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Critical Friendship, Mindfulness, and the Philosophy for Children Hawai'i Approach to Teaching and Learning

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- [5.0] This chapter investigates the relationship between philosophy for children Hawai'i (p4cHI), critical friendship, and mindfulness. It is situated within the context of an international online collaborative journaling project that began in 2014 (Makaiau, Leng, and Fukui, 2015), and that continues to be carried out by four of the authors of this chapter. Brought together because of our shared interests in p4cHI (Jackson, 2001; Makaiau and Miller, 2012) and self-study research methodologies (Loughran, 2007; Beck, Freese, and Kosnik, 2004; Samaras and Freese, 2006), we are teacher educators and p4cHI practitioners from the USA, Taiwan, Canada, and China. In 2015 we engaged in an international online collaborative journaling project to:
- [5.1] • Expand the culturally responsive international p4cHI research collective that was initially created by Makaiau, Leng, and Fukui (2015)
 - [5.2] • Explore the role of a p4cHI teacher/facilitator with international partners
 - [5.3] • Reflect on the professional and personal impact of belonging to an international research collective

- Disseminate and mobilize knowledge relating to the professional development of teacher educators, practitioners, and researchers involved in the worldwide Philosophy for Children movement

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As a result of the findings that emerged (Makaiau, Wang, Ragoonaden, and Leng, In Press), and at the suggestion of Karen Ragoonaden (also an editor of this book) we developed an interest in exploring how the p4cHI approach to teaching and learning promoted critical friendship and mindfulness in our international online collaborative journaling project.

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In this chapter we report on the most recent analysis that we conducted to examine how the “four pillars” of p4cHI (community, inquiry, philosophy, and reflection) (Jackson, 2013, p. 99-109) contributed to the development of critical friendship and mindfulness in the professional work that we accomplished while journaling with one another from August 2014 to January 2015. We share how we used the methods of constant comparison (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and the four pillars of p4cHI to re-examine close to eighty pages of journal entries and written dialogue that are housed in an online Google document. In our findings we use quotes from our online journal to illustrate how the four pillars of p4cHI provided us with both the theoretical framework and the practical tools for building an “intellectually safe” community (Jackson, 2001, p. 460) and for conducting “systematic and critical examination of [our] actions and [our] context as a path to develop a more consciously driven mode of professional activity” (Samaras and Freese, 2006, p. 11). At the chapter’s conclusion we expound on how the four pillars of p4cHI enabled us to co-construct a community of critical friendship and to engage in a collectively mindful process that deepened the understanding of self, other, and our professional practice.

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Background and Theoretical Framework

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In this section we provide the background and theoretical context for the chapter by reviewing the literature related to philosophy for children Hawai’i (p4cHI), Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP), critical friendship, and mindfulness.

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PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN HAWAI’I (P4CHI)

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Philosophy for children Hawai’i (p4cHI) is Thomas Jackson’s (2001, 2012) teacher-lead and culturally responsive offshoot of Matthew Lipman’s original worldwide Philosophy for Children movement. It is an innovative approach to education that transforms the schooling experience by engaging learners in the activity of philosophy. p4cHI practitioners convert traditional classrooms into “intellectually safe” (Jackson, 2001, p.460) communities of inquiry where students and teachers co-create and co-construct their abilities to think for themselves in responsible ways. Defined by both a theoretical framework and actual set of classroom strate-

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gies, p4cHI is best characterized as a philosopher's pedagogy (Makaiau and Miller, 2012) that can be adapted and molded to fit the needs of students in a wide range of educational settings and cultural contexts.

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The theoretical framework that supports the p4cHI approach to teaching and learning is referred to in the literature as the four pillars of p4cHI (Jackson, 2013; Makaiau and Miller, 2012). These four pillars are: community, inquiry, philosophy, and reflection. Designed to support p4cHI practitioners as they find their way and construct a p4cHI practice of their very own, the four pillars of p4cHI are the conceptual blueprints from which all p4cHI activities and assessments are built upon. Some of the most common p4cHI activities include co-constructing an intellectually safe classroom, creating a "community ball" (Jackson, 2001, p. 461; Makaiau, 2015, pp. 2-3) to mediate turn taking, using the "Good Thinker's Tool Kit" to ask questions and make claims (Jackson, 2001, p. 463), engaging in "Plain Vanilla" inquiry procedure (p. 462), and using evaluation criteria to reflect on progress made by the community of inquiry (Makaiau, 2015, p. 3). In the section that follows, we give a brief description of each pillar, and later on the chapter we provide excerpts from our journal to explain how the four pillars helped to cultivate and nurture critical friendship and mindfulness in our professional practice.

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Community

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Central to the philosophy for children Hawai'i (p4cHI) approach is the idea that teaching and learning must be done in an "intellectually safe" community of inquiry. Participants work together to create conditions where students and teachers feel emotionally and intellectually secure and free to "ask virtually any question or state any view so long as respect for all is honored" (Jackson, 2013, p. 460). The community practices "listening, thoughtfulness, silence, care and respect for the thoughts of others" (Jackson, 2001, p. 459). To establish and maintain this type of community, p4cHI practitioners recognize that intellectually safe communities of inquiry do not always form naturally; instead, they must be cultivated and nurtured by both students and teachers (Makaiau, 2015). This includes ensuring that there is ongoing process in which the group can co-construct, co-create, and reflect on the definitions of intellectual safety and community. What develops out of this sense of community is a growing trust among the participants and the ensuing courage to present one's own thoughts.

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Inquiry

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In philosophy for children Hawai'i (p4cHI), inquiry is learner-centered, which means that it "arises out of the questions and interests of the community" (Jackson, 2001, p. 462). It is facilitated with instructional

strategies like “Plain Vanilla” and “The Good Thinker’s Tool Kit” (Jackson, 2012, p. 103-106), which help participants engage in democratic praxis (Makaiau, 2015) and “dig beneath the surface” (Lukey, 2013, p. 50) of the topics that they are inquiring about. The permeating spirit of the inquiry *is not being in a rush* (Jackson, 2001); it emphasizes instead an “ongoing inquiry to modify, correct, enhance and deepen our views of the world” and ourselves (Makaiau and Miller, 2012, p. 10). Progress in an inquiry is characterized and evaluated using the following questions: What new ideas emerged? Were new connections made? Did you get more confused or see the complexity of the topic? Did a possible answer develop? What new questions do you have?

Philosophy

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Practitioners of the philosophy for children Hawai’i (p4cHI) approach to teaching and learning like to distinguish between *Big P* and *little p* philosophy (Jackson, 2012). In *little p* philosophy the emphasis is on the activity of philosophy, on doing. Like all philosophy it begins in wonder - our own deep wonder about ourselves and about the world around us. p4cHI practitioners refine their wonderings with cognitive tools, which help them to think/question more deeply about their own experiences and subjects such as science, math, and history. In *little p* philosophy, content is reconceptualized as “the interaction between the participants’ beliefs and experiences and subject matter they are inquiring about” (Makaiau and Miller, 2012, p. 10). It is “the set of beliefs that we all possess to make sense of the world and hence is unique to each of us... it is the result of the particularities of what some philosophers refer to as our ‘situatedness’ in the world and our responses to them” (Jackson, 2012, p. 5). “This shift in perspective moves philosophy from canonical texts and the problems of philosophy to the activity of inquiry” (Makaiau and Miller, 2012, p. 10). When we engage in the type of philosophical inquiry that is characterized by *little p* philosophy, we are engaging in on-going philosophical reflection. We are living what Socrates referred to as the “examined life” (Plato, 1961, p. 38a).

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Reflection

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Finally, the philosophy for children Hawai’i (p4cHI) approach provides participants with instruments for engaging in an iterative process of self-reflection and self-correction (Makaiau, 2015). p4cHI practitioners and participants use reflective questions, dialogue, inquiry, and cognitive tools to think through the “trying” and “undergoing” of personal and collective life experiences (Dewey, 1916, p. 146). They thoughtfully respond to diverse perspectives/points of view and explore possible meanings and connections to deepen the inquiry, enhance self-knowledge, and

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understanding of the world around them. They think about their own thinking, actions and emotions, and they examine the relationship between self, other, and their environment (Makaiau, 2010). In their reflections, p4cHI practitioners and participants are encouraged to generate conclusions about how meaningful and connected specific knowledge is to self-understanding and understanding of the world (Makaiau, 2014).

[5.20] Bound together by these four pillars, philosophy for children Hawai'i (p4cHI) practitioners are now found in a number of locations across the globe, and researchers like us, who are working to study p4cHI in a wide range of geo-sociopolitical contexts, need methods that bend to the interests of our diverse backgrounds and facilitate a common ground for us to discuss and to reflect together. It is for these reasons that we turned to S-STEP, which is a research methodology used by teachers and teacher educators to create structures for ongoing professional development (Beck, Freese, and Kosnik, 2004; Macintyre and Buck, 2007) in a variety of cultural contexts.

[5.21] SELF-STUDY OF TEACHER EDUCATION PRACTICES (S-STEP)

[5.22] Growing rapidly in breadth and depth in the last 20 years, S-STEP situates teaching and learning at the nexus of educational research. It is one of the largest Special Interest Groups (SIG) in the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and publishes its own journal *Studying Teacher Education*. Aware that the literature points to a plethora of models related to the professional development of teacher educators, we posit that S-STEP, by virtue of its focus on a systematic "personal-constructivist-collaborative" (Beck, Freese, and Kosnik, 2004, p. 1256) approach to critical self-reflection, provides a culturally-responsive (Makaiau and Freese, 2013) and organic paradigm for promoting and sustaining excellence in practice. We have found this to be especially true when it is conducted with international partners (Makaiau, Leng, and Fukui, 2015) who are open to "constructing . . . learning together, probing one another's ideas, and reviewing and reframing . . . ideas collaboratively" (Kosnik, Samaras, and Freese, 2006, p.153). In relationship to the questions being explored in this chapter, critical friendship and mindfulness are two interconnected and highly desired practices of international S-STEP teacher researchers, like us, who aim to collectively engage in methods that are both personally and professionally meaningful.

[5.23] *Critical Friendship*

[5.24] One of the most important considerations in the methodology of self-study is the concept of critical friendship. Illustrated by the findings from previous research studies, the critical friend method supports the iden-

tification and strengthening of shared values concerning practice; improves teaching through critical and collaborative self-reflection; facilitates communication between colleagues; and it helps to foster a professional community of inquiry that is characterized by innovation and creation (Costa and Kallick, 1993; Samaras, 2011; Schuck and Russell, 2005). When self-study researchers collaborate with critical friends they gain immediate access to a colleague's expertise and feedback, which enables continued professional development.

Ragoonaden and Bullock (2015) acknowledge that critical friendships must be nurtured in a climate of trust, compassion, and empathy. They posit that it must encourage analysis and integrity, and it should culminate with an advocacy for success. In addition, they explain that critical friendship requires a connection on a socio-emotional level as well as a formal process based on criticality. To support their claims, Hultman, Özek, Edgren, and Jandér (2012) provide a succinct review of the many emergent definitions of critical friendship in contemporary professional literature. They explain that the necessary conditions for successful critical friendship are trust, constructive criticality a critically, professionalism, and knowledge of a critical friends teaching context and environment. Further, Hultman et al's. (2012) literature review advances that the critical friend should be implemented as professional development in a collaborative setting rather than a formal hierarchical method for peer observation (Baskerville and Goldblatt , 2009; Biggs and Tang, 2007; Swaffield, 2007).

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Mindfulness

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Mindfulness Training (MT) is a reflective mind-body practice that is recognized as a means to support the various facets of well-being in a variety of contexts. Secular in nature, mindful based training allows the individual to develop the ability to focus through breathing exercises, which promote increased awareness and attention. Given the success of mindfulness interventions with a range of populations, it is logical to explore how a reflective mind-body practice relates to S-STEP, critical friendship, and philosophy for children Hawai'i.

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Described as "the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment" (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, p. 145), the reflective body-mind practice of mindfulness can support the often stressful and challenging contexts of teaching and learning. Since mindfulness' focus on attention and awareness is considered to be an innate and inherent human quality, this practice can be integrated into the lived and examined experiences of a teacher educator's practice (Plato, 1938/1961; Ragoonaden, 2015). Further, a mindful and reflective practice (Sheets, 2005; Samaras, Hicks, and Garvey, 2007) in educational contexts

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can sustain Schön's (1983) concept of *reflection in action* by not being in a rush, by paying attention, being present, and being aware of one's every day activities, particularly when those activities center on a situation in which the outcome is uncertain.

[5.29] In terms of the professional development of teachers, Poulin et al. (2008) and Mieklejohn et al. (2012) state:

[5.30] Early research results on three illustrative mindfulness-based teacher training initiatives suggest that personal training in mindfulness skills can increase teachers' sense of well-being and teaching self-efficacy, as well as their ability to manage classroom behavior and establish and maintain supportive relationships with students. (p. 291)

[5.31] In addition, MT has been shown to cultivate innovations in pedagogy by enhancing learning, health, well-being, and positive human development (Mackenzie, 2015).

[5.32] Interested in building on this emergent field of MT research in the context of education we explored already established connections between mindfulness and the professional development of Philosophy for Children practitioners. This led us to the work of Will Ord. As a former chair of the *Society for the Advancement of Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education*, Ord is a seasoned Philosophy for Children practitioner who also writes and teaches about MT. He explains,

[5.33] Mindfulness is about training the mind to be a "wonderful servant rather than a terrible master" (old Taoist saying). Isn't it strange that we learn about hundreds of topics at school, but never about the actual thing that does all the learning/experiencing/feeling/thinking itself – the mind! Mindfulness helps to redress this extraordinary omission in education (Ord, 2016).

[5.34] To extend Ord's work and to become more aware of the number of complex components that contributed to the success of our international online collaborative journaling project, we made the decision to re-analyze the journal that we kept in 2015 so that we could examine how the four pillars of philosophy for children Hawai'i (p4cHI), self-study methodologies, and online journaling with international partners provided us with a space to learn and grow as critical friends and mindful scholar practitioners.

[5.35] RESEARCH QUESTIONS

[5.36] The following research questions were used to guide this study: What does our collaborative online journal teach us about the relationship between mindfulness, critical friendship, and philosophy for children Hawai'i (p4cHI)? What do we mean by critical friendship? Mindfulness? How does the p4cHI approach to teaching and learning promote critical

friendship and mindfulness in an international online collaborative journaling project created by four teacher educators from the USA, Taiwan, Canada, and China?

DATA SOURCES

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Data came from the interactive online journal that Amber Makaiau, Jessica Wang, Karen Ragoonaden, and Lu Leng kept with two other colleagues, Mitsuyo Toyoda from Japan and Ann Yeh from Taiwan who eventually dropped out of the project due to a number of professional and personal reasons. We wrote in the journal at least once a week, for six months (8/28/2014 – 1/8/2015) and used Google documents to share our writing with one another in a “live” online setting. Following Elliott-Johns, Peterson, Allison-Roan, and Ramirez’s (2010) work, our journals “included personal reflections, perceptions and questions” (p. 81). At the end of our data collection period, we had 78 pages of single-spaced journal entries and written dialogue. Secondary data sources included emails and analytic memos (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2007).

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DATA ANALYSIS

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The initial analysis of the data occurred in 2015 and the methods used are fully described in a chapter authored by Makaiau, Wang, Ragoonaden, and Leng (In Press). Then, for this additional research project we used the methods of constant comparison (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and the four pillars of p4cHI to re-examine the journal entries and written dialogue that were stored in our online Google document. This occurred in three phases.

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In phase one, we worked individually to develop initial open codes and analytic themes (Charmaz, 2006). Then, we came together via email and used dialogue methodology (Lunenberg and Samaras, 2011) to share our open codes and reflect on the challenges we each faced as we revisited the massive amount of data that we had collected during our original study. Characteristic of critical friends (Miles and Huberman, 1994), we asked questions of one another, explored possible answers to our questions, gained new perspectives, and further examined the quotes we were using to develop our open codes. Through this rich exchange of ideas we made a connection between the data we were analyzing, the four pillars of philosophy for children Hawai’i (p4cHI), critical friendship, and mindfulness. This led us into phase two of the data analysis process, which included coming to a consensus on the definition of the four pillars of p4cHI. Then, we worked individually again to use the definitions we developed to find quotes related to community, inquiry, philosophy, and reflection. Finally, we came back together again, shared

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quotes, and moved into the process of axial coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) to "specif[y] the properties and dimensions of a category," and relate "categories to subcategories" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 60). This helped us bring our data back "together again in a coherent whole" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 60). In phase three, we wrote up our findings and collaborated further to revise and refine our thinking.

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FINDINGS

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The findings that emerged from this most recent analysis of the data are organized around the four pillars of philosophy for children Hawai'i (p4cHI): community, inquiry, philosophy, and reflection. In the ensuing discussions, parallels to the larger themes of mindfulness and critical friendship are established to demonstrate their impact on our professional development.

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Pillar One: Community

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At the very beginning of our journaling project we worked with one another to establish and build an intellectually safe community of inquiry. This started with Amber establishing a list of eight journaling guidelines. Number five on this list stated, "create and maintain an "intellectually safe" (Jackson, 2001) journaling environment with the other participants in this project" (8/28/15). As a part of this process, Amber also invited everyone to write down "three things you want others to know about you" (8/28/14). From this sharing, we got to know about our colleagues' purpose for participating in the international self-study journals as well as some background information about families, interests, values, and educational practices.

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Who Are We as a Community?

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The first of these introductory journal entries came from Lulu, and then followed by Jessica, Amber and Karen.

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Because my internship teaching experiences with kindergarteners in Qingdao City in China made me realize how I wanted to be a teacher. As an educator I feel I can always grow personally and professionally; I need to learn from others and from myself throughout my lifetime. (Lulu, 8/28/14)

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I am a professor in teacher education and I am also a religious practitioner. I love my professional work. And I am also deeply involved in my religion to promote the notion of self-cultivation. My religion combines Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism, with the goal of helping people uplift their lives and realize a more humane world. (Jessica, 9/1/14)

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I was born and raised in Hawai'i and I am deeply connected to this place, including the physical environment, the history and its people. A lot of my work in education is motivated by a sense of place, and wanting to give back to this place. (Amber, 9/1/14)

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I am a university teacher educator whose practice and research focuses on culturally relevant pedagogy, but deep in my heart would rather be a yoga instructor! This is me, complete with inherent contradictions and multiple identities. (Karen, 9/11/14)

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Through this initial sharing about our personal and professional contexts, we started to lay the foundations of not only our international community but also an emergent friendship based on shared values and life experiences.

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Ongoing Co-construction of What "We" Mean by Community

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The analysis of the data also revealed that an important feature of our community is that it was intellectually and emotionally safe. As the following quote from Jessica illustrates, we saw our community as larger than the total sum of participants.

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A community is an aggregate of individual participating members? Nothing more and nothing less? Is there not a sense of community that transcends the participating individuals themselves? The total sum that is larger than everything added up? Isn't this transcendent sense of community what we are working so hard to establish in p4CHI? (Jessica, 11/3/14)

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In response to Jessica's entry, Amber added, "It is not just about one particular . . . community of inquiry, but rather about building a more just, caring, empathetic, thoughtful, innovative, civic minded world" (Amber, 11/3/14). As these two quotes illustrate, we thought collectively about what we mean by community and co-constructed our understanding together. This too, helped to cultivate a space where we could truly engage in dialogue, offer constructive feedback, and inquire with one another about what we were interested in and cared about.

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Pillar Two: Inquiry

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Inquiry was also at the heart of our journaling process. About inquiry, Jackson (2001) writes, "perhaps most basic to successful inquiry is the clear and shared understanding that 'we aren't in a rush to get anywhere'" (Jackson, 2001, p. 461). In the context of academic inquiry, *not being in a rush* can take on many meanings. In the case of our journal it meant a number of things.

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First it meant that we took the time to pursue, dig deep, and scratch beneath the surface of our scholarly interests. There are many examples in the journal that illustrated how we asked questions about our profes-

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sional practice and of one another. A quote that illustrates this comes from Mitsuyo. On October 15, 2014 she wrote, "I feel frustrated when students do not look at me. But is it because I was in American graduate school? What is the ideal image of p4c facilitator? Perhaps each of us has a different answer to this question" (10/15/14). In response to Mitsuyo we spent many pages of writing searching for evidence to support our emerging conclusions about the topic of eye contact. As a part of this process we let ourselves pursue tangents that may have seemed unconnected to the topic of the inquiry. Eventually, these inquiries lead us to new realizations.

- [5.60] Another example of how we were not in a rush during our inquiries is found in the journal entries where we took the time to pause and to respond with one another in thoughtful and caring ways. For example, Karen wrote,
- [5.61] Thanks for your patience everybody! Even though the teachers' strike is still on, impacting deeply on both my personal and professional lives, we are taking each week at a time and hoping for a resolution. So, now I can start my own journaling and add to the thoughtful and insightful comments made so far. (Karen, 9/11/14)
- [5.62] In response to Karen's entry about a four-month strike that kept her and other colleagues away from a profession that they love and the students that they are connected to, Jessica comforted her.
- [5.63] I have time to write this much because our school semester has not started. It starts on 9/22. So no pressure on other people. In P4C we try to stay as true to life as possible. I felt sorry that Karen's life was affected by the strike. Hope things turn out for the better. (Jessica, 9/10/14)
- [5.64] Despite all of the various elements of our life that we were juggling as professional educators, researchers, mothers, and wives each of us made sure that we were fully present when it came to writing in our journals.
- [5.65] Also related to not being in a rush, in a number of journal entries we saw how the time that we dedicated to our journal writing counterbalanced our frantic and often chaotic lifestyles by giving us a space to breathe and to *be present in the moment*. This was evident in Amber's writing. On September 8, 2014 she wrote,
- [5.66] Wow! I had to drag myself to the computer this morning, and after reading our journal I am so excited and invigorated about this work! Everyone has helped me reconnect to the "bigger picture" (e.g. working to better humanity, live the good life, cultivate self-reflection, etc.).
- [5.67] Then, on November 3, 2014 she stated, "I am working on how to live a balanced life when life is very full," but I must say, that I "always enjoy returning to the journal. It is like taking a breath of fresh air." This quest to find balance between life and work became a topical theme in our

journal; it was woven in-between and throughout the questions and reflections of our academic inquiries. As critical friends, we were mindful of the many obligations and responsibilities that pulled us all in different directions and we allowed ourselves, and one another to include the multiple facets of our lives in our professional inquiry. As a result, our journal was both personally and professionally meaningful.

Pillar Three: Philosophy

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In our journaling project, each of us was a *little p* (Jackson, 2012) philosopher. We engaged in the activity of philosophy by raising questions and pursuing our wonderings. As critical friends we were able to respond to these examinations based on our experiences in different cultural contexts. For example, Lulu “questioned what is philosophy,” whether it is “about logic” or “the way of life,” whether there are “fundamental differences between Western philosophy and Eastern philosophy,” or even whether there is “such a notion as ‘eastern’ and ‘western’ philosophy” (10/17/14). Jessica wondered about what “counts as a *philosophical* question” and whether the criterion might be anything other than “a genuine wonder” or “a true question in life” (11/10/14). Karen wanted to know how “philosophical wisdom” relates to “traditional practices of mindfulness and awareness,” about “being awake and being intentional” (9/11/14). This spirit of wonderment permeated throughout our journaling exchange.

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As critical friends, we also considered and countered one another’s arguments. Mindful of the cultural diversity of our contexts we did our best to suspend preconceived ideas and situational biases. In a non-judgmental and respectful way, we challenged one another to justify what constituted a “good” answer to the questions we were pursuing. As a result, we arrived at a number of conclusions that were shaped by the multiple perspectives and interpretations of our international peers.

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Pillar Four: Reflection

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Participants in p4CHI style inquiries endeavor to reflect upon their lives and their experiences, to confront inherent complexities and conundrums, in order to research for new meanings and transform their experiences. They thoughtfully respond to diverse perspectives/points of view and explore possible connections to deepen the inquiry and enhance self-knowledge. They are able to challenge, modify or correct their own thinking in light of new experiences and new meanings. This interest in reflection is an important reason why we each chose to join the international journaling project in the first place.

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As Jessica wrote, “I believe in the power of dialogue and of reflection. And this is a rare opportunity for each of us to embark on an adventure

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that will eventually amount to something much larger than ourselves" (9/1/14). Lulu also wrote that keeping this journal helped her "reflect on my own experiences" (8/28/14). Admitting that finding time to reflect in the middle of an already busy schedule is difficult Amber wrote, "I am hoping that this project will "force" me (for lack of a better word) to sit down each week and write/reflect and I love that I am writing to 'audience' of listeners" (2014/9/1).

[5.74] Self-Correction

[5.75] Finding the time to reflect upon our experiences provided us with a rare opportunity to step aside from our immediate experiences and look at them in new ways, and in some cases, it provided us with the opportunity to change or self-correct our thoughts about a particular topic. One example of this was Jessica's new realizations about why her students avoided eye contact with each other during class time. In the following quote she demonstrates how she thought through this particular challenge and drew her own conclusion.

[5.76] As I reflect upon this class scenario, I thought that "being open" does not mean accepting any viewpoints with no boundaries. Being open means being willing to enter into the worlds the students were experiencing so that I can enter into the dialogue with them. I am curious to know what reality they were experiencing, which is totally different from mine (I had not experienced shyness or nervousness for a long time). Having understood their major concern with shyness, I was then able to move them to their next level of overcoming their shyness by gradually getting used to it and by eventually cultivating a new habit, a new way of being with oneself and the other, and a new way of encountering the world. (Jessica, 10/26/14)

[5.77] Through reflection and dialogue with the other members of our journaling group, Jessica was able to modify her original assumptions about her students, self-correct, and draw new conclusions about the reasons for her students' behaviors.

[5.78] Like Jessica, this process of self-reflection and self-correction, enabled all of us to think meta-cognitively about our experiences and find new meanings. Such reflective thinking demonstrated in our journals supported our developing understanding of self, and "about really understanding the other person, integrating different voices, and in the process enlarging one's worldviews" (Jessica, 12/22). Such reflection is "not a scientific act aiming at verification of knowledge, but a communicative, artful act aiming at the resolution of tensions or the equilibrium of experiences" (Jessica, 12/22/14).

[5.79] In summary, the findings that emerged from this most recent analysis of our data helped to develop our thinking about how the four pillars of p4cHI (community, inquiry, philosophy, and reflection) provided us with

the framework and tools for co-constructing a community of critical friends who are collectively committed to engaging in a mindful professional practice.

CONCLUSION

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At this study's conclusion we found a direct relationship between philosophy for children Hawai'i (p4cHI), critical friendship, and mindfulness. This is seen through the four pillars of p4cHI:

[5.81]

1. *Community* is a fundamental component of critical friendship, which emphasizes identifying and sharing values concerning practice (Samaras, 2011; Schuck and Russell, 2005) as well as developing a climate of trust, compassion and empathy (Ragoonaden and Bullock, 2016). Further by clearly articulating with one another what we meant by a respectful, safe, and caring environment, we consciously modeled elements of mindfulness and attention to the evolving state of our relationships (Meiklejohn et al., 2012). As the findings from our study illustrate, the presence of critical friendship and mindfulness reiterate the importance of creating supportive, empathetic, and non-judgmental contexts in which to improve practice.

[5.82]

2. *Inquiry* that is characterized by "not being in a rush" (Jackson, 2001) is a very important element of mindfulness and critical friendship. Kabat-Zinn (1990) points to the importance of being present in our day to day activities, of taking the time to appreciate, to consider and to be grateful for the day to day, moment to moment activities of our daily lives. In our case, our regular journaling became a safe haven where we could retreat into inquiry with one another. In our inquiries we took the time to reflect, we were present, and we responded to each other in thoughtful and intentional ways. As a result of these mindful interactions with one another, our critical friendship was cultivated and nurtured.

[5.83]

3. *Philosophy* that begins in wonder and leads to spontaneous questions about the world and ourselves is an essential activity for persons who are interested in developing critical friendships and mindful practices. In our attempt to philosophize about what we know or do not know, we are able to confront our own sense of confusion and "our own situated-ness in the world" (Jackson, 2012, p. 5). Costa and Kallick (1993) address the importance of critical friends asking provocative questions that help us confront what we take for granted. In addition, Swaffield (2007) emphasizes a critical friend's freedom to be intellectually subversive, challenging accepted wisdom and promoting new intellectual paradigms. All of this is connected to the mindful practice of seeing the world

[5.84]

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through beginner's eyes, which includes allowing our senses to fully embrace an event in a slow, thoughtful, and intentional manner (UBC, 2015). In our journal we engaged in the activity of "little p" philosophy to cultivate our critical friendships, become more mindful, and live the examined life (Jackson, 2012, p. 5)

[5.85]

4. *Reflection* is inherent in the process of developing critical friendship and mindfulness. Critical friendship is a technique rooted in reflection and analysis. Baskerville and Goldblatt (2007) support the notion that a critical friend is a reflective practitioner who aims to improve practice by challenging a colleague's practice in a safe, nurturing manner. Briggs and Tang (2007) recognized the importance of critical friendship as a process encouraging reflection and mindful improvement. As the results of this study illustrate, the reflection that we engaged in our international online collaborative journaling project helped to mature the emergent qualities of our critical friendships and mindful practice.

[5.86]

SIGNIFICANCE TO THE FUTURE OF OUR INTERNATIONAL ONLINE COLLABORATIVE JOURNALING PROJECT

[5.87]

Framed by the four pillars of philosophy for children Hawai'i (p4CHI), self-study methodologies and online journaling with international partners provided us with a space to learn and grow as critical friends and mindful scholar practitioners. Prior to this study, most of us were aware of the importance of employing critical friendships (Miles and Huberman, 1994) during self-study research, but we had not yet discovered the powerful role that mindfulness plays in carrying out meaningful approaches to S-S-STEP research. This sentiment is echoed by Macintyre Latta, and Buck (2007) who stipulate that "self-study is . . . key to professional development and [should] reflect our desire to do more than 'deliver' courses in teacher education" (p. 189). With its focus on the human capacity for observation, participation, and acceptance of life's moments from a loving, compassionate stance, mindful activity within the context of practitioner research like ours develops deep understandings of context, experiential approaches, and the pursuit of positive change in educational environments. As we move forward, and collectively plan the next stages of our international online collaborative journaling project we will use what we have learned and be more mindful about applying the elements of community, inquiry, philosophy, and reflection to deepen our understanding of self, other, and our professional practice.



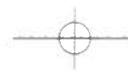
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