

Inquiry and growth: The dance of teaching and learning

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Abstract

The notions of 'growth' and 'inquiry' are central in the Philosophy for Children movement. Phil Cam's writings on these concepts clearly map their close connection and, in the process, raise further questions for teachers of philosophy on curriculum content and the management of inquiry itself. With reference to the senior secondary context, I show how Cam's exposition points to the teacher's significant role, not only in the management of inquiry, but also in his or her participation as a learner in the process. Furthermore, this learning goes beyond academic and pedagogical dimensions to ones involving personal development and character. In conclusion, I suggest that recognition of this deeper dimension of teacher quality is particularly needful today.

Key words

epistemic virtues, growth, inquiry, teacher quality, values

Part 1: Introduction

Our classroom experience presents us with a continuing discovery, that productive teaching and learning almost invariably improves student behaviour and well-being. Phil Cam's explication of the writings of Pragmatist philosophers, especially John Dewey, of what constitutes good thinking, offers a rich conceptual map to account for the psychological intuition above. His work shows how productive teaching and learning can enhance students' self-esteem by involving them in a process that is highly energetic, self-involving and dialectical at multiple levels of interaction.

In the core ideas of the Philosophy for Children movement (hereafter referred to as P4C), the notion of growth is central. Derived from the educational philosophy of John Dewey, Cam shows how different dimensions and levels of growth identified by Dewey can be realised in philosophical work with children (see, for example, Cam 2006; 2008). Far from serving merely as a biological metaphor of endogenous development (Dearden 1972), 'growth' in the P4C context is conceived of as the outcome of a process of active and challenging activity that is carefully managed by the teacher to engage learners and to extend them at different levels: intellectual, social and personal. As we shall see, Cam's discussion of the process encourages clear thinking on various facets of teaching and learning which can, in turn, help to monitor our practice and provide further direction regarding curriculum content, classroom management as well as teacher quality. With reference to Cam's writings on the nature of inquiry, the growth developed by the process, and the particular context of the senior secondary classroom, each of these aspects of philosophical inquiry will be discussed.

Not unlike other subject disciplines, the philosophy curriculum content needs to be debated and justified and, like classroom management, must be sensitive and wise to context. Further, both curriculum and management call upon the teacher's capabilities in substantial ways in the senior secondary teaching of philosophy. Besides the professional capabilities which are normally acknowledged—academic and pedagogical—I wish to suggest that there are essential character traits and interior qualities, recognition of which is particularly needful for our notion of teacher quality today. In particular, Cam's endorsement of Ann Sharp's rich and ambitious concept of growth through Community of Inquiry (henceforth referred to as COI), brings the teacher's presence to the fore as inquiry in that context is clearly seen to call upon his or her values, character traits and own openness to learning and growth (Cam 2017).

Part 2: COI and growth: Insights from the Pragmatist tradition from John Dewey to Ann Sharp

Through Phil Cam's writings on the area of P4C, we have been introduced to the Pragmatist tradition of philosophy from which the movement has drawn its ideas, especially on the nature of good thinking and the implications for education. As well as presenting his case for John Dewey's continuing relevance to education (Cam 2008), Cam has also paid tribute to the work of the late Ann Margaret Sharp for pre-

eminently translating the Pragmatist notion of evidence-based enquiry into ‘the educational reality of the Community of Inquiry’ (Cam 2017). As noted above, these accounts of inquiry instructively map the features which contribute to student learning, well-being and growth.

For Dewey, ‘all which the school can or need do for pupils, so far as their minds are concerned ... is to develop their ability to think’ (cited in Cam 2008, p. 31), for it is thinking that gives meaning and vitality to what is learnt and frees the individual from being ‘at the mercy of his routine habits.’ Cam sets out this conception of inquiry as a coherent process reflecting a chain of connections between thinking and inquiry, inquiry and experience, and experience and education. In citing Dewey’s (1966) depiction of thinking as ‘active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and further conclusions which it tends’ (cited in Cam 2008, p. 32), Cam points out the care and depth of the self-involving engagement which occurs. Far from being neutral and detached, inquiry demonstrates the learner’s ownership of the process. Neither is it random and accidental, for the teacher ensures that it is a ‘regulated pattern of activity’ (Cam 2008, p. 34) which is thorough in its processes.

Beginning with a ‘problematic state of affairs’, the thinker is presented with something to work out—a challenging idea, conflicting possibilities, unexpected consequences or untoward symptoms. While this invites spontaneous engagement from the inquirer, the teacher is at work to connect the process to student experience, involving ‘the act of variously articulating or constructing connections that are implicit within our experience.’ Implicit also in Dewey’s account is the happy outcome of the process because it is ‘intelligent learning ... that employs and rewards mind’ (Cam 2008, p. 32). Cam’s depiction of inquiry accounts for its capacity to capture student interest and deliver rewards—from puzzlement, challenge and discomfort—when a sense of conceptual fragmentation becomes for the inquirer, the sense of a ‘unified whole’ (Dewey 1938, p. 105, cited in Cam 2008, p. 34).

The highly engaging nature of the experience of inquiry is further illuminated by Cam’s exposition of Ann Sharp’s philosophy of the classroom (Cam 2017, pp. 29-37.). It is to Sharp that he gives credit for translating the philosophical movement of Pragmatism into the educational reality of the classroom, and of COI in particular. This includes the nature of inquiry which Sharp richly elaborates, and the nature of philosophical content that is the object of inquiry. In his tribute to Sharp’s significant

contribution to the educational philosophy underpinning P4C, Cam shows how her extension of the tradition issues in a holistic and ambitious vision of education. For, while in prioritising inquiry and evidence-based thinking, Charles Peirce and John Dewey regarded it as a principle to be carried into everyday life, Cam notes how Sharp extends the same idea into her conception of COI (Cam 2017, p. 29). Her elaboration of the dialogical and collaborative processes that inquiry involves, and its effect on learners, certainly reveal the central role of the teacher, beginning with judgements about curriculum content.

For Sharp, COI is intrinsic to the self-development of learners, not only intellectually, but also socially, emotionally and morally. It is therefore not surprising that her notion of philosophical content is not a narrowly academic kind. Indeed, Cam suggests that it aligns with the Pragmatist philosopher Richard Rorty's notion of philosophy, both in method and content. It is a broad view of philosophy as an ongoing non-instrumental conversation, a 'Socratic conversation ... which is its own end' (Rorty 1982, p. 172, cited in Cam 2017, p. 30). Indeed, Sharp saw education as having a profound effect on students because it is bound up with personal fulfilment, growth, meaning and sociality (Cam 2017, p. 30). Cam notes also that this vision of education deliberately recalls Dewey's view of inquiry as 'one of continual reorganising, reconstructing, transforming' (Dewey 1966, p. 50, cited in Cam 2017, p. 32). For Sharp, it is COI that enables this process and realises the goal of continuing and dynamic growth, by giving learners the tools, the learning habits, to reorganise, reconstruct and transform experience. These tools and habits ensure rigour and self-correction and are, for that reason, demanding on the self.

The promotion of these qualities of thinking reflect Dewey's democratic ideal and vision of free society which, as Cam explains, involves 'the conscious sharing of varied and numerous interests and ... with free association and interplay' (2017, p. 31). However, he further observes that, to these political values, requiring the cultivation of a public self, Sharp adds a moral dimension, arguing that the 'commitment to freedom, open debate, pluralism, self-government and democracy' is sustained by values and dispositions, such as 'respect for persons, tolerance, communal deliberation, mutuality, dialogue and compassion' which she saw as not only 'educationally essential' (Cam 2017, p. 33), but essential also to realising Dewey's community. The transformation of selves as knowers who think with care, autonomy and self-confidence adds a 'moral and political cast' to the conceptualisation of the COI which distinguishes it from what Cam identifies as

Matthew Lipman's more intellectual depiction (Cam 2017, p. 33). This ambitious conceptualisation is centred on the development of the self.

'... the ego into perspective': COI and development of the self

Sharp's views of inquiry and of the growth of learners continue to reflect 'expressions of her Pragmatism' (Cam 2017, p. 33), especially her view of the self 'as a social construct that we build for ourselves—with the help of others—from our infancy.' This is a process that involves 'endless transformation' through 'self correction', a challenge that is presented by the breadth and range of philosophical dialogue within the COI (Sharp 1996/2017, cited in Cam 2017, p. 33). In that context, students become aware of others, their thinking and the reasons they give for the beliefs that they own. Such dialogue within the COI is scaffolded by an implicit and growing respect for the authority of reason and indeed, for the preconditions of rational conversation. It is within this carefully managed pedagogical context that students feel safe to listen attentively to others, to 'concede the implications of their own opinions' (Cam 2006, p. 176) and, in the face of good reasons, to affirm, adjust or correct their own ideas. This worthy and ambitious goal obviously presents challenges for both teachers and learners.

With reference to notions of self development found in GH Mead and Charles Peirce's writings (George Herbert Mead 1934; Charles Sanders Pierce 1877; 1935-58), Cam shows that for growth to arise from inquiry, such 'dialogue' within the self is required. This relies on a person's ability to observe themselves, so as to respond to themselves as if to another (Cam 2017, p. 34), whether it is in the form of self-soothing, self-clarification, or self-correction. Mead's distinction between the 'I' and the 'Me' focuses the internal dialogue and transformation that occurs. As Cam explains, the 'Me' represents 'the internalised attitudes resulting from communion with others'—forming the 'generalised other' to which the 'I' reacts or responds in affirmation, reflection and learning. When the goal is Sharp's notion of a democratic self, the mutual respect and attentive listening which scaffold the COI become paramount in developing selves ready for what Dewey describes as 'a mode of associated living' (Dewey 1966, p. 87, quoted in Cam 2017, p. 31), requiring, as we have seen, an intellectual and dialogical openness, as well as resilience (Cam 2017, p. 31).

From Cam's account, it is clear that Sharp recognises that such philosophical ideals are only realised through continual effort on the part of the learner, as through tools of inquiry, they are enabled 'to correct error, improve conceptions, subject opinions

and ideas to criticism.’ (Cam 2017, p. 31). For this reason alone, the context of learning and discussion, especially in COI, requires careful preparation and maintenance in which the teacher’s authority itself needs to be transcended by values of mutual respect and underpinned by a seriousness about truth itself.

This account of growth and personal development is an ambitious one! We note the breadth of learning and depth of transformation it suggests. The stress above on continual effort and sustained concern for truth shows an impressive commitment to epistemic virtues. While experience, corroborated by investigation (see, for example, Millett & Tapper 2011) suggests that the achievement is, in varying degrees, realisable, it is one that is nevertheless significant for the individual. I will return in Part 3 to what this implies for the role of the teachers, their capabilities and their own commitment to epistemic values and growth.

That personal transformation occurs through dialogical inquiry is reflected in Charles Peirce’s idea that a person’s capacity to reason relies on the authority of what he termed the ‘loosely compacted person’ (Peirce 1935, 5.421, quoted in Cam, 2017, p. 34) formed from one’s social circle (such as the COI), to whose authority the individual is accountable. As Cam explains, ‘the individual develops by both internalising aspects of that loosely compacted self which is the community and probing and challenging it’ (Cam 2017, p. 34).

Obviously, what goes on in the philosophy classroom and in the self-development of learners differs according to student age and maturity, therefore the foregoing account of vital and profound development has varying implications for younger and older learners. Where senior secondary philosophy is concerned, most teachers would concur with Sharp’s idea of what constitutes philosophical method and appropriate pedagogical approaches, to include such skills as critical reasoning, analysis, evaluating positions, formulating arguments and demonstrating precise and accurate understanding in the representation of the facts. The question of content, on the other hand, requires further consideration and justification, given the stage of development of students at this time.

For senior secondary philosophy students, the question of course content requires formal jurisdictional accreditation on the basis of course frameworks ‘that integrates intended student outcomes, pedagogy and assessment.’ In the Australian Capital Territory, these frameworks are ‘underpinned by a set of beliefs and a set of learning

principles.’¹ However, that prescription also leaves room for course developers to determine such questions as what philosophical content most appropriately and fruitfully promotes growth at the senior secondary level of development; and even the more fundamental question of what content qualifies as philosophy. That second question, in particular, generates different responses from philosophers², and Cam shows how Sharp’s emphasis on the reconstruction of one’s own experience in P4C has raised the concern from some quarters that it may be ‘unduly relativistic and plays fast and loose with the idea of objective knowledge’ (Cam 2017, p. 31). Addressing that kind of concern and the implications provides a helpful focus for our discussion of the senior secondary philosophy curriculum.

The question of content: Capital-P Philosophy and lowercase-p philosophy

While often seen as a preparation for university study, the curriculum of a senior secondary curriculum should not be viewed simply as a less challenging version of what is to come. While academic rigour must be upheld, there are other considerations such as pastoral and student welfare issues, which raise questions about suitability of content, students’ capacity for engagement with material, their stage of academic and personal development, and the needs these engender. Related to these considerations are the broader goals of student development inherent in the notion of education which we have encountered in Sharp’s philosophy of education ‘made flesh’ (see title of Cam 2017). Like other philosophy teachers, I am alert not only to the power of the subject to develop critical thinking, but also to its potential to shape and transform students’ worldviews.

In the light of the above considerations, Sharp’s broad conception of philosophy education provides useful direction for curriculum planning. In addition, Cam’s comparison of her position to Richard Rorty’s distinction between ‘capital-P Philosophy and lowercase-p philosophy’ illuminates not only Sharp’s philosophy of education, but also the design of a curriculum to address the manifold demands and opportunities of the senior secondary context. At this level, the COI is employed, but also adapted around definitive curriculum content under such designated themes as

¹ ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies, Philosophy Course Framework, from 2018. <http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/>

² http://philosophybites.com/what_is_philosophy/ for a spectrum of views on the question from philosophers.

epistemology, ethics, metaphysics, aesthetics.³ Academic content is taught, and indeed, assessed, alongside conversations and reflections which draw upon student opinion and their personal sense of meaning. The two levels of content—academic and personal—are mirrored in Cam's reference above to Rorty's distinction between 'capital-P Philosophy and lowercase-p philosophy'. As Cam explains, the first refers to 'the Platonic tradition ... of enquiring into the essence or nature of such things as reality, knowledge, goodness and beauty—the mainstream tradition in the history of philosophy'. Lowercase 'philosophy', on the other hand, is not academic philosophy, rather, it the 'ongoing attempt to make comprehensive sense of our world and our lives ... a human undertaking that has broad reference to literature and the arts, and indeed to all areas of human undertaking' (Rorty 1982; see Introduction, cited in Cam 2017, p. 30). In line with Pragmatist thinking, this form of philosophical inquiry is pleased to draw upon knowledge outside philosophy to enable learners to understand and reconstruct their own experience within a wider context.

In translating these aspects of Sharp's vision of philosophy education into the senior secondary context, there are at least three considerations to address: the question of what theories, themes and ideas of 'capital-P Philosophy' are to be included; secondly, what supporting material, such as narrative and inter-disciplinary examples, are to be used to illustrate and explain philosophical content and to enable learners to understand and reconstruct their experience; and thirdly, what steps must be taken to maintain both rigour and relevance.

In the courses that we have developed over the years for senior secondary students in the Australian Capital Territory, our view of content has in many ways reflected philosopher David Cooper's view that good philosophers are those who have 'at least one eye out on the human condition' which, he explains, reflects a sense of alienation and tension between 'that intuition of ourselves as one with the whole ... and that [of ourselves] as separate beings ...' (Cooper 1996, p. 61). For Cooper, it is out of this latent tension between philosophical theory and lived experience that good philosophy arises and the failure to address it is not only an intellectual debacle, it is also a human tragedy. Implicit in our endorsement of Cooper's view of philosophy is a degree of agreement with Sharp's view that education should play a part in contributing to a 'fuller, happier, qualitatively richer life.' (Cam 2017, p. 31)

³ ACT Philosophy A/T/M Course, written under the Philosophy Framework, 2016 Edition, Accredited from 2018-2022. <http://www.bsss.act.edu.au>

What educator would not wish that for their students? What this means for content will, of course, have varying application for different stages of a child's education.

Senior secondary philosophy, particularly if pursued by students as part of an ATAR package,⁴ therefore engages in both senses of philosophy. Each builds understanding of a different kind and this is best understood in the light of RK Elliott's distinction between 'academic understanding' and 'common understanding.' The first corresponds to Rorty's 'capital-P Philosophy', being specialist and technical in character, and shaped by the academic debates and horizons of interest. 'Common understanding' describes the intent and aim of 'lowercase-p philosophy' in its 'ongoing attempt to make comprehensive sense of our world and our lives' (Elliott 1975, p. 62). It is more vitally connected with lived experience and the concerns which arise from it and, as such, it tends towards a more synoptic view of things. On the cusp of adult life, senior secondary students seek that more synoptic understanding to make sense of the world, and philosophy as a school subject is particularly well placed to assist them in careful consideration of their values and beliefs, both through critical rigour in inquiry and also through the big ideas in philosophy to build a 'background map' (Midgely 1989, p. 8) of the whole range of knowledge.

Cam's *Thinking Stories* (1997) are highly successful in engaging children in philosophical questions through narrative. As Cam explains, rather than being presented with 'a ready-made body of knowledge to learn', stories 'stimulate within them the same kinds of curiosity, puzzlement and questions out of which the discipline of philosophy arises' (Cam 2006, p. 171). The point about narrative is no different for senior secondary students, but its place and prominence must be considered alongside the question of what content best suits Year 11 and 12 students who are taking philosophy as part of their ATAR package for university entrance. For those who have an eye on university entrance and especially those who intend to continue with the subject beyond school, what, then, is the role of their philosophical education before they begin their tertiary studies?

In the courses we have developed over the years, we have attempted to include the dimension of lived experience and the 'latent tension' referred to above which gives flesh to philosophical questions. For example, ambitious questions explored in the

⁴ The ATAR is a ranking of Year 12 results that measures an overall academic achievement compared with all other final year students in Australia (excluding Queensland). It allows tertiary institutions to compare the overall achievements of all students who have completed Year 12.

Metaphysics unit, including, *Is there a God? What is the meaning of life? What is human nature?* resist easy and reductionist answers and it is to lived experiences that we turn to do justice to the paradoxes inherent in the experience of being human.⁵ Now, while such explorations rightfully encourage references to stories of human experiences, the philosophical questions must retain their focus and priority. However, at times, we may dwell in the narratives and the tensions that arise in lived experience, to properly understand and articulate the philosophical questions which they generate, or conversely, that they fail to address. Sometimes stories, illustrations and tropes come from philosophers and sometimes from students themselves.

Plato's stories are of course a good start. The Ring of Gyges, in Glaucon's case for injustice (Plato, *The Republic*, Book II), for example, continues to engage students, giving them scope to test their own moral intuitions as they construct a response to the question: 'If you found the Ring of Gyges, would it be in your interest to use it to exploit others?' Wittgenstein's talking lion and torn spider's web have also engaged students' philosophical imagination. From a more contemporary context, British philosopher Havi Carel's own story of living with disability has involved students in her notion of 'inability to be', our presuppositions about health and wholeness, and of how to live meaningfully with loss (Carel 2010).

When discussing philosophy of language and the power of language to shape thought and behaviour, we have turned, for example, to the story of Helen Keller (Penn, 1962) to consider how and why learning language had such a significant impact on her personality and behaviour as a child. We have also considered the question of language, thought and behaviour via economics, thanks to the work of the behavioural economist, Keith Chen on the effect of language on saving patterns (Chen 2014). And when students come up with their own stories and examples from subjects that they take, it is a welcome sign that they are making connections between ideas and are actively applying their knowledge, demonstrating, as Dewey would have described it, active, persistent and careful consideration of ideas. And as the ideas take root, students readily and enthusiastically share their explorations with the class in discussion.

⁵ An example of the tension can be found in Roger Scruton's discussions on the question of 'human nature'. He argues for the need to *understand* these experiences rather than be content with reductionist explanations for them. See Scruton (2017a; 2017b).

These are only a few examples of how senior secondary philosophy participates in ‘lowercase-p philosophy’ but it must be added that explorations of this nature must return to the philosophical questions which generated them and, further, that primary sources are an essential component of the content, such as selections from Plato’s *The Republic*, Descartes’ *Meditations*; or contemporary sources such as Raimond Gaita’s *A Common Humanity* (2000) or Martha Nussbaum’s (2009) case for the humanities in education in her essay ‘Education for profit, education for freedom’. These provide varying exemplars, not only of philosophical content but also of argument and voice for students to emulate, or even to critique.

In the senior secondary context, academic content is clearly important for the foundational knowledge in philosophy that students need to acquire, and the exploratory lower-case philosophy is important for the deeper understanding that students acquire of philosophical questions as they connect those questions to the world that they seek to understand. Here, narratives help to flesh out philosophical ideas, as character and setting offer ‘templates’ of different ways of living and being that teenagers look to adopt (Blair 2017). However, academic philosophy remains a vital component of the curriculum, also because it extends students’ imagination beyond contemporary concerns and questions. As RK Elliott reminds us, in the pluralism of ideas within philosophy that addresses the range of human concerns, philosophical ancestors can ‘play the role of liberators’ (Elliott 1974, p. 140) from the paradigms of thought that students take for granted.

Teachers of senior secondary philosophy are therefore involved in negotiating between the possibilities offered by a variety of content and approaches in their teaching. Like teachers of other subjects, they are constantly deepening their knowledge and learning on the job, including on how to motivate students in their delivery of content as they attempt to maintain both rigour and relevance in their teaching. We turn now to their role in the philosophy classroom.

Part 3: Docendo disco: The role of the teacher

Three aspects of the teacher’s role are particularly pertinent to this discussion: content and its delivery, management of discussion, and teachers’ attention to their own growth.

Content and its delivery

Notwithstanding the course and framework direction prescribed for the senior secondary teacher of philosophy, they are required to interpret the descriptors on content in the light of goals in these documents. This calls for the combination of subject competence, care and thoughtful application, as well as collaboration and discussion with other teachers on suitable resources. In so doing, they should address such questions as what is necessary and foundational for students to learn, what is appropriate given their level of maturity, the pedagogical hooks to ignite their interest and also the dispositions and epistemic virtues that are nourished. As we have seen, balance has to be struck in what is taught, but also in how it is taught.

In the selection and delivery of content, teachers should recognise and transcend their biases. Given that we all have preferences (and aversions!) for particular philosophical positions and ideas, content should benefit the students even though choice of content arising from teacher preference and particular expertise may at times also justifiably benefit students.

It should also be remembered that students are likely to be encountering particular content and ideas for the first time, and how this material is introduced to them can be extremely influential. Accordingly, teachers should be fair and judicious in their delivery, clear and rigorous especially if they carry strong opinion on the matter, ideally embodying the virtues that they seek to promote. A further consideration, besides direct teaching and transmission of content, is the management of discussions in the classroom, especially in COI.

Management of philosophical discussion and the teacher's growth

If growth and self-development are to occur, the teacher's role as facilitator is crucial. As noted earlier, Sharp's worthy yet ambitious goal for personal development arising from processes within the COI would be demanding for any person, student and teacher alike. Attention needs to be given to the challenge the process presents for teachers. As Cam reminds us, this requires thorough understanding, indeed, internalisation of the process and spirit of the COI as 'a form of life' (Cam 2006, p. 169). In his discussion of Sharp's view on this matter, Cam draws attention to her poem *What is a "Community of Inquiry"?* (Sharp 1987, pp. 38-39) in which the teacher is transformed by years of engaging students in philosophy

and begins to have a feeling for what it is like to live in such a community. He writes: '[The teacher] can begin to make it a reality for children by combining inquiry-based teaching with collaborative learning to evoke rich interpersonal association and communication of experience that respects the varied interest and viewpoints of individuals, while bringing them into critical and creative interplay' (Cam 2017, p. 4). Effective facilitation requires not only skill but also commitment to the process and the values which frame it.

These skills also extend to pastoral sensitivity in the teacher's facilitation. If, in the process, students are 'learning to put the ego into perspective' through interaction in COI, the teacher must ensure that the knocks to the ego are kindly and respectfully dealt and healed by mutuality and respect. We are reminded in Cam's writings that 'The education of values is of a piece with education as a whole' (Cam 2006, p. 177) and good thinking has a moral dimension, involving a range of epistemic virtues, such as the virtue of 'caring thinking'. Here, teachers need to set the example, exemplifying care in their own thinking, respect for persons, humility and openness, especially when their position is challenged. In other words, teachers must themselves put the ego into perspective or they will stand in the way of growth for others. They must be invested in their own learning through the internalisation of the dispositions and habits which are wished for the students. Besides qualities and epistemic virtues identified earlier by Cam and Sharp, such as caring and sustained thinking, being open to criticism and refining one's position, is the commitment to truth itself and a self transcending concern for it in inquiry.

For philosophy teachers in the classroom, it is of vital importance how they hear and how they respond, and also how class members are guided in that respect. All speakers must be treated with attentiveness and respect so that due acknowledgement of what is said is not compromised by unwarranted bias. At the same time, teachers must nimbly tread the middle path between affirmation and correction, so that learning and growth proceeds.

These thoughts bring home to us the challenge of philosophy teaching. While writings on inquiry and growth in COI have focused mainly on the transformation of the learner, we have also to address how the process draws upon the depths of the teacher's character and his or her own openness to learning and capacity for growth.⁶ If, as Cam reminds us, education cannot be divorced from values, recent

⁶ Rosie Scholl's work is instructive on what teachers learn from the P4C experience in the context of the primary school. She shows how their pedagogy is transformed through critical reflection on

reflections on his writings have directed my attention to the pertinence of virtue epistemology for the philosophy classroom. The reminder from contemporary exponents like Miranda Fricker and Lorraine Code, that ethics and epistemology are ‘mutually entangled’ (Code 1995), provide valuable support for values inherent in COI, but also warnings and direction on how teachers should manage classroom interactions.

The writings of both Fricker and Code on the subject draw attention to the reality of power relations in human exchanges of what people claim to experience and know. Those with more power, for example, for reason of age, wealth, culture and gender, are likely to be given the authority to acknowledge another’s claim. This will at times mean that some legitimate and fruitful ideas are unheard and overridden by others.⁷ The warning that power operates at both active and passive levels (Fricker 2007, pp. 9-10) is corroborated by Code’s idea of ‘rhetorical space’ to refer to the fact that such contexts of human exchange are textured by power structures which determine how, or whether, claimants are heard. In a book by that name, Code (1995) gives accounts which flesh out the implications of this reality to individuals who do not enjoy attention and acknowledgement.

In their concern to nurture the burgeoning confidence of students, teachers will benefit from these reminders and from Fricker’s more explicit warning that a person’s capacity to claim recognition as a conveyer of knowledge is essential to his or her achieving human value. For that reason, when—through prejudice—a speaker experiences a ‘deflated sense of credibility’, a ‘testimonial injustice’ has occurred (Fricker 2007, p. 1) and when the harm goes deep, people can be ‘prevented from being who they are’ (Fricker 2007, p. 1).

In her discussion of how such situations can be prevented, Fricker (2009) refers to Iris Murdoch’s view that ethical relationships are founded on our attentive responsiveness to the other. Murdoch’s notion of ‘unselfing’ (1970, p. 82), involves divesting oneself of ego to attend to the other, not unlike what we hope our students, in some measure, to achieve. Indeed, we are privileged to witness this in the philosophy classroom, in the transformation of our students and of our selves in

practice. See Scholl (2014) Her article also includes useful references to other writings on what teachers learn from their experience of COI.

⁷ Fricker’s uses the well-known Stephen Lawrence case as illustration. She explains its relevance on ABC Radio National, *Philosophers’ Zone*, interview with Alan Saunders, 22 August, 2009.

our interactions with them. That 'unselfing' exercised, for example, in our openness to self-correction noted earlier, must be encouraged and indeed, mentored by the teacher's example in his or her exercise of internal dialogue and critique.

Conclusion

While I have in the foregoing focused on the growth of teachers with respect to their interior qualities, it goes without saying that they learn on the job with respect to the subject of philosophy itself. The experience of teaching also develops the 'background map' of what teachers know, transforming their understanding and their pedagogical competence. Many teachers of philosophy who are fulfilled by their work would agree that, in a real sense, they teach to learn and that this is both a necessity and a reward which sustains them. However, that reward will often go beyond knowledge of the subject to what is learnt on the job about virtue, care and self in the process of inquiry.

The writings of Philip Cam return us to the human face of teaching and remind us of the significant role of the teacher in the development of the young. At a time when the goal of 'teacher quality' is widely held up by educational management as a benchmark for teachers to achieve, bureaucratic descriptors fall short of the relational reality of teaching and learning and in what practitioners and their charges experience. While these benchmark descriptors and criteria for teacher quality, such as those listed by Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership⁸, are inarguable, their focus on compliance to standards dissociates teaching and learning from their everyday, textured locations. In contrast, the traits which educators like Phil Cam and Ann Sharp identify and acknowledge, more justly reflect the deep qualities which are manifested and developed at the coalface of teaching and learning. Within Philosophy for Children and beyond, indeed, for the profession itself, their work is an important contribution.

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⁸ A Common Teaching and School Leadership/Department of Education and Training:
<https://www.education.gov.au/quality-teaching>

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