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**THE PHILOSOPHER-IN-RESIDENCE
IN TEACHER GRADUATE EDUCATION**

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative action research study explored and documented the experiences of teacher graduate education candidates and a philosopher-in-residence at a small, private liberal arts college during the fall semester of 2017. The study aimed at having the philosopher-in-residence play a meaningful role in enhancing participants' reflection on their current teaching practice as they examined that practice through interpretive, normative, and critical perspectives in the context of a Reflective Practice Seminar.

The study found that a philosopher-in-residence was not able to achieve this goal, for both programmatic and pragmatic reasons.

First, the philosopher-in-residence's role was not made a formal aspect of the graduate education program in general or the Reflective Practice Seminar in particular. Second, the study's participants were primarily concerned with the practical aspects of their action research studies, such as the ongoing implementation and evaluation of the intervention they chose to use in their classrooms during the semester, their Reflective Practice Seminar assignments, and the overall requirements for the successful completion of their Master's degree. Additionally, the participants lacked the needed context and background

knowledge in both the philosophical texts utilized in the Reflective Practice Seminar and educational philosophy in general.

The study concludes that for a philosopher-in-residence to benefit practicing teachers in such a program, the role should be a formal part of the program, and the program itself should be restructured to allocate more time, earlier on in the course of study, for philosophical reflection on teaching, learning, and education in general with the deliberate guidance of a philosopher-in-residence.

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RESEARCHER STANCE

I am a freelance writer by day and a graduate student by night, pursuing a Master of Arts in Teaching that has allowed me to explore the relationship between philosophy and education. In my former career I was a Guide Dog Mobility Instructor for eleven years at The Seeing Eye — the first guide dog school for the blind and visually impaired in the world, founded in 1929. During that time, I was an avid writer and blogger with an abiding interest in philosophy I acquired as an undergraduate student at Moravian College in the 1990s.

The impetus for me to get involved in the field of education was the research I did for an article I wrote for *The New York Times* called “Free the Philosophical Beast” (Neumann, 2014), where I argued that academic philosophers needed to engage more with the general public outside the academy. I compared the public’s perception of science to its perception of philosophy, and came to the following conclusion:

“I think the key difference between science and philosophy is that we need the *results* of science more than we need everyone in the body politic ‘doing science.’ By contrast, we need everyone ‘doing philosophy’ more than we need the results of philosophy. In other words, we don’t need to know or understand how the scientist has gone from the minute molecular intricacies of DNA to a public good like genetic counseling. On the other hand, the emulation of the critical thinking and logical argument of a philosopher is a virtue that can be applied to any area of

life — from where you stand on the most important social and political issues of the day to how best to spend the rest of your days on this planet” (Neumann, 2014).

I felt strongly about this because, up until I went to college, I wasn't a student who loved to learn. My exposure to philosophy in college changed all that:

“When I entered college nearly a quarter-century ago, my two main concerns were playing soccer and preparing for a successful career as a certified public accountant, like my older brother had. The two “philosophers” with whom I was most familiar were Jesus and the apostle Paul. I was born and raised in a small town in Pennsylvania, and immersed in a church modeled after the Plymouth Brethren tradition, where the Bible was taken literally as the inerrant word of God. But by the time I was ready to graduate, soccer and a business career — and my religious belief — had taken a backseat to two other things that had bitten me hard: poetry and philosophy...

I feel I owe a debt to philosophy. It liberated me; it gave me the courage to leave behind the comfort and security of a religious worldview, and provided me with a purpose I will be glad to pursue for the rest of my life” (Neumann, 2014).

One of the philosophers I interviewed for my article was Grace Robinson, creator of an organization called Thinking Space in the U.K. that, among other things, was

involved in the Philosophy for Children movement. Before I interviewed Robinson, I hadn't given much thought to how, or even if, philosophy could benefit education. But in the three years since I wrote that article, I've come to understand that philosophy offers a uniquely clarifying way of thinking and talking about educational problems, and therefore has an absolutely essential role to play in education. I have even come to agree with John Dewey (1916) that "If we are willing to conceive education as the process of forming fundamental dispositions, intellectual and emotional, toward nature and fellow men, philosophy may even be defined as the general theory of education" (p. 328).

Shortly after I wrote my *New York Times* article, I wrote a longform essay about Philosophy for Children for *STIR Journal* (Neumann, 2015). One of the educators I interviewed for that story, Susan Engel—author of *The End of the Rainbow* and founding director of the Program in Teaching at Williams College—invited me to give a talk about my essay.

The talk was well received, so I wanted to find out if my alma mater had an interest in having me giving a similar talk to its students. I emailed Dr. Joe Shosh, then Education Department Chair at Moravian College, and received an encouraging initial reply:

"How wonderful to receive your correspondence directly after leaving Karen Armstrong's convocation address to the Moravian community in Johnston Hall, where she exhorted us all to take action for a better world. I've so enjoyed my opportunity to peruse some of your writing, and I couldn't agree with you more

about the need for dialogic inquiry for all young people in public education. I would love to hear more about your Williams College talk and discuss the different contexts in which we might have you return to Moravian to make a similar presentation to both our pre-service teacher education candidates and to practicing teachers enrolled in our graduate education programs” (Shosh, personal correspondence, 2015).

Joe and I ended up meeting for lunch and having an engaging discussion about the intersection of philosophy and education. Toward the end of our meal, he also mentioned an invitation-only fellowship for Moravian’s Master of Arts in Teaching, which can lead to initial licensure for those interested in teaching in a K-12 setting or to a graduate degree without licensure for those who, like me, have different professional goals.

A week later, I accepted the fellowship and, a month after that, submitted a brief written statement of intention regarding a potential thesis topic. I expressed my desire to explore the possibilities of a philosopher-in-residence in education because of what I had learned in my research for my essay on Philosophy for Children in *STIR Journal*.

As the Graduate Education Fellow at Moravian College, I had an initial opportunity to explore these possibilities through a pilot study by enrolling in a year-long “Researching The Leader in Me” seminar with a group of local K-12 teachers conducting action research into aspects of leadership in their classrooms via FranklinCovey’s The Leader in Me program. My role was to support their research efforts as the group’s philosopher-in-residence in order to assist the teacher leadership fellows, if possible, in

deeper reflection on their practice.

One of the things that struck me most in my experience with those teachers was the unique challenges they face in the twenty-first century as they try to improve their practice, as Darling-Hammond, Hyster, & Gardner (2017) recently pointed out:

“Teacher professional learning is of increasing interest as one way to support the increasingly complex skills students need to learn in preparation for further education and work in the 21st century. Sophisticated forms of teaching are needed to develop student competencies such as deep mastery of challenging content, critical thinking, complex problem-solving, effective communication and collaboration, and self-direction” (p. v).

My experience with the teachers researching *The Leader in Me* in their classrooms, along with my own research in writing about *Philosophy for Children*, inspired me to explore and document what happens when a philosopher-in-residence and teacher graduate education candidates inquire together as they conduct action research studies during the Reflective Practice Seminar requirement of their master’s degrees in education at Moravian College.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to serve as an effective philosopher-in-residence for practicing teachers, I felt I had to be more knowledgeable of the history of teacher education in America, including its contemporary issues and challenges. I also needed to further understand the role of philosophy in education in general as well as previous research, if any, into what role a philosopher-in-residence has played in enhancing teachers' reflection on their practice. This chapter summarizes the results of that inquiry.

History of Teacher Education and Contemporary Issues.

The role of the schoolteacher in America has changed dramatically since the common school was established in the middle of the nineteenth century. Learning to teach is no longer viewed today as a once-and-done process where prospective teachers are simply taught educational psychology and basic pedagogical methods and then sent out into the world to practice their craft, but rather as something that happens over time and never truly ends (Cochran-Smith, 2011). Additionally, teachers have to learn to teach in ways consistent with new understandings of how human beings learn and what they need to know in the ever-changing knowledge society of the twenty-first century, all while serving an increasingly diverse population (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015).

Labaree (2008) notes that “in the years preceding the emergence of the normal school in the mid-nineteenth century and continuing afterward, prospective teachers in the U.S. followed many routes into the classroom” (p. 290). Specifically:

“Before the twentieth century, most professionals did not learn their craft by enrolling in a program of professional education but rather by pursuing an apprenticeship with an experienced practitioner. What was distinctive about the preparation of teachers, however, was that it involved neither formal instruction nor informal apprenticeship. Instead, the rule was simply: take the class, teach the class” (p. 291).

However, once teacher education became a “wholly owned subsidiary of the university” (p. 290), prospective teachers received a broader education in a core liberal arts curriculum, in addition to the more narrow one that consisted only of courses in pedagogy and their chosen subjects.

Labaree’s history concludes:

“By the 1960s, through the diverse processes I have outlined here, teacher education in United States had stumbled upon a model of organization that quickly became canonical. . . . By this time, the former normal schools had evolved into universities, and once they achieved this status they naturally imitated the structure of existing universities by setting up education schools and then assigning them the work that had once constituted the

normal school's entire mission, preparing teachers" (p. 296).

Today, teacher education programs in colleges and universities generally divide their curricula into three parts: courses that impart the content knowledge of the academic subjects taught in schools; methods courses that offer instruction in how to teach those subjects; and foundations courses that provide prospective teachers with a background in theories of learning and, occasionally, philosophy of education. As Winch (2012) notes:

“For those who cleave to a conception of teaching as a form of craft work, based on personal values, experience, intuition and nothing else, [philosophy of education] has little relevance, as successful practice rather than conceptual grasp of the field of education is the overwhelming priority” (p.308).

Philosophy of Education.

But what is philosophy of education, and what do philosophers of education actually do?

Siegel (2018) writes that:

“Philosophy of education is that branch of philosophy that addresses philosophical questions concerning the nature, aims, and problems of education. As a branch of practical philosophy, its practitioners look both inward to the parent discipline of philosophy and outward to educational

practice, as well as to developmental psychology, cognitive science more generally, sociology, and other relevant disciplines” (p. 1)

In a review of the philosophy of education literature, Hayden (2011) elaborates:

“We do many things, most of which is intangible (thinking), resistant to measurement (teaching), inaccessible (advising), or perceived as qualitatively dubious (asking pesky questions of our non- philosophy colleagues). There is one activity, however, that we might be able to get a grip on: our scholarship. Those questions our field asks and the research conducted to answer them often produce papers, essays, and manuscripts that we can read, evaluate, and ponder” (p.1)

After analyzing the titles, abstracts, and keywords for over 1,500 articles, Hayden concludes that:

“This data certainly indicates that researchers who publish in these journals are interested in the kinds of questions that one would predict; theoretical explorations of education, inquiries about teaching, pedagogies, and practice, and investigations of what is being taught or learned in schools” (p. 24).

Additionally, Winch and Orchard (2015) give a sense of how long philosophy of education has been around:

“Through the history of general philosophy we find classic accounts of the possible relationship between aims, content, and learning and teaching in

education articulated by different schools of thought, each with resonances in contemporary educational thinking. Whether this be the innatist epistemology of Plato's *Meno*, the empiricism of Locke, the constructivism of Rousseau, or Aristotle's account of the acquisition of virtues, the continuing relevance of philosophical thinking to contemporary practice is plain to see." (p. 20).

But Orchard & Winch also note that the role of theory in teacher education is particularly tenuous, and describe two typical lines of criticism leveled against it:

"First, the *relevance* of the theoretical component of established teacher training practice to teaching has been questioned. Do teachers need to engage with educational scholarship? What's wrong with a purely practical route to qualified teacher status? Second, the *quality* of university-based provision has been challenged" (p. 7).

Stein and Stein (2016) in particular deliver an unambiguous judgment of the relationship between the philosophical and concrete aspects of teaching: "There is little room for the "ivory tower" mindset when it comes to teaching capable and talented teachers. Teaching is rooted in practice rather than theory" (p. 194).

However, Orchard & Winch counter that "theory has a necessary and unambiguous role to play in teachers' professional knowledge" (p. 7). They argue for a conception of teachers as professionals who are in need of a deep understanding of what they believe are the conceptual, empirical and normative

dimensions of their practice, and they explain why university education departments are best positioned to provide it. To put it simply, they write: “Teachers need educational theory because they must understand what they are doing and why they are doing it, and must be able to think intelligently about how to do it better” (p. 3). Additionally, they argue that: “Teachers...should have a general and basic understanding of the educational arguments and disagreements which are embedded in the roots of common practices in schools and which have evolved over time” (p. 20).

Stengel (2002), who identifies first as an educator and then as a philosopher of education, believes that philosophers and educators should work together more by identifying areas of shared concerns by and through which an ongoing dialogue can take place. She writes:

“I am a philosopher of education...I raise prior questions, point out failures of logic, analyze language, peel away layers of experience, propose thought experiments, expose presuppositions, create space for ambiguity, and ask what it all means and what is of value in the efforts proposed...These actions are typically viewed by my colleagues as relevant to the concrete educational tasks at hand. My work as a philosopher is always appreciated, though not always recognized as “philosophy of education”” (p. 283).

Action Research.

A natural setting for the kind of dialogue Stengel proposes seems to me to be through action research because, as Bridges (2003) writes:

“Not only does action research itself depend on all sorts of philosophical premises for its own rationale, but, properly conceived...it also requires its practitioners to reflect on their own educational philosophies as well as to enquire empirically into the consequences of their actions” (p. 182).

Furthermore, Bridges claims:

“For in action research the professional practitioner is asked not merely to observe the consequences of his or her action but to take responsibility for them. To take responsibility for them requires that one knows what they are and how they result from one’s actions – i.e. the empirical part of the enquiry. But this is not enough. In addition, one has to be satisfied that they satisfy the educational principles, the values, which are one’s own measure of the worth of one’s educational practice – i.e. the evaluative and philosophical part of the enquiry” (p. 189).

Feldman (2017) offers a history of action research in education in *The Palgrave International Handbook of Action Research*. He first notes that the German-American psychologist Kurt Lewin is widely considered to be the originator of the concept of action research in the early 20th century, and then cites British educational theorist Lawrence Stenhouse as a leader in the

resurgence of action research after a decline in popularity in the middle of that century, noting:

“Stenhouse began to have teachers take an active part in the shaping of the implementation of the Humanities Curriculum Project, an integrated humanities curriculum that was developed in Britain to meet the needs of students in the new comprehensive high schools as the school leaving age was increased. By involving teachers in this way and by recruiting teachers to play important roles in the structure of the project, Stenhouse sparked the growth among British teachers and educational researchers in the use of action research as a way to improve curriculum” (p. 132).

Feldman goes on to write:

“However, what is usually considered critical action research in education (Carr & Kemmis, 1986), which is also referred to as emancipatory action research (Boog, 2003; McKernan, 1988) and critical participatory action research, was developed primarily in Australia at Deakin University during the 1980s by McTaggart, Kemmis, Carr, Grundy, and others (Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2014)” (p. 134).

Applying the concept of action research to graduate teacher education in particular, Shosh (2007) notes that “teacher action research must be central to a professional development model that intends to foster the transformation from teacher to teacher action researcher to teacher as agent for systemic change” (p.

271). Additionally, Shosh has stated:

“I think [the Reflective Practice Seminar] is the perfect spot for a philosopher-in-residence because those are the most philosophically-minded texts in the graduate education program. And they're not just read to be read, but in an action research context; so what new action do you take as you look at your own practice through these lenses” (Shosh, personal correspondence, 2017).

Previous Research.

But in my review of the literature, I found no studies pertaining to a philosopher-in-residence working with teacher graduate education candidates in any respect, much less in an action research context.

However, one article in the search results described the exploration and teaching of ethical issues in a clinical forensic psychiatric setting using a philosopher-in-residence (Waithe, 1982), another memorialized the 36-year term of a philosopher-in-residence at Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts (Gaines, 2016), and one argued for the potential value of employing a philosopher-in-residence in hospitals (Snowden, 1983).

Though Snowden’s setting was much different than the setting of my study—he functioned as a full-time philosopher-in-residence for two summers at the parish hospital in rural Louisiana—his experience shares some similar challenges and insights as my own experience. He writes:

“I had come to realize that my lack of any hands-on contact with the day-to-day functioning of a hospital was a marked disadvantage in my efforts to articulate for nursing students the complex relationships between philosophy and actual nursing practice. To work in a hospital and to be privy to the practice and politics of medicine would provide me with valuable first hand information and insight into the system” (p. 68).

I knew that for my role as a philosopher-in-residence to have any chance at being relevant to practicing teachers, I would also have to be privy to the “practice and politics” of public education. My participation in the Researching the Leader in Me seminar was my first taste of that experience, while my work with the teacher graduate education candidates in EDUC 702 was my second. Snowden continues:

“The goal I set for myself was a very broad and admittedly ambitious one: to assist hospital personnel in cultivating a deeper recognition of the uniquely human (as opposed to clinical) needs of patients through philosophical analysis and reflection. To achieve this goal, my primary function was to offer in-service presentations to all hospital staff members...I wanted to offer intellectually solid programs that would stimulate thought and convey significant content, but the special circumstances of the audience (most of whom had never had the least contact with academic philosophy) demanded that attention be paid to practical application of concepts as well.” (p. 70).

Snowden also touched on one of my own programmatic and pragmatic concerns with my role in EDUC 702 when he asks: “Can one-hour in-service programs on the varied philosophical dimensions of health care be sufficiently substantial in terms of content to be deemed intellectually respectable?” (p. 77). The Reflective Practice Seminar of which I was a part met in person only one time per week.

Additionally, as I would come to understand during my data collection process, nearly all the teachers with whom I was working had no prior familiarity with philosophy in general or philosophy of education in particular. Here, Snowden expresses a similar concern: “Can a philosopher-resident even begin to uncover and dissect the philosophical assumptions of various approaches to healing in a way intelligible to nurses and physicians who have—in the vast majority of cases—no prior acquaintance with academic philosophy?” (p. 77). As a result of this lack of acquaintance on the part of my study’s participants, I wondered, along with Snowden, if a philosopher-in-residence could even “engender the critical, reflective attitude of mind that is a keynote of philosophical activity?” (p. 77).

And, finally, as I note in my Theme Statements chapter: “One particularly vital element for success is broad based administrative and staff support” (p. 79).

Significance of My Study.

As noted earlier, I adapted the concept of a philosopher-in-residence for my study from the Philosophy for Children movement, specifically from Lukey (2012), the Associate Director of the Uehiro Academy, has been the philosopher-in-residence at Kailua High School. He writes:

“I see three main roles that a [philosopher-in-residence, or PIR] can play in working with teachers and students: 1) the PIR helps keep the focus on philosophical questions of purpose and meaning; 2) the PIR helps create a community where interdepartmental discussion can flourish; and 3) the PIR collaborates with specialist teachers to think about curriculum, classroom issues, and lesson plans” (p. 40).

My adaptation of the philosopher-in-residence concept was similar to Lukey’s role, but instead of working with teachers to engage their students in philosophical activity in their classrooms, I worked alongside them as they reflected on their practice by engaging with philosophical texts such as those by John Dewey, Paulo Freire, and Lev Vygotsky. With regard to my role in helping my participants dig deeper into these texts, Joe Shosh has stated: “To matter, I have to see how Dewey relates to me, I have to see what I have to do with Vygotsky. So that’s, to me, our goal together” (Shosh, personal correspondence, 2017).

I imagined my role as philosopher-in-residence would be truer to the model provided by Socrates, who can be seen as a co-inquirer with those with

whom he engaged in philosophical discussions, not least because he famously said he knows that he knows nothing. As Plato relates in his *Apology*:

Socrates: “You must have known Chaerephon; he was an early friend of mine.... Well, Chaerephon, as you know, was very impetuous in all his doings, and he went to Delphi and boldly asked the Oracle.... to tell him whether there was anyone wiser than I was, and the Pythian prophetess answered that there was no man wiser.... When I heard the answer, I said to myself, What can the god mean? And what is the interpretation of this riddle? For I know that I have no wisdom, small or great” (P., & Jowett, B. 2012).

I related to Socrates’s sentiment because, as I mentioned previously, I had no experience being a philosopher-in-residence or a classroom teacher. Also, in the *Theaetetus*, Socrates describes himself as a sort of “intellectual midwife,” having no ideas of his own but helping to give birth to the ideas of others (P., & Cooper, 2009).

Though I found no studies that utilized a philosopher-in-residence in the manner in which I intended to utilize it, as I mentioned earlier, there was one study that used a version of the Socratic method. Burns, Stephens, & Bellamy (2016) report on “empirical findings supportive of the Socratic method of teaching as effective in challenging and changing psychology capstone students’ levels of epistemological maturity” (p. 2), concluding that “the Socratic teaching

method can enable students to challenge and reconcile different points of view” (p. 16). The authors used “a graduate-style seminar approach” where “weekly readings are selected to allow students to use what they have learned but also to challenge that knowledge along with unexplored assumptions acquired along each student’s particular path” (p. 9). The authors’ inspiration for their course processes was based on the Socratic method described by Paul (1995):

“The Socratic teacher models a reflective, analytic listener. One that actively pursues clarity of expression. One that actively looks for evidence and reasons. One that actively considers alternative points of view. One that actively tries to reconcile differences of viewpoint. One that actively tries to find out not just what people think but whether they think it is actually so” (p. 297).

Their use of the Socratic method is similar to what I intended on doing in my study, which also utilized weekly readings and associated reflective memos as prompts for discussion in the Reflective Practice Seminar. However, the facilitator of the Socratic discussions was a professor at the university where the study took place, and not a peer of the participants. My being a peer, a fellow graduate student along with my participants, was one of the challenges envisioned by Joe Shosh before my study began:

“In a sense, the philosopher-in-residence is a teacher. But yours is more complex, because the very structures that are designed to help you analyze

what's going on in your study are the structures you're in a sense studying, trying to use to help others” (Shosh, personal communication, 2017).

A fuller discussion of the importance of this challenge for the effectiveness of my role as a philosopher-in-residence is discussed in the Theme Statements chapter.

Summary.

This chapter offered a brief overview of the history of teacher education in America, including its contemporary issues and challenges; the role of philosophy in education; and previous research into what role a philosopher-in-residence might play in addressing teachers’ reflection on their classroom practices, as well as what I intended for my own practice as philosopher-in-residence in Moravian College’s course EDUC 702, the Reflective Practice Seminar.

As mentioned in my Researcher Stance, my first experience with this practice was through a pilot study in a year-long seminar with a group of local K-12 teachers conducting action research into aspects of leadership in their classrooms using FranklinCovey’s The Leader in Me program. I include a summary of that experience in the next chapter because it includes the same challenges of the philosopher-in-residence role discussed in my Research Narrative.

PILOT STUDY

In this pilot study, I wanted to explore what happens when a philosopher-in-residence works with a group of K-12 teachers as they conduct action research into aspects of leadership in their classrooms using The Leader in Me program devised by FranklinCovey.

The Leader in Me is a character education program that applies Stephen Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* to a K-12 school setting. The research that was conducted by the teachers and the philosopher-in-residence would culminate in a published book, with each member of the group contributing one chapter.

The essential questions of the seminar were: "How might I learn more about the implementation of *The Leader In Me* in my classroom, school, district, and community through the development and implementation of an action research study? How might what I learn through action research help others?" And its purpose was to "design and prepare for implementation a trustworthy action research study on some facet of student leadership that includes participant observation, participant interview, and appropriate artifacts."

In addition to weekly readings of The Leader in Me chapters, essays and articles on the foundations and methodology of action research, weekly participant-led discussions of those readings, weekly reflective memos posted to Edmodo, and a written data collection plan to be submitted to the college's Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, the seminar also required analytic

memos that critically examined the data being collected through various conceptual frameworks. The seminar culminated in a final reflective memo that addressed the participant's process as a teacher action researcher.

My practice as philosopher-in-residence consisted of completing the coursework alongside the teacher leadership fellows while also trying to position myself as a Socratic co-inquirer into their problems of practice by attempting to provide, where I thought appropriate, theoretical and conceptual background knowledge, as well as drawing attention to any connections that could be made between that knowledge and their practice. I attempted to do this through three means: writing about the theoretical and conceptual issues of character education in the weekly Edmodo reflective memos that were read (and, ideally, commented on) by my peers; contributing theoretical and conceptual insight to the discussions in our weekly seminar meetings; and, later in the seminar, reviewing my peers' assignments as prompts for those discussions.

My own final reflective memo expressed one of the main pragmatic concerns I noted in my Literature Review chapter with regard to Snowden's role as a philosopher-in-residence in a hospital setting:

"I certainly learned a lot about action research through the readings in the *Palgrave International Handbook of Action Research*, Dana Wright's *Active Learning*, and various other selections. But I have to say that I think some of the action research-oriented assignments this past semester are more properly geared

towards teacher-researchers rather than to a philosopher-in-residence—at least as that role played out. I feel they're much more applicable to a situation in which someone like a teacher spends 8 hours a day, 5 days a week in an observationally and discourse-rich environment with her participants; whereas a philosopher-in-residence meets only once a week (and only for 2 hours) with his” (Neumann, personal communication, 2017).

Throughout my experience in this seminar, I felt that there simply wasn't enough time to dig deeper into the theoretical, conceptual issues relating not only to character education in schools but to the ones arising around the teachers' own practice. By far, the overriding concern for these teachers was how they would actually implement the Habits of The Leader in Me in their classrooms.

The other main concern I had was a programmatic one:

“With regard to my findings specifically related to being a leadership fellow...I've realized that for a philosopher-in-residence to be effective in this context, a combination of assignments and activities specifically related to the philosophical aspect of character education (and even action research), combined with discussions led or facilitated by philosopher-in-residence, would be best. Even having access to the teacher-researcher written assignments late in the process wasn't helpful, I think, because there wasn't enough opportunity for real discussion and reflection afterward because everyone was scrambling to get their chapter drafts written. For such a role to be effective, and I believe it can be, it

should be made explicit, with relevant assignments and activities included in the syllabus/course work, from the beginning” (Neumann, personal communication, 2017).

The main reason the role of a philosopher-in-residence should be made explicit is so that the participants would know what to expect of that role, as well as how to engage productively with it. These observations are consistent with the reported experiences of the leadership fellows in the one-on-one interviews I conducted with them.

For example, I asked all the leadership fellows directly if I, as a philosopher-in-residence, was helpful to them during our time together. Here’s what Shelly Carlstrom, a first grade teacher in the group, had to say:

“I don’t think I’ve known what to ask you, so I don’t know if it’s been helpful or not, because I haven’t really utilized you. I know we read that article [*The High School Philosopher in Residence*, Lukey, 2012], and I think because I’m not bent that direction, I wouldn’t know what to ask you. I think you were trying to figure out what your role was, and we were trying to figure out what your role was” (Carlstrom, personal communication, 2017).

And here’s what Beth Wolford, another first grade teacher in a different school, said:

“I can’t say that I’ve used you to the best ability that we could have. The insights you have given us through additional readings and just, like, class

discussions, I think have been very helpful. But did I ever invite you into my classroom to come take a look? No. Which I probably could have and should have. You let us know that you are available to come in, but I think we were all bogged down in what we are doing on a daily basis that we lost sight of the fact that, ‘Oh yeah, I could have somebody else come in and help us with this and look at my children in a different way and give me pointers and projects on how we can work this better’. I don’t think I used your expertise to the best advantage that I could have” (Wolford, personal communication, 2017).

These two responses are representative of the other interviews I conducted, and speak to the fact that, because I was a novice both as a philosopher-in-residence and in action research, I think it would have been better if my role had been made explicit from the beginning of our study.

Another reason to make the role explicit is so that there is a sense of having “skin in the game” among the participants. There would be more of a motivation for the participants to engage with the philosopher-in-residence and philosophical concepts if they were a required part of the coursework.

And, finally, as I wrote in my field log five weeks into the study, clarity about my role suffered from not being an explicit aspect of the seminar:

“This week’s reading...forced me to reflect on a two things: one, my role as philosopher-in-residence for our Leader in Me research group; and two, my own research question with regard to The Leader in Me.

I’m still trying to figure out what my role is in our research group, to be honest. Ben Lukey’s role as philosopher-in-residence in Hawaii was to facilitate philosophical dialogue and inquiry in teachers’ classrooms (and amongst themselves). But that can't really be my role with these teachers—they’re trying to implement “leadership,” not necessarily philosophical thinking.

I think my role might be better characterized as something similar to Dr. Shosh’s creation of “third spaces” for his Moravian College graduate students. There, he creates a dialogic space for action research that merges the first space of their personal beliefs and tacit knowledge with the second space of the authoritative voices that guide their work. But Dr. Shosh is already doing that with these teachers” (Neumann, personal communication, 2017).

Overall, my experience with the teachers in the Researching The Leader in Me seminar was both promising and frustrating. Promising, because I believe a philosopher-in-residence can be help teachers reflect on their practice, but frustrating because that help was impeded by the programmatic challenges noted previously.

With these insights in mind, I designed a new study that would explore what happens when a philosopher-in-residence works alongside teachers as they reflect on their practice while conducting their own action research studies. Despite my pragmatic and programmatic concerns I assumed, perhaps naively, that my next experience as philosopher-in-residence would be different — that is, more effective and beneficial.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Setting and Participants.

This study explored and documented the experiences of seven teacher graduate education candidates and a philosopher-in-residence at a small, private liberal arts college during the fall semester of 2017. The study aimed at having the philosopher-in-residence play a meaningful role in enhancing participants' reflection on their current teaching practice by serving as a Socratic co-inquirer in examining their practice through interpretive, normative, and critical perspectives in the context of a Reflective Practice Seminar.

Procedures.

Our Reflective Practice Seminar met once a week from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM. During our first week together, I introduced the concept of a philosopher-in-residence and what they could expect from my role. I also administered an initial Philosophy of Education Inventory questionnaire in order to get a baseline understanding of my participants' beliefs about teaching, learning, and education in general. During the next twelve weeks, I engaged in the weekly discussions about the course readings and the progress of their action research studies and intended on conducting one-on-one interviews with my participants. In the final week, administered a final survey to elicit feedback about my role as well as the logic of the Reflective Practice Seminar itself.

Data Gathering Methods

Student Questionnaires and Surveys.

At the beginning of my study I administered a Philosophy of Education Inventory (Appendix C) in an attempt to understand the beliefs about teaching and learning held by the participants in my study. Created by Zinn (1996), this instrument is a 75-item survey that allows educators to explore their educational philosophy. Responses to each item are recorded using a 7-point Likert-scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Responses were tabulated to provide a score for each of five philosophies: “Behavioral,” “Comprehensive,” “Progressive,” “Humanistic,” and “Social Change.”

Near the conclusion of my study I administered an open-ended, seven-question survey to my participants in order to gauge their feelings about my role as a philosopher-in-residence as well as the philosophical aspects of the Reflective Practice Seminar in general. I also asked for feedback, if any, about how the Reflective Practice Seminar experience, and a philosopher-in-residence could have been more useful to them.

The questionnaire and survey were analyzed and the results recorded in my field log.

Participant Observations.

The majority of data collected in my study was from the notes I took during our weekly Reflective Practice Seminar meetings. I observed and recorded

my impressions of these conversations in a double-entry journal to report factual findings on the left while reflecting and inquiring on the right. Direct quotes from my participants, gathered through observations, surveys, and interviews, were also used to represent their voices and perspectives truthfully. Using these low-inference descriptors (Hendricks, 2013) prevented students from being misinterpreted through my recording of their behaviors and attitudes since their own words were conveyed to ensure and cross-check the trustworthiness of the results.

Student Interviews.

I intended to conduct one-on-one interviews with each of my participants during the Reflective Practice Seminar in order to dive deeper into any philosophical issues that arose from the results of the Philosophy of Education Inventory questionnaire, my observations of our discussions, and student artifacts such as their reflective memos. Unfortunately, I was only able to interview two of the seven participants. The Reflective Practice Seminar schedule, combined with the pre-existing personal and professional commitments of my participants, provided limited time for this type of data collection for my study.

Student Artifacts.

The Reflective Practice Seminar in which my study was conducted required my participants to examine their data through traditional, progressive, dialogical, feminist, social constructivist, linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic

lenses by writing reflective memoranda based on select readings from John Dewey, Paulo Freire, Lisa Delpit, and Lev Vygotsky. For each reflective memo, participants were asked to identify five key quotations they feel are most salient to their action research study, and be able to explain the relationship between those quotes and their study. I read and analyzed each reflective memorandum from my participants and recorded my analysis in my field log.

Trustworthiness Statement.

The philosopher Richard Rorty (1979) wrote that “philosophers are questioners of questions whose function is to continue a dialogue” (p. 413). The dialogue to which Rorty refers has been going on, uninterrupted, since at least the time of Socrates. It alternates between claims and counterclaims about every topic under the sun and consists of, at its best, a “systematic exploration of the possibilities and problems presented by alternative propositions” (p. 409). Elsewhere, Rorty speaks of the “methodical care in exploring the possibilities of an idea or a technique” (p. 406).

Throughout the process of gathering and analyzing data in the attempt to answer my research question—which consisted largely of emulating that archetypal philosopher, Socrates—I’ve been careful to remain open to unexpected findings and to actively consider “alternative propositions” by seeking clarifications, identifying and probing presuppositions, and, indeed, questioning every question that arose in my research. In this way, I’ve attempted to ensure that

the results of this study are valid and trustworthy. In addition to this philosophical praxis, I also utilized a number of other specific strategies to increase the trustworthiness of my study.

I obtained approval and written permission from Moravian College's Human Subjects Internal Review Board. I offered a participant consent form (Appendix A) wherein I explained that there are no anticipated risks for those who choose to participate, that participants can skip any question that they are not comfortable answering, that they may choose at any time not to participate in this study, and can withdraw from the study at any point.

Once my participants had given their consent and the study began, I utilized peer debriefing and presentations to key audiences, in which I discussed the study with my colleagues and fellow teacher researchers (Hendricks, 2009) in our teacher researcher support group. In doing this, I had the opportunity to share my interpretations of data and hear alternative perspectives with which to draw conclusions. They were also able to provide feedback on the soundness of my research study design and methods. Throughout the study, I engaged in persistent and prolonged observations during which I recorded data accurately and in detail (Hendricks, 2009). This lengthy data collection process ensured that my results were as accurate as possible, as did my keeping of a detailed field log of all salient observations I made and discussion I had. During data collection, I was sure to use triangulation to corroborate my findings, thereby ensuring their

validity (Hendricks, 2009). This was based on commonalities between data sources including participant artifacts, observational, and inquiry data.

As I began to interpret my data, I used member checks (Ely, et al., 1991) that allowed me to share my interpretations with my participants, who were then able to support or refute my conclusions and claims. I also analyzed negative cases (Hendricks, 2009; Holly, Arhar, & Kasten, 2005)—results that seemed to contradict other sources of data. To ignore these would have been unethical, so it was important for me to analyze these cases to better understand my results. I engaged in continuous, ongoing reflective planning throughout the study (Hendricks, 2009). I constantly reflected on and made changes to my study in order to best suit the needs of my participants. Also, as the study progressed, it became necessary to alter the study design in order to be able to collect as much useful data as possible.

Finally, when sharing the study with larger audiences, I was sure to provide thick descriptions of the setting and the study (Hendricks, 2009). These detailed descriptions of the setting, participants, and methods allow the audience to accurately determine whether or not the results of the study can be generalized to their own contexts.

RESEARCH NARRATIVE

“A philosopher,” wrote George Santayana, “is compelled to follow the maxim of epic poets and to plunge *in medias res*” (1955, p. 1). And plunge I did, into both my role as a philosopher-in-residence and into action research, when I accepted my fellowship to get my Master of Arts in Teaching at Moravian College.

According to McNiff (2010), action research “involves identifying a problematic issue, imagining a possible solution, trying it out, evaluating it, and changing practice in the light of the evaluation.” But since I’ve never been a practicing philosopher-in-residence before, how would I be able to swim now that I’ve plunged?

My first thought was to email two of the philosophers with whom I had been in frequent contact after my *STIR Journal* essay on Philosophy for Children, Amber Makaiau and Ben Lukey, for guidance. At the time, I was in the middle of my pilot study:

“I’m at that point in my Master’s where I have to pick a research topic for my thesis. When I emailed you originally, I said I wanted to focus on some aspect of the Philosopher-In-Residence role. I still do, but I was hoping to get your input on what that might be. For the past two semesters, I’ve been conducting what you could call a mini-action research thesis:

I've been the Philosopher-in-Residence for a group of 11 teachers in K-12 who are committed to discovering how they might learn more about the implementation of the character education program *The Leader In Me* in their classrooms, schools, districts, and communities through the development and implementation of an action research study.” (Neumann, personal communication, 2017).

I was also just beginning EDUC 700: Curriculum Development & Action Research, which is a course that “begins the process of completing a Master’s thesis in education, where educators plan and conduct an action research project based on their practice,” and which “provides an overview of curriculum design, and focuses on the development of an action research proposal and the preparation of the Human Subjects Internal Review Board (HSIRB) proposal form.” So the rubber needed to start hitting the road.

Amber emailed me back with a copy of a self-study she and Ben did titled “A Philosopher’s Pedagogy: A Three-Part Model for School Betterment” (Makaiiau & Lukey, 2013). The Philosopher’s Pedagogy, devised by Amber and Chad Miller and rooted in the Philosophy for Children movement, is “an approach to teaching that is defined by six interconnected educational commitments,” which are: live an examined life; view education as a shared activity between teacher and student; re-conceptualize class content so that it reflects the interaction between classroom participants’ beliefs and experiences, and the

subject matter being taught; position philosophy as “the general theory of education” (Dewey, 1916); make philosophy a living classroom practice; and challenge contemporary measures for classroom assessment. Amber wrote:

“If you recall from this paper, the three parts are: (1) an educative experience, (2) mentoring and coaching from a philosopher in residence, and (3) a meaningful peer/professional community of inquiry. At the study’s conclusion we found that this three-part professional development model was a viable alternative to traditional and usual education reform efforts. However, we only tested it out in our particular context. It would be great if you could apply it to your context and see if it supports meaningful growth of *The Leader in Me* program” (Makaiiau, personal communication, 2017).

My initial reaction was that this would be a perfect topic for my Master’s thesis, because I already had some familiarity with this group of teachers and the problems of their practice. But the programmatic and pragmatic challenges I noted in my Pilot Study chapter — namely, the lack of quality time with them, combined with the fact that my role as philosopher-in-residence was ill-defined — dissuaded me from pursuing it.

I went back to the proverbial drawing board in EDUC 700, where I was prompted by an assignment to write about two problems of practice. I began:

“Since I’m contemplating several projects, each with different curricula, I decided to settle on one of them—the role of a Philosopher-In-Residence in creating a culture of critical thinking in K-12 education. The only instance of a Philosopher-In-Residence role I know of—based on my conversations with leaders in the Philosophy for Children community—is the one in the Kailua High Complex in Oahu, Hawaii. Ben Lukey has been a Philosopher-In-Residence there for several years now” (Neumann, personal communication, 2017)

At the time I wrote this, I didn’t have a clear idea of what a “culture of thinking” would look like in actual practice. But after I described Lukey’s work as a philosopher-in-residence, I went on to write:

“That description is roughly what I have in mind for my own project, except that I’ve come to consider bringing philosophy into schools as both broader than what Lukey does and as a subset of critical thinking in general. Whereas Lukey and his colleagues make an intentional effort to tease out the traditional philosophical issues inherent in critical thinking in the classroom, I see a Philosopher-In-Residence role consisting of the cultivation of both metacognitive strategies like the ones Philosophy for Children works with and the more general thinking routines found in books like Ritchhart’s *Creating Cultures of Thinking*” (Neumann, personal communication, 2017).

At the time, I imagined a culture of thinking would involve two general types of critical thinking: one that includes metacognitive strategies, and one that is more domain-specific. For the former, I liked the idea of a "Good Thinker's Toolkit" that Makaiau and Miller (2012) use in their *Philosopher's Pedagogy*. For the latter, I agreed with Daniel Willingham when he says that the ability to think well (i.e., to think critically) in any domain requires sufficient background knowledge and extensive practice (Willingham, 2007).

As a result of this thinking, I believed one of my problems of practice as a philosopher-in-residence would be: How could I convince teachers to value philosophical rigor, dialogue, etc.? In other words, how could I get teachers to see themselves as philosophers? My professor pushed back a little on my assumption of having to convince teachers to value rigorous thinking — a point well taken — and questioned the appropriateness of my research question:

“I'm also not sure that this question is one that leads to action research; do you have a group of teachers with whom you will work? How could your question instead address your own practice as a philosopher in residence? In other words, if we take curriculum in the broadest sense, what is your approach to encouraging teachers to become more philosophical in their practice? How could you make this approach itself the object of inquiry in this investigation? The data you collect would provide insight into

teachers current philosophical beliefs” (Gleason, personal communication, 2017).

Again, I was a bit stumped as to how I would engage in action research without having an ongoing practice to evaluate and, presumably, change for the better. Because as the professor went on to point out: “While surfacing teachers’ philosophical conceptions is certainly research, it needs to be directed towards improving your own practice, and that connection isn't yet clear” (Gleason, personal communication, 2017).

For the second problem of my proposed future practice, I imagined the following:

“My curriculum would have students engaged in oral and written dialogue with their fellow students, their teacher, and the works of various authors that requires the use of a Good Thinker’s Toolkit (which includes procedures like checking for fallacies, providing reasons and evidence for claims, identifying and analyzing assumptions, making distinctions of meaning and intent, drawing inferences and articulating implications, and questioning the veracity of any claims). Additionally, my curriculum would require students to have an intentional, reflective, systematic engagement with the content of each subject (whether ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies, etc.) that involves stepping outside their comfort zones in pursuit of well-defined goals with the help of the teacher who

makes a plan for achieving them” (Neumann, personal communication, 2017).

In keeping with my professed values described in my first problem of practice, I then asked the following question: “How can I ensure that students are really thinking, both metacognitively and domain-specifically? (Neumann, personal communication, 2017).

For this problem, my professor asked some clarifying questions:

“In problem two, are you now imagining yourself teaching in a k-12 setting, or are your students the teachers you would be working with? The data collection piece sounds more like a project evaluating the efficacy of the Good Thinker's Toolkit. Is there already research about this tool? If so, how would your research add to this literature base? And, how would the results of this study inform your future practice?” (Gleason, personal communication, 2017).

Though the idea of a Good Thinker’s Toolkit is something I knew I wanted to be a part of my practice as a philosopher-in-residence, whatever that turned out to be, I didn’t want it to be the sole focus of that practice. Nor did I contemplate teaching students in a K-12 setting. I always intended to work with teachers, either in a K-12 setting, or as a college faculty member working with in-service and pre-service teachers.

For my next assignment in EDUC 700, I was asked to write two versions of the research questions that will drive my action research study. I wrote:

“On whether the questions I identified in my [previous assignment] lead to action research or not—I have to think about how my “question [could] instead address your own practice as a philosopher in residence”Instead of the question of how to get teachers to see themselves as philosophers, based on the assumption that they don’t, I suppose my question should focus specifically on how *I* could encourage teachers to become more philosophical in their practice. If I get the opportunity to work with teachers as a Philosopher-In-Residence, what could I do in that role that would ensure that critical thinking, discussions with philosophical rigor, are taking place? Alternatively, how could I foster a sense of community and inquiry that would highlight and reinforce the values of reflection and questioning?” (Neumann, personal communication, 2017).

Now, I was getting closer to what my action research study would eventually be, and it was similar to what I had done in my pilot study. The professor responded:

“I think you can certainly keep your project located in the problem space of encouraging teachers to become more philosophical in their practice. Because you are unsure of whether you will get the opportunity to work with practicing teachers, you could frame your question around how a philosopher in residence can foster the values you mention. Then, you

could design opportunities to collect data from practicing teachers, and perhaps others who share this commitment, to use as the basis of formulating a curricular structure that looks to meet those ends. In other words, rather than testing the efficacy of a curricular program, you could design your study that seeks to create this curriculum” (Gleason, personal communication, 2017).

The professor also suggested that my research wasn’t really action research:

“I’m not sure you agree with my critique that your earlier iteration of research questions were not amenable to action research. This project is ultimately your own, and I remain open to thinking about how to make this work productive given your particular desires” (Gleason, personal communication, 2017).

After reflecting some more, I decided to put my thoughts together in a more coherent way in an email to Joe Shosh:

“I’ve been doing a lot of reflecting on the research question for my MAT thesis, and I wanted to update you on that—as well as tie it into my potential plans post-master’s. Here’s where I am right now with my question: How can a Philosopher-in-Residence help K-12 teachers reflect on and make explicit their ontological and epistemological beliefs that shape their professional practice as teachers? How can a Philosopher-in-Residence help teachers whose class already utilizes an inquiry approach

(à la EDUC 500) dig deeper into their inquiries? (Possibly by incorporating P4C aspects like a Good Thinker's Toolkit, etc.) How can a Philosopher-in-Residence support teacher action researchers (i.e., Moravian College grads) who work as teachers in local K-12 schools?

I've been thinking about framing my research question this way because I was wondering if I might be able to do something that combines Action Research and Philosophy for Children, specifically involving the Philosopher-in-Residence role. And, more specifically, I'm wondering if we could create a relationship between Moravian College and BASD like the one between the University of Hawaii and the Kailua High Complex, as described in the email from the Hawaii folks I recently forwarded to you.

What I'm thinking is this: After my master's, would it be possible for Moravian to create an official relationship with me whereby I would work with Moravian College pre-service teachers, graduate students, and local alumni practicing teachers in a manner that would combine Action Research and P4C pedagogy (understood as "creating cultures of thinking," for example)? There are organizations that are willing to fund projects that involve philosophy in schools, and I'm thinking I could apply for grants that would fund a position at Moravian either in whole or in part, that would allow me to work in such a role—if you and Moravian

College would be open to such a position” (Neumann, personal communication, 2017).

Joe Shosh’s response was encouraging, and helped to narrow my focus for my present action research study:

“Oh this is incredibly exciting, Steve! As for the post-master's degree framework, I adore what you propose, and see funding as the only real impediment, so let's talk through what grants we might go after. For the master's thesis, you'll need to hone in on the specific group of teachers you intend to support as Philosopher in Residence. That could indeed be students enrolled in Student Teaching Seminar or EDUC 500, but it might also be those who are a little further along in their own research (i.e. EDUC 702). Let's discuss the pros and cons of each” (Shosh, personal communication, 2017).

My professor in EDUC 700 provided some additional input in his comments to my next assignment:

“I was talking with Dr. Shosh about some ideas regarding your developing project, and we were wondering whether you might form your cohort of teachers from colleagues who are also in class. You could support their philosophical work next fall as they conduct their action research projects, and your research could focus on supporting the more philosophical endeavors of their inquiry” (Gleason, personal communication, 2017).

The research question I would pursue in my action research study was finally coming into focus. Which brings us to EDUC 702, the Reflective Practice Seminar, a capstone course through which Master's candidates carefully examine the philosophical and empirical bases for reflective teaching and learning, and data for the action research thesis is collected, coded, analyzed, and interpreted.

*

Prior to the beginning of this semester, I met with Joe Shosh to discuss which group of teachers would make up the participants of my study.

“I allocate class time to talk about the readings as analytical lenses through which to look at our data,” Joe says.

“There is the expectation that folks will share research and will help one another as we're exploring different modes of analysis. So I could see a philosopher-in-residence being incredibly important to colleagues during that time. To be looking at what's going on through even another lens than might otherwise be there. That's why I think EDUC 702 is the perfect spot for a philosopher-in-residence because those are the most philosophically-minded texts in the graduate education program. And they're not just read to be read, but in an action research context; so what new action do you take as you look at your own practice through these lenses” (Shosh, personal communication, 2017).

I was excited about the possibilities for a philosopher-in-residence because, prior to our meeting, I mocked up a copy of the previous year's syllabus for EDUC 702 looking for places where systematic reflection on the philosophical aspects of teaching and learning can inform and enrich my participants' action research theses. The most obvious places to me are those weeks where the participants discuss their reflective memos on readings of John Dewey, Paulo Freire, and Lev Vygotsky.

“To me,” Joe continued, “you're on the quest for the ways you can engage in dialogue that spurs their thinking, their growth with their beliefs, and how you document that. Because when all is said and done, you're gonna tell the story of the conversations you had that were most meaningful” (Shosh, personal communication, 2017).

*

On the first day of our Reflective Practice Seminar, I see some familiar faces — I'm grouped with seven teachers with whom I've shared most of the other Master's courses with. There are six public elementary school teachers and one high school Spanish teacher. When it comes my turn to say a little something about myself and my study in review, I aim to be as general and as brief as possible.

“Have any of you ever taken a philosophy course before getting your Master's here?” I ask.

“No,” say Amy, Nicole, and Tara, the high school Spanish teacher.

“I took a Philosophy of Education course in undergrad,” says Kelsey.

“Yes,” says another Tara, who teaches first grade, “it was an Introduction to Philosophy Class.”

“Yes,” says Kristina, a fourth grade teacher and a Moravian College alumnus, “I took five philosophy courses for a minor in philosophy in undergrad.”

Not a bad start, I think to myself. I then segue into a definition of philosophy and what I anticipate my role will be for the semester.

“I differentiate between ‘Big P’ philosophy and ‘Little p’ philosophy,” I continue.

“‘Big P’ philosophy is the academic endeavor most of us are familiar with, where people study the history of philosophy, which includes thinkers like Plato, Hume, Kant, and Nietzsche. ‘Little p’ philosophy, on the other hand, is what we all strive to do in our daily lives—a continual effort to understand the world and our place in it. ‘Little p’ philosophy,” I continue, “is similar to what Socrates does in Plato’s dialogues. Have any of you ever read any of the dialogues?”

A unanimous ‘No’ rings out.

“OK. Well, Socrates was a master at engineering question-and-answer discussions that examined people’s beliefs about themselves and the world because, as he famously said, ‘The unexamined life is not worth living.’”

He also considered himself an ‘intellectual midwife,’ having no ideas of his own but helping to give birth to the ideas of others. That’s basically what I hope to do with you guys this semester.”

*

However, my hopefulness that history won’t repeat as a minor farce after presenting as a small tragedy is diminished after only a week between classes.

“The readings in this course are deadly dry,” our professor says.

Well, that’s not quite the introduction to a reflective practice seminar I was imagining, or hoping for. This is our second class, and the teachers were to have read the first two chapters of John Dewey’s *Experience and Education* with the expectation that they would examine their practice in light of this progressive lens on education.

“We’re going to make this mercifully short on Dewey,” he continues.

The idea here is that, not only are these texts fairly difficult to read — especially for those who have no background in them or philosophy in general — but they’re relatively abstract and thus not apparently or readily applicable to these teachers’ practice. But how am I to spur “growth with their beliefs,” as Joe Shosh suggested, if they’re not even going to be digging too deeply into John Dewey’s conception of the term?

Dewey wrote that any educational experience is “mis-educative that has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience” (Dewey,

1938, p. 25). He went on to write that the educator must “be able to judge what attitudes are actually conducive to continual growth and which are detrimental” (p. 39). In fact, Dewey believes that the whole “purpose of school education is to insure the continuance of education by organizing the powers that insure growth” (Dewey, 1916, p. 48). But as philosopher Nel Noddings (2016) points out, “many philosophers of education have found difficulties in Dewey’s concept of growth” (p. 26).

If professional philosophers have had difficulty making sense of this concept, how can I expect these non-academic, in-service K-12 teachers to make sense of it? Ostensibly this is where I, as the group’s philosopher-in-residence, come in. These teachers are trying to digest Dewey’s ideas in such a way that they extract some morsel of intellectual nourishment that can be applied to their classroom practice.

It’s comforting that, with regard to Dewey’s concept of growth, and Dewey’s philosophy generally, it seems all the participants in my study are on board with it, or at least seem to be. All seven teachers have quoted him approvingly in this session. Nicole particularly liked it when Dewey wrote that “[g]rowth, or growing as developing, not only physically but intellectually and morally, is one exemplification of the principle of continuity” (p.36). And Kristina connected with Dewey’s question of “Does this form of growth create conditions for further growth, or does it set up conditions that shut off the person

who has grown in this particular direction from the occasions, stimuli, and opportunities for continuing growth in new directions?” (p. 36).

But what I’m less sure of is whether or not their affirmation of Dewey’s concept translates into classroom practice, or at least helps them clarify what their own beliefs are, and whether or not they are taking action based on their beliefs — in other words, whether or not they’re *growing* in their beliefs. The Philosophy of Education Inventory (Zinn, 1999) I administered in order to get a handle on their philosophical beliefs about education, teaching and learning and determine if there was a role for me to play in enhancing the connection between teacher beliefs and practice, showed some seemingly inconsistent results.

For example, Amy scored highly in both the Comprehensive and Social Change categories, which suggests a contradiction in her philosophy because the former focuses on “shared cultural values” and that “societal values such as progress, change” aren’t strongly represented in this philosophy, whereas the latter views education as “a primary force for achieving social change.” And Kelsey scored equally highly in Behavioral and Social Change, another apparent contradiction. The former teaches children to comply with certain standards or expectations set by societal leaders and professional experts; the latter wants children to challenge those leaders and experts, and the system that makes that hierarchy possible.

Unfortunately, there wasn't much for me to do with regard to assisting my participant's reflection on the relationship between their beliefs and practice. I was only meeting with them once a week, so there wasn't nearly enough time to really dig in to what, for most people, is a diverse set of mostly tacit thoughts and feelings about their practice.

*

"If we can't put something theoretical into practice," the professor continues, "then it's useless." While I agree that the readings can seem dry and boring to some, I'd still prefer to spend more time on them. I completely agree with the professor that theory should have implications for practice, especially in a Master's program where candidates are researching specific problems of practice. Yet there's a dilemma: How do I push for more time on these readings if the perception of them is already (negatively) set? Is it even ethical for me to push them to spend our limited time together on something that is important to me but not important to them?

*

Midway through the semester, I'm noticing that all of my participants are making connections to Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) in their reflective memos, but they are all related to increasing achievement in their respective subject matter only, not to any increase in the kind of critical consciousness Freire talks about. I can certainly see how it would be difficult to

apply Freire's Marxist critique of social relations to the elementary school classroom. Freire's "banking concept" of education is more amenable to my participants' practice. But his two claims that the banking concept both dehumanizes students *and* prevents their development of a critical analysis of the reality in which they exist, isn't really addressed or, equally likely, understood by my participants.

This leads me to ask: What is my role as a philosopher-in-residence in facilitating that understanding? And again, how much should I push for that understanding? Would that understanding really benefit their practice as they currently conduct it?

Our class discussion of Freire was, ironically, more in-depth than some of our Dewey conversations. The professor posed the question of whether or not teachers are an "oppressed class" in relation to Freire's Marxist critique of social relations. Tara, the first grade teacher, noted that teachers may be "comfortable to do what your district says to do, but you have to take action" for your students' benefit. This comment was closest, I think, to Freire's overarching critique of the student as oppressed class, but I would need to push for more clarification as to both what Tara means by "benefit" as well as what role she as the teacher might play or specific things she might do to alleviate the situation.

Kelsey noted that she was practicing "wait time" in her class where she would pause after asking students a question in order to give them more time to

think about an answer. One student blurted out “Will you just give us the answer already?!” Kelsey made a connection between that anecdote and Freire’s “banking concept.” This was a good insight on her part, and it would be an excellent segue into a deeper discussion about her practice — if only we had more time.

Additionally, both Tara and Amy made connections to Freire’s claim that “the teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach” (p. 80). But both connected it to giving students choice with regard to writing achievement, rather than in Freire’s context of disrupting the power hierarchy inherent in traditional teacher-student relations, within the overarching context of becoming critically conscious of the reality of those relations and then doing something to change them.

Kelsey made a further connection between Freire’s claim that “looking at the past must only be a means of understanding more clearly what and who they are so that they can more wisely build the future” (p. 84) and the fact that she tries to bring in the background and culture of her students in her lessons. But this is only to increase achievement in an academic subject (mathematics) within a banking concept educational system.

But, again, do I try to impose my understanding of Freire onto them in our limited time together?

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As we engaged with the thought of Lev Vygotsky near the end of the semester of data collection for my study, I began to realize that most of my participants don't have enough background knowledge about the different perspectives we're asking them to think about in relation to their practice. The EDUC 702 syllabus requires participants to "engage in reflective dialogue" with philosophical perspectives like Vygotsky's, but only has them read chapters 6 through 8 before discussing it in one class and writing a reflective memo on it.

To do justice to Vygotsky's thought, to be able to begin to see if it even applies to their practice, requires not only reading his whole book, but possibly reading prior works of his to put this current one in context. Richard Rorty (1979) even went so far as to claim that "one can't say anything about philosophy without being a philosopher oneself" (p. 414), especially if one is ignorant of the historically continuous, ongoing dialogue that, according to Rorty, is the defining product of the discipline. Rorty continues:

"The real question, perhaps, is 'O.K., so what do I have to do to count as a 'philosopher'?' In other words, just how much about the history of philosophy does one have to know before one is entitled to decide either that (a) the philosophers should be doing something different, or that (b) one doesn't have to know any more? Now the general answer to this is: lots. The specific answer is: enough to be able to offer answers to the

questions that the philosophers of one's day are asking. One ceases to be an amateur in philosophy when, and only when, one stops asking philosophers to speak one's own language and starts telling them in their language why they should cease to speak that language" (p. 414)

In other words, if graduate education candidates in EDUC 702 are to engage in a meaningful, productive, and accurate reflective dialogue with thinkers like Vygotsky, they need a relatively thorough familiarity with not only the main ideas he writes about, but the ongoing dialogic conversation of which those ideas are a part. They don't need to be experts in philosophy, but they do need a more than cursory understanding of the particular ideas under consideration.

I believe this is true of every subject matter under consideration, not just philosophy. For example, E.D. Hirsch, Jr. (2010) writes:

"Back in the 1970s, when I was doing research on reading and writing, the field of psycholinguistics was just beginning to emphasize that the chief factor in the comprehension of language is relevant knowledge about the topic at hand. That finding has since been replicated many times, in different ways and with varying constraints, both in the laboratory and in the classroom" (p. 7).

Hirsch goes on to note that that is "exactly how new information is always offered: it is embedded in a mountain of knowledge that readers are expected to have already in their long-term memories" (p. 7).

In other words, graduate education candidates in EDUC 702 can't be expected to engage profitably with the philosophical texts in the syllabus without already having a store of contextual understanding in their minds. And if they don't have that, a philosopher-in-residence is of no help because there isn't enough time to provide the kind of background context such an understanding would require.

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In the end, it turned out that the rubber never really got the chance to hit the road. But I'm still confident that, under the right conditions, a philosopher-in-residence would be valuable to practicing teachers. As Dewey wrote:

“What a philosophy of education can contribute is range, freedom and constructive or creative invention. The worker in any field gets preoccupied with more immediate urgencies and results. When one begins to extend the range, the scope, of thought, to consider obscure collateral consequences that show themselves in a more extensive time-span, or in reference to an enduring development, that one begins to philosophize whether the process is given that name or not. What is termed philosophy is only a more systematic and persistent performance of this office”
(Dewey, 1929, p. 57).

DATA ANALYSIS

While conducting my action research study, I collected different forms of data in order to engage in prolonged observation that would enhance the analysis of my research (Hendricks, 2009). Analysis of all data points was conducted throughout my entire study.

Questionnaire

At the beginning of my study I administered a Philosophy of Education Inventory (Appendix C) in an attempt to understand the beliefs about teaching and learning held by the participants in my study. Created by Zinn (1996), this instrument is a 75-item survey that allows educators to explore their educational philosophy. Responses to each item are recorded using a 7-point Likert-scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Responses were tabulated to provide a score for each of five philosophies: “Behavioral,” “Comprehensive,” “Progressive,” “Humanistic,” and “Social Change.” What struck me about the responses is how many participants scored highly in two or more philosophies, suggesting contradictions in their beliefs about teaching and learning.

For example, Amy had almost equal scores for Comprehensive and Social Change. The former focuses on “shared cultural values” and “societal values such as progress, change” aren’t strongly represented in this philosophy. The latter views education as “a primary force for achieving social change.”

Kelsey scored equally highly in Behavioral and Social Change, another apparent contradiction. The former teaches children to comply with certain standards or expectations set by societal leaders and professional experts; the latter wants children to challenge those leaders and experts, and the system that makes that hierarchy possible.

Tara, Nicole, and Kristina all scored equally highly in Behavioral and Progressive. The former relies on step-by-step teaching methods where one skill must be mastered before another is started and incorporates lots of practice with feedback and reinforcement. For the latter, a primary role of the teacher is guidance, assisting through cooperation the natural capacities of the learner.

Field Log

During the course of the study, I kept a double-entry journal in which I was able to note my impressions about what was occurring throughout the study. I reflected upon the information that I collected in analytical memos that challenged me to address my data through the lenses of the educational theories of John Dewey, Paulo Freire, Lisa Delpit, and Lev Vygotsky.

In addition to the field log, I wrote a mid-study methodological memo to help me determine how the methods used to date have helped me address my research question by itemizing the data I have gathered, summarize current insights, and to determine the future direction of my data collection efforts. As I

looked back on my field log and mid-study methodological memo I came to understand important patterns in my study and drew many important conclusions.

I noticed that all of my participants were making connections to Paulo Freire—arguably the most difficult of the texts—in their reflective memos, some more thoughtful than others, but they are all related to increasing achievement in their subject matter only, and not to any increase in the kind of critical consciousness Freire talks about. I realized they have to make connections because the syllabus requires it. But I began to think that requiring master’s candidates to come up with a certain number of quotes from someone like Freire motivates them to make superficial connections to their practice.

Participant Work

Throughout my study, I collected and analyzed participant work in the form of several reflective memoranda and the Researcher Stance portion of their action research studies. The Researcher Stance required the participants to explain how they came to pursue the line of inquiry for their thesis and to summarize their personal epistemological and ontological beliefs. The reflective memoranda required the participants to analyze their data through traditional, progressive, dialogical, feminist, social constructivist, linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic lenses. Each memo required participants to use salient quotes from Dewey, Freire, Vygotsky, and Delpit to support how each theorist’s educational theory connected to their study.

What I've noticed, overall, is a fairly superficial engagement with the ideas of both Dewey and Freire. This isn't surprising, given my class observations. But in addition to superficial engagement, there is also evidence of misunderstanding of their ideas.

For example, in a reflective memo, Nicole cites Freire's concept of praxis, which she correctly quotes as "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it," but she applies it to her reflecting on her students' skills at the beginning of the year and taking subsequent action to improve those skills. That definitely falls under the concepts of reflective teaching and action research, but that's not what Freire means when he talks about praxis. For him, praxis means reflection and action as it relates to developing the critical consciousness to understand where one is positioned in reality, whether oppressor or oppressed. Additionally, Nicole wrote:

"Students are expanding their bank of knowledge each time we provide information to them. We are giving them information to help better their practice. Students are acting on the information I provide while having the chance to receive, fill, and store their own deposits in their bank of knowledge."

But for Freire, the "banking concept" is negative; it dehumanizes the depository, the "object" of the depositor. A deeper connection, and more faithful

to Freire's thought, would have thought about how Nicole might be an unwitting agent in that oppression via the banking concept.

In Amy's reflective memo on Freire, she cites the following quote: "The oppressed, having internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines, are fearful of freedom" (p. 47). In response, she writes: "My action research plan revolves around student choice in journal writing in hopes to increase writing achievement, motivation, and engagement. Students have difficulties generating ideas because they are fearful of the freedom they are given." But Freire was talking about something else. He meant that, to overcome the situation of oppression, the people have to first critically recognize the causes of their oppression so that "through transforming action they can create a new situation, one which makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity." Again, a deeper engagement with the text would be for Amy to question whether there a way to get students to recognize those causes.

Final Survey

Near the conclusion of my study I administered an open-ended, seven-question survey to my participants in order to gauge their feelings about my role as a philosopher-in-residence as well as the philosophical aspects of the Reflective Practice Seminar in general. I also asked for feedback, if any, about how the Reflective Practice Seminar experience and a philosopher-in-residence could have been more useful to them.

What struck most about the responses to this survey was the level of difficulty the participants encountered when engaging with the philosophical texts. For example, Tara C. responded: “I found some of the readings cumbersome, and I felt that many of the memos were given so we could earn a grade, but did not necessarily relate enough to the topics.” Kelsey offered a similar sentiment when she responded: “I don't feel like it was very beneficial for my study because the terms were so challenging for me to understand. I had a hard enough time just trying to understand the text and then to relate it to my study presented an even greater challenge.” And, finally, Amy wrote: “A lot of the readings were very dense and difficult to draw connections from without explanation.”

With regard to their view of having a philosopher-in-residence working with them in EDUC 702, the responses indicated that it would be helpful to them if things were structured differently. For instance, Tara C wrote: “I was very stressed trying to balance the class with other pieces. I think a philosopher-in-residence could help find a compromise that provides what a student needs and meets the standards of what the course requires.”

Kristina wrote: “If there was a way that we could get a summary or some background information on different philosophers and their foundations or theories, then we could spend more time reading about the philosophers we

connect with and will benefit from, rather than wasting time reading about ones we do not.”

Tara L. felt that it would have been more beneficial to engage with the philosophical readings before settling on a research question, adding: “I think a philosopher-in-residence could be helpful when reading texts that are hard to understand. Perhaps the philosopher could explain it in terms we are more familiar with.”

And, finally, Amy again:

“Some of the texts were difficult to analyze because of the complexity of the text, as well as the stretch it was to make connections. The philosopher in residence may be able to help paraphrase, or better explain, the points that the philosophers are trying to get across prior to the readings. It may open up more fluid class discussions and easier connections to current teaching practices and action research studies.”

Codes and Bins

Towards the end of the study, I reviewed all entries in my field log, responses to my questionnaire and survey, and notes on all participant work, in order to code and bin my data (Ely, Vinz, Downing, and Anzul, 1997). As I reread the log, there were several recurring ideas or issues, which were given “codes,” short words or phrases to represent them. Through the process of coding, I recognized several significant patterns and relationships emerging. To understand

these relationships further, I grouped related codes together in “bins.” These bins helped me to begin answering my research question by leading naturally to theme statements. These theme statements represented my findings based on the particular codes in each bin.

THEME STATEMENTS

The purpose of this study was to explore and document the experiences of teacher graduate education candidates and a philosopher-in-residence during a reflective practice seminar wherein all participants collected data for their action research studies. The following statements represent the themes that emerged throughout the course of the study.

Time.

The first theme that became evident was related to the issue of time—there simply wasn't enough of it to properly engage with the philosophical texts the reflective practice seminar requires teacher graduate candidates to engage with.

The philosopher Simon Critchley wrote in a *New York Times* article that “the philosopher is the person who has time or who takes time,” and that “pushing this a little further, we might say that to philosophize is to take your time, even when you have no time, when time is constantly pressing at your back” (Critchley, 2010). Critchley makes this claim by citing Socrates' story about Thales, who is usually considered the first philosopher:

“[Thales] was looking so intently at the stars that he fell into a well. Some witty Thracian servant girl is said to have made a joke at Thales' expense — that in his eagerness to know what went on in the sky he was unaware

of the things in front of him and at his feet. Socrates adds, in Seth Benardete's translation, "The same jest suffices for all those who engage in philosophy."

Socrates introduces the "digression" by making a distinction between the philosopher and the lawyer...The lawyer is compelled to present a case in court and time is of the essence. In Greek legal proceedings, a strictly limited amount of time was allotted for the presentation of cases. Time was measured with a water clock or *clepsydra*, which literally steals time, as in the Greek *kleptes*, a thief or embezzler. The [lawyer], the jury, and by implication the whole society, live with the constant pressure of time. The water of time's flow is constantly threatening to drown them...

...But the basic contrast here is that between the lawyer, who has no time, or for whom time is money, and the philosopher, who takes time. Pushing this a little further, we might say that to philosophize is to take your time, even when you have no time, when time is constantly pressing at your back" (Critchley, 2010).

My study participants, including myself, were working against the clock. My study participants were, by far, focused on the practical aspects of both their data collection and their coursework for their Master's degree. Their overriding concern was with the implementation and evaluation of the intervention they

chose to use in their classrooms that semester; their second concern was with their Reflective Practice Seminar assignments and overall requirements for their Master's degree. My impression was that the Reflective Practice Seminar's weekly after-work meeting from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM was itself a burden for these teachers who not only had work commitments that made them late at times but personal family issues as well.

Because of this lack of time, I felt deterred from imposing any extra work on them in order to explore in more depth what happens when a philosopher-in-residence acts as a specifically Socratic co-inquirer into their action research studies. I wondered if it would have been ethical for me to do that, and I worried that it would have been counterproductive to my goal and to my values. I doubted that it would have contributed to an atmosphere of genuine, fruitful reflection on their practice, and believed it would have even encouraged an engagement with the philosophical texts that was even more superficial and perfunctory.

Background Knowledge and Context.

But even if there had been enough time for my participants to adequately engage with the philosophical texts, with the help of a philosopher-in-residence, philosophical activity, at least in the sense that Moravian College's master's program asks its candidates to do it, can't be done "*in medias res*," despite what George Santayana (1955, p. 1) claimed. Too much background knowledge and relevant context is missing. Richard Rorty (1979) even went so far as to claim that

“one can’t say anything about philosophy without being a philosopher oneself” (p. 414), especially if one is ignorant of the historically continuous, ongoing dialogue that, according to Rorty, is the defining product of the discipline.

The goal of the reflective practice seminar was certainly not to turn the teachers into philosophers, but to have them engage in a level of philosophical activity that would enhance their reflection on their practice. It quickly became evident to me that these teachers needed more familiarity with not only the main ideas the philosophers wrote about, but with the ongoing dialogic conversation of which those ideas are a part. They don’t need to be experts in philosophy, but they do need more than a cursory understanding of the particular ideas under consideration if they are to engage in a meaningful, productive, and accurate reflective dialogue with thinkers like Paulo Freire, Lev Vygotsky, et al.

As educational psychologist Daniel Willingham (Willingham, 2007) notes, there is a difference between knowing that one should be thinking critically about a topic and actually being able to do so. The latter requires both domain knowledge and a considerable amount of practice at it. He writes:

“[I]f you remind a student to ‘look at an issue from multiple perspectives’ often enough, he will learn that he ought to do so, but if he doesn’t know much about an issue, he can’t think about it from multiple perspectives ... critical thinking (as well as scientific thinking and other domain-based

thinking) is not a skill. There is not a set of critical thinking skills that can be acquired and deployed regardless of context” (p. 12).

This is as true for a field like engineering as it is for education.

Background context and knowledge is critical. As Willingham writes: “Knowing that a letter was written by a Confederate private to his wife in New Orleans just after the Battle of Vicksburg won’t help the student interpret the letter—unless he knows something of Civil War history.”

Additionally, educational theorist E.D. Hirsch, Jr. (2010) writes:

“Back in the 1970s, when I was doing research on reading and writing, the field of psycholinguistics was just beginning to emphasize that the chief factor in the comprehension of language is relevant knowledge about the topic at hand. That finding has since been replicated many times, in different ways and with varying constraints, both in the laboratory and in the classroom” (p. 7).

Hirsch goes on to note that that is “exactly how new information is always offered: it is embedded in a mountain of knowledge that readers are expected to have already in their long-term memories” (p. 7). In other words, teachers can’t be expected to engage profitably with the philosophical texts in the syllabus without already having a store of contextual understanding in their minds. And if they don’t have that, a philosopher-in-residence is of no help because there isn’t

enough time to provide the kind of background context such an understanding would require.

Program Design.

Furthermore, the design of the Master's degree program at Moravian College inhibits the kind of philosophical reflection it calls for. Engagement with philosophical traditions and texts must come earlier in the graduate education program.

Orchard and Winch (2015) note: "Teachers need educational theory because they must understand what they are doing and why they are doing it, and must be able to think intelligently about how to do it better" (p. 3). Additionally, they argue that: "Teachers...should have a general and basic understanding of the educational arguments and disagreements which are embedded in the roots of common practices in schools and which have evolved over time" (p. 20).

In short, teachers need to have reflected philosophically on both their practice and education in general before they can wisely choose an intervention and productively implement it in their classrooms. By the time graduate education candidates are asked to read and reflect on philosophical texts in EDUC 702, they've already settled on their research question and are in the midst of implementing whatever intervention they've chosen to test out.

Additionally, it would have been more productive if the role of philosopher-in-residence had been a formal, required part of the Master's

education program. Because I had no formal role within Moravian's graduate education program—for example, I wasn't a professor who had any "authority" over his students—there were no consequences for the participants if they didn't engage with the philosopher-in-residence. Aside from any negative consequences, there was no real incentive for them to do so, either.

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The Philosopher-in-Residence.

Despite the pragmatic and programmatic hindrances I've noted, I still believe there is a place for a philosopher-in-residence in a Master's degree program in education. In addition to facilitating teacher understanding of philosophical texts in a reflective practice seminar like EDUC 702, the importance of a philosopher-in-residence is also seen in the development of a teacher's general philosophy of education. Such a philosophy would inform the choices they make with regard to their action research thesis. This philosophy encompasses professional knowledge of their subject as well as how to transmit that knowledge to their students. To clarify, Winch (2012) writes:

“By ‘knowledge’ is meant not merely acquaintance with true propositions within a particular field of human concern that stand in inferential relationships with each other, but the ability to make relevant inferences within that field. A ‘subject’ in this context is an institutionally and socially recognised way of organising knowledge which has a place on the

curriculum. Moreover, one also needs to think of a field of knowledge...as the practices of acquiring, validating and rejecting propositions that articulate facts and norms within that field. Thus, although subject knowledge has...propositional knowledge as a central feature, it is misleading to think of it in a way that ignores the practical knowledge or know how necessary to maintain the subject as a living entity” (p.310)

But even armed with this definition of subject matter knowledge, Winch notes that it’s important to be aware that even the nature of a subject may itself be a topic of debate within the subject:

“There may be controversy about its aims, its extent and relationships with other subjects and its mode of inquiry. Very often these are conceptual debates concerning how the subject is to be understood. For those who claim a more than superficial acquaintance with the subject, it is a reasonable expectation that they have some grasp of these debates” (p.310)

This awareness is cultivated in the two required courses previous to EDUC 702– EDUC 700 and 701, or “Curriculum Development and Action Research” and “Conducting and Writing a Review of Educational Research,” respectively. Even here, a philosopher-in-residence could help teacher graduate education candidates explore the foundations of action research, the formulation of their research questions, and methodological issues concerning data collection and analysis, as

well as facilitate teacher understanding of the key terms, theories, and concepts which those teachers intend to draw on to provide direction for their research and to help make sense of the data they collect.

Winch believes that having a clearer or deeper grasp of these issues is especially important for teachers because such an understanding will have an impact on curriculum design, lesson planning, and pedagogical interventions in the classroom. He adds:

“But classroom teachers...need to interpret the curriculum to design schemes of work and lesson plans, but they also need to be able to contribute to debates about curriculum design and reform and need, therefore, to understand debates about the nature of the subjects that they teach” (p. 310).

Winch makes a case for philosophy in teacher education—and therefore, I argue, for a philosopher-in-residence uniquely situated to facilitate it—by arguing for the need for a conceptual framework and an eye for the philosophical issues within the subject that one teaches. But Winch notes another area in which philosophy, and therefore a philosopher-in-residence, can play an important role:

“Once one moves to consider empirical research into how learning takes place and what are effective methods of teaching, it might be thought that messy issues of contestability are left behind, with nothing more than easily digestible research results left to find and, once found, to put into

effect. This, however, is far from the case: the findings and interpretation of empirical research, let alone the use that is made of it, are often contestable” (p. 311).

Because Moravian College’s teacher graduate education program operates within an action research framework that involves just this type of analysis of educational research and its applicability to their practice, a philosopher-in-residence could be of particular value here. As Winch tells it:

“If the aim of teacher education is to develop individuals capable of making professional judgements, they cannot simply be taught recipes derived from the research, even when we make the generous assumption that the research is capable of providing a clear and unambiguous guide to action. But if we are to ask teachers to use the research to make their own judgments, it cannot be enough to expect them to derive their knowledge of findings from secondary sources alone. Secondary sources frequently give over-simple, inaccurate and partial accounts and do not fully present the designs and methods used. Without access to the primary material, it is not possible to make judgments about quality and value. For this it is necessary for teachers to understand the basic categories for understanding and evaluating empirical research. They need to distinguish between knowledge and belief and between truth and justification. They need to understand the difference between justification and proof and between

hypothesis and test, not to mention between corroboration and refutation. In short, they will need to understand basic concepts in the Philosophy of Science and also, although there is not the space to develop the argument, the Philosophy of Social Science” (p. 311).

While EDUC 700 and 701 are designed to cultivate this kind of understanding among the teacher graduate education candidates via weekly classroom lecture and related assignments, I would argue that the addition of a philosopher-in-residence, especially someone who has been through Moravian’s graduate education program, would not simply add marginal value to the program but is in fact critical to such an understanding among teacher graduate education candidates. As Winch notes:

“The need for philosophical study is not an alternative to empirical study but complementary and, indeed, a prerequisite for understanding, at the appropriate level of depth, the principles underlying empirical research in education...The role of Philosophy on this view is not that of an underlabourer clearing the ground prior to empirical educational investigation, but a critical friend, whose sensibility is present at all stages of empirical enquiry into education, including its interpretation and application” (p. 312).

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I noted in the beginning that there is a vital place for a philosopher-in-residence in a Master's degree program in education. I think this is especially true of one that operates within an action research framework because, as Bridges (2003) writes:

“Not only does action research itself depend on all sorts of philosophical premises for its own rationale, but, properly conceived...it also requires its practitioners to reflect on their own educational philosophies as well as to enquire empirically into the consequences of their actions” (p. 182).

Furthermore, Bridges claims:

“Action research is indeed a process engaged in for the purpose of realising one's educational values, though it will also be a process which constantly throws those values into question and makes us reconsider them...We probably do not even fully understand our educational values until we have seen them implemented or seen the conflicts which arise in practice between different principles to which we ascribe in general abstract terms. We can come to understand our philosophical principles differently by seeing them realised in practice, and hence experience can come to change the principles we hold as well as being informed by them” (p. 190).

While this kind of reflective practice is certainly valuable, Bridges also argues that:

“Action research is not just about solving problems but about generating new problems (cf. Winter, 1987, 1989): about seeing classrooms differently; developing new awareness of the educational values which you want to realise and then having to re-examine them because experience has presented unexpected challenges to them; constructing, testing, re- examining and then reconstructing one’s repertoire of professional knowledge and skills – and all of this seems to me to be very close to what in its more systematic forms one might recognise as philosophy of education” (p. 192).

Bridges concludes that “the action researcher is...a philosopher in the classroom” (p. 192). I believe this is accurate and, furthermore, that the best way to cultivate this identity would be through the guidance of a full-time philosopher in residence in the graduate education department, especially an “insider” who has been through the program, and who would be intimately connected with it going forward and possibly involved in growing and refining it.

NEXT STEPS

When I was deciding on a research question for my action research thesis, Joe Shosh suggested that an exploration of my role as a philosopher-in-residence in the reflective practice seminar of EDUC 702 would be fruitful because that course contains the most philosophically-minded texts in the whole program and because, as he noted at the time, “they're not just read to be read, but in an action research context; so what new action do you take as you look at your own practice through these lenses” (Shosh, personal communication, 2017). So just as my participants contemplate the next steps they should take in their practice at the conclusion of their action research studies, I contemplate mine.

But as I've noted throughout this thesis, I don't really have a practice. I didn't have a practice before my action research study either, because I had never been a philosopher-in-residence before, and I had no formal role in Moravian College's teacher graduate education program. And, as my professor in EDUC 700 noted:

“I'm not sure you agree with my critique that your earlier iteration of research questions were not amenable to action research. This project is ultimately your own, and I remain open to thinking about how to make this work productive given your particular desires” (Gleason, personal communication, 2017).

Whether or not my work in EDUC 702 can properly be called action research is an open question. As Rowell, Bruce, Shosh, & Riel (2017) observe, the “variety of geographic, cultural, professional, intellectual, community-based, and sociopolitical contexts in which action research, in all its many forms, is conducted is now vast,” and that they therefore “take an inclusive view of what counts as action research” (p. 5). The authors go on to describe a large range of action research that includes “participatory action research, critical participatory action research, living theories, action learning, emancipatory action research, informal action research, and collaborative action research, among others” (p. 6).

However, if I were given the opportunity to play a formal role in a teacher graduate education program such as the one at Moravian College, this is what I envision.

Coursework.

The current program of coursework in the teacher graduate education program at Moravian College includes three required courses and four thesis courses, combined with a number of electives. The required courses are EDUC 500, Teacher as Inquirer; EDUC 506: Teacher as Researcher; and EDUC 508, Teacher as Evaluator. The thesis courses consist of EDUC 700, Curriculum Development and Action Research; EDUC 701, Conducting and Writing a Review of Educational Research; EDUC 702, the Reflective Practice Seminar where teachers conduct their action research studies; and EDUC 704/705, where

teachers report research findings in a final thesis under the guidance of a thesis advisor.

In EDUC 500, teachers are introduced to current issues in inquiry-based approaches to teaching and learning, with an emphasis on developing essential questions related to their own effectiveness in the classroom. This course prompts teachers to adopt an inquiry stance toward their practice, which is the beginning of the reflection component of action research. In EDUC 506, teachers get a taste of action research via an introduction to its methods and strategies, with an emphasis on identifying and designing appropriate methods for collecting, organizing, displaying, analyzing, interpreting, and summarizing qualitative and quantitative information. EDUC 508 prepares teachers to properly assess the results of their action research studies by exploring how to select, administer, and interpret assessment instruments in an informed and responsible way.

I noted previously that engagement with philosophical traditions and texts has to come earlier in the program, for reasons of background knowledge and context. At a minimum, I'd prefer that the program offer a course called, for example, "Teacher as Philosopher" in the required courses part of the program so that candidates can get that proper background and understanding of the various philosophical perspectives before they settle on a research question to pursue. The syllabus of this course would be coordinated with the syllabi of the other courses, and would include an introduction to philosophy in general, to the history of

philosophy but also its practice—what do philosophers do and how do they do it; a thorough introduction to concepts such as reflective practice and its philosophical traditions and foundations as well as social foundations theory.

The Philosopher's Pedagogy.

Within such a course as “Teacher as Philosopher,” as well as throughout all the required and thesis courses, I would adapt The Philosopher’s Pedagogy as developed by Amber Makaiau and Chad Miller (2012). Their pedagogy requires a set of six interconnected educational commitments for teachers; for my purposes, the main commitment I would emphasize is that a “teacher should hold, with Dewey, the view that philosophy is the general theory of education.” This idea is from Dewey’s *Democracy and Education*, where he writes:

“The educational point of view enables one to envisage the philosophic problems where they arise and thrive, where they are at home, and where acceptance or rejection makes a difference in practice. If we are willing to conceive education as the process of forming fundamental dispositions, intellectual and emotional, toward nature and fellow men, philosophy may even be defined as the general theory of education” (Dewey, 1916, p. 383).

This general commitment would be realized in the following way.

In my Research Narrative, I recounted my correspondence with Makaiau and Lukey and their study, “A Philosopher's Pedagogy: A Three-Part Model for

School Betterment” (2013). While their study is geared toward the K-12 classroom, I believe their three-part model also jibes well with the role of a philosopher-in-residence in a teacher graduate program such as the one Moravian College offers. They found that an “educative experience,” which for them was a formal learning experience like a university course or professional development class that required teachers to read academic literature and practitioner research related to the philosopher’s pedagogy, experience the philosopher’s pedagogy first hand by participating in class activities, and see the philosopher’s pedagogy modeled by their instructor—combined with a community of professional inquiry and mentoring from a philosopher-in-residence—became a viable alternative to more traditional professional development models.

The educative experience I envision would not be a single, discrete event but rather a continuing engagement with relevant philosophical texts, rigorous dialogue, and extensive reflection beginning with “Teacher as Philosopher” and extending throughout all the required and thesis courses in the teacher graduate education program. EDUC 702 already essentially comprises a community of professional inquiry; my proposal would just be extending that aspect all the way back through the initial courses of the program. Mentoring by philosopher-in-residence would occur throughout the entire program as well. The role of a philosopher-in-residence in this regard would be akin to a expert tutor, or a

“master craftsman” in an apprenticeship—something I know about first hand from my previous career.

In order to be a full-fledged instructor at The Seeing Eye, you have to go through an intensive three-year apprenticeship that involves daily one-on-one direct instruction in dog handling and student teaching from a veteran Guide Dog Mobility Instructor, numerous readings in both dog behavior as well as the anatomy and diseases of the human eye, and as many observations of seasoned Guide Dog Mobility Instructors training dogs and teaching blind students both on campus and in the field as is humanly possible. An overarching goal throughout the apprenticeship is for the apprentice to gradually gain more autonomy so that he is able to work independently with both dogs and students.

After 11 years—and, really, sometime before that—I was an expert Guide Dog Mobility Instructor. How do I know? Because my apprenticeship had all the hallmarks of expertise development through deliberate practice under the tutelage of the kind of “virtuous tutor” that Steutel and Spiecker (2004) recommend. Also, in an apprenticeship setting, the tutor provides examples of and models the behavior as well as theoretical explanations behind each practice.

My apprenticeship had exactly that. All the experiences I had during my three years were as carefully selected as could be, with an eye toward developing my mental representation of guide dog mobility, even if I didn’t know that that was I was doing at the time—at least not in that language. According to Ericsson

(2017), mental representations are the key to developing expertise because they “help us deal with information: understanding and interpreting it, holding it in memory, organizing it, analyzing it, and making decisions with it” (p. 66).

Additionally, Ericsson says, “expert performers use mental representations to improve their performance: they monitor and evaluate their performance, and, when necessary, they modify their mental representations in order to make them more effective. The more effective the mental representation is, the better the performance will be” (p. 76).

In every training session I had with my dogs (or with my blind students and their dogs) my apprentice supervisor was there to nudge me just beyond my comfort zone while making sure I understood the reasons for this or that action. That's the ultimate value of a “virtuous tutor” or teacher—someone who points out the drawbacks of certain actions as well as the benefits of others, an advantage that's just not available to a novice who is simply engaged in trial and error on his own. In this way, the tutor helps to coordinate deliberative understanding with intuition development.

*

I believe that structuring Moravian's teacher graduate education program in this way, utilizing a philosopher-in-residence as an expert tutor in an apprenticeship-like setting would accomplish the kind of enhanced reflection on teacher graduate education candidate practice that Moravian College has

envisioned. Further, I believe this restructuring is merely the making explicit of what is philosophically implicit in Moravian's existing program. As Dewey noted:

“What a philosophy of education can contribute is range, freedom and constructive or creative invention. The worker in any field gets preoccupied with more immediate urgencies and results. When one begins to extend the range, the scope, of thought, to consider obscure collateral consequences that show themselves in a more extensive time-span, or in reference to an enduring development, that one begins to philosophize whether the process is given that name or not. What is termed philosophy is only a more systematic and persistent performance of this office”
(Dewey, 1929, p. 57).

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APPENDIX A
Participant Consent Form

Teacher Participant Consent Form

January 2017

Dear [teacher-researcher],

As our research group's philosopher-in-residence, I have chosen to study the observed and reported behaviors and experiences of my fellow teacher-researchers as they implement their own research regarding *The Leader in Me*. I have chosen to study how such a role might aid you and the other teacher-researchers in implementing *The Leader in Me* in your classrooms. I am interested in learning how your implementation of *The Leader in Me* shapes your students' character and how they may be engaged in deep, critical reflection about the nature and purpose(s) of the 7 Habits.

This study will take place from January through May. I plan to gather data through observations, surveys, and interviews of and frequent discussions with you and our fellow teacher-researchers. As you know, the information I gather may potentially be part of our collaborative book about the influence of *The Leader in Me* in schools throughout the Lehigh Valley.

You may choose at any time not to participate in this study. There are no anticipated risks for those who choose to participate. You can contact me with any questions at junowalker@gmail.com or by phone at (973) 769- 1252. My faculty sponsor is Dr. Joseph Shosh. He can be contacted with any questions or concerns at Moravian College by phone at (610)861-1482 or by e-mail at joshosh@moravian.edu. Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

Steve Neumann
junowalker@gmail.com

I hereby confirm that I have read and understand this consent form. Additionally, I agree that to participate in the study and know that at any time, I may choose to remove my myself as a research participant.

Signature of Teacher Participant

Date

APPENDIX B
Final Survey

Neumann EDUC 702 Study Participant Survey

* Required

1. Email address *

.....

2. Name *

.....

3. Email

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4. Why did you choose Moravian College for your Master's degree? *

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5. Have you ever taken any type of undergraduate course in philosophy before beginning your Master's coursework at Moravian College? If yes, please describe the course. *

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6. Before EDUC 702, were you familiar with any philosophical foundations or traditions of teaching, learning, or education in general? If yes, please describe. *

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7. Have you ever read any works or parts of works by John Dewey, Paulo Freire, or Lev Vygotsky, specifically, before EDUC 702? If yes, please indicate which texts *

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8. Did you find that reading and reflecting on the philosophical texts in EDUC 702 was beneficial to your action research study? Please indicate why or why not.

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9. Did you find that reading and reflecting on the philosophical texts in EDUC 702 was beneficial to your teaching practice in general? Please indicate why or why not. *

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10. If you believe reading and reflecting on philosophical texts in EDUC 702 has been beneficial to your action research study specifically or your teaching practice in general, please indicate how the experience might be improved in the future, and what role you think a philosopher-in-residence might play in that experience. *

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Send me a copy of my responses.

APPENDIX C

Philosophy of Education Inventory

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION INVENTORY (Zinn, 1996)

Each of the 15 items on the Inventory begins with an incomplete sentence, followed by five different options that might complete the sentence. Underneath each option is a scale from 1 to 7. To complete the inventory, read each sentence stem and each optional phrase that completes it. On the 1-to-7 scale, select the number that most closely indicates how you feel about each option. The scale goes from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with a neutral point (4) if you don't have any opinion or are not sure about a particular option.

Continue through all the items, reading the sentence stem and indicating how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the options. Please respond to every option, even if you feel neutral about it. There are no right or wrong answers.

As you go through the Inventory, respond according to what you most frequently or most likely do. If it helps you to respond more easily, you may want to focus on a specific course that you teach. If you do focus on a particular course, choose one that you feel most comfortable teaching--one that you think best reflects your preferred way(s) of teaching.

[Continue »](#)

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