

On Philosophizing as Education

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ABSTRACT: In my article I offer an argument in favor of philosophy as a practical activity that is intrinsically educative. In responding to the crisis of our discipline, I make a case for a beneficial relationship between philosophy and the community, especially from the point of view of the discipline itself. I propose that the practicality of philosophy needs to be experienced in concrete activities involving others, therefore recasting the relation of theory to practice in the modality of translation as a never-completed task to take on. I suggest that philosophizing could be characterized by a position of vulnerability, which complicates notions of inside/outside, belonging, home, and dialogue. I offer examples drawn from my experience of integrating philosophical discussion with children (inspired by P4C pedagogy) in my college courses, to suggest that philosophizing with others in varied contexts should be an integral part of education. By emphasizing the benefits accruing to undergraduate students and to the discipline itself from the practice, I do not intend to downplay or marginalize the voices and experiences of the children and teachers who are such an essential part of the practice. Rather than being a zero-sum game, the engagement of philosophy with the world expands and lifts the experience of everybody involved.

Introduction

PHILOSOPHIZING, AS THE PRACTICE OF PHILOSOPHY, is an education in itself. In this essay I am going to defend philosophy's inherent practicality and advocate its presence in the education of human persons.¹ I set out to claim that philosophy, experienced in practice, is educative, and therefore we should make room for it in our curricula. An experience is educative when it is transformative, as it cultivates the person's capacity to think by herself and with others, which is a condition for democratic agency and participation. I posit that, by helping students experience philosophy in practice as education, the academic discipline of philosophy can be revitalized in generative ways. Although I draw on my experience helping undergraduate philosophy students arrange philosophy-based activities

in the community (K–12 schools, nursing homes, homeless shelters, and public libraries), I am aware that the process of opening up academic philosophy takes countless forms. A small but growing community of academic philosophers is expanding the understanding and practice of public philosophy in diverse, creative, and surprising ways.² An intentional exploration of public-facing philosophy adds one component to the face—and the nature—of philosophy itself.

I intend to depict philosophy as an experience of dialogical thinking grounded in the history of the discipline. Tasks of translation are an important part of my understanding of philosophy, given that thinking implies oscillating between familiar and unfamiliar outlooks in an effort to listen, interpret, and communicate with others. I take translation to inform much of our interpretive efforts of thoughts by others in different generations, eras, and cultures in communities of inquiry³ formed among thinkers who try to think together across their differences. This particular approach to philosophy seems especially crucial to educating persons. The experience of it might make us better philosophers and make philosophy less socially irrelevant.

My aim is to portray an understanding of philosophy in order to counter some of the ills and flaws associated with the academic practice of the discipline. To some the crisis of philosophy as academic subject is evident. Consider how philosophy departments in the United States struggle as they see their numbers decline and have to advocate their own survival. The academic discipline itself seems to dwell in social irrelevance.⁴ Pragmatist,⁵ postcolonial,⁶ and feminist⁷ critiques have emphasized a certain monologism found in Western philosophy: it is safe to say that in the philosophical tradition, only some voices have been recognized as worth recording and transmitting. A serious project of revitalization of the discipline needs to take on canon creation, philosophical historiography, the role of professional societies, publishing, education access, and hiring processes, to name a few.

The Crisis in Philosophy

The crisis in this decade seems a crisis of isolation, reflected both in a perception that academic philosophy has very little to say to the world outside academia and in decreasing numbers of students who elect to study philosophy at the university level. A widely discussed column in *The New York Times* (Frodeman and Briggles 2016b) popularized the interpretation that the creation of the modern research university with departmental disciplines was “an act of purification” modeled on the natural sciences. Philosophy became a specialized, technical undertaking. The column continues:

Our claim, then, can be put simply: Philosophy should never have been purified. Rather than being seen as a problem, “dirty hands” should have been understood as the native condition of philosophic thought—present everywhere, often interstitial, essentially interdisciplinary and

transdisciplinary in nature. Philosophy is a mangle. The philosopher's hands were never clean and were never meant to be. (Frodeman and Briggie 2016b)

The discipline of philosophy, as it now exists in higher education, is a direct outcome of disciplinary-making of the nineteenth century, with its set of assumptions and arbitrary excisions. A similar interpretation has been advanced by Eileen O'Neill, who attributed the erasure of women from philosophical historiography to the impulse to sanitize the discipline from elements considered precritical, such as mystical, utopian, and educational questions (O'Neill 2005, 187).

Currently in the United States, the study of philosophy is generally associated with university instruction. Most people do not access higher education, and of those who do, most do not study philosophy. As Jana Mohr Lone and Michael Burroughs (2016) note, "If the practice of philosophy is restricted, whether conceptually or in practice, to its limited manifestations in higher education, then the vast majority of persons do not engage in the practice of philosophy" (5). Philosophy is recoiling from the public life and also from the life of the university. "Expanding conceptions of the philosopher and of legitimate philosophical practice," the authors contend, provides "at least one possibility for positive change in contemporary philosophy" (6).

The crisis of the academic discipline of philosophy contains a promise of vitality.⁸ I would like to echo what C. Thi Nguyen (2019) writes in his compelling manifesto:

To speak bluntly: the world is in crisis. It's war, the soul of humanity is at stake, and the discipline that has been in isolation training for 2,000 years for this very moment is too busy pointing out tiny errors in each other's technique to actually join the fight. We're busy fussing about jobs, publications, the review process, and all the other minutiae of the academy. Our discipline needs to step up. We need to do philosophy in the world. We need to change our musty norms to support that public engagement. Or we will render ourselves irrelevant through our own inaction.

I agree that the world would benefit from more engaged, more vocal, more connected philosophy: we do need to step up. Similarly, Burroughs (2018) writes that, given this status quo, "We cannot ignore the challenges we face and continue with philosophy-as-usual." Cautious about claiming a simple solution to a complex problem, he continues, "Rather, and while there is no single solution to these challenges, we will benefit from reclaiming a greater public role for philosophy." In my article I will look at how the kind of public engagement recommended by Nguyen and Burroughs might benefit philosophy itself. My article focuses on the angle of practice. I look at how philosophy can be practiced in our current educational contexts in a way to correct some of its vast blind spots and

lapses. My aim is not to diagnose the crisis of philosophy in this context but to offer a few clarifications about how I see it in relation to my thesis that, responding to this crisis, the practice of philosophy is educative.

There is persuasive scholarship stating that practicing philosophy in schools benefits K–12 students and therefore can be seen as a way to contribute to the public.⁹ This article shifts the focus back on academic philosophy as it considers how this practice expands and ameliorates the philosophy taught in college classrooms. My angle offers a perspective from the point of view of a college instructor who is also a practitioner and has integrated public practice in her teaching. By emphasizing the benefits accruing to undergraduate students and to the discipline itself from the practice, I do not intend to downplay or marginalize the voices and experiences of the children and teachers who are such an essential part of the practice.¹⁰ Rather than being a zero-sum game, the engagement of philosophy with the world expands and lifts the experience of everybody involved.

Philosophy in the Classroom: A Scene

In what follows I offer a narrative description of one experience of philosophy-based discussion with my students—philosophy majors or minors enrolled in my proseminar course in philosophy—and second graders in a local elementary school.

One spring morning twenty-seven students crowded the classroom, along with their teacher. Also present were three puppets: a fox with the letter *A* pinned to its chest to signify *agree*; a donkey with the letter *D* to signify *disagree*; and Owl the owl, which the children used to signal their turn in the conversation. (These puppets are called “Good Thinker’s Tools.”¹¹) When they label their comment with one of the puppets, they get to hold the puppet until someone else claims it.

The puppets help children become more aware of metacognitive strategies. When it is their turn to talk, they have the option of saying, “In my comment I am going to agree with [name of classmate].” This is a simple request, but it structures metacognitive awareness: students not only think during philosophy discussion but also think about their thinking and reflect on what their classmates have said. The children are free to not worry about metacognition if they are not inclined to, as well as to make any other comment beyond agreeing and disagreeing; for instance, they may give examples, question assumptions, or formulate conditional statements.

On that morning we discussed a series of questions: What does it really mean to know someone? Has it ever happened to you that someone you have not met told you they knew you?

Becky: Yes. My mom’s friends from church told me exactly that just the other day.

Antoine: Me too. My grandmother's cousins know me, but I have not met them yet. They live in Haiti.

Hira: I think that you can't say you know someone if you have not met.

I asked what the children thought they would need to know in order to claim they knew someone. Most agreed that it was name and age. "And allergies," one student added.

Bridget: What else?

Alaina: Dreams and desires and what they like to play with.

Kimberly (who had been raising her hand for a while): I am going to disagree with knowing name and age, because I was at home gaming online with my cousin, and someone I do not know used my real name, not my cousin's username that I was using to play. So I asked him, how do you know my name? Because obviously he did not know me. Scary, huh? And now do I get to hold the donkey puppet for a bit?

During a recent class, when kids got into the flow of the discussion, they seemed to have forgotten about all distractions and just followed the threads of thinking. It came as a surprise when I said, "Becky, look, you just disagreed with Gloria, so you get to hold the donkey puppet for a bit before we leave the classroom." A short time later, I had to say, "Our time together is ending for today. I want to say thank you, because we have done some very good thinking together, and I want to leave you with a new question to think about in this week: What does it mean to know yourself?" As we left the second grade, my students and I brought our puppet friends with us back to the philosophy department.¹²

By happenstance,¹³ that day the questions of personal knowledge and self-knowledge tied in with the theme of a course I was teaching: the role of narrative in the creation of self. In proseminar we had just spent a month reading Augustine's *Confessions*, discussing his discovery of interiority and his attempt at writing the self as a form of moral undertaking. The discussion with the second graders generated some rich connections to late antique text for my students, such as the insight that there is a difference between knowing *who* one is and knowing *what* one is (what kids were indicating by "knowing name and age"), or the notion that one's truest sense of self comprises what one loves. But even when the question discussed with children is not directly relevant to our curriculum, what the seminar students learn from this experience is both an increased awareness of the specificity of philosophical dialogue and a widened understanding of the nature of our discipline.

Philosophy in the Classroom: Practicality Versus Utility

How does the experience I described in the above section make sense in relation to the academic practice of philosophy? Some actual solid benefits from it can be drawn for everyone involved: for young students, measurable if small gains in academic performance; for college students, an opportunity to think more deeply and broadly about the discipline itself; and for the larger community, improved town-gown relations. Nevertheless, for me the most vital gain is that it increases our understanding about the inherent practicality of philosophy itself.

I do not intend to advocate philosophy's utility but rather its inherent practicality. The vocabulary of utility does not work for me, because it relies on the paradigm of application. The process of application is a process by which something is spread on the surface of something else, like paint on a wall or gold plating over a base metal. The paradigm of application assumes that there are two separate entities and that one must be covered over and sealed by way of the other through one process. According to this paradigm, then, philosophy is applied to life as we try to make sense of life via an external process that relies on the separation of the two.

When philosophy is applied to life, the former covers and stifles the latter, which is preserved, perhaps, but at the price of losing air and life. An applicative view of the relation between philosophy and life, or in other terms, of theory and practice, has dire consequences. As Hogan and Smith explain, experience itself is attenuated and disfigured when theory is cut off from practice, and the two are reconnected by trying to make theory direct practice (Hogan and Smith 2003, 166). The utility derived from this process is as artificial as the process itself: perhaps measurable, but not very meaningful for our purposes. Probably a good countermetaphor to that of application would be the "unmasking" proposed by critical theorists¹⁴—a description that I accept. Unmasking seems a process opposite to application: surfaces are opened, or perhaps layers are added and lifted or dropped in an infinite dance of returns and crossings.

Philosophy does not need to be useful because it is practical. By this I mean that philosophy is not separate from life, but it is instead deeply interwoven in the experience. We can separate them (i.e., philosophy and life), but we need a surgery to do that—an artificial cutting and separation: it evokes the coldness of analysis, the rigor of theory. Rather, philosophy is practical: some parts of life *make sense* when thought about philosophically. Some parts of philosophy also *make sense* when thought about from lived experience. Philosophy is there, in life, even when not yet learned: by practicing it together with others, one refines it and becomes better at recognizing the structures of experience.

I choose to use the term *practicality* because it leans on the concept of practice as outlined by Alasdair MacIntyre.¹⁵ According to this understanding, humans form a practice when they collaborate to structure an activity in view

of a shared purpose, and they keep exercising said activity. They share the purpose to collectively become better at it by forming patterns and strategies that they can communicate to new members who want to participate in that activity. Philosophy is a practice a bit like soccer: it can be experienced in a community of persons interested in collaborating with the purpose of learning how to do it better together. The purpose of this activity, rather than externally imposed, emerges as an end from the activity itself. The practice generates internal goods. When we philosophize together, the main purpose is experiencing the process of dialogical thought as it unfolds, as it manifests itself, and allowing for participants in the conversation to find their own meaning in the process (Välitalo 2017). As groups practice more and more, they become interested in cultivating excellence; that is, in having better and better philosophical conversations that are more creative, caring, and critical.¹⁶

Acknowledging the practicality of philosophy does not erase the problem of the relation of theory to practice. Resisting the idea that philosophy is the foundation of education does not imply that practice does not need theory. Instead consider how some forms of practice contain theory and can be put in a dialogical relation to it. Therefore, recognizing the practicality of philosophy does not call for an abandonment of theory but instead for a more careful consideration of how the two are bound together.

An understanding of philosophy as practical revolves around a rejection of universalization and a perception of knowledge as situated. Ends and means are discovered from within and are not found in external sites. As philosopher of education James Giarelli puts it, philosophy as practice is reflective because it is “an ongoing mode of human activity” (1990, 37). Philosophy as a reflection on one’s practice takes the form of practical activity, specifically of practical thinking. Practical thinking entails discarding metaphysical claims as well as analytical tasks of removing conceptual clutter in order “to orient one’s learning in the critical light of the best of one’s knowledge” (Hogan and Smith 2003, 166) with awareness of one’s own ignorance. Therefore, practical philosophy can facilitate an orientation to pedagogical dialogue. Practicality also suggests that this activity occurs in relation to a community and to a history. By this I mean that even though every conversation is new and unscripted, it also happens in the context of ongoing conversations within the larger scholarly community and within the inherited traditional texts. When playing soccer or basketball, for example, one does not reinvent the game but can still play in new and creative ways with one’s team, trying to achieve excellence. Similarly, when practicing philosophy in a community of inquiry, one enters an ongoing conversation that has set criteria and modes but also has room to play, experiment, and create.

A philosophy rooted in practice “prepares us for a new home” (Giarelli 1990, 39) because it serves to both conserve (i.e., to establish one in one’s traditions, in Giarelli’s words, “a nod to one’s situatedness”) and to dialectically critique what is

given, thus preparing one for one's unforeseen future. The image of a new home is inspiring, even though in what follows I suggest that a trait of philosophical thinking may be learning to live, as it were, *with and without* a home. Giarelli outlines a conception of public philosophy in which the philosopher is an educator. He concludes, "When the nature of philosophy is in itself problematic, the future of philosophy depends upon its ability to become an educative element in the life of the community" (36). This last suggestion needs to be taken seriously and put into practice.

An Example of Philosophy in Practice

There is value in the community outreach: when James Giarelli proposes that philosophy should become an "educative element in the life of the community" (1990), he points to a hopeful possibility for philosophy to rediscover its relevance and its presence in the community in which it is practiced. This possibility also counteracts the effects of the isolation in which professional philosophers conduct their work. Recent attention to the idea of "public humanities" demonstrates the institutional interest in widening access to certain disciplines beyond the walls of university classrooms.¹⁷ The growing sphere of public philosophy offers many forms that philosophy as a public practice can take. For me it takes place when my students and I seek out other, younger thinkers and think together. I do this in the context of various undergraduate philosophy courses, thereby extending academic philosophy into other spheres of public and K-12 philosophy and enriching my own curriculum. In my experience academic philosophy and public philosophy are not exclusionary but work together by making each other better.

Imagine a course of philosophy in which undergraduate students are invited by their local community to philosophize together in a sustained way, whether in a public elementary or secondary school, public library, prison, senior center, or coffee shop. Before going out to the community, these students will need to have gained at least an initial sense of the practice of philosophizing. This means they will have experienced it and will have thought about the pedagogical choices implied in it.¹⁸ They will need familiarity with at least some materials from the tradition and to have access to resources. Then they will need to overcome the discomfort caused by leaving campus and being invited into other places that, however geographically close to them, are possibly unknown. To enter they will have to adhere to a dress code, show an ID, sign in, and experience themselves as guests who are strangers and who may be only partially welcome. They will have to work through some of the normal friction present when communities open up to something new. They will plan, facilitate, and record their sessions with the group that invited them. They will finally bring the experience back to campus, to our classroom, where we will review, discuss, and learn from it together. They will draw connections from the recorded sessions to the texts and theories we

studied and examine them through what they learned. Most importantly they will see that philosophizing makes sources of meaning available to them for the long run, for their lives.

Of the many good things in the experience, I want to comment on one specific part that for me is vital to a philosophical education. Stepping out of the thing studied, observing it from without and as a stranger, is essential to philosophy. The experience of taking on the angle of an outsider¹⁹ arises from knowing how to step outside and positioning oneself so as to ask, “Why is this like this and not otherwise?” The capacity to reach a standpoint of defamiliarization is therefore an important part of learning to philosophize.

My students try this firsthand when they enter, as invited strangers, a second grade classroom or a public reading room and feel out of place; that is, they feel hosted and as if they don’t belong. But accompanying this is a sense that they do belong, that they are part of it, that they share questions, ideas, jokes, and silences with the groups they philosophize with. I find that this movement of belonging and not belonging, of within and without, clearly outlines the dynamic by which a thinker first moves away from the thing she wants to understand and then moves back closer to it.²⁰ It reminds her of the ineradicable bonds that tie the thinker and the thing thought about together. This is the rhythm of life—the pendulum movement—that makes philosophizing possible. As with body movements, it is natural to us, but we become better at it by doing it, refining it, and thus making it, through exercise, part of the way we respond to the world. By exercising philosophical thinking in communities made up of students, faculty, children, teachers, and all who are interested, students and the public see philosophy of education as a lively, fertile possibility that enriches the lives of those who cultivate it.

Decenterment and Translation as Vital to Philosophy

In a small but important way, exiting the college classroom and entering into dialogue with others in contexts in which one may not feel completely at home could illuminate what it means to practice philosophy while being true to its (philosophy’s) positionality.

Barbara Cassin has an interesting project, “Toward a New Topology of Philosophy” (2014), in which she advocates a plurality of paths instead of the single path that runs from Parmenides to Plato and all the way up to Heidegger and Habermas.²¹ In her take the single path—what she calls “the royal road” of ontology and phenomenology—relegated many “others” to the margins. She writes, “Philosophy has organized things so that any critique of the royal road is rejected as not being philosophy” (Cassin 2014, 2). I mention Cassin’s project because it offers a way to think of the history of Western philosophy in terms of positions and, more exactly, of being positioned and positioning oneself. As I have argued, I take noncentrality to be a critical trait of the practice of philosophizing. If it

can be accepted that the monological account of philosophy is just a partial view, then it should be apparent that there are other partial views, equally legitimate.

A last point follows from these considerations on the topology of philosophy. If philosophy originates and moves from multiple positions, then translation becomes a method for philosophizing. The human existence is plural: diversity is a fact of our world. The human existence is also in language, as we make sense of our experience through language. Monologos, the idea that only one language denotes the human existence, is fabricated as the outcome of a process of simplification and reduction from our given plural condition. We exist instead in a plurality of languages. Claudia Ruitenberg (2009) theorizes translation as a philosophical method. We translate both between languages (interlinguistic) and within one language by shifting from one context or discourse to another (interdiscursive). Our belief that our language is obvious and transparent is challenged by the operation of discovering unfamiliar concepts or hidden roots to familiar words. This gesture of defamiliarization, which operates as a displacement, is a philosophical gesture. Ruitenberg notes that “gains, losses, changes, excesses, remainders and commissions” are all involved in the act of translation, which “transforms the relationship between theory and practice itself” (Ruitenberg 2009, 431). Translation as a task is infinite, is never fully settled, and should stay in the present form. Philosophy as an activity, then, shall take on the task of translation, not exclusively but as part of its modes of action. A way to invite philosophy into one’s life is to seek out displacement or not-belonging so as to become involved in processes of translation.

Conclusion

In my article I have offered an argument in favor of philosophy as a practical activity characterized by a position of vulnerability that complicates notions of inside/outside, belonging, home, and dialogue. I have posited that a practical take on philosophy recasts the relation of theory to practice in the modality of translation, and I have proposed that this is a never-completed task to take on. Finally, I hope this article encourages readers to arrange for experiences philosophizing with others in varied contexts, and I suggest this should be an integral part of the education of our philosophy students.

In responding to the crisis of our discipline, I have argued for a beneficial relationship between philosophy and the community, especially from the point of view of the discipline itself. I have proposed that the practicality of philosophy makes it viable and valuable for gaining a more capacious and generous view of the discipline itself. I am not prescribing what we should do as philosophers but rather indicating that philosophy is being done in many ways, allowing for a variety of methods and experiences. In a recent blog entry, Helen De Cruz (2019) writes, “I’m inclined to an expansive conception of philosophy where images, aphorisms, music, poetry, can all be part of philosophical conversation.”

Similarly, Martin Lenz (2019) proposes that we consider the power of shared experiences and examples and that we explore other ways of cultivating attention by considering “examples, analogies, translations into other languages, the use of pictures and drawings, forms of literature, film, theatre, music and other arts.” Philosophers’ voices against monologism are many, vibrant, and diverse. I add mine to theirs.

As a teacher of philosophy, it is pressing for me to make sure that my college students see its possibilities and find in it joy and meaning, not despite but because of the uncertain, somewhat vulnerable status of the discipline. As a scholar of philosophy, it is crucial for me to know and expand my disciplinary literacy and creativity in ways that respect the tradition and are responsive to the community. Even when we are not sure the world needs us, we need it. C. Thi Nguyen (2019) is right when he writes, “We need to do philosophy in the world.” It could be suggested that our discipline looks both inward (to itself) and outward (to life in the world), perhaps like Janus, the two-faced god of beginnings, transitions, and doors. But it should be apparent—if what I proposed makes sense—that philosophy’s outlooks on the world are mobilized in multiple, shifting, and wavering ways. Rather than being a choice between two directions, philosophizing is a matter of seizing the singular response to life, which takes countless distinct forms. I have recommended that students seek out repeated philosophical exercise with a group of friends young and old, in familiar and unfamiliar settings. This is one important way in which philosophy becomes present as education.

Notes

1. This article is dedicated to my students and to my teachers. Previous versions and shorter sections of this article have been presented at the Presidential Panel for New Scholars at the Philosophy of Education Society conference in 2016 and at the Prindle Institute for Ethics Research Workshop in 2019. I am grateful for feedback received there, which greatly shaped my consequent work on it. I also want to thank the editors at *Precollege Philosophy and Public Practice* for going the extra mile in extending support and advice throughout the editorial process.
2. For example, consider the Public Philosophy Network (<https://www.publicphilosophynetwork.net>), which collects many different experiences with publicly engaged philosophy, and PLATO (<https://www.plato-philosophy.org/>), which focuses on expanding precollege philosophy. Another source to consider is Engaged Philosophy, which looks at civic engagement in philosophy classrooms (<https://www.engagedphilosophy.com>).
3. I use the concept of community of inquiry both in its reference to classroom pedagogy and also as a general form to understand philosophical study as an

ongoing dialogical conversation with texts by authors from different times, cultures, and schools of thought (see Kennedy 2012).

4. In *Socrates Tenured: The Institutions of 21st-Century Philosophy*, Robert Frodeman and Adam Briggles (2016a) attribute the crisis of philosophy to its institutionalization. They propose that a way to save philosophy from social irrelevance is by opening the practice to “field philosophy,” a concrete, place-bound way of philosophizing.

5. See Rorty 1982.

6. See Nye 1998; Lugones and Spelman 1986; and Lloyd 1992.

7. See Mbembe 2001; also see Bhabha 2004.

8. Claiming the crisis of our discipline does not imply that we lack vigorous, lively, and open conversations among us; I am grateful to participants in the research workshop “Philosophy in Schools and the Public Realm” for carefully listening and engaging with this paper. Their feedback has been very valuable.

9. Much has been offered by way of argument (Lipman, Sharp, and Oscanyan 1980; Splitter and Sharp 1995; Mohr Lone and Burroughs 2016), field-based research (Millet and Tapper 2011; Trickey and Topping 2004), and exhortation (Goering 2011) in favor of philosophy’s engagement with K–12 education. I am grateful for this work, on which I often rely to make a case for my own practice.

10. There may be concerns that by emphasizing my perspective, I might silence or even exploit the children in the classroom. In establishing a community of inquiry (COI) in the elementary school classroom, participants join in as peers, but they come to it from a variety of positions and experiences. They may draw similar gains from the discussion, but they may also draw different gains, depending on their differences. Highlighting what my students gain does not indicate that the gains are at the expense of others in the classroom. When setting up a program of philosophy with local schools, it is vital to establish a relationship with both administrators and teachers. In my practice I insist that teachers personally opt into the program. I make sure I meet with them in person and discuss together what they hope for our collaboration. We choose themes and subfields together and check in after every meeting. I carefully cultivate a regular habit of philosophy discussion to create the COI that is so important to a proper practice of P4C. I actually intentionally ask that teachers commit to weekly meetings for at least eight weeks, because I find that anything less frequent than that backfires. The episodic “philosophy discussion” that is not joined to a regular practice or other types of engagement are worthy but not for the ends I hope to achieve. In this way, while maintaining our differences and while entering as strangers who are invited to join an ongoing class, we can still foster community if respect, parity, and regularity are upheld.

11. Dr. Thomas E. Jackson developed the “Good Thinker Toolbox” as part of *The Art and Craft of Gently Socratic Inquiry*, a handbook written for practitioners in his P4C program at the University of Hawaii. The toolbox presents inquiry tools to facilitate the acquisition of intellectual discipline and logical rigor. The metacognitive puppets are inspired by the Good Thinker Toolbox, and the letters they display indicate

the cognitive tools, such as agreeing, disagreeing, exemplifying, asking for support, identifying a thesis, and so on.

12. My department strongly supports public-facing initiatives; indeed, it is part of what we consider our departmental identity. It offers interest, support, and validation, without which a junior faculty member wouldn't be able to operate as I do.

13. I do not choose the themes for the K–12 philosophy in connection to my college courses. Actually, it rarely happens that the P4C discussion goes where I expect it to go; in fact, even if I tried to align the K–12 and college classroom curricula, it is likely to not work out. But as it happens, philosophy students can find connections and coincidences, and they enjoy bringing back the content of K–12 conversations to their college classroom. I would not want to give readers the impression that the K–12 discussion becomes a handmaid to the college discussion. That case would make children a lab for our college instruction. But I do encourage my students to make connections between what they learn in college and what they learn in the elementary school and to continue discussions initiated in one setting into the other.

14. See Boltanski 2011.

15. The concept of practice in MacIntyre is widely debated. In my field of philosophy of education, scholars have long been puzzled by his exclusion of education as a practice. My purpose in this article is not to contribute to scholarly analysis and discussion of the concept but to put it to use in its general understanding. MacIntyre writes, “By a practice I am going to mean any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended” (1997, 187).

16. See Lipman, Sharp, and Oscanyan 1980.

17. I am aware that there are other reasons at the root of this newfound institutional support, such as strategic intentions to overcome the so-called “town-gown” divide and to gain support for the university's expansion in the community; nevertheless, it is a good sign that support for public initiatives in the humanities is gaining ground.

18. In my courses I prepare students using the pedagogy outlined by Matthew Lipman and Anne Sharp in the tradition of “Philosophy for Children.” For more information see <https://www.montclair.edu/iapc/> and <https://www.icpic.org>

19. This experience has been called defamiliarization (Ruitenberg 2009), *atopia* (Hadot 1995), or even *epoche*, that is, suspension (ancient and modern phenomenology).

20. I owe this insight to the magnificent book by Francesca Rigotti (2006), *Il pensiero pendolare*, in which I learned of the etymology of *pensare*, “to think” in Italian. The verb originates from an intensive form of *pendere*, to hang or swing. The translated title of the book is *The Commuting Thinking*, where *pendolare* indicates both the pendulum movement and the movement of workers who leave their home in one

town and go to work for the day in a different town, then come back home for the night.

21. Barbara Cassin mentions these authors as canonical; they are understood as main players in the development of Western thought when it is viewed as one central “royal road.”

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