong language skills. They are part of the inquiry process, where observations are made, facts are gathered, and participants discuss their experiences. But being critical does not mean coming to a quick or harsh judgment; rather it means carefully considering the genealogy of our conditions and how various stakeholders are implicated in or affected by them. To be an effective critic and to use criticism to shape one's hopes, and therefore one's action in the world, one needs a good understanding of language. Teachers should help students see how language works to wield power, to bring unity or division, and to persuade others. These skills can be inculcated in an array of ways: learning how to craft and deliver arguments for positions pertinent to students' lives, being pushed to test those arguments in experience, or challenging them in debate with disagreeing classmates. Certainly, there are already curricular opportunities within many schools that develop a child's ability to detect and evaluate arguments made by others (such as seventh-grade Common Core State Standards English Language Arts Standard 7.RI.8) and a child's ability to make claims and follow logical reasoning (7.WHST.1).[365] Teachers might further tailor lessons aimed at fulfilling those standards and others like them to real-life examples from democracy within and outside school walls.

To craft objects and objectives of hope, students must develop skills of historical critique. This involves critiquing the events that have led to our current values and ways of life, including our current struggles with despair and disengagement. To do so, students must have a working knowledge of historical facts and events in order to make valid assessments about the good life they envision today and in the future. In other words, they have to know history to know how to answer, "What should I hope for?" And, helpfully, history also reveals evidence of meliorism, which can help bolster students' beliefs that their efforts are justified and capable of producing meaningful impact on the world.

To support students' capacities to envision a different, unfamiliar reality, teachers should tap into the rich accounts of impactful historic figures or grassroots movements. Importantly, students need access to stories that have not been sanitized to produce happy endings, but instead should include accounts of struggle and failure in decision-making. Allow students to witness the turmoil that figures such as Reverend Martin Luther King or Nelson Mandela endured, instead of viewing them from the successful ending perspectives of achieving greater civil rights or the abolishment of apartheid. Use biographies and personal accounts to help students see how

those exemplars creatively generated possible solutions while wrestling with the potential negative impacts of their choices on themselves and their loved ones, and ultimately moved past bitter disappointments. These accounts provide significant insights into the real thoughts and doubts with which hopers engage, which may help students see them as real people similar to themselves rather than rarely exceptional. Students may later reflect and draw on those examples when facing their own obstacles, finding similarity in their struggles and perhaps solidarity and motivation as a result. One especially worthwhile example that may appeal to teens because it is written by teens is the account of the Parkland, Florida, students who led the March for our Lives.[366] In their book, they detail their incredible loss, their anger and surprise at the power of the gun lobby over legislators who seemed unwilling to truly hear their calls for counselors rather than armed teachers, their recognition of the difficulty of fulfilling their hopeful vision for safer schools, and their feelings of motivation to continue their work in the face of setbacks.

When reading such accounts, it is important for teachers to pause for students to consider how the historic person likely felt in that moment. Allow the student to imagine himself as a participant alongside the figure. For example, the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, Ohio, provides students with an immersive video experience that allows them to feel both the hope of escape and the fear of capture that a slave might have undergone. In the midst of such an experience, the teacher might hone a child's skills of imagination so that she envisions a detailed plan for escape and hope for a better life that was guided and constrained by the realities of the situation at the time.

To distinguish what is possible, feasible, and helpful from what is not, young citizens require knowledge of history, of what has been tried before, and scientific facts about what is realistic in our world. History provides resources for hope. Or, as Rebecca Solnit, social commentator on hope, says of hoping, "We have the past. Which gives us patterns, models, parallels, principles and resources, and stories of heroism, brilliance, persistence, and the deep joy to be found in doing the work that matters."[367] Students should learn about the trajectory of our democracy, including how its principles have supported its growth and have adapted over time. Learning about that trajectory can help students appreciate how democracy has supported hope and enhanced our lives. That historical chart exposes students to examples of how success and well-being have been contingent on others. In other words,

they are exposed to the social and political elements of how hope has played out across time.

Teachers should hone students' abilities to ask tough questions that reveal how power works in social situations, including how it privileges some people and not others. Teachers might also take students to protests and other events where groups are putting forward critiques as part of their vision of hope. At the very least, they could engage students in analyzing what protestors are doing well and what they are not, and whether they are improving democratic living, even from a distance or back in the classroom. Although protests may appear new or spontaneous, teachers can reveal their lengthy histories of activism and organizing so that students have a sense of the persistence and struggle often long at work in protests. Teachers can generate new stories about the importance of protests, showing how they are useful places to engage in and pursue objects of hope. Thereby, teachers may prevent or work against fatalistic views of protests as being an ineffective waste of time or views of protests as being merely the work of paid actors or the sort of chaos that should be squelched by authoritarian leaders. And, when appropriate, teachers could channel students' own frustrations with the current state of affairs as they discuss their hopes for the future by engaging the students in acts of critique and dissent.

Student walkouts following the shootings in Parkland, Florida, are one educative example. Those walkouts resulted from students feeling unsafe in their schools and are aligned with creating visions and bringing about practices that are safer and more welcoming in their schools. The walkouts have demonstrated success for students in several ways: attracting media attention to showcase the problem, starting conversations with elected officials on gun policy reform, prompting new policies on school violence, and helping students to experience a sense of agency and empowerment that may lead to further political and civil participation. The walkouts have also shifted some public impressions of youth as being spoiled or apathetic, revealing their deep concerns and experiences with the legitimate social problem of gun violence. Teachers, however, must help students see that protest is an early step, not a terminus. Students need further support as they move toward sustainable and significant changes in school culture, safety, and legislation. Moreover, teachers should highlight the attention received by the Parkland protestors to reveal the significance of whose stories about struggle, injustice, and reform are featured or heard and where those tellers are located economically and sociopolitically. For example, well before the

Parkland walkouts of largely white suburban students, many urban poor students of color were leading protests regarding gun violence in their communities, yet their stories largely went unheard. Students must be attuned to such differences and what they reveal about power imbalances in our country today as they envision a better future and as they build coalitions that should acknowledge earlier efforts and differing experiences and aspects of similar problems.

Finally, teachers can employ approaches designed to facilitate hope and citizenship development. Some examples of extracurricular programs and school-based curricula include *Discovering Justice, iCivics, Public Achievement, Freechild, Street Law*, or *Mikva Challenge.* These programs help students learn about US laws and values as well as how to critique them, research community issues, get involved politically, use their agency to solve social problems together, analyze power, and to take a stand when fighting for one's own well-being as well as that of others. They enable children to learn *through* democracy and enacting citizenship in the present, rather than just *about* democracy and their future citizenship post-graduation.

Cultivate Imagination and Storytelling

Imagination and storytelling are important to hoping because they help us envision the better world we desire and rally others around that vision. Imagination has past, present, and future aspects. Imagination involves looking at the present from the perspective of what may be possible. But when it comes to pragmatist hope, this is not unchecked possibility, but rather insofar as pragmatism urges keeping one's feet planted in reality, imagination must account for our embodied experience of the natural world and for the structural limitations that linger from history. Imagination is not the radical creation of something entirely new, but rather an envisioning of what might grow out of what is and what has been. It also helps us to better grasp the present, for "imagination gives us a critical distance to the present that allows us to draw connections and to understand our world."[368] Finally, it helps to provide focus and structure as we move forward into the future.

Imagination happens while conducting inquiry, as we try to understand a situation by considering what is actual and what might be possible as a result of our hypotheses and action. It works ahead to anticipate what might unfold. Dewey explains, "the trial is in imagination, not in overt fact. The experiment

is carried on by tentative rehearsals in thought which do not affect physical facts outside the body. Thought runs ahead and foresees outcomes, and thereby avoids having to wait the instruction of actual failure or disaster."[369] Imagination helps us combine means and ends so that we can find our way out of problematic situations. It helps us envision alternatives and chart new directions. Imagination can generate possibilities and the conditions that activate them. Imagination gives us ideas and directions for how to enact hope.

Inquiry into the impact of a problem and potential solutions includes obtaining the perspectives of others. Obviously, firsthand accounts are highly valuable here; but imagination can also play a rather significant role. Imagination can include consideration of how people different from oneself experience a problem or the world around them, such as white people imagining the plight of people of color. Such imagination can build empathy, a desire to connect across differences, and a moral drive to work to alleviate further suffering of others. Imagination can be a motivator to overcome the distancing related to despair and cynicism, to engage habits of hope toward improving our world on behalf of those different from ourselves.

When some groups have had little interaction with others or hold false stereotypes about them, imagination might exacerbate problems. A concern is that individuals might envision the lives of those different from themselves in harmfully faulty ways, such as white people imagining black people as inferior or unintelligent. I follow Christopher LeBron in responding to that potential problem by holding that

> the erroneous holding of racial beliefs is not imagination gone wrong—rather, it is the result of one having not used any imagination at all. The very dangerous thing about ideology is that one accepts without much reflection heuristic interpretive shortcuts to make systematic sense of the world, and quite frequently, these shortcuts are generated by power holders and accepted by those who benefit from acquiescing. Imagination, by contrast . . . leads to possibly revolutionary ideas.[370]

Imagination entails the sort of hard work and critical reflection that can push past those accepted and problematic ideologies to work toward new understandings across difference. Imagination does not generate ideas from nothing, but rather from our experiences of the world. It includes being welcoming to hearing the life stories provided by those different from us and being receptive to the experiences contained therein as a starting point for

imagining how others have lived in the past and present and how they might life in the future. Notably, those stories often serve as a check on stereotypes if we listen carefully to them. Being receptive is a proclivity toward accepting those alternatives as a source for future thinking and effort. An education in imagination partly entails learning how to break from routine ways of seeing others so that we can envision others and ourselves differently.

Storytelling is one of the primary ways that we engage extended imagination and convey our vision of the future, thereby building culture and identity. Stories can help us out of ruts because they give us accounts of how problems can be solved and how life can be better—a check on the apathy increasingly prevalent today. Stories can move us from passivity to participation, showing us both examples of how to take action and why it's worthwhile to do so. All the while, stories depict the objects and objectives of hope; they give us ways to express the better future we desire, as well as who we are and what it means to be an American.

Our stories often depict how the world is and how it could be. And those stories can serve as a rallying point for others, articulating and bringing us together around shared objects or objectives of hope. While the World Values Survey may reveal some worrisome things about the state of democracy today, it also demonstrates that "mass self-expression values are extremely important in the emergence and flourishing of democratic institutions in a society."[371] Telling stories about ourselves and the world we desire is an important way of being heard and of feeling valued in a democracy. Constructing narratives of our shared hopes arising from our collective history and struggles, yet leaving them open ended and revisable so that citizens can contribute to them and change them as conditions unfold is one way that we write the story of democracy. Importantly, those narratives must acknowledge and face the atrocities of injustice in our American past and present even as we construct our hopes for the future. It is especially important that Americans who have been denied opportunities to hope or significantly improve their lives in the past because of laws and practices enforced by fellow citizens have those experiences validated, and that amends are made where possible.

We need to spend more time accounting for trauma and harm in our lives and in the stories we tell. In rushing past them, we risk an array of problems, not the least of which is reinforcing a progress narrative or celebrating improvement over time when we need to be sitting with suffering to process it, assign/take responsibility for it, and work through it. For example,

teachers might engage students in analyzing, comparing, and contrasting the struggles, fear, suffering, and power dynamics evident within the Storytellers Project. While the project is a collection of stories from across the country intended to "celebrate our country's diversity through the stories that bind us together," we must also pause to consider how those connections are forged in light of past and lingering suffering.[372]

Within schools, teachers may guide the important work of imagination and storytelling. Creative writing and language arts courses can cultivate students' self-expression so that they learn how to put forward their experience of the world, to lay claim to it, and to integrate themselves into a community of stakeholders. It's important that we learn how to tell our own stories individually, but collective storytelling often offers even more important rewards. Working alongside others to understand their interpretation of an event can help to forge collective truths about current life that account for multiple perspectives in a pragmatist spirit. It requires careful listening to one another and attention to the details, emotions, and experiences that have shaped various events. To come to empathize with others, when appropriate, we must first listen in ways that extend us beyond our own belief systems or slow our rush to judgment. Through collective storytelling, storytellers engage in complex social action to take a collaborative approach to envisioning the best resolution of a situation for all parties. Finally, this practice builds coalitions that can draw on each other's strengths and achieve mutual empowerment. Altogether, these aspects of collective storytelling embody practices of critical social thought and deliberation guided by empathy and geared toward coordinated social action.

Stories can be used to show students how their worlds could be different. Stories of struggle and success can be used to develop sensitivity to the lives of other people, to encounter emotional struggles, and to provide examples of creative solutions to real problems. When students see how others have worked to improve their lives, they are provided fodder for how they might try out ideas in their own situations. Stories provide an arsenal of examples to be employed, wielded, and tested while providing counterevidence to fatalistic claims that "there's nothing that can be done" or "it's not worth the effort." Stories help to generate and engage possibilities.

Narrative texts whose protagonists must wrestle with problems can be used to generate discussion around those problems. Students are able to witness the character's inner struggle through a transparent process. *The Giver* by Lois Lowry provides an example of a character who discovers a significant,

hidden problem and chooses to act to improve the situation.[373] Jonas, assigned to become the new Receiver, discovers that the seemingly utopian world in which he lives euthanizes individuals regularly, and that his foster brother, Gabe, is scheduled for this fate. Jonas moves toward hope by creating a well-conceived plan with a full awareness of the cost of failure. Thus, biographical accounts and literature build habits of hope in students by offering a means to consider problematic situations in light of fear and possibility. [374]

Teachers can employ stories in ways that cultivate habits of hope. Stories are most effective at doing so when they are meaningful to students, often because the students relate to the real, problematic situations described in the stories. By detecting similarities and seeing themselves in the stories, students may be ushered into self-reflection. Teachers can help to facilitate that self-reflection by engaging students in discussions and assignments that pull students' habits into view and provoke reexamination of them if warranted. Finally, teachers can use stories and self-reflective exercises to help students appreciate their own past agency and achievement to bolster confidence at and proclivity toward continued effort.

Teachers can also engage students in interpreting and critiquing legislators' visions for the future, put forward through their policy proposals and campaign trail anecdotes. Students can explore their feasibility and desirability, all the while seeking what their role might be in those stories, if anything at all. This helps young citizens determine which legislators are worthy of their support, enabling them to make informed preferences or voting decisions based on shared hopes for the future. In each of these examples, imagination and storytelling enable students to better understand themselves, identify their envisioned America, and build identity with others based on that vision.

Finally, storytelling should not be understood as only written or oral; it is also visual and public. Artists Alice Rose George and Lee Marks tapped into this with their collection, *Hope Photographs*.[375] These images depict hope through significant feats of collective work, such as a rocket blasting into the sky and Buzz Aldrin walking on the moon, and through moments of individual effort as simple as an AIDS patient raising his hand toward a lighted window to greet the new day, and as courageous as a political protestor facing down the tanks in Tiananmen Square. One related example, the Hope Camera Project, highlights storytelling that engages visual representations of hope woven together with narratives and then shared with the public. This project for fourth and fifth graders was undertaken by

Jennifer Magnuson-Stessman, a school counselor. She asked the students to take twenty-eight photos during the week of things that made them feel hopeful. They turned to both significant and seemingly mundane aspects of their lives to visually depict such hope. Then, they wrote an essay to tell their story of hope represented by the images. Finally, the photos and stories were publicly displayed at an art show where the students talked with guests about their stories and depictions of hope, thereby serving as fodder for the development of shared hopes and seeing connections with others.

View Citizenship as Shared Fate

In times of national struggle, America has often sought unification through patriotism. For example, Americans joined together in the days immediately following September 11, 2001. We united under images of strength and history, such as displaying our flag and through shared practices, like singing patriotic tunes on the steps of the Capitol. Patriotism positively entails pride in who we are as a country, and a sense of commitment to seeing our country through into the future. Patriotism should not be blind, unreflective, or permanent allegiance; rather, it should be informed commitment with full recognition of the areas in which our country needs improvement. Indeed, many patriots work to ameliorate those areas. Importantly, patriotism should not be confused with nationalism, wherein our country is seen as unquestioningly superior to others and where we put our interests above all others'. Patriotism, however, should invite conversation about what America is and how it can be better.

As we create a new story that unites and moves us forward in hope, we must beware of the potential pitfalls of nationalism, while still celebrating patriotic pride in our country and its possibilities. One way we can achieve this is through viewing citizenship as shared fate, where, despite acknowledging our significant differences, we foreground the ways we are linked together by location, history, culture, and more. Citizenship as shared fate urges us to interpret our experiences and events in America through how they mutually impact us as members of the larger American community. Sharing a fate differs from just having a common fate; it entails a more active role in shaping that future and preserving the well-being of America within it.[376] That future doesn't just happen to all of us simultaneously. Developing citizenship as shared fate nurtures the relational aspects of citizenship. It

builds the inclination to care for others across that community, even though they may differ significantly from us, because we recognize the many ways in which our futures are bound together politically, geographically, economically, and culturally, and that they can be improved by cooperating together. That inclination, one aligned with a sense of responsibility for the well-being of others that can be supported by teachers, leads us to consider the effects of our political choices on others and work toward the best interests of the group.

Citizenship as shared fate can still provide a sense of "us," and pride in that identity, but, unlike nationalism, it is an affinity that is more readily reconsidered and open to change based on shifting circumstances and social ties that we choose to emphasize. Moreover, that identity is one we construct through our relations to others and by shaping our nation. Citizenship as shared fate is an inclination to interpret events in terms of their impact on the "us" that composes a public of authentically connected people rather than a formal collection dictated by citizenship as only a geographical status. We are brought together to interpret and negotiate what it means to be a citizen, which is significant in our environment, where the demographics of our population are changing. Moreover, citizenship as shared fate raises a bigger tent, more inclusively bringing people into the "us." It unites people in a political climate that too often casts people in an "us versus them." For example, while a long-standing narrative of cowboys versus Indians pervades American pop culture and even history textbooks, these two groups united in response to the Keystone XL pipeline, recognizing worrisome implications for their shared fate in light of the pipeline's construction.[377] Foregrounding mutual stake in social problems is a useful way to span diverse or otherwise conflicting groups.

Our larger world is also changing, forcing new considerations of national identity as technology, communication, and the economy have drawn people from around the world together in new ways. Even when they may live far apart, citizenship as shared fate helps to build bridges of concern between people. It causes citizens to think about and act in the interest of those in their local communities, and also to consider how their actions impact those across the country and even abroad. At the same time, it recognizes that the shared history, values, struggles, and successes of our country continue to shape our fate today and those of our neighbors elsewhere. Citizenship as shared fate gives rise to a new form of patriotism as relation and connection to one's countrymen, location, and past.

Attending to shared fate requires an initial grounding in care for the future. Teachers need to work to invest students in the future—to help them to see why it matters for their lives and others, and to see how they can play a role in shaping it. Students need to see themselves as not only in the future but also of value to that future. This builds not only self-care, but also a sense of care about others who will inhabit that future with them. Hal Hershfield, a researcher at New York University has shown that "people who are primed to be aware of their future self . . . focus more on their best interest and/or the best interest of society, compared with participants who haven't made the connection between now and the future."[378] Being invested in the future can help to curb suicide and so-called despair deaths insofar as it helps individuals project a valuable life worth living for themselves. Developing investment in the future can also help to address the population of Americans who believe the past was better and are less satisfied with democracy today. It can provide them avenues to enliven some valued aspects of American life that have dwindled and perhaps help them reaffirm their commitment to democracy, as they recognize that not only is time marching on but also they can have a role to play in shaping influences on themselves and others.

Teachers can engage shared fate by involving students in projects that explore the impact of an issue on a community. For example, as trade wars and large-scale milk and meat contracts threaten the stability of family farms, some rural families are considering fracking as a way to provide additional income to keep those farms operable and rural communities viable. While ultimately deciding whether or not to participate may be up to each individual landowner, teachers in those areas could guide students through a reflection on the potential economic, cultural, environmental, and other consequences of deciding to engage in fracking on family farmland. Teachers could help students in rural classrooms see how their families, classmates, and neighbors might be impacted, as well as how the power grid and energy corporations might also be affected. Teachers can also help students figure out if their personal aims are aligned or in conflict with the aims and needs of other people. Teachers could bring civil society organizations and public agencies, such as the Farm Bureau and Cooperative Extension, into the classroom to better understand the ramifications of potential decisions. And school-based organizations like the Future Farmers of America might provide additional resources and space for deeper discussion of implications on youth outside of, but connected to, the primary classroom. This form of

teaching directly engages democracy, as students seek to understand a shared problem, solve it with others, and protect the future of their community as they do so. It also helps students to see that they are "interdependent, folded up in their shared ends" and that their loyalty to the community and collaboration within it is warranted because of their shared long-term interests.[379]

Service learning is another way to foster shared fate, as it brings together "community service and academic study of the issue being addressed by the students' service."[380] Within service learning, students learn how to identify social problems, respond out of a sense of shared responsibility, act to help those in need, work to transform the situation, and then engage in guided reflection about their experiences. Service learning gives students first-hand interactions with others who are struggling with an issue. Students often need to have those delicate and difficult interactions facilitated by a skilled teacher. Such a teacher can also guide students in seeing points of connection between themselves and other people, whether through similar experiences and emotions or through facing similar outcomes. When one is unable to see shared aspects of humanity, one may not care for the well-being of others; teaching for shared fate works against that tendency. Service learning projects can help students craft reasonable ends-in-view that acknowledge the limitations of the present world while still trying to improve on it. Even small and piecemeal successes can help bolster students' agency by affirming their ability to make a difference and showing that their effort is worthwhile.

Service learning and related pedagogical techniques that intimately join students with others are especially important given our current context of disconnect, our focus on individual success, and our history of ignoring segments of our society plagued by hardship and struggle—places and communities that may seem unsafe or undesirable to connect to our classrooms. Glaude reminds us that we should

> envision the beloved community in which *all* Americans do more than just go to work and tend to their individual gardens, but experience a deeply felt interdependence in a jointly shared effort to reimagine American democracy. Americans have to live together, in the deepest sense of the phrase—to make a life together that affords everyone (and I mean everyone) a real chance. This can happen only when we experience genuine connectedness, when the well-being of African Americans is bound up with any consideration of the well-being of the nation.[381]

Teachers and schools should enable experiences that connect students with others in authentic ways, encourage students to reflect on the significance of such connections, and consider how they reshape citizenship as shared fate. This includes making race and other aspects of difference explicitly foregrounded within our considerations of shared fate, rather than ignoring it or making it an afterthought.

While we know that service learning approaches are effective ways to prepare good citizens, they are quite rare in our classrooms.[382] Some of the best models for such education come from programs like Generation Citizen.[383] Teaching how to hope may mean sizable shifts in the content and approach of typical citizenship education, putting real-life engagement with social problems in local communities, connectedness to others, and service learning at the forefront of classroom practice.

Build Trust

Right now, lack of trust is one of the biggest roadblocks to hope in America. Collective effort toward objects and objectives of hope requires not only that people be able to collaborate with other another but also that they be able to depend on each other for assistance and generally believe that the judgments and motivations of others are wise and just. Sometimes, lack of trust is warranted and beneficial. Some level of distrust is built into the American democratic system of checks and balances, where we rely on our institutions, branches of government, and elected leaders to hold a degree of skepticism toward each other. Between individuals, trust typically functions as a horizontal relationship, yet many of our personal relationships are not fully horizontal, rather they are vertically structured by power and inequity, placing one person over another. Importantly, current lack of trust is justified in many ways and for many people, especially minorities who have been taken advantage of by those with greater power. And, in some cases, there is even warranted distrust among those with more power toward those with less power who may seek to even the score.[384] Making these relationships more horizontal is important to opening the way for trust and it may first require reconciliation for past harm.

But, distrust is growing in worrisome ways as our polarized citizenry becomes cordoned off from opposing views and makes ad hominem, and often stereotypical, attacks on the personal traits of those who hold opposing

views. If we are to revive democracy and teach citizens how to hope, schools, other public institutions, and civil society organizations must affirm justified forms of distrust while primarily working to build trust. This endeavor relates to helping citizens see their shared fate and witness the effectiveness of coming together in community efforts to improve their own conditions and those of others.

Teachers may work to develop and assess trust, while verifying the worthwhileness of that trust, and scaffolding the hoping of students and their sense of self as capable agents.[385] Teachers who can demonstrate the impact of a student's effort to that student and others are more likely to produce future citizens who recognize their own agency and engage in civic action, rather than feeling ineffective and disengaging from democratic life, as we often see in America today.[386] Relatedly, we build trust by engaging in mutually supportive activities together, supporting the agency of others, and making ourselves vulnerable through recognition of our own need for support. When we learn to trust a peer—including his judgments and abilities—we scaffold him in developing his own agency. All the while, we may come to better care for that peer and his well-being. Then, the relationship we form with that peer may create a cycle of willingness to extend our trust out of concern for the relationship.[387]

When engaging in the collective work of hoping together, we build trust, in part, by making compromises. That means that we have to bend and give relative to each other in order to achieve mutual benefits. Too often today compromising is seen as a sign of weakness or surrender. Teachers can respond by sharing historical examples that reveal positive outcomes from compromising. They can also showcase the opposite, instances where unwillingness to compromise breeds stagnation and inability to address problems well or efficiently. At the same time, teachers can describe times when one may feel the need to stand one's ground and discuss criteria for differentiating that situation from those of more bull-headed stagnation. Recognizing that all is not lost when we compromise, that we can still maintain important elements of ourselves and our values when we compromise and yet can achieve significant overall outcomes, can help reveal reasons for trusting others. Emphasizing our shared fate within discussions and collective actions requiring compromise can provide an important reminder that we are "in this together" and that our shared future is better ensured when we work together rather than compete or draw a firm line in the sand between us.

Distrust sometimes arises from suspicion of someone else's intentions. Teachers can talk with students about the importance of clarifying motives and interests when working with others to solve problems, and encourage students to provide reasons for why they care about an issue or feel motivated to work to improve it. They should also discuss how their vision of the future impacts themselves and others. I am not so naive as to believe that all people will clearly share their true intentions, but when we start young, encouraging children to be truthful and forthright, we can work to establish an environment where we move toward greater transparency and justice. We can also talk overtly in schools about the value of aligning one's interests with the interests of others. That said, I also recognize that our country is increasingly swept up a spirit of individualism and in neoliberal economic and political pressures to look out for oneself and to compete against others to ensure one's own interests. These trends work against trust and collective effort, and are difficult to reverse. As a start, we must name the constraints of that environment and reveal its harm and limitations in order to call it into question.

Finally, my own position as someone who has largely lived a life of privilege and has not been significantly burned by others, may lead me to have greater faith in extending trust, which may appear naive to those who have been victims of abuse at the hands of others. Teachers, especially when working with historically marginalized and oppressed populations, must be especially sensitive to that history of harm and should help students develop an informed trust, so they are not easily taken advantage of, while also nurturing a guarded willingness to work with those who may have harmed them in the past. Teachers can equip students with skills for detecting and reducing the risks of trust, while also helping them see that trust can generate the conditions for collective action and improved living conditions. Improving conditions for trust requires first carefully attending to what has caused distrust in the first place, which in many cases includes white supremacy and racism. These must be overtly discussed and analyzed in classrooms so that students understand their lasting impact as well as ways to work against them. Building trust may also require restorative justice techniques that entail dominant individuals and groups recognizing and, when appropriate, taking responsibility for past harms perpetrated by themselves or those like them. Part of such work likely necessitates bringing different types of people together through civil organizations, social arrangements, and classroom experiences, where they can come to interact, learn from each other, discover shared humanity, and lay other foundational elements of trust. Teachers can

encourage students to see goodness and possibility in others rather than assuming mal intent. Ultimately, teachers can support students in having the courage to extend trust to others.

Going beyond Schools

Though I've focused on schools and citizenship education in particular, cultivating hope shouldn't be confined to schools. Children should learn how to hope in their homes, neighborhoods, sports teams, and clubs, not just within the classroom. And they should learn how to hope, not only from teachers but also from parents, friends, religious leaders, and more. Actually engaging in authentic democratic contexts and with civil society can go far beyond simply talking about or practicing related skills in the single, small setting of one classroom.[388] We should support an array of settings where hope is fostered, including in spaces that are significant to children, such as neighborhood festivals, youth poetry slams, and community gardens.[389] Importantly, much of the civic knowledge and identity of African American children, in particular, already takes place outside of schools within communities and churches, and across familial generations. While it is critical to expand school-based opportunities for citizenship education to these children, we should also support and magnify the useful work already occurring outside of school walls.[390]

Children are not the only people who can learn how to hope. Many of the educational practices outlined here can be extended into adult settings, whether they are formal learning environments or informal civil spaces. We might especially encourage the latter, supporting the expansion of civil society by recommending that our friends join clubs and organizations related to their areas of interest. Civil society is the primary space where publics form and act in a "sphere of social interaction" between large government life, private markets, and local family life.[391] Often civil society bridges these elements, interconnecting them and weaving together the individual with the community, freedoms, and regulations. Sometimes this involves compromising or mediating conflicts between the practices and ideologies of the home, the economy, and the state through open communication among individuals who come together in voluntary associations. They work together to expose tensions, and then seek to alleviate those tensions, or at least determine how to live harmoniously in the midst of them.

As groups in civil society navigate the continuum from private to public, they encounter shifts in trust and power. They must transition from interacting with those with whom they share close bonds or common interests, to interacting with unfamiliar people and impersonalized arms of the government that wield significant power.[392] Civil society forms open associations and coalitions that engage together in communication, social movements, and other avenues to shape their surroundings, which ultimately influence the state and economy. Within such a space, citizens can self-mobilize to form relationships, communities, and publics that are not as restrictive and demanding as the family sphere (where blood ties often force action or interaction) because they are open and genuine. Civil society "is participatory and communal (like the public sector) yet voluntary and uncoercive (like the private sector)."[393] Civil society's voluntary nature offers an important space without undue state coercion for citizens to deliberate about laws, institutions, and practices of democracy to determine whether they are just or legitimate. It provides citizens a space to share and compare their assessments, as well as to openly proclaim their consent in public ways, thereby strengthening democracy and affirming its alignment with citizens' beliefs, needs, and desires.[394]

Let's consider one example. Early in 2019 a group of Democratic lawmakers proposed a set of programs to address climate change dubbed the "Green New Deal." One aspect of these proposals dealt with limiting the carbon footprint and emissions of farms. Ranchers and farmers from across the country, most of whom identify as Republicans, perceived that their livelihoods were misunderstood by Democrats in cities far away, at best, and that their very way of life was on the verge of being extinguished by unjustified, uninformed, or unreasonable regulations, at worst. Many of these citizens belong to the Farm Bureau, a nationwide civil organization with state and local branches. Sensing a threat and trying to make sense of the problem of climate change and potential solutions posed by others, farmers and ranchers formed small publics. In their local chapters, they took to discussing the issue, deliberating about the proposed Green New Deal. From those deliberations, some members then turned outward to publicly share their unique perspectives as family farmers whose futures are on the line in light of potential new regulations and to demonstrate environmental efforts already undertaken by many farmers who see themselves as stewards of the earth.[395] Some state leaders used media outlets to speak out.[396] Now many Farm Bureau members are working to sort out solutions that enable their

livelihoods to continue while also furthering efforts to protect the environment. In these ways, the Farm Bureau is enabling citizens to deliberate about legislation, present their alternative views, and affirm their needs, thereby facilitating democratic practices and political impact.

Within civil society, citizens can acquire tools to support themselves when they are struggling and a network of people with whom they can hope together. They may experience solidarity with others around issues of shared concern, which helps to build trust, identity, and agency. Moreover, in a setting where many citizens feel left behind, as though their concerns have not been fully acknowledged or attended to by their leaders, civil outlets may help them feel heard and nurture their own agency instead of hostility.

Community organizations often involve volunteer work, which, when aligned with the method of inquiry and reflection, can be one way in which citizens are introduced to hoping and discover firsthand the impact of shared work. Being active in civil life helps one to become a part of society, thereby fighting against current trends of apathy and disengagement. Additionally, learning how to use power through voting, formal institutions, and movement building that make up political life can provide the tools to leverage change to meet a group's needs and fulfill the objects of hope that they set. We know, though, that in our efforts to rethink and improve civil society,

> Most people need to be directly invited into public engagements, contacted personally by leaders and folks they know. People must also "see themselves" in the shared undertaking. And they must believe an undertaking will really matter—or else they won't bother. All of these considerations direct our attention to the changing roles of leaders, to shifting social identities and modes of organization, and to considerations of power, resources, and institutional leverage.[397]

As educators and concerned citizens, we must offer these invitations and extend supportive conditions to others. As participation in civil organizations dwindles and becomes increasingly segregated, citizens seeking to resuscitate democracy must perhaps first breathe new energy into these spaces.

Finally, adults can use technology (an important but limited resource within so-called civic deserts) to broaden their interactions with others, widening their sources of information and opportunities to exchange and deliberate, so that they can extend their concerns for shared fate to circles outside of just their civil organizations or segregated communities. Scattered and

fledgling publics can use technology to learn from each other, to share stories of success, and to bolster one another's efforts. Such outreach is also an important part of making sure that inquiry is well informed and that our visions of hope bring about flourishing lives rather than harm to others. Connecting with individuals and groups outside of one's primary networks may work against today's trend toward self-interestedness and echo chambers. Even as many traditional civil society organizations are declining or increasingly segregated, technology may open new doors for affiliation and expansion.

Technology can also be harnessed to enable the development and sharing of stories, including accounts of past experiences in America and depictions of what America might become. Storytelling classes can develop skills of expression, description, and persuasion. Storytelling contests can encourage citizens to imagine new and better worlds, while also providing a platform to share stories that can be validated by others as we continue to define what it means to be American.[398] These stories can change what Charles Taylor calls the social imaginary—the expectations we have of each other and what is reasonable to expect from each other. Changing the social imaginary can build trust and support the practice of hoping together. The impact of stories, especially when shared widely via technology, can have wide-ranging impact on who we are and how we understand ourselves. It can even shape formal elements of democracy, perhaps leading to hope-based legislation like the GI Bill, which sought to improve the common good and bring about greater equity for citizens. It informed a vision of a better life for America and its individual citizens, aided by their own agency in achieving it. It told a story of patriotism, participation, education, and effort in America.

A Call to Hope

In sum, learning how to hope is much more than just teaching good citizenship and is certainly more than developing grit. Teaching hope cultivates habits, nurturing proclivities to undertake effort to improve one's life and the lives of others. Those habits must be situated within a larger practice of educating for democracy. They are supported by learning within communities of inquiry that deliberate about and experiment with best courses of action, with shared fate guiding their decisions. Those classrooms should be oriented around the question "What should we do?," a question that engages the pragmatist spirit of hope as collective engagement toward possibility

and action.[399] When those courses of action include actively participating in formal and informal aspects of democracy—from contacting elected policymakers to holding a community conversation about an issue—our young citizens develop not only skills but also confidence and proclivities that increase their likelihood of future participation, thereby countering recent trends of disengagement. Learning skills of criticality and dissent, becoming imaginative storytellers, and developing robust understanding of history and democracy provides students know-how in shaping their objects and objectives of hope, as well as their practices of hoping together. Schools that engage in this sort of active, issues-based citizenship education not only teach how to hope but also showcase for students and the broader community that democracy is more vibrant when we hope.

While immensely important, this call to teach hope is also immensely challenging. Learning how to hope is likely most effective when teachers demonstrate and model hoping and when classrooms are part of communities that engage in and support hoping. Yet, teachers already feel overburdened with a wide array of expectations—from teaching subject matter to being disciplinarians and from providing mentorship to ensuring students' basic needs are met. Teachers may also feel unprepared to teach hope when they themselves may feel lost in despair or are cynical about our political system or when they are overwhelmed by violence and injustice witnessed in their schools. And they may struggle to hope when they work in settings where they feel professionally undervalued and have dwindling resources. Finally, the approach to teaching citizens how to hope also faces substantial obstacles, such as the risks and kickback of exploring controversial political and social issues in the classroom.[400] To support the hope of teachers, we must value their knowledge, experience, and pedagogical choices, reflecting it in the policies and practices we endorse. Teachers also need to be able to employ their own agency in changing and shaping their circumstances in schools. And teachers need administrators and families who support them, including when they venture into politically controversial waters with the topics they select for their classroom. Each of these helps to enable teachers to engage in hoping and thereby model hoping for children. Although the task of reviving democracy through teaching citizens how to hope is a monumental one, it may be one of teachers' most important contributions to our country.

Even though I've focused most on teaching students how to hope, this book is a call to hope across our citizenry. While starting with children who are malleable may help to head off some antidemocratic tendencies in

adulthood, many of our older citizens must also develop new proclivities if we are to maintain and improve democracy as a form of government and as a way of life. The school-based practices advocated here can be used or adapted for college campuses and adults outside of schools to grow their habits of hope.

I opened this book by asking several questions and I return to them now. These questions are especially important as our country struggles with despair and cynicism, as citizens increasingly disengage in political participation and turn to authoritarian leaders, and as we move into new election seasons wondering what lies ahead. "Are there reasons to hope?" Yes, we are those very reasons. We have the ability to create, engage, and sustain hope through our habits. And we can turn to civil society and schools to provide an answer to "How can I hope?" There, we can nurture our skills of inquiry, imagination, and agency so that we become skilled and persistent hopers who both support and are supported by democracy. That sort of hope is deeper, more sustainable, and more actionable that the hope typically championed in campaign slogans or in today's common accounts of privatized hope for one's own self-interests.

Understanding and seeking out such pragmatist hope may also help us identify leaders during elections who will better support our efforts as citizens, regardless of political party. Those are leaders who listen to and learn from our visions of the future as they construct stories of what America might become. And they are leaders who build trust and encourage collaborative efforts to solve social problems. They are leaders that support education, appreciate scientific exploration, and encourage communities of inquiry, valuing the new ideas that each brings. They are leaders that facilitate our hoping, rather than leaders we merely place hope in.

Finally, within our communities and through the stories we construct about our American identity, our prospects, and the principles that we uphold, we can answer, "What should I hope for?" We are the interpreters of our past and the authors of our future. Hoping shapes how democracy is understood, whether it is valued, and what many of its principles and aims are. Let us learn how to hope so that we can revive democracy.