

THE KETTERING FOUNDATION'S ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

CONNECTIONS

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2012

EDUCATING FOR DEMOCRACY

Stories of
INNOVATION
in
**HIGHER
EDUCATION**





NEW from Kettering Foundation Press

Democratizing Deliberation

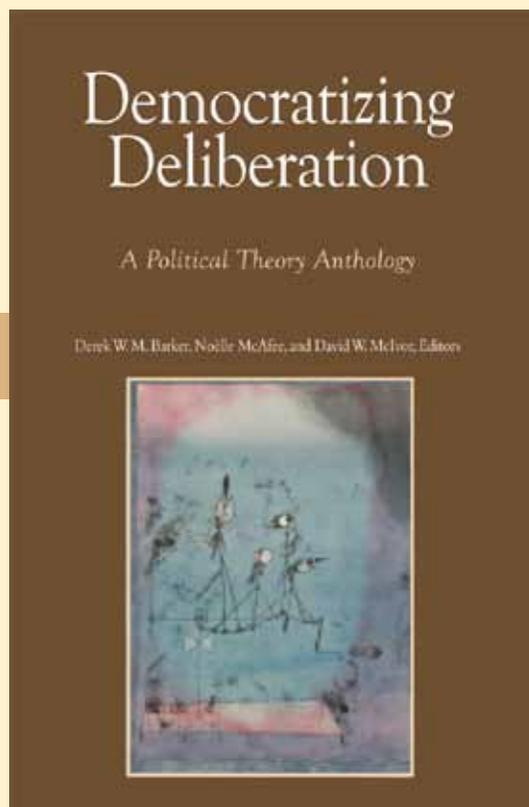
A Political Theory Anthology

Edited by Derek W. M. Barker, Noëlle McAfee, and David W. McIvor

Democratizing Deliberation brings together recent and cutting-edge political theory scholarship on deliberative democracy. The collection reframes deliberative democracy to be sensitive to the deep conflicts, multiple forms of communication, and aspirations for civic agency that characterize real public deliberation. In so doing, the book addresses many of the most common challenges to the theory and practice of deliberative democracy.

Kettering Foundation Press | 2012

\$15.95 • 184 pages • ISBN 978-0-923993-41-2



To read excerpts and purchase this book, visit www.kettering.org.

The Kettering Foundation is a nonprofit, operating foundation rooted in the American tradition of cooperative research. Kettering's primary research question is, what makes democracy work as it should? Kettering's research is distinctive because it is conducted from the perspective of citizens and focuses on what people can do collectively to address problems affecting their lives, their communities, and their nation. The foundation seeks to identify and address the challenges to making democracy work as it should through interrelated program areas that focus on citizens, communities, and institutions. The foundation collaborates with an extensive network of community groups, professional associations, researchers, scholars, and citizens around the world. Established in 1927 by inventor Charles F. Kettering, the foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization that does not make grants but engages in joint research with others. For more information about KF research and publications, see the Kettering Foundation's website at www.kettering.org.

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Community Colleges and the Work of Democracy

Bernie Ronan

A *Time of Crisis*: This phrase served as the title of a crucial section in the historic 1947 Truman Commission Report, *Higher Education for Democracy*, which framed how higher education should respond to the education crisis facing post-World War II America. The most lasting contribution of the Truman Report is that it argued for the creation of a national system of community colleges.

In a similar spirit, *A Crucible Moment* is the title of a 2012 report by the National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, which describes a crisis of democracy still facing our country. This sense of ongoing urgency over citizens' confidence in the political system reflects the perennial, if not permanent, nature of this issue. Moreover, the crisis of democracy, or the problem of how to

make democracy work as it should, is a constant challenge facing our nation's colleges and universities. In the fall of 2011, a group of community colleges came together to form The Democracy Commitment, a new initiative committed to reclaiming their colleges' democratic mission and responding to this time of crisis. Along with Brian Murphy of DeAnza College, I have been privileged to assist in the launch of this initiative, and part of this commitment includes a research partnership with the Kettering Foundation to advance experiments in civic learning and democratic engagement that can be used as exemplars for the nation's community colleges.

"Democracy's colleges" is the moniker applied to the nation's land-grant colleges, which were created in the 19th century to democratize higher education. More recently, the same label has been adopted by the nation's community colleges.

Community colleges started using this term to describe themselves when they embarked on a national "call to action"—to redouble their efforts in assisting students to complete their degrees, echoing the country's critical need for a well-trained 21st-century workforce. This is one dimension of the challenge facing community colleges—how to provide citizens with equal access to higher education and to the opportunities that completing a college education creates. This was a guiding premise when the land-grant system was established in the mid 19th century, as well as when a national network of community colleges was created in the mid 20th century. However, as Scott Peters points out in the *Cornell Chronicle Online*, there is a second, and equally compelling, meaning implied by the term *democracy's colleges*, what he refers to as "public work . . . work that taps and engages and develops the civic agency, talents and capacities of everyone . . . where 'the world's problems' play out in ways that women and men can do something about." This is the work of democracy.

This same duality in the challenges of American colleges—equalizing opportunity and doing the work of democracy—was also embraced in the Truman Commission Report in 1947: "The social role of education in a democratic society is at once to insure equal liberty and equal opportunity to differing individuals and groups, and to enable the citizens



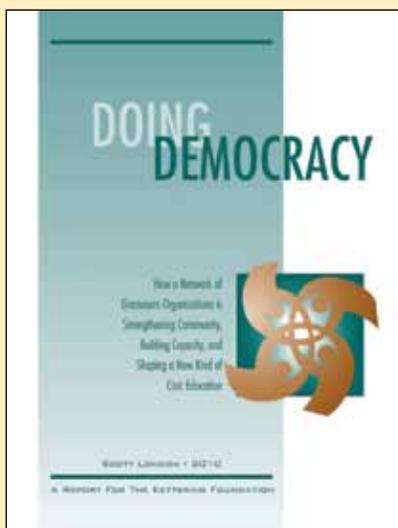
ADDITIONAL READING FROM KETTERING

Doing Democracy:

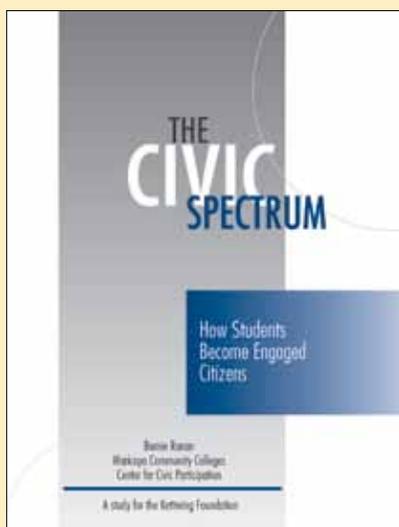
How a Network of Grassroots Organizations Is Strengthening Community, Building Capacity, and Shaping a New Kind of Civic Education

By Scott London

This report examines a burgeoning network of organizations that is inventing new forms of community renewal and citizenship education. Their common aims: tackling tough public issues, strengthening communities, and nurturing people's capacities to participate.



Kettering Foundation | 2010
FREE • 36 pages
ISBN 978-0-923993-32-0



Kettering Foundation | 2011
FREE • 32 pages
ISBN 978-0-923993-35-1

The Civic Spectrum:

How Students Become Engaged Citizens

By Bernie Ronan

Classroom learning, community service, and political engagement are all essential parts of the civic spectrum required to help students become engaged citizens. The author focuses in particular on community colleges, which, he says, play a pivotal role in educating students for civic engagement.

to understand, appraise, and redirect forces, men, and events as these tend to strengthen or to weaken their liberties." Today, community colleges are once more confronting this dual challenge. In their inaugural declaration, the founders of The Democracy Commitment state:

American higher education has a long history of service to democracy. Our nation's colleges and universities have always had a mission to make education available to the many and not only the few, to insure that the benefits and obligations of education were a democratic opportunity. This is a proud history, but it is not enough. Beyond access to education itself, colleges and universities have an obligation to educate about democracy, to engage students in both an understanding of civic institutions and the practical experience of acting in the public arena. The American community colleges share this mission of educating about democracy, not least because we are the gateway to higher education for millions who might not otherwise get a post-secondary education. More critically, we are rooted deeply in local communities who badly need the civic leadership and practical democratic capacity of our students for their own political and social health.

Our organization is a national initiative providing a platform for the development and expansion of community college programs, projects, and curricula that aim to engage students in civic learning and democratic practice across the country. The goal is that every graduate of an American community college will have had an education in democracy. This includes all students, whether they intend to transfer to a four-year university, earn an associate degree, or obtain a certificate.

In collaboration with the Kettering Foundation, we are exploring this second dimension of the historic duality facing higher education and democracy: how these colleges understand their civic mission and their civic relationship to

To read these reports, visit www.kettering.org.

Community Colleges and the Work of Democracy

their communities. We are also investigating to what extent these colleges view themselves as civic agents in their communities, actively collaborating with their communities in addressing the challenges and issues the communities face. Further, we are asking, to what extent are they dedicated to instilling this sense of civic agency in their students, in inculcating in students the skills and capacities to be active and engaged citizens in their communities? How are community colleges developing and implementing programs to foster civic learning and democratic engagement? How does this appear in curricula? In extracurricular programs? In student life? In clubs and associations on campus, including student government?

Kettering research has focused primarily on problems of democracy, rather than problems that occur in democracy; that is, with how democracy works rather than with the specific policy issues that our democracy grapples with. The Democracy Commitment embraces both aspects of the democratic challenge by starting with specific issues that our communities face and asking how they are implicated in larger problems of democracy. How are community colleges engaging their students in the work of democracy—by focusing on the issues *in* democracy? After all, these are community colleges, institutions in, of, and for their communities, enriched and challenged by all of the issues their communities are addressing every day.

The problems our communities face—homelessness and poverty, race and class, public health and neighborhood development—are grist for the democratic mill. Civic learning and democratic engagement in community colleges have as both their rationale and their focus the problems these communities face. Our students come into our classrooms with these problems and deal with them every day outside of class. Community college students are more ethnically diverse, more economically distressed, more part-time and full-time employed, and more challenged in terms of transportation,

housing, and language than any other population in American higher education. In this, they reflect their own communities. As The Democracy Commitment declaration states: “Community college students come from all walks of life and all social stations; they represent all ethnicities and religious communities; they are all ages. Their ability to exercise their democratic rights and work together in public life, to be generous and tolerant and yet able to advocate for themselves, will help determine the future of these communities.”

The research partners in this work are the community colleges that are participating in The Democracy Commitment. As I explain in the 2011 issue of the *Higher Education Exchange*, these colleges are now engaged in a rich variety of civic practices, including student-led dialogue at Skyline in California and Cuyahoga in Ohio, public achievement in Lonestar-Kingwood in Texas, community organizing at Minneapolis Community & Technical in Minnesota, student organizing at DeAnza in California, deliberative forums at Maricopa in Arizona, and developing civic-learning modules at Miami Dade in Florida. Representatives from these and other institutions are coming together in a series of workshops at the Kettering Foundation to reflect critically on a broad array of civic practices and to capture the rich narrative of students democratically engaged in the problems of democracy they actually embody.

In the first year of their work as a national consortium, colleges joining The Democracy Commitment will conduct a “civic inventory” to describe what is happening on their campuses and in their communities with regard to civic learning and democratic engagement.

They will come together at an annual meeting to share best practices and learn from colleagues, joining together with a companion initiative composed of state colleges—the American Democracy Project of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities.

The ultimate goal of the initiative is for community colleges to fulfill their dual destiny as democracy’s colleges: to develop civic skills and a sense of

“Community college students come from all walks of life and all social stations; they represent all ethnicities and religious communities; they are all ages. Their ability to exercise their democratic rights and work together in public life, to be generous and tolerant and yet able to advocate for themselves, will help determine the future of these communities.”

civic agency in their students, through engaging in the challenging, pervasive problems arising every day in their own communities. Bringing together community colleges’ experiences in working with people in their neighborhoods with the Kettering Foundation’s research on deepening and advancing civic innovation, we hope that this partnership will catalyze more robust civic agency in America’s community colleges and in the communities they serve.

Bernie Ronan is cofounder of The Democracy Commitment and directs the Maricopa Community Colleges’ Division of Public Affairs, which includes the Center for Civic Participation, part of a national network that collaborates with the Kettering Foundation on experiments in the work of democracy. He can be reached at bernie.ronan@domail.maricopa.edu.



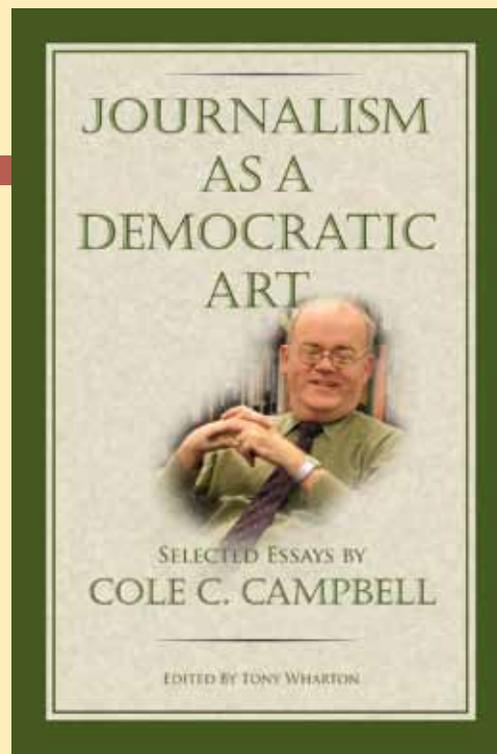
NEW from Kettering

Journalism as a Democratic Art: Selected Essays **by Cole C. Campbell**

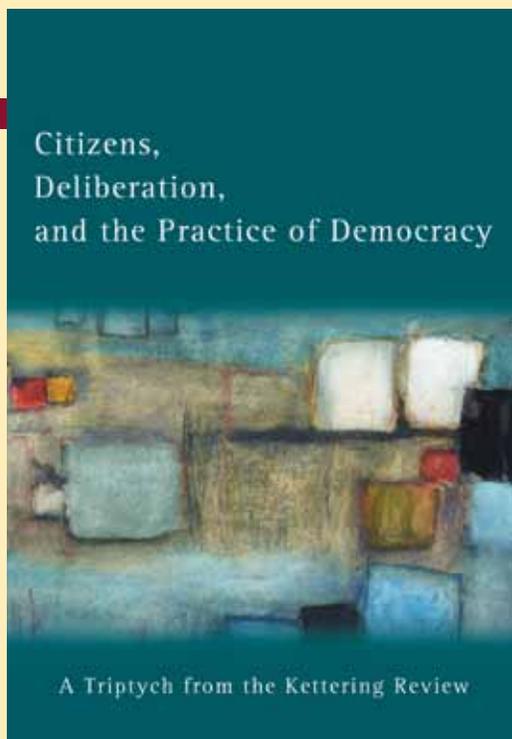
Edited by Tony Wharton

Journalism as a Democratic Art expresses at its heart Cole Campbell's belief that "people expect the press to help their communities solve problems." As one-time editor of the Virginian-Pilot in Norfolk, Virginia, and then the Post-Dispatch in St. Louis, Missouri, Campbell worked to align his profession with that belief, often facing considerable resistance from other journalists.

Campbell's essays address a variety of subjects, including a partly finished dictionary for journalists; timely essays written in the months after Hurricane Katrina and 9/11; and an interview by Jay Rosen, longtime professor of journalism at New York University.



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\$15.95 • 196 pages • ISBN 978-0-923993-40-5



Citizens, Deliberation, and the Practice of Democracy: A Triptych from the Kettering Review

Citizens, Deliberation, and the Practice of Democracy brings together writing by 19 leading thinkers on the contemporary challenges of democracy. These provocative essays, first published in three issues of the Kettering Review to celebrate 25 years of the National Issues Forums, challenge readers to rethink conventional notions of democracy, public deliberation, and citizenship.

Kettering Foundation Press | 2012
\$15.95 • 236 pages • ISBN 978-0-923993-44-3

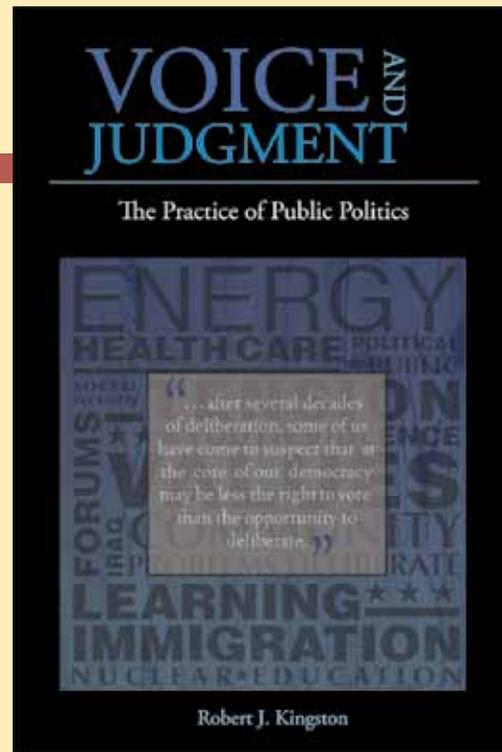
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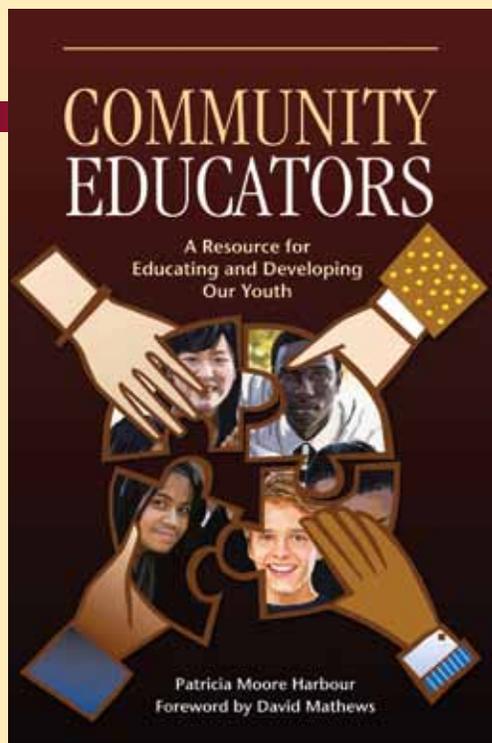
Voice and Judgment: The Practice of Public Politics

By Robert J. Kingston

"We are victims of argument and instruments, from time to time, of circumstance or the influence of others' whims. Our civic movement, however, is from a state of anxiety, puzzlement, blame, defensiveness, or anger, toward the place where contraries meet, where unavoidable tensions remind us that no life is lived without risk . . . or collaboration. A deliberative public begins with opinions but shares experiences; it recognizes shared concerns or 'values' in unexpected, sometimes unfamiliar circumstances; it responds to the divisive with restraint. . . . Public deliberation reveals not a verdict but the making of a 'public,' the formulation of a public will that can be described and put to use."



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\$15.95 • 272 pages • ISBN 978-0-923993-42-9



Community Educators: A Resource For Educating and Developing Our Youth

By Patricia Moore Harbour

Community Educators asserts that the relationship between education, community, and democracy are inseparable and illustrates that education is broader than just schooling. Current thinking about education is challenged and reveals how the public participates in the education and development of youth. This book is a call for action and responsibility—both individual and collective—to transform education beyond simply reforming schools.

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