

# SOKA EDUCATION: PRESENT AND FUTURE

SOKA UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA  
ALISO VIEJO, CALIFORNIA  
MARCH 26-27, 2005



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The Soka Education Student Research Project is a part of the Soka Student Government Association at Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, California.

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# SOKA EDUCATION: PRESENT AND FUTURE

## PROGRAM

### Saturday, March 26

| <b>Time</b>   | <b>Event</b>  | <b>Person</b>  |
|---------------|---|--|
| 9:30 – 10:00  | Breakfast   |  |
| 10:00 – 10:30 | Intro + presentation of Soka Education Student Research Project | Dr. Habuki, Mr. Obelleiro, Mr. Høffding and Ms. Kleiman  |
| 10:30 – 11:30 | 2 papers  | Ms. Sanchez, Ms. Park, Ms. Kainuma, Ms. Matsumoto: <i>“A Humanistic Approach to Moral Education”</i><br>Prof. Parkhurst: <i>“Experiential Learning: An Integral Part of the Present and Future Soka Education”</i> |
| 11:30 – 1:30  | lunch   |  |
| 1:30 – 3:00   | 3 papers  | Ms. Ohrstrom: <i>“Actualizing Soka Education”</i><br>Prof. Merod: <i>“Globalism and Citizenship: Private Thoughts”</i><br>Prof. Liu: <i>“Study abroad and being a global citizen”</i>                              |
| 3:00 – 3:30   | break   |  |
| 3:30 – 4:15   | SUJ: SERC   | Mr. Shiohara   |
| 4:15 – 5:00   | Panel Discussion: Wrap up                                       | Prof. Thomas   |

### Sunday, March 27

| <b>Time</b>  | <b>Event</b>                        | <b>Person</b>  |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 11:30 – 1:00 | 3 papers                            | Prof. Saragosa: <i>“Where the Value Creation Meets the Road...”</i><br>Ms. Montero: <i>“The lifelong Happiness of the Learner...”</i><br>Ms. Sanchez: <i>“Makiguchi &amp; Freire...”</i> |
| 1:00 – 1:30  | Break                               |  |
| 1:30 – 2:30  | 2 paper                             | Mr. Kondo: <i>“The Effect of Class Size on Teaching Methodology...”</i><br>Ms. Delalieu: <i>“The challenge of consistency...”</i>  |
| 2:30 – 3:40  | Workshop + break                    |  |
| 3:40 – 4:50  | Panel Discussion: Wrap up + closing | Dr. Heffron (Panel) and Dr. Hays (closing)   |

Dear faculty, staff and students:

This is a historical document. This volume contains the ten papers that will be presented at the “Soka Education: Present and Future” conference on March 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, 2005. This is the first time an academic conference encompassing and addressed to the entire community of Soka University of America (SUA) takes place on this campus. At the eve of the long awaited first graduation, our heartfelt expectation is that this conference becomes an opportunity to reflect upon the past decade of development and achievement and to direct our outlook onto the awaiting possibilities of the future. We hope this conference marks the initiation of a new stage in the development of our university; and it is in this spirit that we have chosen the title “Soka Education: Present and Future.”

What have we accomplished? What is our present state? Where are we heading? Professor Parkhurst and Professor Liu comment on different aspects of the current implementation of Soka Education at SUA, namely experiential learning and study abroad learning, respectively. Ms. Ohrstrom, Ms. Delalieu and Ms. Montero propose various possible changes to emphasize student responsibility regarding political and environmental consciousness as pivotal aspects of Soka Education.

Across the works included in this volume, we find a consistent consideration of the compatibility of Soka’s educational project with its founding ideas and mottoes. Especially in this constituting period, the importance of inquiring into the philosophical foundations of Soka’s existence cannot be underestimated. We are delighted that the participants have decided to take on this task, and hope this conference can further generate a wave of dialogue bridging from theoretical inquiry into practical application.

We would like to acknowledge the invaluable support of Dean of Faculty, Dr. Michael Hays and Professor of Philosophy and Literature, Dr. Alain Vizier, who worked as members of the review committee and advisors; to Dean of Students Dr. Edward Feasel and his staff at Student Affairs for advice and support; to the Soka Student Government Association for volunteering time and resources; to SUA President, Dr. Daniel Habuki, who enthusiastically encouraged us since the dawn of the project; to all presenters who devoted precious time for research and writing for this conference despite having to work on a very short time frame. We also acknowledge Chief Administrator of the Soka Education Research Center at Soka University (Japan) who wrote a paper especially for this occasion and generously made arrangements for its translation into English. Also thanks to all those who in one way or another supported this project. It has been delighting to see the interest and support from so many in our campus community. It is essentially this support that made the completion of this volume and the upcoming conference possible. Finally, we express our appreciation to the founder of Soka Education, Mr. Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and its successors Mr. Josei Toda and SUA Founder, Dr. Daisaku Ikeda for conceiving and keeping alive the spirit and ideas that constitute the foundations of this university; their life and work themselves are the most eloquent illustrations of applied Soka Education.

Simon Høffding and Gonzalo Obelleiro.

## SOKA EDUCATION: PRESENT AND FUTURE

**The challenge of consistency: Human rights consciousness  
at Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo**

Masako Delalieu

Soka Education: Present and Future  
Soka University of America  
March 27, 2005

*“We can feel the common pulse and hear the shared breathing of self and other, of the unseen people near and far whose lives are linked to ours in relationships of mutual support.”<sup>1</sup>*

Soka University Of America, Aliso Viejo, (SUAAV) was founded upon humanistic ideals at a point of history where growing globalization and the progress of high technologies appear to be potential solutions to closer humanity, while also showing their limits. The increasing gap between the rich and the poor and a world plagued by conflicts are still growing concerns. The humanistic values of our university are meant to challenge the prevalent cynicism about the realization of world peace because they dare to promote beliefs that the world has failed – or has been unwilling – to explore enough until now. The ultimate goal of our humanistic values is the human being’s happiness. Talking about our university’s high standard mission, my Core teacher, David W. Chappell, once said that SUAAV should be named the Human Rights

University. Indeed, sanctity of life and human rights are our institution’s core values which are deemed to be more than global: they are universal. Consistently, two of our mottoes are “Be world citizens in solidarity for peace” and “Be the pioneers of a global civilization.” Two of our guiding principles are “Foster leaders of humanism in society” and “Foster leaders of pacifism in the world.” In view of these statements, my professor’s comment made sense. Each one of us may have a personal interpretation of our mottoes, but one clear trait of a global citizen supporting world peace should be his/her ability to think at a global level – that is, at a worldwide scale beyond his/her immediate environment. As Dean Carter said in the community speech inaugurating the opening of our university, SUA’s mission is to help us learning how to create values in our lives, in our communities, and more largely in the world, by “thinking outside the box” (Carter 2). And yet I think it would not be exaggerated to point that the level of awareness on present world issues and ensuing human rights challenges is disturbingly low in our university. The point of this argument is not to criticize for the mere sake of criticizing but I hope I could bring my part of contribution for SUAAV’s present and future on the basis of my own background.

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<sup>1</sup> Daisaku Ikeda on Japanese educator Tsunesaburo Makiguchi’s *The Geography of Human Life*, in “Education for a Sustainable Development”, *Japan Times* of November 22, 2004.

### Background and Hope of Contribution

I have attended French universities where it is taken for granted that students of any field of studies read the newspapers regularly, or take the responsibility to be informed on topical issues out of class, and when relevant, organize actions like discussion forums, petitions or demonstrations. This does not mean that these students belong to specific associations. They do not claim to be world citizens in solidarity for peace or human rights leaders. They are far from enjoying our exceptional life conditions in SUAAB. But even then, they just care about social and world issues as individuals. Discussing about my concerns about specific human rights issues with my university mates or my teachers, sharing our personal opinions, hopes and ideas for the future was a routine part of my student life. Although SUAAB is nearly unknown or related to the Soka Gakkai organization – still perceived as a cult – in France, my friends and ultimately my professors, have placed their hope in our university and show themselves curious to see how we are studying to bring our contribution to world peace. This was for me a gratifying sign of trust, but since I have been in SUAAB, I have to admit that I do not have much to tell them each time they ask me about SUA students' talks or reactions regarding such and such world news or issues, for the simple reason that there is no such debate in our university – at least at a widespread enough level. In this respect, I have felt an immense void in SUAAB because I thought that these discussion topics would be – if not as natural – more frequent in our university than in any other.

### Human Rights

The paradox is that, we, as SUAAB students, enjoy the highest fulfillment of human rights, but on the other hand, our spirits

are singularly disconnected from current world issues and related human rights challenges occurring outside our campus. By human rights, I mean a certain number of fundamental rights ideally meant to protect “all human rights for all” according to French intellectual Rene Cassin (Cassin 1). These are civil, political, economical, and social rights that should be enjoyed by all human beings everywhere, without discrimination on the basis of race, sex, opinion, nationality, and whatever the political regime to which one pertains. These basic rights are intended to ensure decent living conditions for everyone and promote the achievement of each human being's full potential. The goals and essence of human rights are defined in the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) proclaimed by the general assembly of the United Nations in 1948. The passages of the preamble that I think, highlight the connectedness of our university's mottoes and principles with human rights values, are those stating that : “Whereas disregard and contempt for human right have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief of freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people” (...) “ Now, Therefore, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance...” (UDHR 1-2). Like the UDHR was proclaimed as a reaction to the barbaric degradation of humanity during World War II (WWII), Tsunesaburo Makiguchi imagined and



theorized Soka education as a response to a dehumanizing military regime in WWII Japan. The purpose of both Makiguchi and the drafters of the UDHR was thus to restore human dignity by making humanity's happiness an end to any enterprise. In view of the values and heritage of Soka education, we can scarcely claim being prospective leaders of humanism in society or world citizens in solidarity for peace while not facing the current human rights violations in the world and the sufferings they cause to billions of people with whom we share our Earth. We need to think with a worldwide and human-rights perspective if we want to make our spirits and actions fusion with our lofty mottoes and principles.

#### Toolbox

I believe that as SUAAV students, we have at our disposal a toolbox with the greatest potential to achieve our goals. The fact we all came here to unite around the same wish to create a better world with our own personalities and passions is, I think, our greatest strength. Tool number two is the benefit of a unique setting where each one of us is made to feel at home and enjoys rich opportunities of cultural exchange thanks to everyone's combined efforts. Living on a multicultural satellite allows us to feel a sense of human kinship that transcends national boundaries, and the junior year study abroad program is recounted as a unique experience of immersion in different cultures and societies. Thereby, we have the best tools to grow through cultural interactions, learning to adjust to our globalizing world. Besides this irreplaceable wealth, we have exceptional living conditions in a secure environment with abundant material, technological and natural resources to support us in our process of learning. The administration, the faculty and the staff strive to actualize Soka education by making our university a student-centered

institution. The fact that all efforts are focused on the achievement of our greatest potential is in itself the fulfillment of our human rights.

#### Our SUA World and our World

All we enjoy should – ideally – be considered as rights. Yet, on seeing the current world order, it appears that the number of people enjoying such rights is so low that our rights would rather be privileges. SUAAV founder Daisaku Ikeda has stressed the overwhelming gap between rich and poor countries and increasing human rights violations in his 2005 annual peace proposal for the United Nations. In this text where he urges “the peoples of Earth” whom we are, to “declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations”, Ikeda writes that mounting human rights violations and the discrepancy between wealthy and poor world parts are “threats to human dignity” and are “the challenges facing us” that “are clear and inescapable” (Ikeda 2). If we fix ourselves on the world map, we actually appear to be part of the world *minority* that has a chance to live decently and receive education<sup>2</sup>. And among this world minority, we are a sub-minority of people studying in a university exclusively founded on the basis of and committed to humanity's happiness. The fact of studying in a university that promotes global citizenship and peace leadership is a first step to world peace commitment but it does not make us be automatically global citizens and peace leaders. Being a SUAAV student is not an end but it is

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<sup>2</sup> We are the 20% world's population who consume 86% of the world's good. Meanwhile, nearly a billion people were unable to read a book or sign their names as we entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century and 1.3 billion of people have no access to clean water, 3 billion have no access to sanitation and 2 billion have no access to electricity (Shah 1-7)

a precious tool to *become* involved global citizens.

#### A trait of Global Citizenship

Global citizenship involves a lifelong training which requires that we develop what Ikeda calls “inner nobility.” In Soka Education, Ikeda writes that global citizenship is not determined merely by the number of language one speaks or the number of countries one has visited, but by the fact of possessing this “inner nobility” (100). For Ikeda, this expression refers to “people who may never have traveled beyond their native place, but who are genuinely concerned for the peace and prosperity of the world” (Ikeda 100). Likewise, among the qualities that Ikeda points in his 2005 Peace proposal as essential to develop global citizenship, are: “the wisdom to perceive the inter-connectedness of all life and living” and the “*compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy that reaches beyond one’s immediate surroundings and extends to those suffering in distant places*” (Ikeda 2). In order to develop this sense of connection between our own lives and humanity as a whole, the first step would be for everyone to take the responsibility of being informed about present world issues and human rights challenges. This step will allow everyone to think beyond what we all agree to call our SUA bubble. With all the privileges we enjoy, with our mottoes and values, with the tools we hold, and our understanding that peoples’ sufferings in distant places can not be taken as separated from our own lives, we have the responsibility to care about the issues that plague our world and cause humanity’s sufferings. Martin Luther King embodied this spirit as he wrote from his Birmingham jail cell in 1963, as he wrote that he could not “sit idly in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happen[ed] in Birmingham” because “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere” (King 1). If we miss the point of

empathy on which Ikeda and King have insisted, our perspectives are likely to turn narrow and our ideals will sound naïve because committed citizens must know their scene of action. SUA founder has clearly pointed that “ignorance of our interdependence with each others, as people of the world, accounts for failure to develop empathy,” after mentioning that the respect and protection of human rights are necessary elements to achieve a truly fair global world (Ikeda 2).

#### Ensuing Questions and Necessities

So why is it that despite our unique mottoes and principles, SUA founder’s insistence on frontierless empathy, and our well furnished toolbox, our university is still more conservative in terms of human rights commitments than other institutions that do not even claim our high ideals? That when it comes down to care about peoples’ rights violations outside our bubble, awareness and/or reaction is/are missing?

If SUA AV has to become the tower of hope that the founder envisions, then we need to modify the prevailing lack of outreach and discussions on issues happening outside our campus. Whether we will succeed or not in reaching this degree of global citizenship will depend on the responsibility of each one of us. Contrary to what I have sometimes heard here, caring for people’s sufferings in the world as seriously as for our own problems is not a question of being a political or a human rights activist. Had this assumption been true, human rights organizations would not be made up of people of all backgrounds and different fields of studies and professions. Caring for the common problems of humanity, for people who suffer even in distant places is a question of empathy, and this quality is inside each one of us. When most students will be informed about news beyond SUA life and naturally care and discuss about world issues, when raising specific human rights concerns will not

cost a light “you/human rights activist” label anymore, then I think that SUA will start its path as a distinct college of students with meaningful global awareness and spirit. The civic action of being informed to become critical thinking citizens, especially in an age of mass-media where accurate and in-depth domestic and international information become scarce, is therefore an essential step to take if we want to fully actualize our mottoes and principles. We need to create an intellectual, global and world-connected climate in SUA. The mere exchange of each one’s opinions on the interrelated notions of peace, human rights and global citizenship would be a helpful step before we could share concrete goals.

Suggestions: Peace and human rights should not only sound good

For the long-run first, the values and mottoes of our universities and the perspective of hope for the 21<sup>st</sup> century that our donors, ourselves and our founder share should, in my view, compel us to start considering seriously the creation of a research center on peace and human rights studies that would become a center of reference and reliability where individuals, organizations, schools, or other entities would come to seek innovative ideas for peace and efficient human rights implementation. Professors and student searchers of any studying fields could work together to this end. But this project would first require – in the shorter run – students’ willingness to take the responsibility of being informed about current issues at a regular rate. This action is a synonym of *caring about our world*. Regarding the curriculum, a class like Pacific Basin for example, should strive to offer an emphasized human rights perspective along with literary, historical, or economical

perspectives<sup>3</sup>. What could also be considered would be the opening of a class on media-awareness and criticism. Knowing how to handle the media should help us to develop a sense of criticism and adapt ourselves to our mass-media era where the quality of world and social news reports become increasingly flawed, biased or distorted. It think it would also be relevant to incorporate the writings of prominent pacifist leaders like the Mahatma Gandhi, Linus Pauling, and Martin Luther king – among others- as required readings for all students – whatever the class where these readings may fall down. The knowledge of their lives and ideas may serve as sources of inspiration for our own lives and would allow to discard too frequent amalgams and serious misjudgments on human rights and peace activism. The class of Introduction to Peace studies should also be strongly encouraged because it shows the complex implications that are behind such an idealized notion as peace. Ikeda pointed in his last Peace proposal that as 2005 marks the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, “Our most pressing task is to understand the inner forces within the human heart that drive people to engage in the ultimately self-destructive act of disrupting and undermining harmony with the natural environment and other people.” This is exactly what the class of Introduction to Peace studies is about. Outside classes, information resource will be made as easily accessible as possible on campus (See the Model United Nations publication in the cafeteria). A “world issues” discussion table will be set up in the cafeteria so that students could regularly talk about issues they wish to share. We could also prepare and celebrate International Human Rights Day (December 10th) and the Earth day (March 20th) like the local high school and

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<sup>3</sup> This would be all the more relevant as approximately 790 million people in the developing world are still chronically undernourished and that almost two-thirds of this population is in Asia and the Pacific (Shah 2).

colleges. This could be an opportunity to create, for example, an annual forum on human rights that students enrolled in classes of International studies (or other fields too, all fields of study having a highly contributive potential for peace and human rights consciousness) could chose to discuss to ponder upon solutions. Core classes and learning clusters which make the uniqueness of our curriculum, should be opportunities to put more emphasis on our interaction with the community. Then, by meeting more with local universities and the community, we could discuss and share approaches and ideas on specific human rights and peace issues. Such exchanges could help us to introduce a broader diversity of opinions in our university and share our cultural wealth with other students. An official apparel of communication on local events (like workshops, conferences, or

actions) related to human rights and peace issues should be set up in order to replace individual mass emails. Through this system that could be part of the students' government, information would be checked and selected before being sent. Ultimately, the success of our path toward global citizenship will only depend on the individual responsibility of each one of us. It is in your best interest to be aware of the world where you live, in a broad sense.

We need to create and be a generation of individuals who are able to encompass the complexities of our globe. This task requires a deep knowledge of our world. Connect with the issues, the realities and future of the billions of people whose lives are connected to yours. Allow yourselves to know about your global world. Let us become world citizens in solidarity for peace beyond our SUA sphere.

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## Makiguchi's Perspective on Morality in Education

Nobuko Kainuma

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Maria F. Sanchez

Soka Education: Present and Future  
Soka University of America  
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With the emergence of pluralism, a philosophy of moral relativism, and the strict separation of church and state, moral education in the West has become increasingly divorced from academics and schools (Vardin, 2003). Changes in history have posed the important question of *who* is being tasked to provide moral education today, and who or what, if anything, is doing the tasking.

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871-1944) stated that "morality is the principle element at the root of educational theory, which in turn provides the guiding directives behind educational theory." (Bethel, 1989, p. 108) Furthermore, he says "whatever else teachers and educators in general do, moral education is their most basic mission." (Bethel, 1989, p.109)

The purpose of this paper is to propose Makiguchi's perspective on the inclusion of morals in education as an alternative approach to moral education. We will attempt to do so by first defining the major recurring moral education approaches in the past and the

present. Also, we define the meaning of morality and what it means to be a "moral person." Finally, we elucidate what Makiguchi had to say on morality in education and how this perspective can be beneficial in the present.

### The Role of Schools

It is impossible to have a completely value free environment in schools. Teachers and administrators themselves possess different value systems, which ultimately have an effect in the classrooms and school environment as a whole. As Dewey (1959) indicated, even without a program of moral education, every single school has an omnipresent moral atmosphere. We can therefore conclude that school has a significant role in children's moral development and thus societies fundamentally need to understand the importance of addressing the issue of embedding moral principles in schools.

### Morality

The definition of morality encompasses three different domains: moral thought, moral behavior, and moral feeling. Different theorists and philosophers have restricted the idea of moral development and moral life with particular emphasis on only one of these specific domains. We argue that moral life is ultimately characterized by all of these domains, as well as having an objective and "righteous" standard of right and wrong.

### Moral thought

Generally, moral thought embeds the reason or ways of thinking about rules of ethical conduct (Santrock, 2005). However, the main challenge of this approach is that individuals may understand what is right and still do what is wrong (Crain, 1985). In other words, having a highly moral thought may not necessarily motivate highly moral behavior.

### Moral behavior

This domain of morality refers to how individuals behave regarding conventions of right and wrong or one's moral instincts. It has been claimed that moral behavior is regulated by social and cognitive factors. Moreover, through reinforcement and punishment within their social environment, individuals learn which behaviors are considered right and which are considered wrong. People also adopt right behaviors when they have models who behave morally (Santrock, 2005).

### Moral feeling

This domain explains the role of emotions in morality and explains how these emotions develop, thus showing how individuals morally feel. Empathy contributes to shaping moral behavior. For the development of moral

behavior, not only feeling sympathy for others but also having the emotional capacity to put oneself in other people's shoes is important. In fact, current child developmentalists claim that both positive and negative feelings contribute to the child's moral development. Furthermore, when these feelings are strong, they influence children to act according to standards of right and wrong (Santrock, 2005).

### What is a moral person?

A "moral person", we argue, is a person who holds balanced morality in these three domains. A moral person should be able to utilize the morality in his or her daily life. In order for an individual to apply morality in his daily life, he or she should have the capability to grow and to be flexible enough to adjust and readjust himself and his moral standards at all times. Dewey (1959) calls this quality of a moral person as "a new and moving self" compared to "an old, an accomplished self" (p. 172).

In order to be a moral person in today's rapidly-changing society it is essential to have the flexibility and ability to grow and readjust according to each situation in order to make the best judgment. As Kant exposed, "moral persons act in such a way that they could will that the principles of their actions should be universal laws for everyone else as well" (Sommer & Sommer, 1997).

Having briefly defined morality and what a moral person encompasses, we now look into the different main approaches to moral education.

### Character Education

The focus of character education is on the direct teaching of virtues with the goal of "preventing students from engaging in immoral behavior or doing harm to themselves or others." (Santrock, 2005) Through the inculcation of specific virtues deemed

important by the character educators in cultivating sound character, students are taught what behaviors are right and what are not. And the inculcation of virtues happens through the form of habit, modeling, direct instruction, and authority.

Although they vary depending on schools and programs, some of the virtues emphasized are respect, responsibility, honesty, caring, fairness, and courage. Character educators believe that “there are widely shared, pivotally important core ethical values—such as caring, honesty, fairness, responsibility and respect for self and others—that form the basis of good character.” (Lickona, Schaps, & Lewis quoted by Noddings, 2003) Presently, character education is becoming a widespread practice of moral education in schools.

### Hidden Curriculum

In his book *Moral Principles in Education*, Dewey (1959) considers the idea that the teaching methods, the subject-matter and the school atmosphere all influence the moral growth of students. The hidden curriculum has been defined by scholars as the implicit demands of educational institutions which students must follow in order to succeed in the educational system (Ballantine, 2001).

Schools provide education on morals not only through the actual curriculum but also through an informal system of education. This system is based on the school’s value climate, culture, learning climate, classroom regulations and peer interaction. Teachers’ posture, teaching materials, class requirements and reading material all influence the development of students’ character. Rather than a passive phenomenon, this paracurriculum is a dynamic and ongoing dimension of the educational experience (Ballantine, 2001).

### Cognitive Developmental Approach

This approach states that with the development of their moral reasoning, children should come to value ideas such as democracy, human welfare, rights, and justice. The main advocator of this approach is Lawrence Kohlberg (1969). Kohlberg (1969) identified three levels of moral development (preconventional, conventional, and conventional morality); each having two stages, and believed that the development of moral reasoning occurred through a progression of the six stages. He used moral dilemmas and classified children into distinct stages based on their reasoning/justification as to why they agreed/disagreed with the character’s decision. Stressing the importance of social interaction, mainly peer interaction, Kohlberg (1969) claimed that creating moral disequilibrium for individuals was an effective way to facilitate their moral reasoning.

### The Value Clarification (VC) Approach

The Value Clarification is defined as “an approach to moral education that emphasizes helping people clarify what their lives are for and what is worth working for: students are encouraged to define and understand the values of others” (Santrock, 2004).

The first advocators of the VC were Louis Raths, Merrill Harmin and Sidney Simon. Their focus is on the *process of valuing*, countering to the indoctrination of values and the assumption that educators know “the right set of values” that need to be passed on to the young. Through the process of valuing, the VC approach encourages students to achieve a fuller integration of feelings, beliefs, and behavior.

### Conclusion

It is impossible to define a set of values that is applicable for every circumstance; therefore, imposing values and/or directly teaching values is ineffective. All four moral



education approaches shed light on different aspects of morality and through our research, we have come to believe that all of the four approaches are valid and need to be taken into consideration. But as Makiguchi portrays, more important than a specific methodological approach is to acknowledge the vital role that teachers play in the process of fostering moral students. Makiguchi states that "the qualitative difference between educators and noneducators boils down to teachers' direct involvement with exclusively moral values in their value creation. If teachers and educators are to act as role models, then more than anything they are to be model individuals in the creation of moral value." (Bethel, 1989, p.109)

Moral education could be used to restrict and manipulate the students through indoctrinating certain morals. To prevent this, the concept of morality should be flexible enough to keep the focus on the learner's happiness as the center of education. In fact, Makiguchi states that the purpose of education is the happiness of the student who receives the education. According to him, happiness refers to a state of man's life when he is engaged in the process of attaining and creating value (Bethel, 1989).

Makiguchi (1930) stated that the strongest influence on the students in terms of morality is the teachers and the relationships that the students build with them (Bethel, 1989). Therefore, teachers have the responsibility to model the three domains of morality previously defined in this paper. In addition, they must have an objective and "righteous" standard of right and wrong. They must offer guidance, create challenges that promote moral growth and help children see how their actions may affect other people, thereby tapping and nurturing a concern for others that children possess from a very young age (Kohn, 1997).

In order to do this, teachers have to become examples themselves of ideal moral

persons. Whether conscious or unconscious, students learn moral values by observing and modeling examples of their teachers. Thus, children and the teacher have to establish a relation of care and trust (Noddings, 2002).

An important point to tackle then is teachers' education. Is the cultivation of morality emphasized enough when teachers themselves are being educated? How much of an impact does current teacher education have in the development of teachers' moral and ethical skills? Even at Makiguchi's time this was already a concern in the field of education. In fact, he criticized teachers of his time because of their mere focus on the curriculum as the core point in teaching. Furthermore, he proposes a "three-pronged approach" for teachers' education which includes: (1) general scholastics or the curricular studies; (2) preparatory techniques, meaning to acquire experience and knowledge in teaching methodology; and (3) moral cultivation, which he defines as "character development, to foster awareness of the teacher as a role model in personal character, the foundation of the other two aims." (Bethel, 1989, p.118)

Studies regarding the way teachers feel about moral education, specifically character education in public schools, indicate that although teachers are enthusiastic about having components of character education in their classrooms, many feel that there is little consensus of what moral education is and how it should be taught (Murray, 2004).

In addition, many teachers feel that moral education is not prioritized in teacher education curricula (Deckle, 2004). Although we sympathize with the confusion that moral education brings about for teachers, we also feel that rather than trying to reach a consensus of what moral education is and how it should be taught, it is more important and efficient to reexamine the vital role that teachers play for their students as models of morality and improve the quality of teachers.

In this matter, Makiguchi mentions that “[teachers] need cultivation of their moral character no matter what they are to teach.”(Bethel, 1989, p.122) Of course, Makiguchi does not underscore the importance of teachers’ academic background in their subject matter. But he expresses that “teaching is ultimately a moral proposition.” (Bethel, 1989, p. 120) Further, he explains that differently from all other professions teaching is an intricate one because of its endeavor to foster character values (Bethel, 1989). In sum, the educational field needs teachers to become moral persons who, as previously described in this paper, hold and balance the three domains of morality; who utilize morality in his or her daily life; and who have the capability to grow and be flexible enough to adjust and readjust themselves and their moral standards at all times.

In addition to teachers, it has been shown that parents influence several components of moral development such as social orientation, self-control, compliance, self-esteem, empathy, conscience, moral reasoning, and altruism (Berkowitz & Grych, 1998). As Makiguchi,

Noddings (2003) also emphasizes the important role parents play as educators, especially since it is with the parents that much of essential informal and incidental learning takes place. However, parents have the tendency to attribute education in moral dimension to the school. On the other hand, teachers tend to attribute the moral responsibility to parents (Mathinson, 1998).

What we need in order to improve moral education is what Makiguchi depicts as the cooperation of parents, school, and society taking responsibility in the students’ learning process through their daily lives in school and at home.

Daisaku Ikeda (2001), founder of the Soka schools system, calls for a “a shift from viewing education as serving the narrowly defined needs of society to a new paradigm that sees society serving the lifelong process of education”( p.35). As exposed by Makiguchi, the ultimate purpose of moral education should be based on the belief that education is for the sake of the students, moreover, for the sake of the students’ happiness.

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## The Effect of Class Size on Teaching Methodology: An Examination of Williams College's Tutorial Program

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Soka Education: Present and Future  
Soka University of America  
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Soka University of America (SUA) students and faculty have had much discussion about Soka education. The discourse revolves around two main questions: "What is Soka education," and "How do we actualize it?" All our efforts to reach a consensus on the first question would be unproductive if we do not properly address how SUA can actually achieve Soka education. In addressing the second question, content and pedagogy seem to be two important areas of focus. These two areas represent divergent approaches to actualizing Soka education.

Pacific Basin and the Core classes are two examples of actualizing Soka education through a content approach. Pacific Basin is a result of SUA's emphasis on introducing students to a more global perspective. Core consists of a common set of literature read by all students. As mention on the SUA website, "Core explores a range of issues related to the mission statement of the school, including its commitment to such values as peace, human rights, and the creative co-existence of nature and humanity."

On the other hand, learning cluster is an instance of a pedagogic approach to actualizing Soka education. The benefits of

learning cluster have more to do with the independent format of the class than the actual content being taught. Over the past three school years, students have participated in learning clusters for a variety of subjects.

In this paper, I introduce Williams College's Tutorial Program as an iteration of a pedagogic approach to how SUA students can actualize Soka education. The two students-one teacher format of Williams Tutorials offers a unique opportunity for students "to take a heightened form of responsibility for their own intellectual development." In addition, this format helps students and professors form closer relationships. These characteristics of Williams Tutorial help to make education a much more student-centered experience.

### Introduction

Williams College is a small liberal arts school in Williamstown, Massachusetts whose history goes back to the eighteenth century. The school has slowly cultivated a reputation as one of the most prestigious liberal arts colleges in the United States. As evidence, in 2005 US News ranked Williams College first

in the liberal arts category. The school continuously strives to achieve excellence in educational standards. It currently holds an undergraduate student body of approximately 2,000.

In 1988, Williams College introduced a unique classroom format for several advanced courses. They named it “the Williams Tutorial program,” and the classes consist of ten students and one teacher. The format is unique because the students and the teacher do not meet all together on a regular basis. Instead, the teacher pairs off the students and meets weekly with each pair.

The Williams Tutorial Program has been so well-received that in 2000 Williams President Morten Owen Shapiro and the Committee of Education Policy approved the broad expansion of the program. From 1988 to 2000, Williams College offered between 25 and 30 tutorial classes every year; now it offers upwards to 45 and plans on increasing the number still.

#### A Closer Look at the Tutorial Program

Because the Williams Tutorial program is a pedagogic approach to innovative teaching, the content of the class is very flexible. Williams College offers a variety of courses in the tutorial format. For example in 2004–05, tutorial classes included class titles such as: “Rethinking cultural relativism,” “Genomes, transcriptomes, and proteomes,” “War in Modern Literature,” “Computer Networks,” and “Nature versus Nurture: Controversies in Developmental Psychobiology.”

As mentioned earlier, students participating in a tutorial class typically form pairs and meet with the professor every week. The two students would then take turns presenting work they have completed in the form of papers and specific problems. The teacher and the second student listen to offer critiques from their two different perspectives. The class may occasionally meet together to

cover background material, and the actual specifics of how a class proceeds may vary slightly according to the classes needs. However, the bulk of the course focuses on the two students-one teacher format.

#### The Benefits of Williams Tutorials

The Williams Tutorial format provides a unique educational setting for participating students and professors. 1) In a two student-one teacher environment, the professor is better able to customize each class according to the specific needs of the students. This educational tailoring becomes increasingly difficult as the number of students rises. 2) The students take responsibility to gain a deeper understanding of course content. 3) The students and professors foster a closer relationship in this program. The result is a setting which provides for a truly student-centered education.

As the number of students in a classroom increases, the professor’s ability to effectively teach suffers. For example, in a classroom of eight students, the teacher must accommodate to eight different learning styles, eight different levels of previous knowledge, and eight different proficiency levels. By reducing the number of students to two, the Williams Tutorial program confronts this dilemma with the least amount of compromise. In this situation, the professor is able to give direct attention to each student while a second student is there to offer insights from a perspective other than that of a teacher.

Tutorial classes are set up so that the students, not the teachers, are the active participants. In lecture type classes and even in seminars, the opposite is usually the case; students spend the majority of the class time receiving knowledge from the teacher. In an article from “The Chronicle of Higher Education” about the Williams Tutorial program, William Dudley, an assistant professor of philosophy noted “Even in a

seminar, if no one wants to speak, I have to talk. In the tutorial, they (students) don't have the option of not talking."

When students become the active participants, the dynamics of the class change drastically. The students must have a deep and thorough knowledge of the course content before stepping into class because they are the ones who present material. A Williams College student who has participated in several tutorial courses notes that:

"The biggest benefit of tutorials I found was that it forced you to learn more content for a class. I've found that in all of my classes what I learned was most closely tied to the papers I wrote; in tutorials you write many papers so you learn a lot of content. I think for many students, tutorials might be the best system because they effectively force you to learn more content well."

Then as the student presents during the actual class, the teacher offers suggestions and helps to fill in gaps and find connections where the students may not have. In this type of setting, the students truly take responsibility for their own education.

The third area where Williams Tutorials has an effect is the relationship between teacher and student. The students and teachers who have participated in these classes have said that this format helps to develop a close bond between teacher and student. One student who took a class titled "The Economics of Higher Education" said, "In general, there's nothing like it (Williams Tutorials). Professors get to know you personally and to know your work."

My own experiences have confirmed these assertions. This semester, Phat Vu SUA's professor of physics is teaching the advanced physics course using the tutorial format. The class consists of eight students with a wide

variety of background knowledge on physics and calculus. In a regular seminar or lecture setting, this variance in previous knowledge may pose a problem for effective teaching. However in the tutorial format, Professor Vu can set the pace differently for each pair of students. He notes that:

"I teach more in a tutorial format since I know (and the students reveal) better what the student's weaknesses are, what they need to develop as a student and as a person, what they know and don't know, and I can cater to those things and focus on them."

When Professor Vu uses the tutorial format, he is better able to ascertain the progress of each individual student and determine what's needed to help them learn certain difficult concepts.

These attributes help to make Williams Tutorials a very student-centered educational experience. Some may argue that these consequences are a result of a well-accepted rule: the fewer students in a class, the more effective the teaching. However, the rule may not be as simple as it seems. I argue that at a certain threshold, when the number of students is sufficiently low, the dynamics of the teaching environment can change drastically. Williams College takes advantage of tutorial classes' two student-one teacher ratio to develop an extremely student-center education. It is still possible for a teacher to lecture even in a class with only two students. Williams College deliberately made the decision to have the students become the active participants.

#### Conclusion: Possibilities of Williams Tutorials at Soka University of America

My main objective for researching Williams College's Tutorial Program is to put it forth as a possible program for SUA's near future. The school's public website proclaims

that “SUA is founded on the belief that student-centered education is the best way to promote peace and human rights by fostering a global humanistic perspective on the world in which we live.” I believe the tutorial format can bring this school one step closer to fulfilling its goals of a student-centered education.

One of the advantages of the tutorial program is its flexibility. A drastic change in curriculum is not needed to accommodate for its development. In the case of Williams College, the development of tutorial classes generally followed the demand from students. As demand for tutorial classes increased, so did the supply. The same can be done at SUA. Even this semester, Professor Vu is teaching the advanced physics course in the tutorial format by his own initiative. However, there are a few obstacles to overcome before SUA can realize the full development of tutorial classes.

One of the more important areas not covered in this paper is how Williams College

trains its professors for teaching tutorial classes. In order for the tutorial program to succeed at SUA, the professors who participate must have a thorough understand of the teaching methodology, its benefits, and its weaknesses. This area may be an avenue for further research that future SUA students and faculty can undertake.

SUA emphasizes the need for student-centered education to help properly develop students through their college career. It may have been nearly impossible to continually challenge SUA’s educational practices while the student body was burgeoning every year with 100 new students. However, now with the student body stable at about 400 students, the school can begin to take the first steps to vigorously examine educational policies and push the envelop for more innovative education. I believe seriously considering Williams College’s Tutorial program as a viable option at SUA can be one of those first steps.



**Soka Education:  
Study abroad and being a global citizen  
(This paper is dedicated to Class of 2005 at SUA)**

**Xiaoxing Liu**

**Soka Education: Present and Future  
Soka University of America  
March 26, 2005**

Last semester, I taught an advanced Chinese class called “Contemporary Issues in China.” All seventeen students in the course had come back from study abroad programs in China. We read articles written for native speakers from books and the Internet, and discussed issues such as education, politics, the environment, tradition and modernity, human rights, and economic development. Some articles were so difficult to read that I could see that the red marks the students had made covered all the pages. However, they didn’t show signs of being discouraged. Not only did they try to understand the materials, but they also brought their experiences and insights into the discussion to make it very interesting.

I noticed that these students had a deep appreciation and the sympathy for Chinese people and genuinely cared about their happiness and well-being. They were open to read articles from different perspectives, and used their own experiences as a reference to understand and analyze the problems. At the same time, they remembered to take their

Chinese friends’ viewpoints into account. They frequently talked about the experience of study abroad, and the in-depth discussion in the classroom concretized their notion of being a global citizen. They have become more concerned with the Chinese people’s situation than they might have been before, and were seriously thinking of doing something for people in the world in general and in China in particular.

Some of these students wanted to work for the UN to help people facing difficulties, some wanted to work as education administrators, who would fight against corruption in the educational system, some wanted to become teachers who bring knowledge and humanism to generations of young people, some wanted to go to the Middle East to study and promote regional peace there, some wanted to go North Korea, and some wanted to study the relationships among Japan, China and the US and to promote a positive relationship that would benefit the entire world. Looking at these students, I saw a stream of global citizen in the making. They are young, energetic, and

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enthusiastic to contribute to the cause of world peace; yet they are mature and intelligent in the sense that they are able to look at things from different perspectives, and to understand and respect the differences among people in various areas and cultures. They are our first group of graduates, the realization of the Soka Educational ideal from SUA. They made me so touched and proud that I wanted to talk with you here about what I have learned about Soka Education and what has made these students who they are today, although many faculty members and students know much more about it than I do.

Apparently, the entire curriculum at SUA was designed to create value and to produce global citizens. I would like to focus on foreign language teaching through the example of Chinese language, because at this stage it is more manageable for me. SUA is the only college in the US to require all its students to participate in a study abroad program after completing two years of foreign language learning. This pedagogical design has been proven successful, at least in the SUA environment, based upon the experiences of the first batches of returnees. Here I will discuss how the interaction between this requirement and the notion of being a global citizen advances students' academic competence and spiritual awareness to fulfill the mission of the school.

### I - The mission and the study abroad program

The mission of SUA is "to foster a steady stream of global citizens committed to living a contributive life." Although Mr. Daisaku Ikeda mentioned that, "global citizenship is not determined merely by the number of languages one speaks or the number of countries to which one has traveled,"<sup>1</sup> it is

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<sup>1</sup> Daisaku Ikeda "Education Toward Global Citizenship" June 13, 1966, Teachers College, Columbia University.

certainly helpful to know foreign languages and to experience life in foreign countries. In fact, the founding group of professors and educators at SUA felt it to be so important that they decided to provide every student the opportunity to study abroad, where they could be immersed in the target language environment. In addition, they could put their ideas to the test and feel what it is like to actually work with people of another country and culture. The study abroad program facilitates the mission of fostering global citizens, while the major task of the foreign language program is to prepare students for study abroad.

### II - The stage of preparation

As part of the academic curriculum, every student attending SUA has to earn adequate credits through a period of study abroad to receive his or her Bachelor of Arts degree. The Undergraduate Catalogue states that "all students must spend one half of their junior year abroad engaged in a study abroad and/or an internship program" after completing two years of foreign language study at SUA. The rationale for this lies in the mission of the school. It is inevitable that the social and linguistic environment in which people were raised would constrain their vision and thoughts. Therefore, promoting foreign language learning and study abroad is necessary to foster quality global citizens. It is clear to prospective students that they not only have to take and pass the foreign language courses, but also must use the language in a foreign country shortly after they complete the four-semester language training at the college. In other words, these are requirements to obtain a SUA degree, and students are aware of them at the time they are selecting colleges in their senior year of high school. Choosing SUA means making a commitment to learn foreign languages well and to use them in a real-life situation.

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The financial strategy ensures that the requirement is practicable. Unlike at other colleges, expenses for study abroad are included in SUA tuition. When students decide to attend SUA, they (and their parents) agree to pay for study abroad. After students have fulfilled the academic requirement of four-semester of foreign language study, they can easily move to the stage of study abroad. At other colleges, students and their parents have to spend a lot of time discussing 1) To go or not to go; 2) How much they are willing to pay for it and how to pay for it; 3) Within the affordable range, which program is better; 4) Whether or not the student's language ability is acceptable for the program, etc.. At SUA, on the other hand, students can focus on which program would serve their needs better and how they can get the most out of the experience. In other words, the time and money spent on the program will be more meaningful and more productive in this kind of system.

Psychologically, students know from day one of their life at SUA that they will need the foreign language they are learning to survive and study in a foreign country during their third year of college. With this clear and definite goal in mind, students can plan their courses and time allocation better, especially in terms of learning foreign languages. At other colleges, the first two years of foreign language courses are just to fulfill a general education requirement, and more often than not, language learning is sacrificed for "content courses". This makes sense for students who will hardly use the foreign language after graduation, or who do not see how useful the languages will be in the near future. It is quite different here at SUA. Students have to consider learning both "content courses" and language courses well at the same time. They know that achievement in foreign language learning has a lot to do with the quality of their life and the outcome of their performance during study abroad, so just

passing the course is not good enough. As a result, we see that our students' attitudes towards foreign language study are very positive and self-motivated. Teachers can focus on how to teach effectively and how to make the knowledge and skills more practical for study abroad, rather than spending large amounts of time and energy on motivating and retaining students in their language classrooms.

The general goal of foreign language teaching at SUA is more specific than that of other colleges as well. Instead of simply going through the language textbooks and having students pass tests, the teachers are more concerned with how to help students use the language in the study abroad context. Language teachers serve on the Faculty Study Abroad Committee as well, working closely with the Office of Study Abroad and International Internships to select programs and provide guidance for students. The Study Abroad Office offers numerous seminars, orientations, and workshops to help students prepare for their life abroad, and keeps in touch with the programs and the students overseas to ensure that their learning there is successful.

The key players in all of this, however, are our students. The outcomes of the program ultimately depend on their performance. It is SUA's mission that draws the majority of our students here. At the pragmatic level, having in mind the objective of using the language in a foreign country in the near future, most students work very hard from beginning to end during their four-semester language-learning period. At the spiritual level, from the beginning of their freshman year at SUA, students work passionately to turn themselves into global citizens. Many of them read Mr. Daisaku Ikeda's writings, which have a lot to do with education and global citizenship, and these students regularly hold discussions on these subjects. I participated in one such discussion session and observed students' serious attitudes toward the reading and

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discussion. They seem to sincerely want to become global citizens and to contribute to world peace and to people's happiness. This desire is the constant motivation for most students, while the requirement reinforces their commitment.

### III - The stage of practice

The collective efforts of the students and the school have brought about what I consider very successful outcomes of our study abroad programs. When I first met them in the cafeteria before I started to teach, I was surprised by how fluently our students could speak their target language, Chinese. I was impressed by their fluency and by the number of students who displayed such proficiency in Chinese. When I taught the advanced Chinese course, I was even more impressed by the students' keen interest in various issues related to China, and their ability and willingness to examine these issues from different perspectives. I've heard good comments on our students from study abroad program directors and site advisors, such as that they worked hard, behaved well, respected teachers, and focused on their studies. When I look at the whole picture, I find that several elements made our students particularly successful.

First, two years of classroom instruction provided a good foundation in grammar, vocabulary, and reading and writing skills. Students usually have a hard time at the beginning understanding native-speaker and expressing their own thoughts verbally. Once they get used to these things, however, they take off quickly and are able to incorporate the new knowledge with the old because they have a "head start" in what they learned at school. This is in contrary to many schools that send their freshman to study abroad, and these students spend more time struggling with language skills. By the time they start to feel comfortable in the target language, it's time to go back to their home institutions.

Second, their commitment to the mission disciplines our students to make study their highest priority. The common advice that our returnees give to their juniors is: stay away from students who speak English and hang out at bars; make Chinese friends and speak Chinese all the time. They have a serious attitude towards their studies. Even though they go out sight seeing, dancing, eating, and having fun with friends, as all young people do, the long-term goal of becoming global citizens keeps them focused and productive during their time abroad.

Third, most of our students have deep humanistic concerns. They seem naturally drawn to other people and make successful efforts to establish connections with them. They value the opportunities to communicate and learn from local people: shopkeepers, security guards, and service people at the cafeteria and local restaurants. By communicating with these people, students not only practice their listening and speaking skills, but also learn about education, employment, family relations, and the differences between city people and rural people, and between the rich and the poor. Unforgettable experiences of some students have been visits to their Chinese friends' families in the countryside. Through getting to know local people, the students learn more about certain aspects of language and culture than they would be able to learn in the classroom. One student pointed out, for example, that the best thing about her study abroad was not the beautiful scene of China or even the program per se, but rather the people she got to know and with whom she still has contact. Many returned students still write emails, make phone calls, and write letters to their Chinese friends and host families. Just as the catalogue states, the study abroad programs are "truly a bridge over which students enter the world of global citizenship."

Understandably, not all students are equally excited about learning foreign

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languages and going to study abroad. For many students at SUA—the international students, that is-- the United States is foreign enough. They had just managed to overcome culture shock and started to feel at home in the US not long ago. When they had to force themselves to head to another unfamiliar country. Nevertheless, since they have made the commitment to become global citizens whatever it takes, they mentally prepared to go study somewhere else when they first walked the campus. Some students realized that they did need the language to survive in the country only when they found themselves already there, amongst people who spoke the language they were supposed to have learned before they came. This forced them to learn, and they learned well, the hard way.

The experience abroad helps students know themselves better and forces them to think critically about the realities of today's world. Although students have read and talked about the concept of "global citizenship" ever since they started at SUA, or even earlier, they didn't really know how this "ideal person" feels and works when he or she is in action to better the world. Students become more aware of their own identity and their position vis a vis the people of the host country once they set foot in the country. Better yet, they might sense what a global citizen trying to work with local people in a given place encounters: how do you get to know the people? How can you win people's trust? How do you work effectively with them? In a complex society, how do you know who really needs your help and who might exploit your good will? Just to name a few examples. In addition, since most of our students of Chinese are Japanese, Chinese-Japanese relations come into play when our students stay in China. Most students report that they were treated well, but some of them did feel the tension. Although some students had a few unpleasant experiences in this regard, they treated Chinese people with sincerity, eventually

convincing people that there are friends of China among the Japanese. This valuable experience taught them that they are able to and already had played a role in bringing two peoples and nations together.

### IV - The stage of reinforcement

Unlike at other colleges and programs, at SUA our returnees' experiences are valued and respected by fellow students who are their juniors. This reinforces both groups' motivation for learning and using the target language.

In panels that relate to study abroad at conferences of the Chinese Language Teachers Association, we often hear about the difficulties that returnees from study abroad face. Among all of the so-called "reentry culture shocks" identified, the hardest to bear is that nobody seems to care what they have done and accomplished abroad. They come back with myriad discoveries, feelings, and insights, but nobody on campus pays attention to these changes that happened in their lives over the course of a few months, except their language teachers and study abroad directors. So, the students feel lost. At a conference last year, a teacher from Brown University presented a paper addressing the problems her returning students encountered and how she dealt with these problems. At the end of her presentation, her audience failed to see any good solutions to the problem. The Brown case is probably an extreme example. Many colleges, such as Northwestern University, where I taught for the past several years, have certain mechanisms to handle issues of study abroad. However, it is still a matter that is of interest only to those who come back from abroad and those who plan to go.

At SUA, on the other hand, the experiences and knowledge that students bring back from the host countries become the assets of the whole community. We have school-wide activities for them to report on and share

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their experiences overseas. For example, the Chinese Club, run by students, invited several returnees from China and Taiwan to give talks to the students on campus. At the Chinese language table, which happens at lunch every week day in the cafeteria, many students who have not yet gone on study abroad have been fascinated by returnees' stories and amazed by their fluent conversation in Chinese. One day, a freshman came to my elementary Chinese class after talking with seniors at the Chinese table. His eyes were wide with excitement, and he said to me: "Those seniors were so good! Their Chinese was so fluent! I want to be just like them." Since all of our students must study abroad, the returnees' experiences and advice are relevant to all students, and therefore highly valued and respected. As the first group to study abroad, these students experienced uncertainty, worry, loneliness, and other difficulties during their time overseas. Now, the price they paid has become a spur to their juniors, and they are almost heroes to the lower-classmen. This fact, and the connections they made with Chinese people, encourage them to continue their Chinese language study on return.

Interestingly, even after the school's requirement has been fulfilled, these students themselves feel the need to keep learning and using the foreign language. They have set up a

lifelong goal without external pressure. This is, to me, convincing evidence of the success of Soka education. In this presentation, I have talked about how the interaction between the mission of the school and the requirement for all students to go study abroad work for the purpose of Soka education. We will see the materialization of the ideal and all the effort to facilitate it through our students. A student of mine wrote in his paper for the Chinese class I am currently teaching that, "We will graduate in only eighty days (at the time). We should take every each day of our study and life seriously. This is a way of welcoming the graduation ceremony for it is not the end, but rather the beginning of our new challenge." After four years at SUA, I have no doubt that they have been better equipped for a fulfilling life. Let's wish them all the best in welcoming their new challenge.

As you can see, this presentation is primarily based on my personal observation and experience. I am sure that our students of Japanese and Spanish are just as wonderful as the students I have taught in Chinese. I am eager to expand my quest for understanding of Soka Education. In doing so, I will certainly need help from people who are here attending the conference, for instance, filling out questionnaires and accept my interviews, so I would like to say thank you to you in advance.

## The Life-Long Happiness of the Learner: A Holistic Approach to Education

Candela Montero

Soka University: Present and Future  
Soka University of America  
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The aim of this paper is to define Soka education with a holistic perspective and to develop a holistic approach to academics at Soka University of America through the teachings of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, Daisaku Ikeda, Paulo Freire and Krishnamurti. With this approach students and professors will simultaneously interact with their academic curriculum in an intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual way.

### What is Soka Education?

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi never ceased to stress that at the center of education and its very purpose is the student's happiness. He illustrated this focus as the life-long happiness of the learner, which Abraham Maslow described as "the primary consideration of education is to help the student become actually what he deeply is potentially" (Ikeda, 100). The life long happiness of the learner is the process of developing the capacity to find meaning in every situation and to contribute to the well being of others and ourselves under any circumstance. In order to attain the capacity to do that, the student must develop every aspect of himself or the full

development of his/her personality. "Education shall aim at the full development of personality, striving for the rearing of the people, sound in mind and body, who shall love truth and justice, esteem individual value, respect labor and have a deep sense of responsibility, and be imbued with the independent spirit as builders of the peaceful state and society (Ikeda, 67)." The humanistic education present at Soka University of America aims to nurture the whole individual (Ikeda, 47) therefore Soka education can be defined as holistic education. Holistic education aims to call forth an intrinsic reverence of life and a passionate love for learning that surpasses a simply academic curriculum and solicits finding meaning through connections with the community, the natural world and spiritual values such as compassion (Infed). Holistic education cultivates an understanding of the inner self and the outer world that creates a sense of belongingness with the whole world. "To educate the student rightly is to help him to understand the total process of himself; for it is only when there is integration of the mind and heart in everyday action that there can be intelligence and inward transformation

(Krishnamurti, 45).” Holistic education abolishes the fragmentation of knowledge so present in the current academic arena and, instead, nurtures the totality of education and of the mind. “The human brain, for reasons too complex to go into here, normally works by fragmenting the whole, and one very important task that the brain needs to learn is to stop this fragmenting process when it is not necessary (Krishnamurti, 75).” Soka Education is value-creating education that through holism, aims to develop “students abilities to ponder meaning and purpose...and to foster a rich humanism and spirituality that will enable students to enjoy personal growth and contribute to society (Ikeda, 49).”

#### The Intellectual Component

The intellectual component of this education is based primarily on Freire’s critical and multicultural pedagogy. Three crucial characteristics students must derive from their academics intellectually are a non-Eurocentric global vision, a desire for social change and the ability to be critical of every bit of information passed down to them, including the learning process itself. Contrary to traditional classroom experiences, a Freirian classroom does not simply deliver information to the students, which often cultivates passive and anti-intellectual listeners, but instead invites them to think critically about the subject matter and society, “teachers pose problems derived from student life, social issues and academic subjects, in a mutually created dialogue (McLaren, 25).” This pedagogy prepares students for social change by asking both teachers and students to question their existing knowledge and their current conditions. In this mutual search the students and teachers create ‘co-intentionality’, or mutual intentions, which make the classroom and the study collectively owned and not the teacher’s property (McLaren, 26). Co-intentionality empowers students to have a

voice in the creation of their education and breaks down any barriers between the teacher and the student therefore establishing a “democratic and transformative relationship between students and teachers, students and learning, and students and society (McLaren, 27).” A rejection of the traditional Eurocentric education replaced by a multicultural pedagogy that offers a more global perspective is also crucial and brings the students closer to their ultimate goal of becoming global citizens. Multiculturalism in the classroom brings all previously learned knowledge into the limelight and subjects to questioning and challenges the students to re-evaluate the perception of the world around them. Lastly, we must seek to develop what Freire calls ‘critical consciousness’ in our classrooms; a perfect balance of thought and action developed by thinking holistically and critically. Freire refers to this thought as ‘critical transitivity’, and critical transitive thinkers feel empowered to think and to act on the conditions around them, and relate those conditions to the larger contexts of power in society (McLaren, 32). A Freirian style classroom is necessary at Soka University of America because there is no doubt that a deep social change needs to occur. However, the revolutions that have changed social structures from one day to another have caused tremendous suffering because of lack of analysis, in some cases, or of the maturity of the population at the time to face new challenges, in others. For that reason, a critical and multicultural pedagogy that gives the students the skills required to confront the challenges of the twenty first century (the theoretical and practical bases for profound transformation to occur in a pacifist way), must go hand in hand with conflict resolution teachings that transcend typical problem solving methods, that rely on winners and simple solutions to complicated problems, and the universal values of love and compassion. “Based on the principle that educational



reform should be driven by humanism, not politics, I indicated in that proposal a humanistic ideal imbued with creativity, internationalism and totality (Ikeda, 62).”

### The Emotional Component

With the emotional aspect of this education, I bring in the role of the educator. “To be a good liberating educator you need above all to have faith in human beings. You need to love (Freire, 25).” The most important aspect of being an educator is to have an endless profound love of learning, teaching and of the students, and with that love to create an environment in which the students can develop. In order for students to respond emotionally to their course study the teacher must create an atmosphere in which it is appropriate for that to happen. Generally, when love and emotions are mentioned in education there is a mainstream misconception in the sense of the educator being soft or that he/she will be partial during the learning process, therefore, we rely on specialists in dry atmospheres instead. “Teaching should not become a specialist’s profession. When it does, as so often is the case, love fades away; and love is essential to the process of integration (Krishnamurti, 46).” It is important for the educator to be an example of what the student should strive to become. At Soka University of America one of the founding principles is “to foster leaders for the creative co-existence of nature and humanity (handbook, 5),” which is impossible without love. Therefore, if the educator cultivates love and emotion in the students’ hearts he is ultimately helping them to become human and reach their goals. Following the example of their professors, Soka University of America alumni must be compassionate, functioning humans, not specialized robots. The relationship students develop with their professor is the bridge between them and their education, if they are

to be really impacted and if they are to really grow, they must feel connected to their educator. “Where there is love there is an instantaneous communion with the other, on the same level and at the same time. It is because we ourselves are so dry, empty and without love that we have allowed governments to take over the education...but governments want efficient technicians not human beings (Krishnamurti, 24).” The co-intentionality Freire writes about is the spark for this relationship to occur. Most important in student-educator relationships is the notion of ‘authority of spirit’, which implies that the educator does not receive his authoritative position through his title, but instead on his level of self-evolution. He is an example of growth for the students, an example of a life-long seeker, and of a humanistic leader, which creates a respect from the students for the educator that is much more profound than that which any title could induce. Krishnamurti wrote:

“As this is equally necessary to both staff and students, there can be no real hierarchy between them. There are, of course, differences between staff and students in their responsibilities and experience; but in all that is most important in education the staff and students are really in the same boat. In the central concerns of education, which is to do with inner liberation, both the students and the teachers are learners and therefore equal, and this is untouched by functional authority. In thus helping the student towards freedom, the educator is changing his own values also; he too is beginning to be rid of the ‘me’ and the ‘mine’, he too is flowering in love and goodness.” (106)

If we refer back to the Frerian classroom in which the students and the educator share

the responsibility of shaping and governing the classroom, then we can deem teaching a mutual effort. The same goes for the emotional component, the teacher and the student are in a mutual exchange for their personal growth which creates an atmosphere of trust and love that allows the students to relate to their studies and react to them on an emotional level. By using Freire's method of problem posing mentioned earlier, which uses students' current conditions as a tool for them to relate to their curriculum, it also becomes possible to induce an emotional response. In order to build a truly humanistic education teaching must consist of educating about life. "I believe that education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living (Dewey, 78)."

#### The Physical Component

The Physical aspect relates to the practical application of teachings in the community and directly to the concept of critical consciousness present in the Freirian classroom mentioned earlier in this paper; with a holistic education the student can develop the perfect balance of thought and action and feels empowered to think and *act* on the conditions that surround him. Although Tsunesaburo Makiguchi originally wrote for elementary school students his philosophy about converting theory to practice can be and should be applied to contemporary college education. In *The Geography of Human Life* Makiguchi opens by quoting renowned educator Yoshida Shoin who said that "people do not develop in isolation from their environment and human affairs are just a reflection of people. Therefore to understand human affairs, you first must understand the local context in which the people have developed (Ikeda, 75)." He continues on to say that only within the local community can one foster qualities of compassion, goodwill, friendship, kindness, sincerity, honesty and

cultivate the nobility of the heart (Ikeda, 75). Makiguchi proposed the notion of a half-day school system in which students spent the first half of the day in the classroom and the second part in the community applying what they had learned. The half-day school system intended to combine spiritual and physical growth by immersing the children in the enrichment derived from learning at school and from practical experience in society (Ikeda, 81). He believed that by doing so the energy of young people could be re-directed from anti-social targets to creating value in society, which contributes both to individual happiness and that of the community. I do not propose a half-day school system for Soka University of America, but I do intend to mold a curriculum designed for a younger student population to one for college students. The gain that elementary school students can experience from converting theory to practice in the community is the same college students would experience through becoming involved in their local communities. As students and professors at Soka University of America we aspire to become global citizens, but "to be meaningful, education for global citizenship should be undertaken as an integral part of daily life in our local communities (Ikeda, 100)." If through this education we are meant to create value and social change, there must be a fundamental shift in the education that teaches students how to be reactive to their education. Students generally have not been exposed to a pedagogy that encourages being reactive, instead, they are conditioned to learn and spin knowledge around a million times in their minds but not necessarily do anything with it except regurgitate it. Simply doing that with our education will not create social change. We have to be active members and examples in our communities in order to touch people individually in a way that propels them to organize and create grassroots movements; the root of all social change. Daisaku Ikeda asks in the article *Serving the Essential Needs of*

*Education* “How can we encourage children to directly communicate with society and nature?” and answers his own question with the idea of volunteer activities. “I believe this should be promoted—not merely through occasional field trips but as continuous ongoing activities (Ikeda, 87).” Service Learning, the incorporation of community service in an educational system, would be a suitable tool at Soka University of America in giving students the initial push towards becoming reactive to their education and being involved with the community; a suitable adaptation of Makiguchi’s half day school system. “Experiencing the feeling that one’s actions are of use to others gives confidence to the young people and becomes a firm foundation for spiritual growth (Ikeda, 87)” Which leads us directly to our next section.

#### The Spiritual Component

When spirituality in education is mentioned, the general consensus is a complete rejection of the notion, but in the context of this paper spiritualizing education does not mean compulsory religious education but simply suggests learning within the context of being and becoming fully, positively, human. If we define spirituality as understanding the essence of humanity, then the importance of its inclusion in a holistic education becomes clear; during the process of fully developing the personality, an underlying understanding of ourselves as human beings is indispensable. One way to get closer to that understanding is to observe ourselves within the environment of our community, as we mentioned earlier, but another is to use the natural environment as a mirror. “Makiguchi keenly perceived that a breakdown of communication with nature not only causes humans physical damage but also results in the destruction of virtues such as compassion that are essential to the development of the personality (Ikeda, 76).” By understanding the

laws of nature and its cycles we can begin to identify their reflection in humanity, therefore students must seek to forge a relationship with their natural environment to instill in them a respect for the earth and all of its living things, which touches upon another important aspect of spirituality; the value of life. Nature is our mentor in learning about our own cycles, the rhythm of our lives and the path we as participants of Soka Education must strive to stay on; one of interdependence and harmony. For Krishnamurti nature was both beautiful and a demonstration of order. “The healing of the mind gradually takes place if you are with nature, with that orange on the tree, and the blade of grass that pushes through the cement, and the hills, covered, hidden, by the clouds. If you establish a relationship with it [nature] then you have a relationship with mankind (Krishnamurti, 1987). Nature is only one of our many mirrors; our very readings assigned in class must also in one way or another be our mirrors, along with a multitude of things. However, I offer nature as our primary source for reflection because there is something very magical about being one with it “because when you are there, it is not only through your eyes you are touched (Ikeda, 77)” and if we create a personal relationship with our natural environment we will also create a tendency to protect it (our source of life) which is another responsibility as leaders for the creative co-existence of nature and humanity. By observing ourselves in something else we deepen our understanding of ourselves and therefore of humanity and *that* is spirituality, but by doing so in a setting where the reflection is extremely apparent (nature) it facilitates seeking that same reflection and understanding in the context of academics.

By describing interaction with our education in these four different parts it may seem as if I am doing exactly what I emphasize should never be done; fragmenting the process of education. However, I am not referring to four different ways to interact with

our education but four ways to respond to our curriculum simultaneously, interlaced with one another. Soka education then exists in the attitudes of students and professors when they approach their education in this holistic way, because otherwise Soka University of America is essentially like any other liberal arts university. We, the students and professors, must carry on Soka Education on this campus by growing intellectually, emotionally, physically and spiritually through our academic endeavors. With this approach, changes in the curriculum come second, because the heart of Soka education and the

responsibility of creating Soka education with the academic material provided lies solely in the hands of the professors and the students. We cannot rely on the administration or anyone else to shape it for us, because Soka education goes beyond anything written or anything tangible. Soka education is in the minds and the hearts of the participants. This very fact is one we must keep in mind as Soka University of America is forced to comply with the rules and regulations that will begin to establish it as a legitimate academic institution, so that we never lose sight of what Soka education is and where it exists.

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## Actualizing Soka Education: An Introduction

Jennifer Ohrstrom

Soka Education: Present and Future  
Soka University of America  
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I agonized over this paper. I agonized over the writing of it because its acceptance or rebuff by the Soka community determines not only my future, but the future of our society, our world. I leafed through my copy of Soka Education for the tenth time, wondering if I could find enough proof, enough backing for what I wanted to say. Everything is in the book. I even thought of just saying “read it yourself, I don’t need to explain anything.” Because I know that if people really read it, they will see the same things I see, if not right away. My copy, riddled with so many multi-colored sticky notes it looks more like a gay pride symbol than a bible of educational reform, on the inside is covered in scribbles, exclamation points, stars. I debated whether or not this would be enough, the reading of this and scores of other books. *Would anything be enough*, I wondered.

I wrote and wrote and wrote only to quickly trash essay after essay, knowing they were unconvincing and most of all dishonest. But this time, this last time, is different. Because I decided that I would write how I live. Bell Hooks, my favorite critical pedagogue and a brilliant black feminist author, details in one of her essays how she

writes outside of typical academic conventions because these only serve to separate and exclude. I agree with her and Daisaku Ikeda, when they assert that education, academia, if it is to enhance the whole of society, must be accessible to the whole of society, not just an elite few.

But I still tormented myself about the style of this paper, doubting its acceptance if it did not adhere to already established ‘norms’ for essay writing. Knowing many might dismiss it immediately merely because of its style. But I have to be honest. It is

Hooks’ open candor, her vulnerability, which makes her at once compelling and intriguing. In this candor lives, breathes, her revolution. Her act of defiance to the system she cannot accept because that system attempts to exclude her on the basis of her blackness, her femaleness. It is in this candor that one will find of heart of Soka Education.

I agonized over delivery. I poured over re-writes for hours, vehemently purging sections for being too blunt, not wanting to offend; heaping mounds of sugar onto every paragraph. But I finally realized that to expect offense was to disrespect you. I realized that I must trust you as I trust myself. So in this

final paper I have stripped the layers that 'convention' insists on, crumbling that fabricated distance between the 'insider' and 'outsider.' I have made us all insiders. I hope this is enough.

### Global Citizenship

What on earth does this mean? Ikeda states that a global citizen is a person who has:

- “The wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life and living.
- The courage not to fear or deny difference, but to respect and strive to understand people of different cultures and to grow from encounters with them.
- The compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy that reaches beyond one’s immediate surroundings and extends to those suffering in distant places.” (Ikeda, 2001)

When I read this, I was simultaneously shocked and elated. “Of course!” I thought, jubilant. “This means that every Soka student will definitely *not* wear sweat-shop made clothes, eat dead animals, leave their lights on or use the elevator if they don’t live too high up!” To me, the meaning of this passage is evident and unmistakable. But, apparently this is not the consensual interpretation. With regard to the first point, (which I won’t repeat since you’ve just read it...though part of me really wants to repeat it because its meaning seems so evident to me yet not to others) to perceive the interconnectedness of all living things means to relate the carcass on our plate to the life it would be living if not for our apathy and indifference. “Indifference toward evil,” our founder warns, “implies indifference toward good.” We are taught that animals do not matter, that nothing is important save our every desire. But if killing an innocent

creature that has the intelligence of your baby sister, only because you want to eat it, for no other reason, if this is not evil, then I must be insane. And yet, I’m sure many readers at this point may throw down this essay in protest. No one likes to be told they are wrong. I certainly don’t. But every part of this essay is written not so I can tell you that you are wrong and I am right, but so that together we can discover the truth. If I don’t speak these thoughts which have plagued my mind since I walked onto this campus, who will? No one has until now. Only in secret have I divulged my concerns, my criticisms, for fear that I would be ostracized, or worse, ignored. I feel that many of us have had these questions, these *insurgent thoughts*, only to quickly stifle them before they can register in our expression, hinting of our weirdness. But only because I love Soka with all my heart, and love its ideals even more, do I criticize. Because I know that there can be no growth from the subtle squelching of difference. I know that there will always be dissidence, and I am willing to hear it from you if you will hear it from me.

For the students, I think that our duties regarding global citizenship are evident. We are so disconnected from the world, even from our community. Most students don’t even read the news, and few take action for any human, animal or environmental issues. The handful of active clubs only have a handful of active members. Even globally publicized issues like the devastating tsunami are put on the back burner here. What is keeping us from these pressing issues? Surely their urgency is paramount! Makiguchi, the founder of Soka Education, asserted that we cannot regard “learning as a preparation for living, but enable people to learn in the process of living” (Ikeda, 20). The opposite is true here at Soka.

I would like to make one last observation with regard to the student responsibility of actualizing Soka Education. Ikeda’s third point, is that we must extend our empathy beyond our immediate surroundings. This

only brings one issue to my mind: sweatshops. Though our school clothing line is certified by the Fair Labor Organization, an organization notorious for its abuses of ‘fair labor’ codes, only a handful of students have begun researching more bona fide non-sweatshop clothing. However, this issue stretches far beyond what we buy in the school store. The power of the greenback spans the whole globe and usually culminates in China, where most products are made. Nearly everything we buy, apart from being unnecessary, is made in a sweatshop in China or some other country. China has some of the worst documented human rights abuses in the world, and this country is also perpetrating a bloody cultural genocide of Tibetans.

Tibetan activists are imprisoned, tortured, and put to work in China’s Laogai labor camps. Guess where their products are sold? Half of the products in our campus store are made in China.

These are only a few of the immediate and urgent responsibilities of Soka students, if we wish to honestly call ourselves global citizens. Yes, it is extremely difficult to stop buying things we are told we need. Yes, many people crave dead flesh after they stop consuming it. But who ever said being a global citizen was easy? Not once in his book does our founder detail how easy it is to be intelligent and virtuous. But many passages describe the difficult task of upholding one’s beliefs in the face of societal pressure. That’s what both Makiguchi and Ikeda did.

The tasks for faculty and administration towards implementing global citizenship are even more demanding and will doubtless be slow to change. Our current curriculum is highly traditional, as are the ways in which most classes here are taught. Not being a teacher, I’m unsure about this next claim, but I’m confident the faculty will correct me if I’m wrong. I doubt that any of our faculty underwent a seminar on racism, sexism and other types of societal pressures before

teaching here at Soka. The recognition that these types of oppression influence teaching methods and therefore profoundly affect students is one important claim of Critical Pedagogy.<sup>1</sup> Notably, women, men of color and people with non-heterosexual lifestyles are consistently ignored in curriculums and often given little or only negative attention by teachers. While this essay is not nearly long enough to detail the necessities of alleviating these types of oppressive behavior in teachers, I will talk a bit more about what educational reformer Carlos F. Diaz (2001) refers to as contributive and additive multiculturalism.<sup>2</sup>

Many universities, Soka University included, incorporate multiculturalism in what Diaz refers to as either “contributive,” or “additive” approaches. The former includes the experiences of varying cultures, women, men of color or varying sexual orientation only as they relate to activities outside of the curriculum. One example of this type of inadequate inclusion is “Coming Out Week,” a week long event initiated by official “Coming Out Day,” during which students at SUA attempt to encapsulate the entire homosexual<sup>3</sup> experience into a few days of events. This

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<sup>1</sup> Critical Pedagogy is a system of education reform, founded by bell hooks, Paolo Friere, Ira Shor and other preeminent educational reformers which has many of the same goals of soka education, with different terminology. It is from this theory which I draw many of my implementation strategies, since Ikeda himself even admits that he gives little attention to the application of his ideas.

<sup>2</sup> I am using the critical pedagogue’s definition of multiculturalism here, because Ikeda stresses that global citizens are have minds free of ‘societal ills’ and ‘racial consciousness,’ I have understood this as including the societal ills of sexism and heterosexism, among others. Many educational reformers include the experiences of marginalized voices when they refer to multiculturalism, because these voices have been consistently ignored by the dominant culture.

<sup>3</sup> here meant to include all other varying sexual preferences as well

half-hearted approach to multiculturalism and inclusion of experience is entirely inappropriate for a school that prides itself on the development of students who understand and empathize with every one in the human family. Ikeda stresses that “the university exists for the sake of the students. We must permit no one to take their freedom or dignity away” (Ikeda, 2001).

The additive approach calls for minute changes in curriculum, such as the addition of “special interest” courses that focus on women’s issues, other cultures, or the experiences of men of color and varying sexual orientation. This approach is demeaning to the experiences of people by labeling them “special interest,” when in fact, they may (notably in the case of women) represent the experiences of the majority of the population. For instance, in most of my classes, we do not read an equal amount of works by male and female authors. In fact, in CORE I, the only required readings were all written exclusively by men. How can a student be a ‘global citizen’ if they only read the works of less than half of the global population?

Both the additive and contributive approaches to multiculturalism buttress already existing structures of social hierarchy, structures which Soka Education is supposed to challenge: “education is a weapon to liberate humankind and rid our world of the human suffering caused by ignorance and other societal ills;” “it is the special function of a private university to send out into the

world young people free of narrow nationalism or racial contentiousness, who can...work for a revolution in our troubled and hectic society” (Ikeda, 2001).

The fundamental task of teachers and administration is the same as for students. We must all question, challenge, and grow. Ira Shor, one of the founders of Critical Pedagogy, notes how difficult it is to introduce these revolutionary systems of teaching and education because they are just that: revolutionary. They require revolutions in the hearts, minds and actions of every member of the university community. These challenges are greater at Soka. We have taken the weight of living these claims onto our shoulders, with every self-celebrating student festival and repeated claim of global citizenship. It is our duty to live these claims, as one of our statues said, to “be the change we wish to see in the world.”

Now I’m exhausted. Writing this paper in itself was a liberating process. To lift the heavy burden off my shoulders. To give voice to an eerie silence that has permeated this campus for too long. To have finally gained the courage and respect for you that enabled me to tell you the truth. I know many of you will criticize, question. That is wonderful. Though our future discussions I’m sure will be heated, at least we will be engaging in candid dialogue. This is the start of that dialogue. I look forward to furthering this discussion between you and me, so that we can truly move our education on the difficult path we have chosen, towards its actualization.

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### Preface

*As with every part of this essay, I feel the need to explain my works cited. I cited very few books in my actual essay, but many here. This is because the books I cite here changed and shaped my thoughts and theories as I read them. I cannot quote single concepts or phrases from these works, but rather have incorporated their profound messages into my every action, every thought. They are wonderful*



## SOKA EDUCATION: PRESENT AND FUTURE

*books and I highly recommend them to anyone who wants to add some training wheels to the bike of their revolution.*

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## **Experiential Learning: An Important Aspect of Present and Future Soka Education**

**Jocelyn Parkhurst**

**Soka Education: Present and Future  
Soka University of America  
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### Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's Vision of Soka Education

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi first envisioned an educational system that focused on the needs of the student, countering an amalgamation of Eastern and Western education meant to create citizens amenable to the needs of the state (Miller 15). Makiguchi sought to create free-thinking students taught by teachers within an egalitarian system, teachers who do not perceive themselves as better than their students, but participants in an interactive education that benefits the students and teachers (Miller 15). Makiguchi's philosophy, one of a humanist education, emphasizes "purpose in education, happiness, value creation, student responsibility, science of education, and the integration of school, home, and community in the learning process" (Miller 17). Yet, Makiguchi lived in Japan in the early 1900s, was an educator of elementary school students, and was responding to Imperialist Japan's nationalist tenants for learning. His system of education does not directly translate into action for a secluded small liberal arts college in Orange County,

California, where young adults, some who rarely leave campus, seek to realize Soka Education through the mission of Soka University provided by its founder, Daisaku Ikeda, to "foster a steady stream of global citizens committed to living a contributive life" ("Mission and Values"). Soka education must include aspects of experiential learning in order to realize both Makiguchi and Ikeda's visions, as experiential learning incorporates problem solving learning, student generated education, the inclusion of the community, and the application of information to real life situations throughout the learning process.

Experiential learning takes on many forms based on different fields of study. Science courses often include labs where students apply their learned information to specific experiments. Literature courses explore texts and often act out scenes and recite verse. In political science, there is a movement to support various aspects of experiential learning, some employed for decades and new ideas based on problem solving learning. This paper explores these past, current and new trends of experiential learning emerging out of the political science field as observed at this

year's American Political Science Association's Teaching and Learning Conference in Washington, DC, but certainly not unique to this discipline. While some aspects of these learning tools have a direct link to politics, every discipline potentially can benefit from these experiences.

Leaving the Classroom: Involving the Community in Education

One age-old experiential learning tool involves leaving the classroom or the teaching/learning space to explore the "real world" of politics. In some cases, this may involve internships or activist involvement. Laurel Elder,<sup>1</sup> Andrew Seligsohn, and Daniel Hofrenning explored the use of direct participation in the political process through the New Hampshire Presidential primary during a J-term, a January four week term similar to SUA's Block term. During these four weeks, students and professors traveled to New Hampshire just prior to the Presidential primary in 2004. Students volunteered their time on various campaigns, from Kucinich, Kerry, and Edwards, to Bush/Cheney. Students manned the phones, participated in rallies, and stood on street corners in freezing temperatures, holding signs for their candidates. Students and professors also had the opportunity to dialogue with a number of political and professional leaders. Students kept weekly journals and were graded on group presentations, papers, participation and appropriate behavior, along with their internship. A pre-/post-survey revealed that besides an increased understanding of politics, the political efficacy of students increased as they believed that policy makers did care about what young people think. Direct involvement in the political process resulted in

a greater understanding of the presidential campaign, an increased belief in the political process, and a developed sense of one's civic duty.

Students also gain an understanding of politics when they interact directly with the public and bureaucracies in activist efforts to change policy. Mark O'Gorman and Patricia Siplon both relate how they incorporated activism into the "classroom." O'Gorman encouraged his environmental policy class to find an on-campus policy to address, forcing students to enter into the policy making process. Students involved themselves with the building of a gazebo on campus, interacting with the designer and builders, as well as the administration, on where, how, and when the gazebo would be built, and what materials should be used. Students learned that activism often faces the invested interests of policy makers and bureaucracies, and that good negotiation goes a long way in realizing activist goals. Siplon took activism in education a step further and, after extensive required course work, traveled to East Africa for two weeks to fight directly the HIV/AIDS epidemic in this region. Siplon reports that students return from this trip energized to continue the fight, with a better understanding of the human costs, and the determination to raise awareness in their communities and campuses. Again, the politics involved in taking action inform students' future actions and create a better understanding of the compromises often necessary when seeking to achieve a political goal.

In each of these examples, leaving the classroom enables students to interact with communities, a tenant of Makiguchi's educational system, in order to gain real-world knowledge that enhances and furthers the information learned in the classroom. Yet, limitations restrict the ability for teachers and students to involve themselves in learning outside the classroom. Time constraints, limits on funding, lack of background

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<sup>1</sup> All presentations discussed here are based on papers found in the works cited section of this paper.

knowledge, personal limitations, limited opportunities and unforeseen barriers make learning experiences beyond the classroom inapplicable to every classroom. Luckily, numerous other experiential learning methods exist.

### Simulating Reality in the Classroom

Simulations, or games, often create an environment that challenges students to think beyond the classroom, incorporates learned information, and resolves problems in as real a situation as possible when leaving the classroom isn't possible. Simulations take different forms and may have a variety of goals, but all offer students the opportunity to "become" an actor in an event or political process. Nancy Biggio, Bruce Wallin and Marni Ezra seek to explain the process of policy making and the influence of external effects: Biggio incorporated the information processing of foreign policy experts into her class design; Wallin introduced students to the complexities of congressional policy making; and Ezra created the opportunity for students to better understand the context and manipulation of information in the White House media. These types of simulations place the students as actors in the policy making process, provide a prompt or policy problem, and then allow students to solve the problem through those means learned throughout the course. For instance, this author also employs simulations in her course with the goal of enlightening students to the complexities and difficulties in the policy making process. In an introduction to international relations course, a typical simulation would evolve from current international events. The most recent simulation in the intro to IR course at SUA involved the assassination of Kim Jong Il, leader of North Korea, and the resulting vacuum of power and struggle over leadership within that country, how this crisis affected

surrounding countries, and the possible threat posed by unsecured nuclear weapons in North Korea. Even though SUA students are close and enjoy a unique camaraderie, they commented on the difficulty in coming to a consensus, how their own actions as decision makers made them feel "bad" about themselves as they had co-opted into an aggressive, self-help, power-driven stance, and how external effects and the lack of information almost derailed the entire diplomatic process. Even though case studies often relay this type of information and instructors inform students on diplomatic difficulties, the "real-world" hands on experience of simulations provides a better understanding of the complexities involved in policy making or in resolving problems.

Other classroom projects, not exactly simulations, can incorporate the basic principles of simulations to enhance student learning. Victoria Williams provided students with individual actor prompts on "people" living during the Cold War period. The students then developed family histories and futures based on these prompts, reflecting students' understanding of the events and experiences of the Cold War in the U.S. Students then shared these experiences throughout the course and culminated their research with individual projects. Some students contacted individuals whom their "person" represented to gain first hand knowledge, while others used vintage magazines and journals to understand this era's culture and experiences. Students sought to immerse themselves in their person and understand the experiences of individuals during the Cold War, from soldiers to housewives, from black activists to gay and lesbian intellectuals. Sometimes an uncomfortable process, students often explored experiences beyond their knowledge, gaining an understanding of "others" in America.

In this way, simulations offer less expensive and more applicable means for incorporating “real-life” experiences and problem solving learning into the education process. Such tools for learning push students to take the reins of their education and become involved in knowledge acquisition. Yet, there is the problem of how much time to give up from the traditional lecture/discussion teaching format to simulations, and how applicable simulations are to the real world. Real stakes of defeat or poor policy making often are beyond the scope of the classroom. In addition, disagreement over the grading of simulations exists: should students be graded on a poor outcome or on their involvement level? Do instructors grade on participation when involvement differs due to actor description? How do instructors counter students who see no value in simulations and fail to adequately play their role, dooming the simulation to failure? Simulation success often relies upon instructor involvement to guide the simulation, but student involvement is instrumental to a positive learning outcome. Nevertheless, simulations incorporate student generated learning, create a hands on process for learning, focuses on problem solving learning, and offers insight into real world situations that the student will face in the future, all aspects of Makiguchi’s vision for student centered humanistic learning.

Innovative Learning Processes  
in the Classroom

Beyond internships, activism, and simulations, innovative teaching also offers a process whereby students participate in their own learning. Rosemary Shinko relates her teaching methods as a function of problem solving learning. Shinko utilizes small group discussions as a means for students to gain an understanding of course material. Students then relay their information and partake in a larger dialogue across groups, determining the

“truth” of their discoveries. Each section focuses on theory, reality, and case studies to inform the students. Short essays, papers and portfolios round out the learning process. The instructor acts as a facilitator to the students’ learning, guiding and directing the learning path, clarifying information when needed. Yet, the student is the protagonist in the learning process, not the object-receiver of information.

Paul Dosh adds upon this interactive process by suggesting a “Montessori”-type of education system developed for university students. Dosh experienced the Montessori schools as an elementary student and suggests that this same student centered and active learning system could be developed for college students. Students would learn in a classroom set up for political science (or history, social science, cultural studies, etc.), a room that includes maps, works by the professors, tools for taking political action; a comfortable learning center. Students take courses in a two course step. The first semester they are led by a peer group who took the instructor’s course the prior semester. The peer group leaders involve themselves in the development of the course, lead class discussions, develop simulations, and teach the new student cohort the peer group leadership process. Not only do students gain a hands-on learning opportunity, but they also experience the process of developing the course and the resulting outcome.

While these innovative teaching and learning methods offer exciting new ideas for students and teachers, there are some limits to their incorporation. Repeating the same learning system throughout the course, no matter how innovative, may still result in a perception of mundane information processing. In addition, while the Montessori system has several promising aspects, it runs into the same constraints as does Makiguchi’s educational system: how to apply a vision meant for elementary education to the university level. Yet, the inclusion of students

into the education process, peer group guidance, and a hands-on method of education support Makiguchi's vision of a humanist educational system that focuses on the student.

#### Outcomes of Experiential Learning

Experiential learning adds to students' educational experience, benefiting both the student and the communities. Students engage in the learning process, become excited about learning, which then spills over into other courses. Experiential learning may even motivate the struggling student towards greater academic success. Experiential learning often sparks a fire in a student who then goes on to excel in their academic career. Students may also find their calling in life, committing themselves to the betterment of the community. Students with a mission of becoming contributive members of a global community may better understand this mission through experiential learning. Students also learn to take responsibility for their education, developing a love of learning and becoming life-long learners, also a goal of Soka education. Experiential learning incorporates an egalitarian teaching-learning process, one that reduces the hierarchal structures between teachers and students, creating a more holistic educational system.

Furthermore, student learning often peaks at the course final, with the knowledge learned slowly leaving the student after the end of the course. Experiential learning not only makes the information real for the student, but stimulates students to continue their learning. In addition, students increase their ability to solve real life problems as they are provided opportunities to solve problems in the classroom through experiential learning. Students learn to question information,

critically think about what may be reality, and consider various points of view. Students may even change their views of the world, incorporating new ideas based on their hands on learning or interaction with real world events. What they thought was the reality of the world, possibly an idealistic perception of what ought to be, transforms into an understanding of the complexity of human endeavor and an enhanced ability to determine solutions to problems. Furthermore, teachers also benefit from the experiential learning process by enhancing their teaching experience, promoting student-teacher interaction, sparking excitement in teacher learning, and informing teachers through student projects. Experiential learning addresses all aspects of the vision set by Makigushi for Soka education.

#### Conclusion

As Soka Education in its application to a small liberal arts college develops, experiential learning must become a mainstay in the educational system's development. Experiential learning focuses on student centered learning, problem solving, student involvement in course development, and life-long learning. While experiential learning is not the only means for actualizing Makiguchi's vision, it must be a major piece. The benefits of experiential learning influence the student, teacher, university and community. The learning process becomes real for the student, not just an academic exercise, resulting in a continued desire to learn after the course has ended. Makiguchi and Ikeda's visions of Soka Education actualize through experiential learning, a method that produces contributive members of a global society.

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## **Makiguchi & Freire: The role of education in social change**

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**Soka Education: Present and Future  
Soka University of America  
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Today, different nations are experiencing social transformation followed by an urge for implementing a different type of education (Shackman et al., 2004). Education plays a significant role in terms of leading social changes in a positive course (McLaren, 2000). There is a call for an education that empowers common people to make a difference in their individual societies (Ikeda, 2001b). Furthermore, in global politics, there is a need for mutual understanding, respect for the dignity of life and respect towards individual differences (Ikeda, 2001a). There is a need for justice, for true freedom and a need to illuminate concepts such as interconnectedness among nations, and among individuals (McLaren, 2000). Education must reflect a fresh perspective towards global civilization. In fact, education should create leaders who uphold global values and that can foresee a peaceful future for the entire world (Ikeda, 2001b).

On the other hand, although education can be used as an instrument of social justice and buttress against cultural hegemony, it can also be misused, manipulating and marginalizing people (Torres, 1994). In consequence, we should not neglect the importance of the role

of education in social transformation. Throughout history, we have seen and experienced the interrelation of society and education. In different points of time social changes have affected schools and, conversely, the way schools educate makes a difference on young people who later will be in charge of leading the world (McLaren, 2000).

Both Makiguchi and Freire underwent times of social change in their respective context. In the midst of these changes, they elucidated the core values they thought education should stand for. They concur that the main purpose of education should be to empower people and protect the well being of individuals (Bethel, 1994; Freire, 1998). They believed in a student-centered education in which teachers would be not authorities but facilitators in the learning process. They defined learning as a self discovery experience, and a way to connect people to one another (Bethel, 1989; Freire, 1970). Opposing to the marginalizing and manipulative educational systems of their times and countries, their respective proposed pedagogy fosters individuals who critically think about their reality and relate classroom experiences to daily life. (Bethel, 1989; Freire, 1969).



This paper is an attempt to define and understand the function of educational systems tasked with the important matter of fostering the new waves of citizens in society. Through an exploration of the educational theories of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871-1944) and Paulo Freire (1921-1997), this study sheds light on what should be the role of education in social change. Even though these two revolutionary educators were born and raised in completely different circumstances, their educational work has, among many differences, some important and interesting similarities. Most important for the present study, they both created their theories in times of intense political and social change within their respective countries (Bethel, 1994; Freire, 1998). I argue that because of their roots in social, political, and interpersonal transformation, Makiguchi's and Freire's theories of education, are among the best examples we look today of the proper role of education in society.

#### Makiguchi's background

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi was born in a village located in Niigata Prefecture on June, 1871 during the third year of the Meiji era (1868-1912). From age three, he was raised by an uncle, Zendayu Makiguchi, and his family. At age fourteen he moved out by himself to the city of Otaru in Hokkaido where he lived for some time with another uncle. His uncle was too poor to send him to high school so Makiguchi had to work as an errand boy in the police department while arduously studying for a government examination. Makiguchi's responsible attitude towards his studies and job impressed the chief of police who offered him the opportunity to move with him to Sapporo and enroll in Sapporo Normal School (Bethel, 1989).

After two years living in Sapporo, Makiguchi got accepted to Sapporo Normal School as a third-year student. Upon

graduation, Makiguchi was offered to work as a supervising teacher in the primary school which was part of the Normal school. A year after he began working in the primary school, Makiguchi got married to Kuma and had eight children, four girls and four boys. However, his four sons and one of his daughters died tragically at a young age. While imprisoned because of his refusal to cooperate in some religious ceremonies mandatory at the time, Makiguchi received the awful news that his remaining son had died in battle during World War II; soon after he heard the news Makiguchi died in prison on November 18, 1944 (Bethel, 1994).

#### Japan's sociopolitical situation at Makiguchi's time

At the time of Makiguchi's birth, Japan was living moments of political uncertainties. Japanese leaders and intellectuals were engaged in a strong debate on the direction the new nation should take. The results of the debate were in favor of the traditionalists and the Confucians (Bethel, 1994).

As explained by Bethel (1994), when Makiguchi began his career as a teacher, it was already decided the direction of the new Japan and, in consequence, the direction of the national education. Japan's education was to be based on the creation of loyal and obedient subjects who would devote their lives to the building of a new nation. Bethel cites Robert Epp (1969) on this matter saying that instead of encouraging freedom and equality, the orders were to be given from above; hence, the best builders of the new nation were obedient individuals.

In the midst of this political situation, Makiguchi did not directly criticize the educational policies from the government but rather condemned those educators who followed traditional and popular ideas without questioning them. In addition, instead of verbally denouncing his objection towards the

production of subjects through education he did so through his educational career. Moreover, the educational philosophy he kept preaching before the beginning of World War II was clearly in opposition to the governmental policies (Bethel, 1989).

Makiguchi's experience working in Sapporo Normal school, which was characterized by its rigid discipline, was crucial in the development of his educational ideas. In the school, laudable teachers were those who would obey command from the government. Makiguchi severely opposed to this militaristic education in which, as Bethel (1994) explains, he thought the creative potential of the children was destroyed. As a geography teacher, Makiguchi believed the relation of people and land to be of greatest importance. He believed geography could be the core of the elementary school curriculum. As a result of his passionate belief, he wrote a geography book for elementary teachers which he later called "A Geography of Human Life" (Bethel, 2002).

Through different interactions with university-educated elite of Japanese society who develop educational theories Makiguchi realized their lack of understanding towards practical problems teachers face in the classroom. Therefore, Makiguchi encouraged teachers to develop their own pedagogy based on their teaching experiences. In addition, Makiguchi tirelessly protested against the common favoritism to the children of wealthy families emphasizing the importance of equal rights among students (Bethel, 1994).

Theory of Value Creation Education:  
influence and implementation

Makiguchi's most important work was the development of the System of Value- Creating Pedagogy, in Japanese Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei. This theory was the product of accumulated notes from Makiguchi's elementary-school work. His ideas of

pedagogy and philosophy of education came out of his own experiences as a teacher. In his value-creating pedagogy, he emphasized the importance of the interconnection of family, school and society in the learning process (Bethel, 1994).

Makiguchi believed that the uniqueness of human beings lays on their ability to create value. Moreover, he believed that the attainment and creation of value is in itself happiness, hence, it should be the ultimate goal of human life (Ikeda, 2001b). In his theory, Makiguchi explains the distinction between truth and value saying that truth means making epistemological statements about an object while value relates the object to the man. Furthermore, Makiguchi stated that truth can never change while values can (Bethel, 2004).

Makiguchi expounded on beauty, gain and goodness as the three elements of value. He explained beauty as a temporary and emotional value deriving from the senses. Gain, on the other hand, as an individual value that comes from the relationship between an individual and an object which contributes to the preservation and progress of his or her life. The third element is goodness, a social value which relates to the deliberate actions of individuals to contribute to society (Bethel, 1994). Most importantly in Makiguchi's theory is the development of a balance between individual gains and social goodness (Bethel, 1989). Thus, the skills to develop this balance should be the main purpose of education (Bethel, 1994). In other words, for Makiguchi the main purpose of education should be the creation of individuals who seek for personal happiness and the happiness of others through the creation of value.

In his theory, Makiguchi expounded the structure of an education that aims towards the balance between individual happiness and social contribution. In order to accomplish this, he explained, it is necessary to change the traditional way of teaching through

fragmented subjects. Instead, he said, the different disciplines should be used as means to study the meaning of life itself, hence, this gives a meaning to what and why you are studying. When the subject matters are unrelated to life the purpose of studying loses importance and meaning (Bethel, 1994).

Makiguchi believed that each individual has a unique potential that should be developed and expanded through education. The role of teachers in the process of learning is to facilitate individuals' self-discovery and acknowledgement of their own unique potential. Additionally, instead of teachers transmitting knowledge to students Makiguchi putted forth emphasis on dialogue as a tool for teachers and students to engage in the learning experience (Ikeda, 2001b).

#### Freire's background

Paulo Freire was born and raised in the Northeast part of Brazil. As Makiguchi, Freire grew up in a rural area, many times experiencing poverty and hunger. When Freire was 10 years old he had to move to Jaboaata, near his natal town of Recife, as a consequence of the world economic crisis of 1929 which greatly affected the Northeast part of Brazil. Three years later, Freire's father passed away and his mother went through the burden of sustaining Freire and his siblings by herself (McLaren, 2000).

When Freire was in high school his mother was unable to continue paying the tuition and convinced the owner of the school to accept Freire as a scholarship student. Freire then continued his studies at the private high school and at age 14 began teaching Portuguese grammar in that same school. At the same time, he spent time with children and teenagers from poor rural families who lived in his neighborhood. From attending a private school and spending time with friends of low socioeconomic resources, Freire was able to experience and understand the effects of

socioeconomic status on education (Freire, 1998).

Later on, in 1934, Freire began his studies in Law School at the University of Recife. While studying there, he met his first wife Elza Costa de Oliviera, who was an elementary school teacher and with whom he eventually had five children. She passed away in 1986 and Freire remarried two years later to Ana Maria Hasche, who continues to be actively involved on educational issues. Elza, Freire's first wife, encouraged him to become an educator, thus, Freire at the same time as finishing his studies on Law got involved in educational matters and acquired teaching experience in several educational institutions. This background gave him the opportunity to become the Director of Education at the Social Service Industry (SESI) which is an institution in Brazil dedicated to help workers and their families. In addition, in 1947 he joined the Movement of Popular Culture (Freire, 1998).

Fifteen years later, Freire's theory was applied for the first time having outstanding results. Moreover, Freire's literary program helped 300 farm workers learn how to read and write in only 45 days. These workers were learning how to read and write based on their day to day experiences. As the literacy worker, Freire lived with the groups of rural farmers and learnt generative words which were socially meaningful and relative to them. It was with a dialogical and revolutionary praxis that Freire was able to make happen such a success (McLaren, 2000).

In 1964 Freire was named director of Brazil's National Literacy Program. However, as a result of the military coup that overthrew Joao Goulart, Freire was imprisoned for 70 days as a traitor. When liberated, he became aware that the new military government represented a life threat to him; thus, he traveled to Rio de Janeiro and asked for political asylum at Bolivia's embassy. The political asylum was conceded but he stayed in Bolivia for a short period of time. In that same

year he began his self-imposed exile living in Chile for five years. He became really active in Chile's Ministry of Education, specifically with two organizations related to agricultural improvement and land reform (Freire, 1998).

Five years later, Freire was appointed as a visiting professor in Harvard University's Center of Educational and Developmental Studies. He then was invited to move to Switzerland, as consultant to the Office of Education of the World Council of Churches, where he aid in the development of literacy programs for Tanzania and Guinea-Bissau. Additionally, Freire contributed to the development of literary programs of other South American and African countries. Freire's exile was obviously important in spreading his theory of literacy program around the world (McLaren, 2000).

In 1979, Freire visited Brazil under political amnesty and finally returned to Brazil the following year to teach at the Pontifica Universidade Catolica de Sao Paulo in Sao Paulo. Also, he continued his literacy work throughout the world in countries such as Italy, Fiji Islands and Angola. Most importantly, in the following year of 1980, he joined the Socialist Democratic Party in Brazil, also known as the Worker Party or PT, which won the municipal elections in 1989. At that time, Freire was appointed Municipal Secretary of Education for Sao Paulo. From 1989 till 1991, Freire developed and continued a radical agenda of literacy in Sao Paulo. He also led reforms on school curriculum around critical community issues (Torres, 1994).

#### Brazil's sociopolitical situation at Freire's time

When Freire was born, a revolution was taking place on the streets of Brazil. Throughout his childhood, Freire was living in a country surrounded by labor unrest, protest from army officers, the world depression, and the dreadful crisis of the coffee economy. A combination of all of these events gave an end

to Brazil's Old Republic bringing Getulio Vargas to the presidency in 1930. Constitutional and, in consequence, sociopolitical changes were overruling the nation. On the whole, the rural lower classes were politically excluded and the urban lower classes were controlled. This was the political environment that welcomed Freire into the world (Almond et al., 2004).

By the time Freire had accumulated much of his revolutionary educational ideas, Brazil's political system was more than straining. During the early 1960s, the elites were threatened by the leftist rhetoric of the then president Joao Goulart, who by 1964 was advocating revolutionary changes in the countryside and in the Congress. Indeed it was his leftist lined actions what led the Brazilian military to deposed him and institute military rule. Consequently, the new bureaucratic-authoritarian regime repressed any movement associated with left wing ideas, including Freire's educational ideology. It was this military repression that encouraged Freire to move out of the country to protect himself (Almond et al., 2004).

Nevertheless, the military regime did not eliminate elections and representative institutions. In fact, even though the abolishment of existing parties, there were still elections for mayors, national and state legislators, and for most of the regime the Congress was still in session. This was what ultimately allowed the 1989 elections in which the Workers Party won the municipal power of Sao Paulo and Freire was appointed as Municipal Secretary of Education (Torres, 1994). These elections marked the establishment of a democracy in Brazil after 20 years of military regime (Almond et al., 2004).

#### Theory of political literacy: influence and implementation

Freire is considered by many one of the most influential thinkers on education in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. He is well known among informal educators because of his dialogical approach and contribution to understanding the relationship between education and issues of political and social change (McLaren, 2000).

Freire's pedagogy of literacy is based on the premise of not only "reading the word but also reading the world." In other words, Freire emphasized the idea that while becoming literate individuals must also learn about the interplay of meaning and history rooted in language. Thus, he often referred to the concept of praxis as linked to certain values that must be understood. In this way, Freire taught that is not only the words that should be taught but also their meaning in the life of each individual or group (Freire, 1998).

Freire explained that the way to do this is for individuals to develop a critical consciousness. Through learning how to read and write students expand and refine their critical awareness on sociopolitical issues and the environment surrounding them. In addition, Freire defined this development of critical consciousness as *conscientization*. Students develop the capacity to critically analyze their social reality and, furthermore, acquire power to transform their reality. This participatory role of students was particularly vital in the creation of a democratic society Brazil was undertaking (Freire, 1969).

The role of educators in this process of *conscientization* is of supreme importance. Freire described a dialogical exchange between teachers and students in which they both learn, question and participate in meaning making. The teacher, though, first mingles in the community learning about the people and learning the words used in daily activities to understand the social reality of students. Even though the description of teachers seems to be as one of facilitator Freire emphasized, on an active and responsible role of the teacher in the educational process. Freire was opposed to

what he called the "banking" educational system in which educators make "deposits" in the students (Freire, 1970). On the contrary, he proposed a pedagogy in which educators were also students and students were also educators engaging in meaningful dialogues (McLaren, 2000).

### Common ideas

There are three main key concepts that are common between Makiguchi's and Freire's theories of education. The first one is what Makiguchi refers to as *political consciousness* meaning individuals who have a clear understanding of the political structures of their surroundings; they also have a sense of political responsibility and are politically active in and outside election periods (Bethel, 1989). The second common concept is what Freire calls *critical minded* individuals who have a vivacity of searching and inventing within reality; they also have a clear understanding of true causality and are able to analyze it (Freire, 1969). The third common concept in Makiguchi's and Freire's theories is that of being an *awakened* person (Bethel, 1989). Makiguchi refers to awakened individuals as those who can critically understand the political and social atmosphere that they are part of, thus, understanding and acting following their duty and responsibility in society; they also believe they have the power to transform their environment.

Both Makiguchi and Freire emphasized the importance of students developing an active and participatory relation with their social environment. They both asserted that the passive classroom approach in education needs to be changed to an approach that directly connects reality with classroom education and vice versa. In this way, students are able to bring their life experiences to classes and what they are learning in classes they can carry it into their life outside school. Their educational experience then becomes

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more meaningful and useful. Moreover, education becomes a tool to understand our environment and to grasp on how we can positively impact the environment through daily actions. It is with this kind of pedagogy

that fear or laziness to participate in one's society and political issues vanishes and the youthful passion and responsibility to positively change our environment is developed throughout time.

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