

From the Philosophy to Six Points to Connecting the Philosophy with Use and How to Use

Here we explain the concept of democratic citizenship, which forms the basis of this book.

By making new discoveries through dialog, each of you, with different ways of thinking and cultural backgrounds, will deepen your understanding, learn to speak more clearly, and develop your ability to engage in dialog further. The purpose of this book is to practice this in the language classroom, and the basis for this approach is democratic citizenship. Here, democratic citizenship refers to the stance of the citizen to compromise with and show tolerance for people with diverse backgrounds and different ways of thinking, and the stance of the citizen to proactively involve themselves in their government to create a society for themselves, without leaving that to others.

Under Philosophy of This Book, we will first explain education for democratic citizenship as defined by the Council of Europe, and education for democratic citizenship in Germany, which together form the basis by which the authors of this book practice Japanese-language education. Then we will explain the Beutelsbach Consensus, which is a basic consensus regarding education for democratic citizenship in Germany. These principles are the fundamental ways by which this book should be viewed, and therefore, are essential for understanding and using this book. Please read this section on Philosophy, and then read the section, Six Points to Connecting the Philosophy with Use to begin actually working on the subject matter. That section contains the important perspectives for reflecting the philosophy in how you use this book. Then, after working on Six Points to Connecting the Philosophy with Use, proceed to How to Use This Book. If you read in this order, you will understand why we chose the content and activities for the materials provided.

Council of Europe Education for Democratic Citizenship/Human Rights Education

The Council of Europe¹⁾ is an international organization established in Europe in 1949, following WWII, and currently has 46 member states. The organization upholds the principles of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, and carries out a variety of activities to defend and promote those values.

The Council of Europe has long been engaged in education for democratic citizenship and human rights education. Education for democratic citizenship involves democratic rights and responsibilities and proactive participation in society in numerous ways, while human rights education focuses on human rights and basic freedoms. The Council of Europe sees these two as intrinsically related and refers to them together when discussing education for either. In this book, we include both when we

1) <https://www.coe.int/en/web/about-us/> (September 11, 2023)

say education for democratic citizenship. Violence, ethnocentrism, extremism, xenophobia, discrimination, and intolerance are emerging recently in Europe as threats to democracy²⁾, and to combat this trend, education for democratic citizenship is growing in importance.

Initiatives on education for democratic citizenship have particularly been subject to vigorous debate among the member states of the Council of Europe since 1997, and the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship was ultimately released in 2010³⁾. That charter serves as a shared standard in Europe for education on democratic citizenship⁴⁾. The charter states that education is extremely necessary for practical initiatives for the principles of the Council of Europe (democracy, human rights, and the rule of law), and encourages member states to put effort into education for children and youth. The charter also emphasizes providing opportunities for education for democratic citizenship for all manner of people, and the cultivation of stakeholders and organizations involved in any way in education, given that learning lasts throughout one's life. The purpose of the charter is to promote social solidarity, dialog between cultures, respect for diversity, and equality, and while knowledge and skills are required for that purpose, the charter states that it is necessary to give people the courage to defend and promote the principles of the Council of Europe and take action.

Education for Democratic Citizenship in Germany

Education for Democratic Citizenship in Germany can be said to be taking place in collaboration with the educational initiatives of the Council of Europe. Here, the authors wish to write in some detail what we learned about education for democratic citizenship in Germany through school tours and interviews with teachers and children. One major element is the work by the Federal Agency for Civic Education, or Politische Bildung in German, which covers Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC). The point here is that rather than the narrow definition of "politics" used in Japan, political education in Germany refers to education to ensure each citizen widely studies democracy, practices it, and acquires the skills of democratic citizenship. The other element is Demokratiepädagogik, or education on democracy. Born out of pedagogy in response to the emergence of neo-Nazis and racism in the early 2000s, it involves a wide range of activities to cultivate the soil for democracy inside and outside the schools.

Meanwhile, "politische" classes as a subject at school are not the only classrooms in which education for democratic citizenship is being carried out. While the homeroom period and activities of the students' council, which focus on dialog and conversation between students, can be said to be

2) See Ruth Wodak (2020) *The Politics of Fear* (Second edition). Sage.

3) https://www.coe.int/en/web/edc/home/-/asset_publisher/MmQioA2qaHyO/content/twenty-years-of-promoting-education-for-democracy-and-human-rights (October 2, 2023)

4) <https://www.coe.int/en/web/edc/charter-on-education-for-democratic-citizenship-and-human-rights-education> (October 2, 2023)

political education in and of themselves, there are also cases where the entire school is engaged in proactive education for democratic citizenship.

There, the terms “democracy” and “participation” (in society or politics) are often heard. Many people perhaps believe that “democracy” is vocabulary or knowledge that only appears in civics class, but in fact, democracy is the act of practicing all manner of activities you are involved in through dialog. Both small children and adults share ideas and practice numerous activities to manage their school or organization democratically. That is the meaning of “participation”. It means speaking up about the things you think about in daily life, discussing them, and giving them form. In one interesting example, local children gave their opinions during the design phase of a park in their community, and those opinions were adopted, that is to say, the children participated in the politics of their community. In another school, there is a program called *Aktive Pause*, or proactive break time. “Proactive” means that the students take the initiative in their own activities. So, during proactive break time, the children themselves design and manage what they will do with their break time, whether using toys, books, or games. Democracy is the process of convincing others of your ideas, increasing the number who agree with you, and giving those ideas form, and thereby you gain empowerment. Conversely, experiencing failure is very useful for your future thinking or activities.

Federal Agency for Civic Education

The Federal Agency for Civic Education, a government agency in Germany founded in 1952 and renamed in 1963, plays a central role in such initiatives.

The organization carries out a very wide range of outreach programs to enable the citizens to proactively participate in politics and tackle political and social problems through a critical approach. Acknowledging their totalitarian past, the Federal Republic of Germany particularly recognizes their responsibility to instill their citizens with the values of democracy, pluralism, and tolerance⁵⁾. Pluralism is the stance of respecting all the members of society with their diverse opinions, interests, goals, and expectations⁶⁾. The phrase, “Everyone is different, everyone is good” appears in the well-known poem, *A Bell, A Bird and Me* by Misuzu Kaneko, which is a good example of pluralism. More so than simply accepting diversity, mutual respect between people forms the basis of democracy, while it also helps stem the trend towards an exclusionary society on the opposite side from democratic society, while preventing the recurrence of the abominable wars of the past. Sincere reflection on past history serves as the very soil from which democracy is built.

Beutelsbach Consensus

Political education in Germany is predicated on regret for war and aims to teach the democracy

5) <https://www.bpb.de/die-bpb/51743/demokratie-staerken-zivilgesellschaft-foerdern> (October 2, 2023)

6) <https://www.bpb.de/kurz-knapp/lexika/handwoerterbuch-politisches-system/202088/pluralismus/>(October 2, 2023)

and respect for human rights that forms the basis of the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany, which serves as their constitution. In the past, there was a time when there was no common understanding of political education due to conflict over political reforms. However, an agreement was finally reached in 1976 at the end of a long debate among academic experts⁷⁾. The agreement was named the Beutelsbach Consensus for having been reached in a place called Beutelsbach. This agreement forms the basic policy not only of the Federal Agency for Civic Education, but for democratic education itself. The Beutelsbach Consensus consists of the following three points⁸⁾.

- Prohibition against Overwhelming the Students: The teacher must not impose their thinking on the students or indoctrinate them.
- Treating Controversial Subjects as Controversial: There is always debate in academia and politics. It means matters should be presented as controversial even if it is inconvenient for the state or teachers.
- The students must learn to be able to analyze a political situation and their own personal interests, while the teacher must guide the students to develop their political decision-making skills and ability to participate according to their interests.

This agreement is the stance required of the party that carries out political and democratic education. If this agreement is kept, then mutual respect for human rights will occur and dialog can be achieved. The more this stance is promoted, the more the position of the teachers will naturally change. Both teachers and students are human beings with mutual respect. They are partners that learn from each other through dialog. Furthermore, it frees teachers and students to speak without restraint in the classroom about political or social taboos. When we say that education must be neutral, the problem is that there are many interpretations of the word "neutral". The axis on which we depend is education for democratic citizenship, which defends and strengthens democratic society. Accordingly, it was our intent to create this book according to the Beutelsbach Consensus. Our hope is that by engaging in dialog between participants based on the materials and activities, your words will give rise to deeper and more refined thinking.

7) Takahiro Kondo (2009), *"Doitsu ni okeru wakamono no seiji ishiki: Minsyusyugi-syakai no kyoikutekikiban"* ("Political Education of Youth in Germany: Educational Foundations for a Democratic Society") Japan Science Support Foundation, Trends in the sciences, October 2009, pp. 10-21.

8) <https://www.bpb.de/die-bpb/ueber-uns/auftrag/51310/beutelsbacher-konsens/> (October 28, 2023)