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A CITIZEN'S EDUCATION

The Philosophy for Children Hawai'i approach to deliberative pedagogy

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Deliberative pedagogy is an emergent field of research and practice that aims to identify meaningful approaches to a citizen's democratic education (Carcasson 2013; Longo 2013; Manosevitch 2013). 'The primary goal isn't civic education per se, but for students to develop commitment, knowledge, and skills necessary for creating and maintaining equitable, diverse and democratic spaces, whether it be in the local community, the workplace, the nation, or world' (Doherty 2012: 25). Deliberative pedagogies work to prepare citizens for life in a democratic society by engaging students and teachers in the practice of 'considering perspectives, evaluating views, and treating each other as political equals' as they think collectively about the larger question, 'How should we live together?' (Hess & McAvoy 2015: 5).

Philosophy for Children (P4C) has much to offer this area of scholarship. When practised with fidelity, P4C can provide individuals with the 'experience of dialoguing with others as equals, [and] participating in shared public inquiry [so] that they [are] able to eventually take an active role in the shaping of a democratic society' (Sharp 1993: 343). As both an educational theory and a set of classroom practices, P4C is a form of deliberative pedagogy that gives life to Dewey's (1916) assertion that in order for democracy to function as it should, students and teachers must have opportunities to *experience* democracy in schools.

In this chapter I draw from thirteen years of teaching high school social studies to elaborate on connections between P4C and deliberative pedagogy, and to explain how the Philosophy for Children Hawai'i (p4cHI) approach aims to create democratic *experiences* in multicultural schools. The chapter is organized into three sections. First I discuss the difference between traditional forms of democratic education and Horton and Freire's (1990) notion of a citizen's education. Second, I offer the p4cHI approach to deliberative pedagogy as a resource for translating the ideals of a citizen's education into a working classroom practice. Third, I share findings that emerged from my qualitative case study on the impact of p4cHI on student learning in a high school Ethnic Studies course (Makaiau 2010). The conclusion reflects on my experiences and desire to advance the pedagogy towards philosophical communities of *action* (Popp 1981).

From civics to a citizen's education

In my work as a social studies educator I am constantly reflecting on the relationship between democracy, education and the civic mission of schools. Inspired by the scholars who came

before me (Dewey 1916; Freire 1970; Vinson 2006; Hess & McAvoy 2015), I have developed beliefs about the connection between democracy and education, and I have worked hard to translate my aspirations into a meaningful classroom practice. At the heart of this process of ongoing professional development there has been one democracy–education praxis puzzle that has kept me particularly engaged. *What does it mean to experience democracy in school?*

In many of the classrooms that I've observed the answer to this question is often shallow and contrived. Civics education in the USA is typically interpreted as instructing students *about* given citizen knowledge, information, skills, and values (Vinson 2006). Teachers typically provide direct instruction on political philosophies and the bureaucratic role of citizens and elected officials in democratic governments. Lessons often include memorizing the three branches of government, defining the separation of powers, and learning about how a bill becomes a law. In these lessons, democracy is presented as a set of facts that students need to memorize for their civics exam, and teaching consists of lecturing and closed questioning from the textbook.

With an emphasis on the transmission of factual knowledge, this approach has created generations of American youth who believe that government and politics are components of a career pathway destined for a select few. They demonstrate low levels of civic engagement, lack civic knowledge, and experience an ever-widening civic achievement gap depending on their family income or ethnicity (Gould 2003). On the whole, American students do not see democracy as an all-encompassing project experienced by every citizen on a daily basis, and generally feel ill-equipped or motivated to take civic action in their lives. They internalize government as something outside of their sphere of influence and they are unable to discern the political dimensions of their classrooms, families, churches, and neighbourhoods (Gregory 2004). Above all, they do not seem to see themselves as citizens (Horton & Freire 1990) or active members of a democratic 'community' (Dewey 1916: 4). All of this should come as no surprise to proponents of P4C, who are familiar with Lipman's (1988) pronouncement that 'only by active participation in democratic and constitutional praxis will young people be prepared to exercise citizenship when they become adults' (p. 60).

Democracy is a living work in progress, and I argue that schools are in a position to respond to this continually changing 'mode of associated living' (Dewey 1916: 87) with *a citizen's education* (Horton & Freire 1990). In contrast to a traditional civics course, a citizen's education is an approach to schooling that is integrated across disciplines, practised at every grade level, and enacted throughout the school day by all members of the school community. It is based on the assumptions that schools should 'take the lead in exemplifying educative community life' (Popp 1981: 4) and that, along with fostering those skills and dispositions that are necessary for life in a functioning democratic society, the process of co-constructing what it means to be a citizen is one of the main purposes of schooling (Horton & Freire 1990). It is for these reasons that educators that facilitate the development of citizen's education at their schools, are not necessarily responsible for reflecting democracy as it is, but rather for providing students with the opportunity to experience democracy as it could and should be.

Ideally, teachers and students who engage in a citizen's education have opportunities to ask meaningful questions; explore problems of democracy (Matthews 2014) that are relevant to their community; access, read, and analyze sources of information that represent multiple viewpoints and cultural backgrounds; think about complex topics and participate in deliberative dialogue with diverse groups of people; listen with empathy, treat others with respect and be a valued member of a community; reflect, write, and reason for themselves; and take responsible and informed action.

The process of translating these ideals into an actual classroom practice is not always an easy task. In the following section I analyze the approach to P4C developed in Hawai'i – p4cHI –

to show how it can assist students and teachers in realizing a citizen's education, and to uncover areas where it can be improved.

The p4cHI approach to deliberative pedagogy

Philosophy for Children Hawai'i (p4cHI) is a culturally responsive offshoot of Lipman and Sharp's P4C programme. It evolved in response to the tensions that arose while doing P4C in a multicultural community context, and from the way in which the Hawaiian concept of aloha is used to mediate these tensions and build community between diverse groups of people in the islands. Directly in line with the culturally responsive teaching movement (Gay 2000), p4cHI practitioners emphasize the creation of 'intellectually safe' (Jackson 2001: 460) communities of inquiry in which participants' cultures, languages, histories, socio-economic backgrounds, and other aspects of their identities are included and validated during the building of relationships and the co-construction of knowledge (Castagno & Brayboy 2008).

Also unique to p4cHI is the way in which it responds to the culture of schooling found in most American State Departments of Education. Rarely practised as a stand-alone school pro-gramme, p4cHI is now thought of as a 'philosopher's pedagogy' (Makaiau & Miller 2012: 8) or an overall approach to teaching and learning that can be used by classroom teachers to incorporate the 'activity of philosophy' (p. 10) into standards-based learning. Always sensitive to context, and hence rarely, if ever, enacted in the exact same way across diverse cultural and institutional settings, the translation of p4cHI from theory to practice depends on the professionalism and values of teachers who must adapt the pedagogy so that it can meet the needs of their particular teaching context. Generally characterized by 'reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it' (Freire 1970: 33), the goal of p4cHI is to move school culture from a top-down bureaucracy to a community-based, participatory model.

Based on my experiences with using p4cHI to teach high school social studies I view the approach as a form of democratic praxis (Freire, 1970). It is built upon the four conceptual pillars of community, inquiry, philosophy, and reflection, and it has an actual set of flexible classroom strategies that can assist students and teachers in incorporating 'deliberative decision making with teaching and learning' (Longo 2013: 49) across the curriculum. This was my experience when I used p4cHI to design, teach, and research a high school Ethnic Studies course in Hawai'i.

Ethnic Studies is an important site for a citizen's education because it provides rich oppor-tunities to explore democratic ideals such as social justice, multiculturalism, self-determination, and civic action. From 2004–2011, I was given the opportunity to experiment with using p4cHI to teach Ethnic Studies at a small public high school on the Hawaiian island of Oahu. To investigate the impact of this approach to deliberative pedagogy on student learning in our multicultural community context, I designed and implemented a qualitative study (Makaiau 2010). One of the main research questions was: what does the data tell us about the impact of high school ethnic studies course that utilizes a philosopher's pedagogy?

Research methodology

Student participants were selected on the basis of their enrolment in the Ethnic Studies classes that I taught between 2004 and 2007. In the first two years of the study my class was volun-tary, and then in year three, due to a 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, females (49) and males (40), heterogeneously grouped

in regards to their academic ability; the majority qualified for free or reduced cost lunch; and they mainly identified as Hawaiian/Part-Hawaiian, Japanese, or White.

My role in this study was as a participant researcher. This had benefits, such as the close relationships with my student participants, but it also had drawbacks, including my desire for positive findings. In an effort to reduce bias, and 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 involved the method of constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss 1967), which included employing the expertise of critical friends (Miles & Huberman 1994) to decrease researcher bias. At the end of the study, three important findings related to the impact of a philosopher's pedagogy on student learning in a multicultural high school Ethnic Studies course emerged. In this particular context, p4cHI supported 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, and action.

Respectful and ethical civic relationships

One of the defining features of p4cHI is students and teachers working together to co-create intellectually safe classroom communities of inquiry. In Ethnic Studies, I started this work from the outset by writing Jackson's (2001) definition of intellectual safety (p. 460) on the board. I made myself vulnerable and used examples from my own life to illustrate why I believe classrooms should not only be physically safe, but intellectually safe as well. From there, my students and I worked collectively to think about the type of classroom environment that we wanted to create. We listed examples and counter-examples, from our diverse backgrounds and experiences to help us explain what intellectual safety would look like in the context of *our* classroom. When our concept map was complete, we made the agreement to do our best to put our words into practice.

Based on the analysis of their class reflections, this process appeared critical for students' development of respectful and ethical civic relationships.

> When intellectual safety . . . is highly stressed . . . This encourages students to be free thinkers and it allows students to voice their opinions based on their various upbringings and cultural backgrounds . . . This class is cool because we are able to discuss any topic concerning culture or race. It is safe to discuss things here and voice your opinion, it is a freedom that we don't really have in other classes.
>
> *(Senior Male Student 2007)*

These ways of being with one another did not always come easy. One student wrote:

> 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. 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 by other people.
>
> *(Freshman Male Student 2007)*

Through experiences like these, we found out the hard way that the establishment and maintenance of an intellectually safe learning environment is an ongoing process. This is an important

take-away for p4cHI practitioners like me, who – in our mission to create a more just and equitable civil society – must remember that civic relationships need to be explicitly taught, worked out together in a community, experimented with, and practised in our schools.

Distributing power and accessing multiple perspectives

The use of a 'community ball' (Jackson 2001: 460–61) also had an impact on learning in Ethnic Studies. Handmade by students in each Ethnic Studies class period, the community ball served as a physical manifestation of our social-emotional connectedness and the thinking we did together. Seated in a circle, we used the community ball to mediate turn taking, distribute power, and open up room for multiple perspectives to be heard during classroom deliberations and inquiry. Put in place to shift traditional power structures, this instructional tool helped to cultivate and nurture a collaborative civic space (Makaiau 2015) in which no one perspective dominated, and every voice was valued. It also redefined teachers and students as co-inquirers (Freire 1970) who recognize that in order for the work of a democracy to move forward, everyone must be learning together (Matthews 2014).

Examples of how the community ball distributed power and opened up space for multiple perspectives were prevalent in the data. For example, when asked to reflect on her participation in a deliberative inquiry about the violence that was occurring in our school community, one student wrote,

> [Our two communities] face many social problems. One major problem is violence . . . [and] there is tension between these two communities . . . Ethnic Studies has taught me to see through the tensions and hostilities. During the . . . discussions I believe we broke down barriers and really opened up. I also learned a very important mediation skill as a 'facilitator' [with the community ball] . . . I know these skills will help me in the future to communicate better. Through Ethnic Studies I've learned to be open, and more accepting of others.
>
> *(Senior Female Student, 2005)*

In this particular deliberation the students elected to engage in an inquiry about the reasons for violence both on and off of our campus. At the beginning of the inquiry, the students had a difficult time communicating with one another because they came from two different communities. However, as they passed the community ball around, and shared their experiences, they came to recognize that each student had something unique and important to contribute to the group's thinking. At the close of this inquiry we didn't rid our community of violence, but what we did experience was the ways in which the p4cHI approach seemed to build our capacity for becoming more caring and empathetic citizens. In 2012, this positive transformation of our school culture was formally acknowledged by a visit from His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama.

Dialogue, deliberation, inquiry, and action

There are two additional strategies found in the p4cHI approach to deliberative pedagogy that proved helpful in facilitating dialogue, deliberation, inquiry, and action. They are the 'Good Thinker's Tool Kit (GTTK)' (Jackson 2001: 463) and 'Plain Vanilla' (p. 462). The GTTK is a set of seven philosophical moves that assisted us in thinking responsibly about the problems of democracy during classroom deliberations and Plain Vanilla is the five-step inquiry process that we used to structure those deliberations.

One example was an inquiry about racism. After reading an article about a young woman who grew up with privilege and prejudice, the students elected to explore the questions: 'Is it true that racism exists at our high school? If so, what are the implications?' About halfway through their deliberative dialogue they started to wonder about their friendship groups. To strengthen their enquiry they applied the GTTK and looked for reasons behind their thinking and examples to support their emergent claims. This led them to the realization that they tended to be friends with students of their same ethnicity. They asked: 'Is it because we like the same things? Is it because people of my same ethnic background are more like me, so we get along better? Is it because we live in the same town/community?' Then one of the students in the class pointed out that she tended to socialize with the students that were in the same courses as her.

Kimi: But I also think it has to do with your classes and stuff. Being in gifted and talented and in honors classes we hang out with a lot of the same people who are in our classes. We get homework help. We have similar interests and goals I guess. And having gifted and talented classes, I can say from experience that we don't have very many people from [Community A] or Polynesian people in our classes. (Junior Female Student 2004)

Teacher: So why is that?

Kimi: I don't know why that is.

Becki: I've been thinking about that the whole time we've been talking about the [differences between Community A and Community B] . . . because I was thinking that we hang out with who is in our classes. And it is true that there are not very many people [from Community A] in gifted and talented classes, and I was talking to Mark and he was like, 'how are you in Algebra Two, you are only a sophomore?' And I told him; 'I just took algebra when I was in eighth grade.' And he told me, 'we don't even have that at our school' [Community A's intermediate school]. And so I'm not saying that the reason they don't have it is because they are stupid but maybe it is because [Community B] is thought of as a more well off area then [Community A] is and schools reflect the area, like what is offered at the school. And so I guess what happens is that maybe their curriculum isn't as challenging and this is the reason why they [the kids from Community A] aren't in the honors classes as much. And then also . . . that reflects who you hang out with. (Junior Female Student 2004)

As the transcript shows, students scratched beneath the surface of this difficult topic, made progress in their inquiry, and uncovered the fact that the schools in the predominantly Native Hawaiian Community A did not have access to advanced mathematics classes when compared to the students from the more affluent neighbouring Community B. As a result, when the students got to high school, the majority of the Native Hawaiian students from Community A weren't eligible for advanced mathematics, while the Caucasian and Japanese-American students from Community B were. This was the hard-to-see manifestation of institutionalized racism at our school, and it was a problem of democracy that my students now wanted to address.

This session did not conclude with the making of a plan for collective action, but we did use what we learned from the process of engaging in the activity of philosophy to take some individual actions. I brought the issue up to our school administration, yet never followed through

to see if changes were made. My students seemed to make concentrated efforts to form friendship groups outside of their tracked classes. And together, we extended our thinking about this problem during final classroom deliberations of the semester.

When I reflect on these actions a number of critical questions surface. Could we have done more? Is changing one's thinking good enough? What about the collective and sustained action needed for institutional change? Should classroom teachers be responsible for organizing this sort of action with their students? As time has gone by, I've come to believe that the answers to these questions are yes, and in my efforts to improve upon p4cHI, I want to push the deliberative pedagogy further.

Strengths, limitations and directions for future research

In the full report of this study (Makaiau 2010) I offer an in-depth look at the impact of p4cHI on student learning in a mainstream high school social studies course and the ways in which this approach works to realize Horton and Freire's (1990) notion of a citizen's education. The research aims to provide a window into the ways in which philosophy, when conceptualized as an activity rather than a school subject, can be used by teachers to establish deliberative and democratic procedures for making classroom decisions, and engage students in philosophical inquiry as part of their regular education coursework. It is a strong case that adds to the scholarship of previous researchers who questioned practitioners' abilities to incorporate P4C into the pre-set curriculum (Haynes 2007), integrate P4C into all stages of the civic action process (Gregory 2004), and use P4C as a method for the democratic reconstruction of classroom management (p. 171). Bound by a 'snapshot' (Makaiau 2010: 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. Longitudinal research in this area is needed.

Concluding thoughts

On the role of philosophy in democratic education, Lipman (1988) writes,

> One of the most valuable contributions philosophy has to make to the conversation of mankind with regard to civic education is the model philosophers offer of a community of inquiry in which the participants are profoundly aware of how much they can learn from other participants with whom they strongly disagree.
>
> *(Lipman 1988)*

While I agree with Lipman, I also believe that students and teachers need opportunities to apply their philosophical insights to action outside the classroom. Popp (1981) refers to this as a 'community of action,' and to build communities of action he explains that educators need to identify the conditions of 'progress in human history and to envision the school as an institution that exemplifie[s] these very conditions' (p. 4). This is the powerful potential of schools and where I want to pursue further curriculum development and research.

Instead of recreating democratic life as it is, educators are in the privileged position to create opportunities for students to experience democratic life as it could be, and to support students in making democracy work as it should both in school and in out-of-school contexts. With additional structures and strategies for ensuring that informed action is regular part of the community-based philosophical inquiry process, p4cHI will move closer to providing students and teachers with the necessary conditions for experiencing what ideal democracy feels like,

so that when they are faced with problems of democracy outside of the classroom, they will be ready to draw from these experiences and turn those ideals into our new reality.

Horton and Freire (1990) tell us that 'real liberation is achieved through popular participation. Participation in turn is realized through an educational practice that itself is both liberatory and participatory, that simultaneously creates a new society and involves the people themselves in the creation of their own knowledge' (p. xxx). This is a citizen's education. It is what we are aiming to do with p4cHI, and this is the purpose of practising a deliberative pedagogy.

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