Australian Teachers as Democracy Workers

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Abstract Most visions of democracy recognise the important role played by educators and education systems in ensuring that young people are both informed and capable and willing to act on that knowledge by exercising their democratic rights. This means that teachers, and especially those working in formal educational institutions, have a key role to play in the development of an active and informed citizenry. Yet teachers are often limited in their capacity to do this well—either through their own lack of knowledge, or through policy constraints that limit their agency. In addition, popular (and populist) media often presents teachers as either unintelligent or apathetic, or dangerous liberals. This chapter seeks to reframe this debate and show how teachers might embrace their role as democracy workers. It does this by, firstly, outlining the challenges facing educators as a whole, and the teaching of civics and citizenship in particular. It then describes how teachers might enact their role as exemplars of active—and perhaps even activist—citizens, and to do so in a way that encourages the development of active citizenship amongst their students.

1 Teaching: A Profession Under Attack

The teaching profession in Australia is under attack from many avenues. Even leaving to one side the ongoing and repetitive comments from politicians and radio 'personalities' about teachers not working hard enough, or having too many holidays, there are assaults from policymakers and even academics (and fellow teachers) on teaching and its status as a profession, with some arguing that there is little skill involved in managing a classroom, or that all the work is done by publishing companies, or it's simply a matter of teaching from the textbook and to the test. Much of this criticism is gendered: the majority of the teaching workforce is made up of women, and not surprisingly, especially in early childhood settings, they continue to be paid much less than other, male-dominated professions with similar qualifications.

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However, perhaps the most sinister imposition comes from the role of third party actors who are seeking to control what teachers do, and the manner in which they do it. This has come from many different sides. There are academics who are often distant from the profession, yet don't hesitate to insist that they know how teachers should perform in and out of the classroom (Gore & Gitlin, 2004). There are federally funded programmes that devalue the profession by equating it to what is effectively 'on the job training' (Carr, 2017). There are so-called thought leaders, who are quick to point out everything that the schooling system does wrong, and to affirm how 'broken' it is—usually closely followed by a promotion of their book or training programmes (Eacott, 2017). And, of course, it would be foolish to ignore the ongoing meddling of politicians within the educational system, at both a state and federal level (Visentin & Baker, 2021). Teachers are constantly assailed by updated curricula, as well as increased requirements to teach about domestic violence, or road safety, or anti-radicalisation programmes or so many others.

I am not for a moment suggesting that education, and schooling in particular, should not teach about any or all of these things. Nor am I suggesting that everything that schools do is perfect or should be absented from criticism. Indeed, I believe quite the opposite. But the point that I am making—and it is a point that has been made before, by myself and others—is that the people best placed to make the decisions about the changes that education requires are those working within the profession: that is, the teachers themselves. Yet it is teachers who are largely absent from discussions about the profession. TV talk shows often fail to invite educators on, to discuss education, instead opting for academics or researchers. The board of the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) provides another example of the exclusion of teachers from decision-making bodies. This organisation wields significant power through the development of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, which all teachers must meet and continue to meet throughout their career as a requirement of their registration (although compliance with these is delegated to state bodies, such as the New South Wales Educational Standards Authority [NESA]). In other jurisdictions, such as New Zealand, the equivalent body has to have a composition of at least half the board being practising teachers. Yet there is no such requirement within AITSL. While many of those on the board have at the least a tangential relationship to education and teaching, this misses the point—the board's make-up can be changed at will by the Federal Education Minister—and the profession has no recourse to remedy this.

Initial teacher education is another area where the voices of practising teachers are absent. Recent symposiums (Australian Council of Deans of Education [ACDE], 2019) raised concerns about the quality of students becoming teachers and suggested a raft of different measures. Think tanks like the Grattan Institute (Goss & Sonnemann, 2020) suggested new classifications of teachers—like the UK's advanced skills teacher programme—and others suggested raising the tertiary entrance score required to enter initial teacher education programmes. Filmmakers, pre-service teachers, Deans of education, newspaper editors and politicians were consulted and spoke at the conference—but representatives of practising teachers, such as teaching unions,

were only invited at the last minute, once again underscoring the lack of input into discussions about their profession.

At a more granular level, there are increasing strictures limiting the ability of teachers to take part in the civic sphere. For many professions, social media networks have provided an opportunity to speak to an audience of millions in a fashion unmediated by others (Iredale et al., 2019). Yet teachers are increasingly wary about their interactions in such a space, risking approbation and even termination based on their interactions and commentary. Indeed, many teachers have forsaken social media, despite its obvious advantages, not least in networking and professional development, in order to feel more secure in their employment (Carpenter & Harvey, 2019). On the other hand, teachers that still use social media restrict their use to anodyne comments, showing a one-dimensional aspect of the profession, or faithfully toeing a party line at the expense of their professional standing. Teachers may still be able to use social media, and speak to a public audience, but I question the value of them being able to do this if they cannot speak freely about matters pertaining to their professional expertise, without fear of repercussions.

This state of affairs is untenable. Indeed, for the reasons outlined above, and many others, there is increasing concern about factors like teacher recruitment, attrition and recruitment (Gallop et al., 2021). While different pathways into the profession and increased remuneration might be part of the solution, they will not come without activism from the teaching body; that is, instead of just teaching young people to be active citizens, teachers themselves need to embrace an activist stance in their professional work. Approaches to teaching civics and citizenship offer some ideas as to how teachers might do this.

2   The Challenges Facing Civics and Citizenship Educators

It is a strange time to be a civics and citizenship educator, in Australia and around the world. On the one hand, there appears to be a swelling of student or youth-led social movements taking action within the public spheres, both online and offline—and often together. On the other hand, the very nature of democracy and democratic institutions seems to be threatened by the rise of authoritarian, opaque approaches to government and even outright totalitarianism in some countries (Keane, 2020). Into this mix—and further complicating already complex matters—are the opportunities and challenges presented by ubiquitous social media and digital technologies which promise greater connection between individuals and groups and increased opportunities for civic engagement, yet at the same time present very real threats to users' privacy and agency, (Wells, 2015), as well as presenting challenges related to the scale of mis- and disinformation (Mihailidis & Viotty, 2017).

Despite the rise of these social movements and the opportunities for civic engagement they represent, it appears that the civic knowledge of many youths is in decline. It is not hard to find news articles decrying the lack of civic literacy amongst Australian youth (Ghazarian et al., 2021). Indeed, these news headlines often extend beyond

national borders; anti-democratic sentiment appears to be on the increase, according to some scholars (Foa & Mounk, 2016), and the youth of today are supposedly more in favour of a military dictatorship, for example, than ever before. While much of this is disputed (Alexander & Welziel, 2017), assessments such as the National Assessment Program—Civics and Citizenship (NAP-CC) have identified that young people in Australia are failing to reach the expected standards of civic literacy. Indeed, the most recent report indicates that less than half of Year 10 students are performing at what might be described as proficient (Fraillon et al., 2020). The results are slightly higher for younger students, but certainly not anywhere that might be described as acceptable.

3   The Malaise Among Youth

Nor is this a new phenomena: results going back to 2004 in Australia indicate the same malaise and lack of achievement amongst Australian youth. Last century, the Civics Expert Group (CEG) identified that Australians of all ages were ignorant and apathetic, and it was especially a problem amongst young people. It was this that gave rise to *Discovering Democracy*, the Federal Government's programme to improve civic literacy amongst Australia's youth. It appears, based on the NAP-CC, that despite significant investment, it failed to achieve its stated purpose.

These failures of civic literacy are, of course, not evenly distributed. Students from low socio-economic backgrounds, or those who attend schools in those areas, are likely to fare less well than their colleagues from higher economic backgrounds. Students in regional and remote locations are also more likely to be less civically literate than their peers in metropolitan areas. And students from Indigenous backgrounds also struggle to become proficient in civic knowledge. Of course, the real areas of concern lie where students belong to more than one of these groups: then the effects of combined disadvantage are especially significant, and students in these positions are at risk of being disenfranchised from their right to participate in Australia's civic society.

There have been a number of reasons posited as to why this might be the case. In Australia, scholars like Suzanne Mellor (2003) have suggested that part of the problem lies in the lack of civic literacy and knowledge of teachers. She indicated that very few teachers, at either primary or secondary level, had undertaken any study about civics or politics. While programmes like *Discovering Democracy* did provide professional development for teachers, the funding ran out quickly, and did little to develop a sustainable body of expert civics teachers. This means that teachers often felt poorly prepared to teach the civics and citizenship curriculum. Such feelings might have led to teachers only teaching it superficially, or avoiding parts of it entirely.

4   Questionable Curriculum Offerings

Another problem might be related to the civics and citizenship curriculum itself. The most significant investment in civics and citizenship education (CCE) in the last 30 years was, as already mentioned, the *Discovering Democracy* curriculum. While the curriculum itself was considered to be of high quality (Erebus Consulting Group, 2003), there were criticisms from some researchers and teachers that the curriculum failed to address the interests of Australian youth (Kennedy, 1997; O'Loughlin, 1997). Instead, there was too much focus on the mechanisms of government, and the institutions of that government, and not enough on those topics that were relevant to the everyday lives of students in Australian schools and communities.

The final significant problem lies in the fact that in many jurisdictions, the place of CCE was, and still remains, unclear. This is despite the fact that the development of active and informed citizens is a central goal of the Australian education system, and has been since at least the Melbourne Declaration (2008), which states that one of the fundamental aims of the Australian Curriculum is the development of 'active and informed citizens' (p. 7). There is something of a gap between the policy and the practice, at both an institutional level and the individual classroom level. In New South Wales, for example, CCE was incorporated into History and Geography, and in many cases, entirely ignored in other subjects. More recently, the Australian Curriculum made promising noises about the importance of CCE, but the latest iteration of the curriculum indicates that, once again, civics and citizenship are less important than subjects like Mathematics and English. As an example of this, one might note that, in the primary years, CCE has been subsumed entirely into other subjects alongside History and Geography.

Another troubling sign that our approach to CCE in Australia might be past its use-by date is the fact that, despite the social activism sweeping the world in terms of topics like Black Lives Matter, March for Our Lives and the School Strike for Climate, young people don't appear to link that to what they are learning about in terms of civics and citizenship. Indeed, broader social movements, such as #Occupy, were regularly castigated by critics for their lack of clarity about goals and means to achieve them (Castells, 2015). This led to the notion of protest as identity, and social movement cultures (Tufekci, 2017). This failure to connect what, by any stroke of the imagination, is the very real practice of active citizenship with the subject known as CCE was present even amongst politicians in Australia, some of whom insisted students should return to their classrooms, rather than engage in any kind of protest about climate change (ABC News, 2018).

This paints a troubling picture of both the present and the future of civics and citizenship education, and perhaps even the future of democracy in countries like Australia. Yet this book is not about civics and citizenship education, and one might question the relevance of this to the notion of empowering teachers and democratising schooling. How is active citizenship, and students' declining civic literacy, related to the broader themes of teacher empowerment? To my mind, the answer is simple: rather than being two separate problems within our education system, they are the

two sides of the same problem. In other words, educators can and should remedy the problems facing civics and citizenship education, and the lack of engagement of students with this area, by embracing their role as democracy workers.

5   Teachers *as* Active Citizens not just Teaching *about* Active Citizens

The description I've provided above is a deeply concerning state of affairs. The combined assaults upon teachers in the form of increased accountability, the lack of a voice in policy discussions and an inability to engage and advocate in the public sphere have meant that the profession itself is at risk of being hollowed out. This is terrible for the status of teachers, but I would argue that it raises grave concerns for the state of our civil society and democracy as well. This is because teachers are far more than curriculum deliverers—or child-minders! They are essential democracy workers.

In using the term democracy workers, I am referencing the notion of teachers as cultural workers, as suggested by Freire (2018). This is a central tenet of many critical pedagogies and recognises the work done by educators to build and sustain cultures of democracy within schools, but also more broadly within civil society. According to Kozleski and Handy (2017, p. 207), 'Cultural workers foreground the cultural complexities of their situated experiences while aiming to produce cultures that transform prevailing inequalities and injustices in public education'. This definition is a good starting point for thinking about teachers as cultural workers, but more importantly, as democracy workers. The focus on the role of transforming injustices and inequalities is central to many approaches to education, and it remains a constant theme of different educational jurisdictions. Perhaps it is not surprising that Australia's education system has been classified as both high quality and low equity (Thomson & Teese, 2016)—or that researchers have discovered that Australia's mixed model of public and publicly funded private schools often is an exercise in segregation along lines of race and wealth (Ho, 2015).

Aristotle said that, for there to be liberty, it was necessary for all citizens 'to rule and be ruled in turn' (Aristotle et al., 1995, p. 12). This is a simple encapsulation of three of the important principles of democracy: equality, justice and participation. In order to ensure democracy, the Athenians felt that civic education was vital, and indeed, they recognise the role that all of the community had to play in that civic education. While that form of democracy was limited in many respects, it does provide us with some insights into remedying some of the ailments afflicting education in Australia.

The key part of the concept of teachers and democracy workers is that they aim to produce cultures that transform prevailing inequalities. This is an active stance— perhaps even an active transformative stance (Stetsenko, 2015) and it is significantly

different to the notion of teachers as simply transmitters of knowledge, which dominates so much of the mainstream approaches to curriculum design, even in the field of civics and citizenship education.

However, even more than that, I would argue that ascribing to this notion of teachers as democracy workers means embracing the idea that teachers need to not just educate the next generation of active citizens; rather, they need to demonstrate active, or perhaps even activist citizenship themselves. This is a step significantly further than most other progressive notions of education, which might privilege student centred or active learning opportunities.

6   Teaching the History of Democracy is Insufficient

It is not enough for teachers to teach about the history of Australian democracy, for example. Much of the current civics and citizenship curriculum is devoted to discussions about either the history of Australian democracy, or the various mechanisms and manifestations as they are present within Australian society. An inordinate amount of time is spent discussing the responsibilities of individual citizens, or the structure of government at state, local and federal levels. While this certainly has a place, by making it the focus of civics and citizenship education, it ultimately moves both students and teachers away from the locus of power: in other words, they come to see themselves almost as supplicants to governmental institutions—rather than those who are responsible for empowering the same institutions. Despite making claims towards active citizenship, such approaches do anything but.

Even where there is a focus on students being active in their local communities, this is limited, for the most part, to either learning about other examples of activism—which, again, I note as being important, or, at best, planning for possible campaigns or other civic actions that could be implemented at some point in the future. It is not enough for teachers to teach students about some of the great civil rights movements or protest actions or legislative changes—either in the past, or currently taking place. There is very little attention given to how young people can and should be active immediately—how they might be 'citizens-in-action', rather than 'citizens-in-waiting' (Arvanitakis & Marren, 2009).

Needless to say, these approaches lead to the disappointing outcomes that were described above. After all, what reason is there to learn about civics and citizenship education if you're not going to have much opportunity to practice it—at least until after you leave school? Instead, it is necessary to find a way that teaches young people the requisite civic literacy through civic activism—rather than simply storing up knowledge in the hope of being able to action it at some later, as yet undefined date.

Fortunately, we know the best way to do this. Numerous reports into civics and citizenship education, in Australia and internationally (for example, see Kerr, 1999) have highlighted two key concepts: students are far more likely to be both civically literate and civically active if they are already engaged in some kind of community

or participatory endeavour—at the same time that are learning about civics and citizenship. And perhaps even more importantly, they are more likely to be civically active and civically literate if they have direct contact with role models (often parents or other family members in the extant literature) who are civically active.

7 Teachers as Democracy Workers

It is the second point that is central to this chapter. I propose that teachers become democracy workers when they demonstrate to students both how students might already be active citizens, but also how teachers themselves are active in the public sphere. In a very Deweyian (1916) perspective, teachers have a role to nurture the development for the next generation of active citizens—and the mechanism to do this is by demonstrating (and not just teaching) active citizenship.

Teachers have responsibility for the development of democratic ideals amongst our youth and, more broadly, they contribute to the health of democracies in nation states. This position is not revolutionary: scholars as far back as Aristotle and Plato have acknowledged the intrinsic links between education and democracy, although it should be noted that Plato was not entirely in favour of democracy.

Aristotle was also very much in favour of what we might term experiential education. He argued that in order to learn to do something, we needed to do it: Speaking about the nexus between learning and participation, Aristotle said, 'For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them' (Aristotle & Sachs, 2002, p. 9).

This is a common theme within civics and citizenship education, which has been criticised in the past as nothing more than passively storing up information to perhaps use in the future (Shermis & Barth, 1982). Progressive scholars and activists such as Rousseau, John Stuart Mill and John Dewey have made similar arguments about the importance of civic education; indeed, Dewey wrote widely on the role that schooling plays in the shaping of democracy and the civil sphere.

However, much of the focus has been on the students within this paradigm. While I acknowledge the paramount importance of students and learning outcomes within any school setting, I feel that this is short-sighted, especially in the case of civics and citizenship education. More than perhaps any other subject within the school curriculum, for students to develop into what the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) declaration calls active and informed members of the community, they need to see what such a form of activism might look like. For some students, they will have role models in their families or communities external to the school—but this will not be the case for all students. It might not even be the case for most. Who, then, will model what it means to be an active citizen to Australia's school students? More importantly, who will, through the medium of shared experience, demonstrate the importance and value of being involved in the civic sphere of our democracy? The answer is, of course, teachers.

8   What Might Teachers as Democracy Workers Look like?

This idea is, perhaps, a revolutionary one, and I have no doubt that it will be a challenging notion for many teachers, and many other members of the broader education community. To begin with, I want to clarify the point I am making: I am not suggesting a form of indoctrination, as might be imagined by various teacher-critics. Nor am I insisting on inculcating a kind of left-wing progressivism at the expense of all other points of view. Rather, my aim in redefining teachers as democracy workers is broader than that, and is based on three main points. Firstly, I acknowledge the important role that teachers play in education, and especially education about democracy and empowerment. Secondly, through their practice, teachers model what it means to be empowered and active in civil society. Finally, teachers can also model productive and meaningful opposition to anti-democratic principles and action.

It might seem disingenuous to emphasise the important role that teachers play in educating young people in Australia. After all, few would argue that engagement in school is formative in many aspects, and that is why schools classify their work as education, which has an attendant moral paradigm (Biesta, 2017), rather than simply learning, which is absent from these discussions about morality and ethics. In their role as democracy workers, teachers have the opportunity to teach students *about* democracy and education. There are ample opportunities for this to be done in different key learning areas, and especially in areas like History, Geography and other social sciences (and especially civics and citizenship), and, indeed, such approaches have a long history in Australia and overseas.

However, rather than teaching students about previous or historical examples, as is common in these cases, I would suggest that teachers should instead be encouraged to make use of recent and current events—that is, events that have relevance and cachet to the students sitting in their classrooms. The backwards focus I describe— the study of democracy as past, rather than democracy as present—was one of the main criticisms of *Discovering Democracy* (Kennedy, 1997; O'Loughlin, 1997) and it is still present today in many parts of the Australian Curriculum. It comes from the notion that, in order to become an active citizen in the future, students must first store up information about civic mechanisms—something that doesn't seem supported by much of the literature (Shermis & Barth, 1982). Unfortunately, at present, there is little opportunity for student input into much of the civics and citizenship curriculum. While there is a case that, for example, Science curricula should be set by experts, this is not the case for civics and citizenship—after all, who better to discuss what matters to young people than young people themselves?

As teachers committed to the notions of democracy, it is our responsibility to find ways to integrate current issues of democratic attention into the work that we do. This might be as simple as finding a relevant news story to discuss with students within a KLA area, or it might be more involved, such as modelling and then explicitly explaining, democratic processes in the practice of our classroom. Of course, this is always easier said than done: teachers are often concerned about teaching 'hot

moments' or controversial issues in the classroom, fearing students might misunderstand, or being accused of indoctrination, or perhaps even being called out by politicians (Chrysanthos & Baker, 2021). This leads to the second way that teachers can strengthen democracy within their schools and classrooms: as models of active citizenship.

While the topics of curriculum and key learning areas are, to a large extent, mandated by government and other authorities, the most important aspects of education—the relational ones—are often left solely to teachers, or perhaps schools and systems that govern them. Developing these relationships is central to what it means to a good teacher, but it's not a simple process, and teachers often do it very differently from each other. Much of this relational development occurs in the interstitial spaces between formal educational moments. These islands of emotion and connection often take the form of an amusing story, a shared understanding, or a discovery of a common interest. These moments form bonds that skilful teachers can then use to contextualise learning in such a way that improves individual and class learning outcomes. I'm sure everyone can remember a teacher who showed interest in a passion that wasn't strictly school-related, and the rush of affection and belonging that accompanied that interest. As much as lesson plans and assessment tasks and deep content knowledge, this emotional and relational work is what makes a good teacher.

The development and maintenance of these relationships are central to the schooling experience. They also showcase the importance of teachers as role models to the students in their care. This is where the second theme fits: by these relational practices, teachers can model what it means to be an active and informed member of their community. It is not for no reason that teachers are often held to a higher standard of professional behaviour than many other professions—for example, politicians. This is because of the recognition that teachers have a fundamental role in the development of the next generation that extends well beyond literacy and numeracy; rather, in very Deweyesque (1916) terms, teachers guide the next generation through the process of learning to live in a democratic society.

This places significant responsibility upon the shoulders of teachers, and I should note that not all teachers live up to this responsibility—at least not all the time. Nevertheless, it provides teachers with a powerful opportunity to not just tell, but to show students what it means to be a member of the community in a democracy. This can be done through in class practices, such as those described above, but I think they are even more powerful through bridging the gap between school and community. In other words, the more teachers share the ways they are already active in their local and global communities, the more likely students are to recognise the value of that.

Teachers can and should draw on their own experiences as active citizens to explain how they navigate their communities, how they contribute to the public good, and how they engage with the public sphere. This might be as simple as discussing their membership of a local sporting club, or a trade union, or their opinions about an important topic of the day. In order to become active citizens, young people need to see other active citizens in action—and there are few better placed to do this than their teachers. After all, it was an incredibly powerful experience for the young people

at the School Strike For Climate to see their teachers join them at the rally points, indicating both their support for action on climate change, but the role of young people to demand that action for their elected representatives.

And, of course, the more teachers are required to do this, then the more likely it is that teachers are to be active—or more likely, more active—in those communities, and this will further strengthen the profession of teaching and its unique position within society. In other words, by modelling active and engaged citizenship to their students, teachers become more active and empowered within their own professional and personal communities—and that has to be good for the profession as a whole, considering the parlous nature of the attacks upon it.

The final point to make about teachers and democracy workers is perhaps the most important one. As well as teaching about empowerment and democracy, and modelling the same, I think teachers as democracy workers need to model opposition to anti-democratic democracy action. This is also perhaps the most challenging task facing teachers, yet it is not entirely absent from their practice already. It is apparent that, in many places around the world, there is a rise in extremist political parties, especially on the right, that emphasise nationalism and populism (Gholami, 2018), often at the expense of things like multiculturalism and diversity. These principles are antithetical to democracy, and to global citizenship more broadly, which recognises the strength that diversity brings to communities.

Yet these forms of extremism also target schools, seeking to amplify their message and recruit young people to their causes. Teachers are empowered to shut down racist dialogue, and indeed, they are expected to do so, much as they might try to eliminate bullying within a school setting. Yet this area is becoming much more challenging to delineate, amidst claims of 'cancel culture' and the right to free speech. The role played by social media and mobile technologies also means that the borders between schools and communities are increasingly porous, or entirely non-existent. After all, if a teacher knows a student is watching questionable videos on social media, on their own personal device, outside of school time, should they take action about it? Or is it none of the teachers' business?

The solution to this, and similar problems, is through explicitly modelling opposition to what I describe as anti-democratic action. Teachers need to teach young people to critically engage with all the myriad sources that present information to them, of course at school, but even more crucially in their own personal lives and via their social media feeds. After all, what value is it to young people if they can critically interrogate a newspaper article, but not question the disinformation or misinformation present on Twitter? If we're to safeguard democracy—and perhaps even improve the health of it—against the forces of fascism and totalitarianism, teachers need to explicitly engage in education about these dangers.

9   Conclusion

My argument above begins by stating that the ongoing devaluing of the profession of teachers and the concerning performance of Australia's youth in civic literacy tests are related; they represent the fact that teachers are increasingly being seen solely in an instrumental capacity, and education itself is becoming a robotic, soulless endeavour. To remedy this situation, I propose a redefinition of teachers as democracy workers, empowering and placing them in a central position of importance to the nurturing and sustaining of the health of democratic states. In order to work as democracy workers, teachers need to teach about democracy, and especially as it pertains to the young people in their care. They also need to teach through democracy, by modelling active citizenship practices to their students. And finally, they need to explicitly challenge and critique anti-democratic action in their classrooms. Through this renewed importance, teachers will not only protect democracy, but also empower themselves and raise their status in the future.

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