Chapter 27
Creating a More Thoughtful and Compassionate Schooling Experience: Implementing Philosophy for Children Hawai’i in Our Teacher Education Programs

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ABSTRACT
Amidst the many calls for teaching critical thinking in our schools, this chapter argues that what is most important for education is philosophical thinking. The p4c Hawai‘i pedagogy offers an approach to further philosophical thinking in schools while reconceptualizing what “philosophizing” entails. This chapter then presents the key elements of p4c Hawai‘i pedagogy as a proven way to help develop teachers and classrooms that cultivate philosophical thinking. These elements are presented not only for K-12 classrooms but in the context of redesigning teacher education programs. This chapter is not presenting a program or curriculum but instead highlights key areas of change. Colleges of education must restructure their approach to current teacher preparation programs in order to instill, model, and foster the type of teaching that we wish to produce in our educators.

INTRODUCTION
Our goal as educators is to cultivate more thoughtful and compassionate people in this world. Like Dewey (1916), we conceive “education as the process of forming fundamental dispositions, intellectual and emotional, toward nature and fellow men” (p. 328). Therefore, like Dewey, we view philosophy “as the general theory of education” (p. 328). We believe the original impetus behind the critical thinking

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movement was the desire to help people become more thoughtful, but in trying to form these intellectual dispositions, many efforts towards critical thinking became disconnected from the general purpose of education. Hence, we want to describe the dispositions for cultivating a thoughtful person, particularly one who is on their way to become a teacher.

We have found it helpful to return to the collected works of Plato, specifically *The Apology*. In it, Plato depicts an Athenian courthouse scene from 2,500 years ago, where Socrates, at the age of 70, is defending himself against the very serious charge of corrupting the minds of the youth, which was punishable by death. Socrates, acting as his own lawyer, states the gods appointed him to lead the philosophical life, thus it was his duty to examine himself and others (Plato, 1961, 28e) and spent his days efforting “to kindle into a flame the spark of a good in every man” (p. 3). He set out to accomplish this task by engaging his fellow citizens in inquiries concerning their experiences, ideas, and beliefs, as well as those assumptions held by society. For example, in the *Phaedo* Socrates discusses the nature of the afterlife and the immortality of the soul with his students. Because his death was imminent, the topics they inquired into were extremely relevant and, as a result of the dialogue, his students challenged and/or changed their beliefs due to the ideas, questions, perspectives, and logic presented by Socrates and their peers. This, as Plato has depicted, was the typical strategy of Socrates throughout the *Dialogues*; a topic, problem, or pressing issue arises (most often from Socrates) and an ensuing dialogue between him and other Greeks ensues. His thirst for wisdom drove him to engage in dialogue concerning the issues that were of the most importance to him and the state found this to be troublesome because it encouraged Athenians to think for themselves, which threatened the established power structure and ultimately made Socrates an enemy of the state.

The quest to promote a more thoughtful citizenry was so imbedded into Socrates’ being, he argued it was impossible for him to stop philosophizing, even if it would acquit him of the charges, because he could “never stop practicing philosophy and exhorting and elucidating the truth for everyone that I meet” (29d). He was incapable of living in this manner because the value of life is grounded in investigation and inquiry. As Socrates famously remarked,

> Let no day pass without discussing goodness and all the other subjects about which you hear me talking and examining both myself and others is really the very best thing that a man can do, and that life without this sort of examination is not worth living. (38a)

According to Socrates, the examination of one’s beliefs and conceptions of the world gives life purpose. Therefore, thinking, whether it be by oneself or with others, about life’s most pressing and important topics is what makes life worth living.

We find the example of Socrates helpful not because of Ancient Greek beliefs in “gods,” “truth,” or “good,” but because of the essential importance of the activity of philosophy for understanding the value of thoughtfulness in education. The purpose of education tackles the same philosophical problem Socrates’ addressed in his statement of the purpose of life. For him, the thinking involved in the activity of philosophy was part of the answer to this timeless question. And if the purpose of education is to improve life, our theory of education should be identical to or, at the very minimum, resonate with our theory of life. To be clear, we are not advocating a particular philosophical theory of what makes life meaningful. Rather, we are arguing that the value of education derives from its role in helping us find purpose and meaning.

Unfortunately, when one reflects on their own schooling or walks into a typical American classroom, there is a massive disconnect; these experiences are far too often devoid of the very activities that make living worthwhile. In fact, the very structure of the traditional, “depositing” model of teaching (Freire,