
Abstract:
This article examines the political pedagogy of the French Revolution and, with that, the revolutionaries' engagement with issues of political community and communication. It proposes that while the distinction between éducation and instruction, or between the development of moral and civic character, on the one hand, and the cultivation of particular skills, on the other, was prominent in eighteenth-century pedagogy and has been influential in our understanding of the Revolution, that same distinction has obscured essential elements of the revolutionaries' pedagogical and political agendas. Attention to the proposals and practices of revolutionary pedagogy, including the revolutionary festivals, reveals that what the revolutionaries called “public instruction” was a dynamic synthesis of civic and technical training, a synthesis that was intended not to foster unquestioning obedience or the obliteration of differences among citizens, but to promote civic communication in ways that would make a participatory politics possible.

Keywords: Eighteenth century; Emulation; France; French revolution; Political culture; Political pedagogy; Revolutionary festivals