The need for philosophy in promoting democracy:

A case for philosophy in the curriculum

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Abstract

The studies by Trickey and Topping, which provide empirical support that philosophy produces cognitive gains and social benefits, have been used to advocate the view that philosophy deserves a place in the curriculum. Arguably, the existing curriculum, built around well-established core subjects, already provides what philosophy is said to do, and, therefore, there is no case to be made for expanding it to include philosophy. However, if we take citizenship education seriously, then the development of active and informed citizens requires an emphasis on citizen preparation, but significantly more than the existing curriculum can provide, namely, the acquisition of knowledge and skills to improve students' social and intellectual capacities and dispositions as future citizens. To this end, I argue for a model of democratic education that emphasises philosophy functioning educationally, whereby students have an integral role to play in shaping democracy through engaging in philosophy as collaborative inquiry that integrates pedagogy, curriculum and assessment. I contend that only philosophy can promote democracy, insofar as philosophical inquiry is an exemplar of the kind of deliberative inquiry required for informed and active democratic citizenship. In this way, philosophy can make a fundamental and much needed contribution to education.

Key words

Australian curriculum; citizenship education; deliberative inquiry; democratic education; John Dewey; pedagogy

Introduction

If philosophy improves academic performance, and delivers social gains, then there is no good educational reason it should not receive appropriate funding, institutional support and be allocated a place in the curriculum for the betterment of

all students and wider society. The much-touted studies by Trickey and Topping provide empirical support that philosophy does indeed produce cognitive gains and provide social benefits (Trickey & Topping 2004, 2006, 2007; Topping & Trickey 2007a, 2007b, 2007c). However, philosophy has not been given priority on the education agenda as it is often seen as irrelevant to modern society. Its ivory tower associations, in a decidedly anti-intellectual political climate, contribute to philosophy suffering 'from an image problem, with it sometimes being thought of as a remote and abstract discipline suitable only for a small number of academically-minded adults' (Millett & Tapper 2012, pp. 546-547). Thoughts of philosophers conjure images closer to Rodin's *The Thinker*, motionless, introverted, cold and distant, instead of cognitively able and active members of society. Moreover, within philosophy's most esteemed ranks, Plato himself can be quoted as saying that philosophy is not mere child's play, but rather, serious business. Unfortunately, this attitude is enduring, as Philosophy for Children founder, Mathew Lipman (1993) attests:

> To the report that very young children almost invariably greeted opportunities to discuss philosophy with joy and delight, the standard reply was that this proved that the children could not be doing philosophy, since the study of philosophy is a serious and difficult matter. The recent career of philosophy in elementary and secondary education has been a matter of overcoming precisely these objections and misconceptions. (p. 5)

Arguably, the existing curriculum, built around well-established core subjects (referred to here as learning areas), already provides what philosophy is said to do, and therefore, there is no case to be made for expanding it to include philosophy (see Pritchard 2014). I take the opposing stance, and argue that philosophy is unique in its ability to provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to improve their capacity as future citizens to be able to exercise competent autonomy. Put another way, I argue that only philosophy can promote democracy, insofar as philosophical inquiry is an exemplar of the kind of deliberative inquiry required for informed and active democratic decision-making. I propose a model of democratic education that emphasises philosophy functioning educationally; that recognises the social role of schooling as a means of achieving social reconstruction in which students have an integral role to play in shaping democracy. In this way, philosophy can make a fundamental and much needed contribution to the present curriculum; a view that has been promoted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (2007) in *Philosophy: A School of Freedom*. UNESCO endorses

teaching philosophy to promote the development of critical reasoning and the exercise of freedom, placing emphasis on 'putting concepts and ideas into perspective' through reflection and developing 'each person's skills to question, compare [and] conceptualise', which are requisite for 'an open, inclusive and pluralistic, knowledge-oriented society' (p. ix). As such, philosophy can provide an education that Matthew Lipman (1988) described 'as a form of life that has not yet been realized and as a kind of praxis' (p. 17), toward the development of lifelong learners.

I begin with a broad overview of the Australian Curriculum as an example of an educational environment in which philosophy has the potential to contribute where other learning areas cannot, or do not, offer the same educational force. Much can be learned from examining Australia as an example, for like other Western democracies, such as the UK, Canada, New Zealand and the USA, it is underpinned by a liberal discourse that drives education primarily toward economic concerns, ahead, and often to the detriment, of a multitude of other educational aspirations, included those described by UNESCO above.

The Australian Curriculum

The idea of a nationwide curriculum for all Australian students is not new, and has been on the political agenda at least since the late 1980s when Prime Minister Bob Hawke and the Federal Labor government attempted to achieve agreement from State governments. However, by 1991 the initiative was abandoned due to lack of consensus from state education ministers. In August 2006, it was back on the agenda. The renewed push came from then Liberal Prime Minister John Howard who convened the Australian History Summit, which recommended that Australian History be a compulsory subject in the curriculum for Years 9 and 10 in all Australian schools. According to Howard, the call was a response to criticism of a lack of awareness of historical events by Australian students and the Australian population generally. Due to the defeat of the Howard government at the 2007 Federal election implementation was never fully achieved.

In 2008, a significant change occurred when the Rudd Labor Government established an independent National Curriculum Board. Unlike Howard, who could be described as having a nationalist view of Australia's past, hence his push for Australian History to be included on the curriculum, Kevin Rudd leaned toward a regional and global world view. The Board appointed four academics to draft framing documents to establish a broad direction for the Australian Curriculum in

four core subject areas: History, English, Science and Mathematics, and in 2009 the statutory Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)[1] was established to oversee the implementation of the proposed Australian Curriculum. Many of the reforms that manifest in the curriculum have their origins in the 'Education Revolution' initiative of the Rudd-Gillard Labor government of 2008, which put education at the centre of the 'productivity agenda'. While Julia Gillard expressed a desire to reduce inequity, her primary motivating vision was for 'Australia to become the most educated country, the most skilled economy and the best trained workforce in the world' (Gorur 2016). This somewhat reflects the views of other Prime Ministers before and after her. To Gillard, education was the key to winning a global economics race; a view that has become an obsession in Australian politics.

As it now stands, the Australian Curriculum is a national curriculum from Kindergarten to Year 12 for schools in all states and territories of Australia, and purports to set more consistent national standards for teachers and students to improve learning outcomes for all Australian students. It identifies core knowledge, understanding, skills and capabilities considered to be important for all students as they progress through school. The Australian Curriculum includes seven general capabilities that are key dimensions of the curriculum: literacy, numeracy, information and communications technology (ICT) capability, intercultural understanding, personal and social capability, ethical understanding, and critical and creative thinking. All the general capabilities encompass knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions and are identified as playing a significant role in equipping students for life in complex and changing circumstances.[2] Teachers are required to assess all general capabilities by incorporating them within learning area content with the aim of developing successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens. The trouble is that the aims of the curriculum sit at odds with those of the wider political and economic climate. Further, I contend that without philosophy the aim of developing confident, creative, active and informed citizens, is undermined. Modern democracies need to confront the challenge of providing education that is both responsive to an increasingly complex and globalised world and responsible to the pluralistic needs of students (Burgh & O'Brien 2002). If education is to contribute to the cultivation of democratic

[1] Information is available on the official Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority website: http://www.acara.edu.au/

[2] For an introduction on the role the general capabilities play in the Australian Curriculum see ACARA (n.d.): http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/generalcapabilities/overview/introduction

competencies and values to enable civic participation, governments cannot ignore the importance of citizenship preparation as an integral component of schooling.

Civic participation can be described in two ways: (1) as collective and individual activities reflecting interest and engagement with governance and democracy, and (2) as the quality of the participation with regards to deliberative processes and decision-making. The task of civic participation 'is for better decisions, supported by the public and fostering the increased wellbeing of the population' (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006, p. 173). However, a persistent obstacle preventing students from participating in an education that develops civic participation is the education system itself. Education in Australia 'is constrained by bureaucratic rationality, which not only informs the way teachers approach education, but tends to thwart efforts by teachers and parents who seek democratic reforms' (Burgh 2014, p. 23). Although there have been attempts to include philosophy in the Australian Curriculum, it has been a very difficult task to convince education decision-makers to accept the idea of teaching philosophy at school. In 2009, the Australasian Association of Philosophy (AAP) established a Working Party to promote the inclusion of philosophy in the Australian Curriculum,[3] which subsequently submitted an argument to ACARA.[4] Unfortunately, the submission was unsuccessful.

It is unfortunate that there is a tendency, even among policy-makers who are sympathetic toward the goals of lifelong learning, to relegate education to the task of enabling individuals, organisations and nations to deal with the challenges of an increasingly competitive neoliberal world. They do this to the neglect of immersing people in a continuing process of education that focuses on the development of a learning society, one in which students develop an understanding of the connections between societal values and their own. Such an understanding is essential in successful efforts to deal with dissension and confrontation over matters of public interest, which rely on shared commitments of citizens to provide a context for deliberation and decision-making. Schools become little more than institutions that produce a product that is then sold as education to children and parents. The opportunity is lost to create democratic habits, 'integrated with work and the rest of life that prepare and direct children toward becoming an integral part of a well-informed citizenry' (Burgh 2014, p. 24).

[3] The Australasian Association of Philosophy Chair Graham Oppy with the assistance of Eliza Goddard chaired the meetings. Member of the Working Party were Monica Bini, Gilbert Burgh, Philip Cam, Clinton Golding, Sue Knight, Stephan Millett, Janette Poulton, Tim Sprod, Alan Tapper and Adrian Walsh.

[4] See 'The case for inclusion of philosophy in the National Curriculum', available on the FAPSA website: http://fapsa.org.au/curriculum/national-curriculum/.

To achieve the overarching educational goals that most countries, including Australia, strive for, such as those laid out in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, the curriculum needs to be underpinned by an education aimed at the development of democratic citizens. The Melbourne Declaration, which informs the Australian Curriculum, is committed 'to supporting all young Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens' (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs 2008, p. 13). This requires more than lessons in civics and citizenship education. To be active and informed citizens, students require an understanding of how the curriculum contributes to the development of the requisite social and intellectual capacities and dispositions. To this end, philosophy needs to be reconceptualised as collaborative philosophical inquiry that reflects democracy as a way of life; an inquiry that not only develops students' capacities for critical thinking, but also creative thinking, ethical behaviour, and personal and social capabilities.

Rather than expanding the existing academic curriculum to include philosophy as a discrete learning area, I argue that philosophy has the potential to contribute its greatest educational force as an inquiry pedagogy, insofar as it can integrate the curriculum, not only through the learning areas but through the general capabilities, in which the development and improvement of thinking is first and foremost. Through philosophy as collaborative inquiry students improve their cognitive abilities, increasing not only their knowledge of the learning areas, but also the connections made between all aspects of the curriculum. In support of these claims, in the next section I will note the benefits of philosophy by highlighting empirical studies and applied research that demonstrate that collaborative philosophical inquiry can have cognitive and social benefits as Lipman contended, 'not to turn children into philosophers or decision-makers, but to help them become more thoughtful, more reflective, more considerate, more reasonable individuals' (Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyan, 1977, pp. 69-70; see also Lipman 1988, especially chapters 5 & 6). I argue that not only is philosophy useful, it is an essential pedagogical requirement to the effective teaching of many of the key dimensions of the curriculum.

Philosophy as an exemplar of democratic education

There is ample evidence, supported by many international research studies, on the effectiveness of philosophy in schools (Burgh & Thornton 2016a). According to Millett and Tapper (2012):

> In the past decade well-designed research studies have shown that the practice of collaborative philosophical inquiry in schools can have marked cognitive and social benefits. Student academic performance improves, and so too does the social dimension of schooling. (p. 546)

An analysis of 18 studies by Garcia-Moriyon, Robello and Colom (2005) concluded that 'the implementation of P4C led to an improvement in students' reasoning skills of more than half a standard deviation' (p. 19). Topping and Trickey's studies concluded that the practice of collaborative philosophical inquiry produces increases in measured IQ, sustained cognitive benefits, and clear performance gains in other school studies (Trickey & Topping 2004, 2006, 2007; Topping & Trickey 2007a, 2007b, 2007c). In Australia, recent studies have attempted to show to what degree philosophical inquiry in the classroom has been successful. These studies have demonstrated the potential for collaborative philosophical inquiry to foster pedagogical transformation (Scholl, Nichols & Burgh 2008, 2009, 2014, 2016), more effective learning in the science classroom (Burgh & Nichols 2012; Nichols, Burgh & Kennedy 2015), and the potential for cognitive dissonance during students' experiences of inquiry to be transformed into the impetus for the acquisition and improvement of social and intellectual inquiry capabilities and thinking behaviours across the curriculum (Nichols, Burgh & Fynes-Clinton 2017). The empirical evidence points to the effectiveness of philosophy to increase learning outcomes in a wide range of areas. Lipman's notion of philosophy as a community of inquiry (*viz*. collaborative philosophical inquiry) thought of as a pluralistic community, focuses on dialogue and collaborative activities that 'forms an inclusive cooperative community in which communication and inquiry sow the seeds for democracy' (Cam 2006, p. 8).

Lipman's emphasis on philosophy as a community of inquiry, which draws on the educational theory and practice of John Dewey, expressly puts thinking at the heart of teaching and learning, by fostering good habits of thinking; a tradition that has become known as 'reflective education', in which, not Plato but 'Socrates, most famously, stands at the beginning' (Cam 2008, p. 163). Philosophy as collaborative inquiry is crucial for citizenship preparation and, as I will argue, of all the subjects available, philosophy as democratic inquiry has the greatest potential to actively promote the acquisition of democratic habits. However, as it is unlikely that an upheaval of current institutional practices will be forthcoming, I contend that

educational reform is better served incrementally, as bottom-up reforms are more practical as means to subverting dominant epistemic practices and accompanying social, economic and political agendas. This approach not only regards reform as a social process, rather than dictated by government policy that must somehow be implemented, but it also has an educative potential, insofar as it can provide opportunities for increased participation (from parents, teachers, educators) in the formulation of educational policy. Moreover, this is a pragmatic approach to the integration of philosophical awareness and procedures in all aspects of curriculum, teaching and learning.

> The emergence of philosophy in schools illustrates this well. It indicates a growing willingness of administrators, teachers and parents to challenge the institutional practices of the educational system. It can also be taken as evidence of acceptance by the community, generally, of philosophical inquiry as a model of education. Some educators see the introduction of philosophy in the classroom as a reappraisal of education, others see it as an appealing approach to be integrated into the current curriculum or new curriculum innovations, while others realise its potential of improving reasoning skills or as an appropriate pedagogy for value inquiry. (Burgh 2014, p. 24)

To this end, I will argue that a suitable framework for assessing philosophy as an educational approach with regards to citizenship preparation is to distinguish between what I call 'education for democracy' and 'democratic education'. Whereas education for democracy focuses on the acquisition of knowledge and skills to improve the capacity of future citizens to exercise competent autonomy, democratic education recognises the social role of schooling as that of reconstruction and that both children and adolescents have an integral role to play in shaping democracy (Burgh 2003a, 2003b, 2009, 2014; Burgh, Field & Freakley 2006; Burgh & Yorshansky 2011). I contend that education for democracy serves politicians who have a vested interest in promoting the essentially pre-political conception of citizenship, 'a means for enabling individuals, organisations, and nations to meet the challenges of an increasingly competitive world to the neglect of involving people in a continuing process of education aimed at self-actualisation and a learning society' (Burgh 2002, p. 1). Conversely, democratic education places priority on the development of social and intellectual capacities and dispositions for active and informed citizenship, insofar as it recognises democracy as an educational process and not something to educate toward.

Education for democracy

The desired outcome of education for democracy is an educated citizenry that is competent to participate in liberal-democratic societies, by providing students with a 'sufficient degree of social understanding and judgment so that they have the capacity to think intelligently about public issues' (Burgh 2014, p. 31). I identify four approaches to education for democracy favoured by educational policy-makers and curriculum designers. The first, and obvious, approach is to teach or instil a set of values or promote such democratic values as respect for the institutions of democracy. This approach presupposes a common identity that is congruent with dominant values of the society at the time.

> The assumption is that values can be prescriptively taught through either: (1) a character education approach which identifies the stated values as universally shared values that students will supposedly accept and enact as guides for behaviour, or (2) a cognitive developmental approach which promotes moral reasoning through moral dilemmas or values clarification. (Burgh 2014, p. 32)

An example of this first approach is the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005) which emphasised democracy underpinned by a set of broadly defined values as a body of knowledge, rather than the kind of democracy advocated by Dewey as an associated form of life.[5]

A second approach to education for democracy, often referred to as political education and usually situated in the curriculum as a component of humanities or social studies programs, teaches students to be adaptable and socially responsible contributors to society. To achieve this, students require a thorough knowledge and understanding of their country's political heritage, democratic institutions and processes, systems of government, the judicial system, and other aspects that will assist them to become fully functioning citizens. The assumption is that specific political knowledge can be attained and that such knowledge should be reinforced in schools and, as such, it relies heavily on a normative approach to education, which if not taught critically becomes a model of cultural transmission.

A third approach focuses on political literacy, which lessens the emphasis on political competence, placing it instead on the development of a broad range of

[5] The then Australian Federal Minister for Education, Brendan Nelson, proclaimed that the basic values are intuitive of education itself that 'parents want prescriptively taught. Imperfect though each of us is as parents, we nonetheless expect school to reinforce the values we believe important foundations for life' (Nelson 2004, p. 7).

knowledge, skills and attitudes that are prerequisites for political understanding (Wringe 1984, p. 97).

Teaching democracy or democratic values through values education, political education or political literacy programs inculcates specific political obligations and social responsibilities that students are expected to embrace as citizens. It is an illustration of what Gerard Delanty (2003) calls the governmentalisation of citizenship as a learning process, which tends to emphasise disciplinary citizenship, i.e. learning citizenship entails the teaching of the official values of the polity as interpreted by public officials and citizenship is reduced to measuring competence through formal learning. This is reflected also in ACARA's (2012) definition of citizenship:

> Citizenship can be formally defined as the legal relationship between an individual and a state. More broadly, citizenship is the condition of belonging to social, religious, political or community groups, locally, nationally and globally. Being part of a group carries with it a sense of belonging or identity which includes rights and responsibilities, duties and privileges. These are guided by the agreed values and mutual obligations required for active participation in the group. In the Australian Curriculum citizenship incorporates three components—civil (rights and responsibilities), political (participation and representation) and social (social values, identity and community involvement). (p. 2)

Education for democracy, however, need not be limited to these three approaches; the articulation of critical thinking skills in the context of disciplinary knowledge that informs the learning areas of the curriculum has also been advocated. The aim of this approach is:

> to provide opportunities for students to critically evaluate the principles, values and processes that underlie democratic institutions and systems of governance. Rather than superficial discussion of particular facts, emphasis is on the underlying concepts that those particular facts reflect. The basis of this approach is to develop an active and informed citizenry able to participate responsibly as members of their society. (Burgh 2014, p. 33)

Crucial to this fourth approach is that students develop a sufficient degree of social understanding and judgement to improve their capacity to think intelligently on matters of public affairs. While this approach is a move in the right direction, the underlying idea is that students need to first be 'initiated into the established traditions and institutional practices, and that gradually they could adapt their

ability to think critically to novel situations or challenge some practices that may no longer be rationally defensible' (Burgh 2014, p. 33). Although the educational focus is shifted to the development of democratically minded citizens, the desirable citizen is still characterised by the liberal citizen, namely, an autonomous individual with the capacity to think rationally and to make choices.

A concern over the dearth of critical thinking capabilities in students has not only resulted in a call to increase students' analytic and logical acumen, but it has also re-kindled an interest in the use of philosophy as an effective pedagogy for facilitating intellectual engagement. Proponents have been quick to point to the merits of philosophical inquiry for improving students' thinking that empowers them to transfer the skills associated with critical thinking across the curriculum and into other areas of their lives. However, this conception of philosophy as a teaching method for instilling thinking skills is misconstrued because 'it immediately marginalises the social, ethical, aesthetic, affective and political components that are as integral to the teaching of thinking as the skills themselves' (Splitter & Sharp 1995, p. 3). Whereas an adequate theory of education for democracy cannot avoid the inclusion of critical thinking, it is a mistake to not acknowledge the integral link between philosophy and democratic practice, 'as it is this link that distinguishes education for democracy, whereby citizenship is seen as a set of values, from democratic education which emphasises citizenship as a learning process' (Burgh 2014, p. 34).

Democratic education

Democratic education acknowledges the need for students to have an integral role in shaping democracy, and that democracy is educative; a process, and not something to educate toward. Historically, two models of democratic education have emerged; one emphasising self-regulation and the other the development of communicative and deliberative capabilities. According to the self-regulating or school governance model, schools must embody decision-making structures that facilitate and foster meaningful participation by all members of the school community, so that students will develop as far as they are capable of developing and share in the responsibility for social reconstruction and change. A.S. Neill's renowned Summerhill School is an exemplar of a permissive self-governing school. Neill (1960a, 1960b, 1992) believed that if students were given freedom and self-governance in relation to school practices they would develop good habits and demonstrate the capacity to share responsibility with adults for positive social reconstruction. Few schools have actually practised school democracy, insofar as all functions of school management, curriculum, and the

pedagogical relationship between teachers and students are fully democratised. Currently, there is a diversity of educational approaches among alternative schools, but most are less permissive, leaving administration mainly to professionals with varying degrees of input from students and parents.

It is not evident that freedom and self-governance in relation to schooling are sufficient to foster an educated citizenry competent to participate in democratic societies. Speaking on the notion of participation in school governance generally, Mark Weinstein (1991) has argued that 'children have neither the responsibility for making actual school policy decisions, nor information and deliberative competence adequate to the task' (p. 16), and that expecting children to participate and share the responsibility for school governance is 'contrary to the democratic principles of nondiscrimination and nonrepression' (p. 16). Instead, Weinstein favours the development of communities of inquiry in the classroom, whereby students learn deliberative strategies not through participation in school governance, but by focusing on issues in such a way that enables them to prepare for sharing the responsibility of public deliberation and governance.

Democratic education that focuses on the development of communicative and deliberative capabilities and attitudes has its roots in a pragmatist interpretation of Dewey's educational philosophy, which recognises the importance of education as communication 'where different perspectives are brought into ongoing meaning-creating processes of will-formation' (Englund 2005, p. 141). As Dewey (1916) put it: 'Not only is social life identical with communication, but all communication (and hence all genuine social life) is educative' (p. 8). Lipman (1991) also recognised the integral connection between effective communication, education and social life, and extended Dewey's philosophy of education to his constructivist pedagogy of the community of inquiry, which he argued provides a model of democracy as inquiry, as well as being an educative process. The classroom community of inquiry is, he says, 'the embryonic intersection of democracy and education', and 'represents the social dimension of democratic practice, for it both paves the way for the implementation of such practice and is emblematic of what such practice has the potential to become' (pp. 249-250). I cannot stress enough, however, the importance of Dewey's contribution to the formulation and evolution of this model of democratic education.

> According to Dewey, an idea must be tested and final judgment withheld until it has been applied to the situation or state of affairs for which it was intended. Through reflection and reasoned judgment, the consequences that ensue from

> the testing of ideas are evaluated, and only then do the inquirers establish meaning. (Burgh 2014, p. 38)

The practical testing of ideas is, therefore, essential for the facilitation of the Deweyan ideals of thinking, community, autonomy, and democratic citizenship that it intends to facilitate (Bleazby 2006), and, in turn, essential to Lipman's formulation of philosophy as a community of collaborative philosophical inquiry.

To sum up so far, my emphasis on the educative role of philosophy in democratic education relies on Dewey's (1916) notion of communion, which is present in his educative ideal of communal dialogue as being identical with social life. The school becomes a microcosm of a greater deliberative democratic community that provides opportunities for students to understand the connection between themselves as active members of the community, the school of which they are a part, the greater community, and responsible decision-making. What this reveals is a radical conception of citizenship.

> To convert the classroom into a community of inquiry is to foster in students the capacity to form opinions about democratic ways of life; to encourage experimental intelligence and plurality as a way of transforming or reconstructing society. But it is also accomplished through education as effective communication which is exemplary in communal dialogue. It is an educative ideal that moves between the classroom and civil society. (Burgh 2009, p. 9)

This is in stark contrast to citizenship preparation being mainly the responsibility of a designated learning area, such as civics and citizenship, under the rubric of humanities and social sciences that provides skills and knowledge 'to foster students' commitment to national values of democracy, equity and justice' by developing their appreciation of political institutions and 'what it means to be a citizen' (ACARA 2016, ¶2).

Why should philosophy be taught in schools?

I am now able to answer the question: 'Is there any good reason to expand the existing academic curriculum to include philosophy?' Clearly, there are educational benefits that can be delivered by the study of mathematics, science and other learning areas of the curriculum. However, as discussed previously, there is significant evidence that philosophy increases educational outcomes in terms of both sustainable cognitive and social benefits, such as the acquisition and improvement of

social and intellectual inquiry capabilities and thinking behaviours across the curriculum. In other words, the capabilities and thinking behaviours acquired from exposure to philosophy are transferrable to other disciplines that inform the learning areas of the curriculum: English, mathematics, science, humanities and social sciences, the arts, technologies, health and physical education, and languages. Nevertheless, philosophy's ability to enhance studies in other areas is not necessarily justification enough for including philosophy as an additional learning area in the curriculum.

On the other hand, if the aim of the Australian Curriculum is more than creating the most skilled economy and the best trained workforce in the world to compete with other countries, which the curriculum documents, Melbourne Declaration and related literature illustrate, then a much stronger case can be made for the inclusion of philosophy as an integral component of the curriculum. If we take seriously the claim that '[t]he link between schooling, citizenship and democracy is enshrined in every set of Australian education goals, most recently in Goal 2 of the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEEDYA 2008), which states that all young Australians should become active and informed citizens' (ACARA 2012, p. 3), then citizenship preparation necessitates more than study in a discrete learning area. It also requires not only understanding of the learning areas and how they inform our understanding of the world that impacts on social and political decision-making, but also realisation of the general capabilities in which philosophy is grounded—especially critical and creative thinking, ethical understanding and personal and social capability. This is particularly relevant, as the AAP Working Party noted:

> much work has been done in the pedagogy of teaching philosophy about how to assess more abstract general capacities such as thinking and ethical behaviour. Philosophy actually enables the assessment of these areas where most teachers have little idea how they might assess the capacities and achievements of their students. (AAP Working Party 2009, §4.¶10)

A model of democratic education provides a more effective model for philosophy as pedagogy, in which the teacher's role in facilitating inquiry is multifaceted. As well as being co-inquirer, the teacher is also facilitator:

> The latter role requires teachers to draw on their expertise as members of professional communities (i.e., members of the teaching profession with interests in key learning areas, such as arts, mathematics, science or history). Students come to understand that teachers have subject knowledge, but

> teachers need also be aware that their expertise and the expertise of their discipline or profession is limited, and they must also convey or model this limitation in their role as co-inquirer. (Burgh & Thornton 2016b, p. 173)

This model of philosophy, as transforming classrooms into communities of inquiry, relies on developing effective teacher education programs for pre-service teachers and professional development for qualified teachers to deliver the kinds of teaching and learning required to integrate pedagogy, curriculum and assessment. Philosophy as pedagogy is an educational methodology for teaching and learning across the curriculum. Philosophy has a substantive component in the core concepts present in the sub-disciplines of ontology, epistemology and axiology (values inquiry, i.e. ethics and aesthetics) that are embedded in and link all the learning areas. Philosophy, by its very nature, is open to self-correction as the result of rigorous inquiry, and, therefore, can make a substantial contribution to assessment, both formative (as self- and peer-assessment) and summative evaluation.

As the AAP Working Party discovered and I have shown, there is ample evidence to take seriously a proposal for the inclusion of philosophical inquiry as integral to the integration of the curriculum and meet a variety of curriculum objectives at once.

> By doing philosophy, we can meet curriculum aims from a subject area as well as many general capabilities. For example, by philosophical discussion of justice arising from historical cases, we can meet objectives from history and civics and citizenship, as well as general capabilities of thinking, ethics and self-management. (AAP Working Party 2009, §4.¶6)

For an effective model of democratic education, attention needs to be on the learning area of civics and citizenship, and general capabilities of ethical behaviour, personal and social capability, and critical and creative thinking, and how these connect to the other learning areas and capabilities, to meet the objectives of citizenship preparation. It follows that the philosophical and educational basis for developing the kinds of curriculum materials and accompanying teaching practices that will enable students to explore the core concepts associated with democracy and citizenship needs to take into account the primacy of deliberative democracy (i.e. the development of deliberative and communicative relationships) and to place emphasis on the radical conception of citizenship as a learning process (i.e. citizenship is experienced as a practice that connects individuals to their society, sustained through social reconstruction).

Conclusion

A case can be made that philosophy should seriously be considered as having a significant role to play in the curriculum. However, proponents must avoid the two most common public misconceptions that philosophy is either a remote and abstract discipline that has no place in schools or claims to have superiority over other learning areas, insofar as it can show students how to think in the disciplines that inform the content. Otherwise, this perpetuates an image problem that has severe repercussions. It makes it difficult to communicate with educators and teachers on the importance of philosophy, and subsequently, even more difficult to introduce into education policy.

I have argued that only philosophy can promote democracy, and in doing so it can make a fundamental and much needed contribution to the present curriculum; a view that has been promoted by UNESCO. My concern in this article is for the inclusion of philosophy in the school curriculum, not as a discrete learning area but as both pedagogy and embedded across the curriculum. In the Australian Curriculum, philosophy has the potential to contribute to the general capabilities, key dimensions of the curriculum that encompass knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions, and play a significant role in realising the goals of the Melbourne Declaration to support students to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens. All the general capabilities that are addressed through the learning areas, especially critical and creative thinking, ethical understanding and personal and social capability, can benefit from philosophy. In doing so, I propose the inclusion of philosophy not only as procedural but as substantive content that can engage with core concepts that underlie and unify the other disciplines as well as inform the learning areas that are the province of philosophy only. In other words, what philosophy can do is also allow students to think about what is the core of thinking in each learning area and how they relate to one another.

To create successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens requires an emphasis on citizen preparation, but significantly more than the existing curriculum can provide, namely, the acquisition of knowledge and skills to improve students' social and intellectual capacities and dispositions as future citizens. The model of democratic education I propose emphasises philosophy functioning educationally, whereby students have an integral role to play in shaping democracy through engaging in philosophy as collaborative inquiry that integrates pedagogy, curriculum and assessment. The integral role philosophy plays in

democratic education justifies the inclusion of philosophy as part of the school curriculum, insofar as no other discipline that informs other learning areas has the same educational force.

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