Using a philosopher's pedagogy to teach school subjects:

The case of Ethnic Studies at Kailua High School

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Abstract

This article examines the impact of using a philosopher's pedagogy to teach school subjects (Lewis & Sutcliffe 2017) through the case study of Ethnic Studies at Kailua High School. Conducted in a multicultural setting, the participants in the study are 89 high school students and data comes from their course assignments. A constructivist approach to grounded theory methods is used to analyse data. Findings reveal how two facets of the philosopher's pedagogy helped engage students and positively impact their personal and academic development. They are: (1) the seven-part inquiry process and (2) the community of inquiry. In the article's conclusion, using the philosopher's pedagogy to teach Ethnic Studies is presented as an important means for developing student engagement and carrying out the aims of multicultural, culturally responsive, and social justice approaches to schooling.

Key words

community of inquiry, culturally responsive teaching, ethnic studies, multicultural education, Philosophy for Children, social justice education

Introduction

In 2004, the National Academies' Committee on Increasing High School Students' Engagement and Motivation to Learn published a comprehensive study regarding the state of the American public high school. They reported,

> The instruction typical of most urban high schools nevertheless fails to engage students cognitively, emotionally and behaviorally … most subject matter appears disconnected and unrelated to students' lives outside of school. Students spend much of their time passively listening to lectures or doing repetitive, formulaic

tasks. Instruction and tasks are commonly very easy or impossibly difficult for many students, and getting right answers is stressed over understanding. (National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine 2004, p. 213)

As a result of this type of instruction, the report concluded, 'it is common [that] fewer than half of the ninth graders who enter [American public schools] leave with a high school diploma' (p. 2).

At the time that this study was published, I was entering my fourth year as a professional educator and I was experimenting with using Philosophy for Children (P4C) to teach social studies at a small public high school in the state of Hawai'i. Determined to find solutions to many of the issues outlined in the report above, I was deeply concerned about questions related to equity and engagement. I wondered: In the context of the American public education system, what might an engaging school or engaging classroom look like? How can American public high school teachers successfully engage *all* of their students in meaningful ways? Could the *activity of philosophy* have a positive impact on student engagement in the American public high school setting?

In this article I show how the development of a 'philosopher's pedagogy' (Makaiau & Miller 2012, p. 8) helped me find possible answers to these questions, and I describe how I used this approach to teaching and learning to create an innovative high school Ethnic Studies course. I also report on the formal study I conducted to examine the impact of the philosopher's pedagogy on student learning in Ethnic Studies (Makaiau 2010). This includes the study's findings, which reveal how two facets of the philosopher's pedagogy helped to engage students and positively impact their personal and academic development. They are: (1) the seven-part inquiry process and (2) the community of inquiry. In the article's conclusion, I expound on the ways in which the philosopher's pedagogy can be used to teach school subjects like Ethnic Studies, and why this approach is an important means for developing student engagement and carrying out the aims of multicultural, culturally responsive and social justice approaches to schooling.

The philosopher's pedagogy

The 'philosopher's pedagogy' (Makaiau 2010, pp. 55-62; Makaiau & Miller 2012, p. 8) is the term I use to describe both the theoretical and practical dimensions of using

philosophy to teach 'school subjects' (Lewis & Sutcliffe 2017, pp. 202-203). It was developed out of my own biographical journey as a professional educator, and it is deeply embedded in my positionality as a qualitative researcher who is interested in learning more about its impact. Its origins lay in the progressive writings of John Dewey, the activities outlined in Matthew Lipman's early P4C program, and Thomas Jackson's philosophy for children Hawai'i (p4cHI).

Dewey (1916) helped to articulate what I see as an essential connection between education and philosophy:

> If we are willing to conceive education as the process of forming fundamental dispositions, intellectual and emotional, toward nature and fellow men, philosophy may even be defined as the general theory of education. (p. 328)

In an effort to bring Dewey's theory to life, Lipman created P4C in the 1970s. At the time, he wanted to adapt the academic discipline of philosophy to 'enlist the social impulses of the child by creating classroom communities of inquiry' (Lipman 1988, p. 110) from kindergarten to 12th grade. P4C, he explained, 'will cease to treat children as passive blotters whose education consists merely of learning of inert data and will instead stimulate their capacity to think' (Lipman 1988, p. 110). By the mid-1980s P4C had gained international recognition as a growing movement in education with several centres around the world and thousands of individual practitioners. Among these centres is the University of Hawai'i Uehiro Academy for Philosophy and Ethics in Education, which is the home of Thomas Jackson's philosophy for children Hawai'i (p4cHI).

I met Jackson in 1999. I was a pre-service teacher in the College of Education and I was searching for examples of actual classroom practices that matched my theoretical beliefs about education, teaching and learning – beliefs based on education *for* democracy (Dewey 1916; Adams, Bell & Griffin 2007) and social justice (Freire 1970; Nieto 1996; Oakes & Lipton 1999), *through* culturally relevant (Gay 2000; Castagno & Brayboy 2008), learner-centered (Dewey 1897, 1938; Schiro 2008), and social constructivist (Vygotsky 1978) approaches. As I sat in Jackson's *Introduction to Philosophy for Children* course, I saw first-hand how the key strategies of p4cHI (Jackson 1984, 2001, 2012) could bring all of these theories to life and I began to envision how accessible and useful philosophy could be in the context of the mainstream public high school classroom that I was teaching in. This is when I started experimenting with, reflecting on, and modifying

Jackson's p4cHI strategies to develop what Chad Miller and I now refer to as the philosopher's pedagogy.

Recently highlighted in a review of the 'number of ways in which Matthew Lipman and Ann Margret Sharp's original' P4C program has 'been adapted to respond to the complex and sometimes conflicting demands of twenty-first-century education', Lizzy Lewis and Roger Sutcliffe (2017) describe the philosopher's pedagogy by explaining how it focuses

> more on *teacher* dispositions and skills than on pupil ones (though the strategies and foci are not, or course, mutually exclusive). It is the espousal of an approach to teaching that certainly sees a place for developing pupils' own readiness to inquire philosophically; but it calls for teachers *themselves* to become more thoughtful, reflective, reasonable and considerate in their own instruction and their dealings with pupils. (p. 205)

They elaborate that it is 'probably better not to think of it as a model *within* the curriculum but a model *for* the curriculum, whatever shape the curriculum might take' and they conclude that 'this idea(l) of philosophical teaching may, in the end, provide the best model for the advancement of P4C and philosophy in the curriculum, since it can underpin all of the other models and strategies' (p. 205).

Described extensively in a number of other articles and book chapters (Makaiau 2010, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017; Makaiau & Miller 2012; Makaiau & Lukey 2013), the philosopher's pedagogy is an overall approach to teaching and learning that can be used to incorporate the activity of philosophy into a variety of subject areas (e.g. History, Geography, Science, English Language Arts, Health, etc.) across grade levels and age groups. Grounded in a fundamental connection between education and philosophy, it is defined by a set of six interconnected teacher commitments. While the six commitments of the philosopher's pedagogy are unpacked, contextualised and expanded on in Makaiau and Miller (2012), they can be summarised as follows:

> The first is that the teacher must live an examined life. Secondly, the teacher must see education as a shared activity between teacher and student. Thirdly, the teacher and students must re-conceptualize the 'content' of the discipline as a reflection of the interaction between the classroom participant's beliefs and experiences and the subject matter being taught. This connects with the fourth commitment: that the teacher must hold, with Dewey (1916), the view that

philosophy is 'the general theory of education.' Fifth, teachers, and students, must make philosophy a living classroom practice. And finally, teachers must be willing to challenge contemporary measures for classroom assessment. (Makaiau & Miller 2012, p. 11)

By no means is this a closed set of criteria, instead, the philosopher's pedagogy is rather organic in nature – a work in progress that continues to develop the more I read, teach, research, reflect and participate in professional communities of inquiry.

In the remainder of this article I want to highlight the ways in which the philosopher's pedagogy has helped me engage high school students in the academic discipline of Ethnic Studies. Established in the late 1960s at the height of the American civil rights movement, the purpose of Ethnic Studies is to provide students with the resources to learn about the history of *all* ethnic groups through the words of the people who lived through those histories. An important site for the activity of philosophy, Ethnic Studies provides students and teachers with rich opportunities to explore democratic ideals such as social justice, multiculturalism, self-determination and civic action. In the section to follow, I describe the history behind my opportunity to experiment with using the philosopher's pedagogy to teach Ethnic Studies at a small public high school on the Hawaiian island of Oahu.

History of Ethnic Studies at Kailua High School

In 2004, a colleague – Kehau Glassco – and I were commissioned by the Asian/Pacific Islander Youth Violence Prevention Center (APIYVPC) at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa to design and teach an Ethnic Studies course for the students of Kailua High School (KHS). In the state of Hawai'i, public high school students are required to take four credits of social studies. Out of these four credits, the students must select two half-credit social studies elective courses. Decisions about what social studies electives are offered to students are made at the school level. Ethnic Studies is one of the half-credit social studies courses that schools can choose to offer to their students.

KHS is a small American public high school located on the windward side of the Hawaiian Island of Oahu. In general, the students from this school tend to self-identify with two main communities: Waimanalo and Kailua. Although these two communities are close in proximity, they do not share a common intermediate or middle school. It is at KHS that students from the more affluent community of Kailua meet students from

the more rural community of Waimanalo for the first time. This separation between students in the two communities creates a unique, and sometimes divisive, cultural milieu.

One aspect of this cultural context is tension and conflict between the students from the two communities. In the minutes from a KHS Parent Community Collaboration Day (October 2004) participants rated as one of the top five challenges facing the school 'communities fighting communities – Kailua vs. Nalo [Waimanalo] mentality'. This demonstrates how the socially constructed differences between students from Kailua and Waimanalo were sometimes used to perpetuate and justify conflict on campus. It also illustrates why Ethnic Studies was envisioned as an important part of a school-wide effort to reduce incidents of violence both on campus and within the larger communities serviced by the school.

Central to the design and implementation of Ethnic Studies at KHS is the philosopher's pedagogy – an overall approach to teaching and learning that guides teachers (via the six commitments described above) as they work to use p4cHI to incorporate the activity of philosophy into required school disciplines and subjects. p4cHI is defined by a conceptual base and a set of classroom practices. At the core of its conceptual base are the four pillars of p4cHI: community, inquiry, philosophy and reflection. The four pillars of p4cHI are fundamental, and function as the theoretical framework from which all p4cHI activities and assessments are built upon. Among students and teachers, the most popular p4cHI activities from Jackson (2001) are:

- Creating *Intellectual Safety* (p. 460) to make sure that *all* participants in the community feel like they can ask any question or state any point of view as long as they are being respectful of everyone in the group.
- Making a *Community Ball* (p. 461) to help mediate turn taking during classroom dialogue and inquiry.
- Using the language of the *Good Thinker's Tool Kit* (p. 463) to articulate questions, claims and thinking in general.
- Participating in *Plain Vanilla* (p. 462) discussion-based inquiries that use the following structure: question, vote, inquiry and reflect.
- Using *Magic Words* (p. 461) to support student facilitation during the Plain Vanilla inquiries.

- *Reflecting on the Community of Inquiry* (p. 464) with a set of evaluation questions to help measure progress.

In the context of designing and teaching a high school Ethnic Studies course, the philosopher's pedagogy was used to support students and teachers as they worked towards three main goals:

(1) Increasing understanding: of the history of ethnic groups in the US, topics related to race, class, gender and/or sexuality, violence indicators in the school community, and the ethnic identity of oneself and others.

(2) Developing skills: including thinking critically and philosophically about Ethnic Studies concepts, reading and writing, analysis of primary sources, interpersonal communication, and personal reflection

(3) Increasing empathy: for others, connectedness, inclusiveness, empowerment to make positive changes in the community, and personal responsibility for resolving issues of violence

To accomplish these goals, the course curriculum is structured into six major units of study, plus a civic action unit, which requires a community-service project:

Unit One – Citizenship and Participation: an intellectually safe community of inquiry is created, and the concept of civic engagement is introduced.

Unit Two – Contextual Background: a glossary is created by the students, containing 54 terms/events related to Ethnic Studies.

Unit Three – Self-Concept: students apply the glossary to conduct an inquiry into their own self-concept.

Unit Four – Violence in Our Community: students read Chris McKinney's *The Tattoo* (or an alternative book), thinking critically about the text through writing and philosophical discussions.

Unit Five – Struggles for Ideal Democracy: students study historical experiences of ethnic groups in the US.

In relationship to the findings that resulted from the study described in this article, it is also important to know that Unit 3 of the course (listed above) was structured using a seven-part philosophical inquiry process (Makaiau 2013). This learner-centered strategy starts with a philosophically-rich inquiry question, which is generated by the teacher.

Then students engage in the inquiry by: (1) questioning, (2) gathering information, (3) organising/analysing/construct a thesis, (4) outlining, (5) writing, (6) presenting, and (7) reflecting. Details about this and other aspects of the course can be found in Makaiau (2010).

The Ethnic Studies course and curriculum was first introduced as an after-school pilot program in 2005 and then became a part of the school's regular offering in 2006. Since then, feedback from the APIYVPC's research, teacher-initiated action research projects, collaboration with the Uehiro Academy, and student input have all been used to make course improvements. In 2007, KHS's Principal made Ethnic Studies a required course for graduation, establishing KHS as the first school in the US to have such a requirement. By 2011 Ethnic Studies at KHS achieved local and national recognition as a promising approach for improving the lives of students.

Research Design

From 2004 to 2007 I developed and conducted a large-scale qualitative case study (Creswell 2007; Patton 2002) to examine the impact of the KHS Ethnic Studies curriculum on student learning and engagement (Makaiau 2010, 2017). One of my main research questions was: *What does the data tell us about the impact of a high school Ethnic Studies course that utilises a philosopher's pedagogy?* In addition, I asked a follow-up question: *What components of the philosopher's pedagogy supported student engagement for all?*

Participants

Student participants were selected based on their enrolment in the Ethnic Studies classes that I taught during the 2004-5, 2005-6 and 2006-7 school years. In the first two years of the study my class was voluntary, and then in year three, due to the new school policy, students were required to take Ethnic Studies for graduation. In total, 89 of my students agreed to participate in the research project. They were between 14 and 18 years old and included females (49) and males (40). They were heterogeneously grouped in regards to their academic ability; the majority qualified for free or reduced

lunch,[1] and they mainly identified as Hawaiian/Part-Hawaiian, Japanese or White. To maintain anonymity, all of the participants in this study were assigned a pseudonym.

Data collection and analysis

My role in this study was as a participant observer.

> The participant observer employs multiple and overlapping data collection strategies: being fully engaged in experiencing the setting (participation) while at the same time observing and talking with other participants about whatever is happening. (Patton 2002, pp. 265-266)

This had benefits, such as the close relationships with my student participants, which elicited authentic responses from my students, but it also had drawbacks, including my desire for positive findings. In an effort to reduce bias, and to view the course through my students' eyes, I invited them to help me collect the data. They video-recorded our sessions and provided me with copies of their coursework.

Analysis of the data involved the method of constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss 1967) and grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin 1998; Charmaz 2005, 2006), which included employing the expertise of critical friends (Miles & Huberman 1994) – who were both co-teachers and academics – to decrease researcher bias.

Findings

At the end of the study, two important findings emerged which related to the impact of a philosopher's pedagogy on student engagement in a multicultural high school Ethnic Studies course. Both of the findings can be characterised as methods or practices of teaching that specifically illustrate how the theoretical dimensions of philosophy can be translated into a functioning classroom practice that engages students and teachers in school subjects. They are: (1) The seven-part inquiry process, and (2) The philosophical community of inquiry.

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[1] Children from households with income at or below certain levels – dependent on the number of family members – are eligible for free or reduced-price meals in the Hawai'i State Department of Education. For example, a family of four making less than $51,708 is eligible for free or reduced-priced meals.

The seven-part inquiry process

After a thorough analysis of the data, it became clear that the seven-part inquiry process (Makaiau 2013) – used to structure philosophical inquiry in Ethnic Studies – engaged the students in course material and helped them see connections between what they were learning in school and their lives outside of the classroom. This learner-centered activity starts with a philosophically-rich teacher-generated focus question, and is followed with student: (1) questioning, (2) gathering of information, (3) organising, analysing, and constructing a thesis, (4) outlining, (5) writing, (6) presenting, and (7) reflecting. In the case of the Ethnic Studies course examined in this study, the focus question guiding the students' seven-part inquiry process was: 'What is my self-concept from the perspective of Ethnic Studies?' To stimulate their thinking at the onset of the inquiry, the students used a set of previously learned Ethnic Studies terms and concepts to generate questions about their self-concept. To further explain how the seven-part inquiry process helped to foster student engagement, it is important to look at the students' comments about each step of the inquiry process.

Questioning: In the first step of the inquiry, Ethnic Studies students used a set of previously learned vocabulary words (e.g. values, prejudice, class, bias, ethnicity, equity) and Jackson's (2001) *Good Thinker's Tool Kit* to stimulate their thinking and to generate philosophical questions about themselves.[2] The analysis of the data revealed that many of the students' questions engaged them in thinking about the Ethnic Studies content in relationship to their own lives and experiences. Some examples of their questions are:

> *Can I assume that if my values change, so will my self-concept? What are the reasons?* (9th grader)

> *What are some of the reasons I use prejudices or epithets to be funny?* (9th grader)

> *What does it mean to be part of the middle class? Do we have more or less authority?* (12th grader)

> *If it is true that I make rude remarks about other people's biases, then does that imply that I am a hypocrite?* (9th grader)

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[2]   For more information about this process see Makaiau (2010, pp. 101-102, 345-347)

Is it reasonable to assume that for me culture, race and ethnicity are all the same thing? (12th grader)

What are the reasons my parents don't treat me and my brother with equity? (9th grader)

Is it reasonable to assume that if I look at myself as a minority that I will be treated like one? (12th grader)

What does it mean to be Hawaiian? (12th grader)

Is it reasonable to infer that I need to be treated with justice from the way I try to find justice for others? (9th grader)

What does it mean to be considered a biological race? What if I am dark skinned, and mistaken for an African-American, but I consider myself to be Hawaiian. What does that make me? (12th grader)

If it is true that I am not mad about the Japanese internment camps then what does that imply? (12th grader)

Is it reasonable to assume that my view of men causes me to be sexist? (9th grader)

Is it safe to assume that I have adapted to my community's culture? If so, can I also be personally diverse? (12th grader)

What are the reasons I don't always feel empowered? (9th grader)

When reflecting on his experience with this first step of the inquiry process, one of the students commented on the importance of asking personally relevant and philosophically rich questions like these. He wrote, 'this hard essay made me think of questions I would never have thought about. And with this it gave me a deeper understanding of who I am' (12th grader). Further analysis of the data revealed how the philosophical nature of the students' questions motivated them to gather information and seek deeper understandings of the course materials, the world around them, and themselves.

Information gathering: The data showed that the Ethnic Studies students used three different approaches to answer their questions: introspection, interviewing, and analysis of primary documents. Many of the students commented about these methods in their writing. About introspection, a student wrote, 'by doing this paper I have introspected and remembered many events that create my self-concept and only now I

can look even deeper and understand myself better' (12th grader). Another commented on the interviewing process:

> *… existing in this world for 14 years and having two to three weeks of discovering my self-concept was the hardest thing that I have ever done. I have learned that it is not mostly me who is answering my questions but other people who have watched my actions. I looked more into perception than I usually do. I had never really gone this deep about figuring my self-concept out.* (9th grader)

In this stage of the philosophical inquiry process, the data illustrated how students like the ninth grader above begin to think intensely about the importance of point of view and perspective-taking in the construction of new knowledge. It also showed the extent to which his philosophical questions engaged him to participate in class activities both in and in out of school contexts.

Organise/analyse/thesis: In step three, the students used the methods of constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss 1967). They sorted through, organised, and analysed the information they had gathered. As the quote below illustrates, new questions emerged at this point in the inquiry.

> *What makes a person who they are? What identifies a person and makes them an individual within society? These are questions that an individual has to answer by analyzing themselves and coming to conclusions based not only on how they see themselves, but also how others see him or her. Through my own self-analysis, I found that being Japanese, with its cultural and racial ties defines a significant part of who I am. Facing discrimination both in my past and present helped shape who I am today. I also found that having a lack of religion has also had a significant impact on how I see myself. In truth, our identities are made up of millions of factors. There are however certain elements defined within Ethnic Studies, that play, or have played, the most important and influential roles in our lives and our identities. Even though playing clarinet is only a hobby for me, it nonetheless plays a significant role in my identity.* (12th grader)

Like this twelfth grader, the analysis of the data revealed how they talked, discussed, and thought through their thinking with their peers. Through this level of engagement they developed new ideas, connections, and became motivated to write.

Outline and write: All of the Ethnic Studies students who participated in this study culminated their thinking in the seven-part inquiry process by outlining and writing an 'identity narrative' (Makaiau 2010, p. 106). By this stage of the inquiry, the analysis of the data revealed that the students were both excited to draw conclusions in writing, but as the student below points out, they were also aware that their thinking had the potential for further development.

> *This investigation into myself has started off with me saying, 'I don't know who I really am'. But now my understanding has evolved to a point where I believe that I may understand my self-concept. Well, just enough to write this essay about it. After I went through deep self-thinking and tons of interviews, I have come up with the things that make up my self-concept.* (9th grader)

Proud of the writing they produced, the students also demonstrated engagement in the next step of the inquiry process, which included students reading their identity narratives out loud in our community of inquiry.

Present: In relationship to their presentations, the analysis of the data uncovered how students engaged with one another in supportive and critical ways. Through active listening they gave comments and asked meaningful questions. One of the students shared about this experience.

> *I was asked [by one of my classmates] if I did anything based on my home-culture and I said no. This person then asked me where my family emigrated from and I said that I have no idea. Well, this example may not have told much, but for me it seemed really weird to answer all these questions without even knowing the answer and I believe that if I found out maybe I could try doing things based on my home-culture. (10th grader)*

It is clear from this student's quote that they were engaged in their learning as they listened, questioned, and thought out loud with one another. They expressed deep emotions, made connections with their peers, and described a change in the way they see the world.

Reflect: In the last step of the philosophical inquiry process the data demonstrated how the students reflected on their experience. They wrote about what worked well, what

they learned, and what they would want to change if they went through the philosophical inquiry experience again. One student wrote,

> *It is definitely an interesting class … the idea of identity and self-concept … These concepts are actually proving to be meaningful in my life, because they are basically what I have been living by, without ever realizing it until now. My race/ethnicity, my values of diversity, and being a local boy in Hawai'i have shaped my self-concept. In turn my self-concept has shaped my life.* (12th grader)

In addition to having a meaningful learning experience in class, where, as one student put it, 'we got to really think about things that I have always wondered about', many of the students were compelled to use what they learned to make positive changes in their lives outside of school.

> *… this lesson in Ethnic Studies [the seven-part philosophical inquiry process] has really made me step back, look at my life and realize who I truly am and not be ashamed of that. I have learned not to be someone I'm not, and take pride in where I'm from. I also learned to be aware of other peoples' self-concept and not be so judgmental of other people because I do not know what has happened in their life that made them the way they are today. I will use what I have learned here to maybe help my friends figure out their self-concepts' and maybe this would end a lot of problems we have. I will also try and go out … to better my community …* (12th grader)

Not only does this quote illustrate how the seven-part inquiry process engaged Dayton in school, but it also shows how it contributed to his active engagement in civic life.

In summary, this final quote from Gina helps to express the overall impact of the seven-part philosophical inquiry process in the context of Ethnic Studies:

> *I have learned a lot about myself and to be proud about the person I am by going through this [seven-step inquiry] process. I think that if I show that I'm proud of whom I am and my ethnic background then everyone will start to feel the same. Hopefully if everyone looks back to their history of where they come from, they will be more respectful of who they are and where they're from. When people learn more about each other, it might decrease racism in the world and help better everyone's future. That means less wars and hatred amongst each other.*

This comment is particularly interesting as it helps to reveal the tremendous impact that a philosopher's pedagogy can have on engaging students in meaningful ways with

school subjects. In traditional forms of schooling (like those referenced in the National Research National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine's 2004 report) students sometimes come to see social studies as the rote memorisation of historical names, dates, and past events – far removed from the study of oneself. As it is illustrated in this quote, Gina's experience left her with an alternative conclusion. Her comment expresses how the philosopher's pedagogy and the seven-part inquiry process engaged her in seeing how the understanding of others is inherently linked to self-understanding and positive social change.

A philosophical community of inquiry

The second major theme to come out of the analysis of the data is the role that the philosophical community of inquiry played in engaging students. In addition to the seven-part inquiry process, the creation of an 'intellectually safe community of inquiry' (Jackson 2001, p. 460) was used to frame both the overall structure of the course and the interactions between teachers and students on a daily basis. This community of inquiry was established on the very first day of class. From then on, p4cHI's conceptual framework (community, inquiry, philosophy and reflection) and hallmark strategies (intellectual safety, the community ball, the Good Thinker's Tool Kit, Plain Vanilla inquiries, and evaluation questions) were used to cultivate and nurture a collaborative civic space (Makaiau 2015) throughout the duration of the course.

In Rick's identity narrative he wrote about the overall impact of this type of intellectually safe philosophical community of inquiry:

> *In my ethnic studies class [the other students in my class are] helping me define who I am. I want to know more about my grandparents and how they influenced my life. I know that my grandfather & father were in the military. I am in JROTC [Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps]; I want to know if their background will have an impact on my decision whether or not to join the military. I also want to know [whether] my home culture makes me who I am.*

In an effort to answer his questions, Rick, like many of the other students in the class, believed that the feedback from his classmates was important in his quest for self-discovery, and his interaction with them motivated him to learn.

Christian was another student who referred to the ways in which the community of inquiry engaged him and challenged him to think about himself in new ways:

> *In the beginning of this Ethnic Studies class, it was one of the first times I became aware of what it feels like to be discriminated against. We were going around the circle talking about ethnicity and one of my classmates said to me, 'I thought you were Asian'. This bothered me because he assumed that I was just Asian when in my own mind I was thinking of myself as Hawaiian. Right at that moment I realized it hurts to be discriminated against by other people. I understand his mistake because other people might think I'm just Asian by the way I look, but what they don't know is that I have other ethnic backgrounds. Other than being Chinese and Filipino I'm also Hawaiian and Portuguese. My self-concept is more diverse than others might think.*

As this quote illustrates, the community of inquiry awakened Christian to the complexity of the topics being discussed in Ethnic Studies. Suddenly aware of the assumptions that his peers were making about him, Christian was able to use the safety established in his classroom community of inquiry to enter into a dialogue with his classmates in a critical and questioning way. He confidently started this dialogue by asking, 'Who defines who we are? Ourselves? Others?' Social interactions like this, illustrate the important role that intellectual safety can play in engaging young philosophers in higher levels of critical reflection.

Reflection on the community of inquiry

Based on the analysis of the data, it is clear that the process of reflection was also essential to the success of the community of inquiry. Along with the reflection that students engaged in during the seven-part inquiry process, additional reflective questions and activities within the classroom community of inquiry engaged students in thinking about their own thinking, looking back and making sense of their experiences in the course, and sharing their thoughts in dialogue with their peers. As a result of these reflections a number of the students became open to applying the course material to self-improvement. Here is an example from Lani:

> *By self-reflecting I noticed that I say people shouldn't judge people, but here I am judging people. Another example that shows I contradict myself is when I say that I am diverse but then that I am also prejudice towards other ethnicities. I think that me, myself makes me prejudice. Maybe If I hung out with those certain ethnicities*

and got to know them better, then I wouldn't be judgmental towards them. I think that I have grown a lot through this investigation.

Lani nicely summarises the findings that emerged from the analysis of the data as a whole. Not only does her reflection show the depth of her personal growth, but it also provides evidence that the philosopher's pedagogy will have a longstanding and positive influence on her learning. Through meaningful engagement with the course material, Lani was able to make a connection between what she was learning about in Ethnic Studies to her life beyond the school day.

In conclusion, the findings from this study describe the impact of the philosopher's pedagogy on student learning in the context of a high school Ethnic Studies course. The student voices make it clear that they were engaged and motivated to make meaningful connections between the Ethnic Studies content and their lives beyond classroom. The students used the discipline of philosophy 'to systematically develop reason and good judgment' (Jackson 2012) as they learned more about themselves and about others. As a result they developed increased tolerance of their diverse peers.

Discussion

The results from this study demonstrate how the activity of philosophy – as it is defined and framed by the philosopher's pedagogy – can be used to effectively teach and engage adolescent students in American public high school subjects such as Ethnic Studies. This is directly in line with the recommendations given at the end of the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine (2004) report, which is referenced at the beginning of this article,

> a focus on engagement [which] calls attention to the connection between a learner and the social context in which learning takes place … promotes a sense of belonging by personalizing instruction, showing an interest in students' lives, and creating a supportive, caring social environment. (p. 3)

As the analysis of the data revealed, the philosopher's pedagogy supported this type of student engagement; it cultivated in students a critical stance towards their academic coursework, personal reflection, and in some cases, informed action within the school community. In particular, the greatest areas of positive growth were seen around the

students' attitudes towards discrimination, justice, equity, prejudice, racism and violence.

Nelson and Pang (2006) write,

> The dual focus, study of the human condition and examination of controversy, makes social studies [and in this case Ethnic Studies] the ideal location for the study of racism and prejudice. Social studies, in its best forms, uses ideas and information from a variety of disciplines to understand and evaluate conceptions of race and ethnicity. (p. 125)

As the evidence suggests, students in Ethnic Studies at KHS took these issues seriously as they questioned, critically analysed course materials, dialogued, drew conclusions, and made changes in their thinking about themselves and the world. Banks (1997b) writes that when teachers keep these aims in mind they,

> change the basic assumptions of the curriculum and enable students to view concepts, issues, themes and problems from several ethnic perspectives and points of view … [it] requires students to make decisions and take actions related to the concept, issue or problem they have studied. (p. 24)

This was the case in Ethnic Studies at KHS. Students reported changing the way they related to others, challenging social norms by speaking out, and engaging in activities to stop violence both on and off our school's campus.

The best example of this was Dayton, who helped to create a 'Safe Schools Task Force'. This task force was comprised of a group of students who came together to work on facilitating school-based activities related to violence reduction and awareness about causes of violence in the students' communities. Their activities included: organising an orientation day for incoming students, arranging a 'Movie and a Message' night, and working with adults on campus to think about innovative ways to create a more positive school culture. Other students took less formal, but equally important approaches to reducing violence on campus like informing teachers when and where a fight was going to occur, and asking for peer mediation to resolve personal conflicts they were having with other students on campus. A true embodiment of the goals set forth by multicultural education advocates (Banks 1996, 1997a, 1997b, 2002, 2006; Nieto 1996), the culturally responsive schooling movement (Gay, 2000; Castagno & Brayboy 2008), and social justice educators (Dewey 1916; Freire 1970; Nieto 1996; Oakes & Lipton 1999; Adams, Bell & Griffin 2007) – the KHS Ethnic Studies curriculum provides a

valuable example of how the activity of philosophy can not only engage all high school students in course curriculum, but also move them towards engaging in positive social change.[3]

In sum, the philosopher's pedagogy in the context of a high school Ethnic Studies course is highly successful because it engages students *and* teachers in the development of: (1) respectful and ethical civic relationships, (2) shifts in the distribution of power and access to multiple perspectives, and (3) dialogue, deliberation, inquiry, and action (Makaiau 2017).

Strengths, limitations and directions for future research

In this article I have offered concrete examples of the impact of a philosopher's pedagogy on student learning in a mainstream US high school Ethnic Studies course. The results from the study provide a window into the ways in which philosophy – when conceptualised as an activity, rather than a school subject itself – can be used to teach school subjects (Lewis & Sutcliffe 2017), engage students, and possibly promote social justice. The unique contribution of this research is that it elaborates on two methods or practices of teaching that specifically illustrate how the theoretical dimensions of philosophy can be translated into a functioning classroom practice that engages students and teachers in a core American public school discipline like social studies. It is a strong case that adds to the scholarship of previous researchers who questioned practitioners' abilities to incorporate P4C into the pre-set school curriculums (Haynes 2007). Bound by a 'snapshot' (Makaiau 2010, p. 37) methodology, this study is limited because it does not examine whether or not p4cHI had a lasting impact on students in their lives beyond the classroom. Additionally, the study was done by a teacher-researcher whose students' comments might reflect their desire to please her. Longitudinal research by an external evaluator in this area is needed.

Conclusion

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[3] See Makaiau's (in press) *Philosophy for children Hawai'i: A culturally responsive pedagogy for social justice education* for a more detailed description of how the philosopher's pedagogy is a multicultural and culturally responsive approach that promotes social justice.

Philosophy for Children (P4C) started as an idea for the 'future revision of education' (Lipman 2008, p. 53). Today it is a thriving catalyst for school reform in a number of countries all over the world. The Uehiro Academy for Philosophy and Ethics in Education at University of Hawai'i at Mānoa is a vital and growing part of this revolution because it supports students, teachers and researchers who wish to experiment with the activity of philosophy as a possible means for engaging *all* students in school subjects and promoting social justice.

Dewey (1916) wrote,

> As a society becomes more enlightened, it realizes that it is responsible *not* to transmit and conserve the whole of its existing achievements, but only such as make for a better future society. The school is its chief agency for the accomplishment of this end. (p. 20)

From this standpoint, teaching is a political act and educators have the power to promote a more socially just society through the curriculum, pedagogies, and institutional structures that they develop and maintain. This is social justice education – 'full and equal participation of all groups in a [school] … [through educational practices that are] democratic and participatory, inclusive and affirming of human agency and human capacities for working collaboratively to create change' (Adams, Bell & Griffin 2007, pp. 1-2). As the voices of the students in this article indicate, the philosopher's pedagogy supports the development of a school culture that is characterised by inclusivity and active participation by all members of the school community. It is a general approach to schooling that focuses on building relationships, learning how to think across contexts, and making connections between the content we study and what matters to us in our lives.

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