7th Annual Soka Education Conference

Soka University of America, Pauling 216

February 19-21, 2011
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The Soka Education Student Research Project is an autonomous organization at Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, California.

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# Soka Education Conference 2011 Program

Pauling 216

**Day 1: Saturday, February 19th**

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Dear Guests, Faculty, Staff, and Students of Soka University of America (SUA),

Our seventh annual Soka Education Conference will take place on February 19th, 20th and 21st, 2011. This year, the conference will be extended to three days due to an unprecedented number of proposals. In addition, Soka Education Student Research Project has decided to hold this year’s conference without a theme to allow for a greater variety of topics and to develop a more expansive understanding of Soka education. This year also marks the celebration of two major milestones: the 80th anniversary of the founding of Soka education (on November 18th, 2010) and the 10th anniversary of the founding of Soka University of America (on May 3rd, 2011).

This conference will present the work of students and scholars both associated and unassociated with SUA. Mr. Gonzalo Obelleiro, Mr. Simon Hoffding, and Ms. Nozomi Inukai look at the issues with translations of Makiguchi’s works. Mr. Garrett Braun looks at the development of rural areas through his experience volunteering in El Salvador. Hip Hop Congress (represented by Ms. Simone Barclay and Mr. Ryan Hayashi) has compared Hip Hop and Soka education as means of empowerment for students. Mr. Kenji Yamada defines global citizenship through Soka education. Mr. Kevin Kan, Ms. Yui Takishima, and Mr. Patrick Noon form a panel to explore Soka education and the environment. Mr. Jean Marcus Silva writes about the power of failing and of breaking outside expectations. Ms. Jihii Jolly has looked into value creative subjectivity and journalism through Makiguchi’s concepts. Mr. Menelik Tafari analyzes a course entitled *El Hombre y Juegos* to explain experiential learning and how pedagogies of experience can help education today. Mr. Tyko Shoji, Mr. Scott Williams, and Mr. Ryan Hayashi write about Soka education in technology and the value of scientific education. Ms. Nozomi Inukai uses interviews from scholars to examine Chinese education, as well as Soka education research initiatives in China. Dr. Namrata Sharma takes the work of Gandhi and Makiguchi as examples to discuss relevant issues in understanding citizenship education. Mr. Gonzalo Obelleiro and Ms. Karina Kleiman write about the concept of appreciation in Soka education and explore unsuspected meanings, connections, and uncharted philosophical terrains. Mr. Simon Hoffding attempts to define the conditions of creativity using Descartes, Kant, Leibniz and Daisaku Ikeda. Workshops and Special Interest Groups will also be facilitated by various SUA students, faculty, and alumni, with the goal of increasing audience dialogue and interaction at the conference and providing the venue to discuss particular facets of Soka education.

We sincerely hope that this conference will expand the research on Soka pedagogy and explore its applicability in a variety of different fields. This year, we are honored to welcome keynote speaker Dr. Jason Goulah, assistant professor of Bilingual-Bicultural Education and director of world language education in the department of leadership, language, and curriculum at DePaul University. His research interests include transformative world language learning as well as Makiguchi and Ikeda studies. We would like to use this year’s conference as a significant milestone to look back on the eighty years since Makiguchi established Soka education as well as a point of departure for further exploration, research, and collaboration.

Thank you for your continued interest and support of the conference.

Sincerely,

Soka Education Student Research Project
Soka Education Conference Committee
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<tr>
<th><strong>Dr. Jason Goulah</strong> is Assistant Professor of Bilingual-Bicultural Education and Director of the World Language Education in the Department of Leadership, Language and Curriculum at DePaul University. He holds a Ph.D. (University at Buffalo) in second and foreign language curriculum and instruction, an M.Ed. in teaching English to speakers of other languages, an LLM (Kwansei Gakuin University, Japan) in fundamental laws, and a B.A. (University at Buffalo) in Japanese and Russian languages and cultural studies. He served as a research and translation fellow in Makiguchi Studies at Soka University, Tokyo (2008). His research interests include transformative world language learning, Makiguchi and Ikeda studies in education, and language, culture, identity and multiple literacies. His scholarship on Soka education and Makiguchi and Ikeda studies has appeared in numerous edited volumes and scholarly journals.</th>
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<td><strong>Menelik Tafari</strong> is a junior at Soka University of America and alumnus of CCHS, and has spent the last seven years working with various community action programs, organizations, and networks to improve the quality of life for youth and communities. His research focuses on experiments in education that aim to transform communities. The foundation of his personal pedagogy begins by acknowledging educational institutions as the truest center for critical community action. His current project is developing a community action and research programs center for high school and undergraduate students that would provide leadership training and a peer network of activists.</td>
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<td><strong>Dr. Namrata Sharma</strong> has a Bachelor degree from Delhi University, Masters in Education from Soka University, Tokyo, and a Ph.D. and Post-doctorate from the Institute of Education, University of London. Dr. Sharma has special interests in Intercultural Education, with subsidiary interests in International and Comparative Education and Development Education in relation to youth education. She has authored two books, several papers, and articles in relation to education in India, Japan and the UK. As part of her research in education, Dr. Sharma has conducted studies on the system of education in Japan, India, UK and USA, and is conducting observational studies in schools in Tokyo and New Delhi.</td>
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<td><strong>Simon Hoffding</strong> is a SUA graduate from the class of '08. After leaving SUA, he went to Liverpool, North England to further pursue his interest in philosophy doing an M.A. program. A year later, he returned to his hometown, Copenhagen, Denmark, beginning a second M.A. in philosophy while hunting for open Ph.D. spots. He has a burning passion for phenomenology and especially for questions pertaining to the constitution of the Self, of intentionality, and of perception of time and space. He also spends time studying and trying to apply Soka education, so he really looks forward to this 2011 Soka Education Conference. In his spare time, he plays the cello, cooks, listens to all kinds of music, goes for a run, and even goes bird watching.</td>
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<td><strong>Gonzalo Obelleiro</strong> is a doctoral student in Philosophy and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. His research focuses on Daisaku Ikeda’s Philosophy of Cosmopolitan Education. Gonzalo graduated from Soka University of America in 2005 receiving the first Founders Award from Soka University of America, and in 2008 became an education fellow of the Ikeda Center for Peace, Learning and Dialogue. Currently, Gonzalo is an Innovation Fellow at EdLab, Teachers College, Columbia University, where he coordinates research, design and development projects at the intersection of education, communications technology and information design.</td>
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<td>Nozomi Inukai</td>
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Jihii Jolly was born in India and raised in New York, two cultural backdrops that facilitated the development of her passions for spicy food and writing, respectively. Her childhood yearning to be a member of SUA’s class of 2011 was actualized in 2007, leading her to believe that individual life dreams are quite attainable and attention should be given to more expansive world-changing feats—which she is still building up the confidence to commence. Through her studies, her time serving as Editor-in-Chief of The Pearl Student News Magazine, and writing experiences with a number of news and literary blogs, she’s convinced herself that Soka education ought to be the foundation for every aspiring journalist and her paper for this conference is her first venture into the articulation of this conviction. Post-graduation, she intends to study cultural writing and communications in New York, and is most excited to continue to explore the nuances of Soka education from outside SUA’s sunny little bubble.

Julie Nagashima received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Soka University of America and her Master of Arts in Social and Comparative Analysis in Education from the University of Pittsburgh. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D. at the University of Pittsburgh. Her most recent research interest is examining Soka education in practice. Since Fall 2006, she has also been working as Educational Program Coordinator for the InterCultural House, a non-profit organization committed to providing academic and service-learning programs for undergraduate and graduate students.

Yui Takishima joined Soka University of America as part of the first class of Extended University Bridge Program in 2007 and later became part of the class of 2012 at the same university. At the age of ten, being deeply distressed by the decreasing population of Siberian tigers and panda bears in the eastern Eurasia Continent due to habitat loss, she decided to devote her life to nature conservation. Since then, she has been exploring a variety of environmental studies in Tokyo and California. She also sought to see the reality of nature conservation during her study abroad experience in Ecuador, South America and became involved in a Fair Trade NPO, Fundación Runa as an intern. Now her study interests include deep ecology, ecosystem conservation and the United Nations Environment Program. She hopes to continue her education in the field of biodiversity conservation and management in graduate school.

Kevin (Cheng-Kuan) Kan is currently one of the Environmental Department chairs at Soka. Coming from Taiwan, where learning serves the interest of national development, Kevin received a very informative education. In Taiwan, students memorize knowledge they may never use again, spend an average of eight hours a day studying during high school, and often continue lessons at cram school or supplemental schools for another two to three hours. Seeing this situation of many of his classmates and friends, Kevin started helping as a teacher assistant at Lion School Cultural and Educational Foundation since high school, where he learned teaching skills and became passionate about teaching. Kevin currently works part-time as a tutor for the Chinese language at SUA and is interested in environmental education.

Patrick Noon, originally from Northern California, is a 2006 graduate of the second class of SUA. Since graduating, he has been following his passions in organic farming, travelling, alternative medicine, nutrition education, Hip Hop, and jazz. He is currently a teacher at the Monticello Academy in Santa Clara, where he enjoys teaching kids gardening and chess among a variety of subjects. He is dedicated to teaching children about their relationship to the earth and hopes that in this century humankind will drastically change their relationship to the natural world.
Kenji Yamada is currently a senior at Soka University of America. Although he is still very early in his academic career, he is thankful for all the faculty members at Soka University who awakened in him a lifelong desire to learn. In particular, he acknowledges a series of outstanding teachers who helped form the basis of his education: James Williams, Robert Allinson, James Spady, Marie-Rose Logan, Mark Kirchner, Aneil Rallin, and Jim Merod. After graduating, Kenji hopes to pursue international human rights law as well as pursue his interests of running, reading, capoeira, photography, art, cooking, eating, and foreign languages.

Jean Marcus Silva looks forward to his final semester at SUA happening in Taiwan on Study Abroad. His academic interests include free trickstry by the docks. From a family of Hungarian exiled secret agents, Jean comes to us from his home in Rio de Janeiro. He will sedate you with his intoxicating symphony of Brazilian-accented discourse on Failure. He is currently constructing three novels simultaneously, all three of different genres. Keep an open mind and prepare yourselves for the mental ejaculation he will incur on you with his sultry voice and enlightened reason.

Simone Barclay was born and raised in Newport News, Virginia and is currently studying abroad in Nanjing, China, as part of the junior class of 2012 at Soka University of America. Throughout her time at Soka, she has been able to explore and write about alternative educational methods due to her many engaging classes, powerful learning cluster experience in India, and diverse internships and volunteer opportunities. Because of this, she developed a passion for education and educational pedagogy that she hopes to pursue in graduate school. As a member of Hip Hop Congress, she helped to organize the 2010 conference Elements of Change which has allowed her to promote social justice through the positive messages within Hip Hop music. By combining these two areas of interest, she looks forward to be able to develop alternative pedagogies that can overcome and revolutionize the crippling educational system in America.

Karina Kleiman is currently a Ph.D. candidate and an Assistant Professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem’s Humanities Department. She received her M.A. from the Philosophy and Education program at Teachers College, Columbia University. She was the first president of SESRP, the Soka Education Student Research Project, which aims to inspire individuals seeking humanistic education. Her core research interest is in the history of educational philosophy, especially in the debates about education in the Socratic dialogues and its intersection with Soka education. As a fellow of the leading Research Institute for Peace in the Middle East, she is currently engaged in a collaborative project about dialogue and education.

Sabrina Kataoka is currently a second year graduate student in UC Irvine’s Ph.D. in Education program, specializing in learning, cognition, and development. In 2008, she graduated from Soka University of America. Seeing how wonderful an impact a humanistic, well-rounded university education had on her development inspired her to work for the quality education of others. Sabrina’s research focuses on how the healthy development of children and youth can be fostered in diverse educational contexts. Particularly, her passion lies in understanding how the social relationships in children’s lives can positively influence their learning and development. In addition, she is interested in examining how after-school activities can enhance the educational and overall development of children and youth. Her recent research findings will be presented next month at the Society for Research in Child Development Conference in Montreal, Canada.

Kristi M. Wilson is an Assistant Professor and the Director of the Writing Program at Soka University of America where she teaches writing, rhetoric and humanities. Dr. Wilson founded the Stanford Film Lab and taught humanities, writing and rhetoric at Stanford University for 9 years before coming to Soka University. She is the co-editor of "Italian Neorealism and Global Cinema" (Wayne State University Press 2007) and author of numerous essays in such journals as Screen, Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature, Signs, and Literature/Film Quarterly. Her latest co-edited collection, "Film and Genocide" will be published by the University of Wisconsin Press later this year.
El Hombre, Juegos, and Pedagogies of Experience

Menelik Tafari

Class of 2012

“Of the uncompleted beings, man is the only one to treat not only his actions but his very self as the object of this reflection…” – Paulo Freire

Abstract

The mini ethno-methodological research design of this investigation recognizes the imperative of further developing pedagogies of experience, integral to the next era in educative endeavors for learners of all ages. Through ethnographic analysis of the two courses titled “El Hombre y los Juegos,” conducted through La Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, this paper aims to better understand how pedagogies of experience may be incorporated to improve education today. Comparison of the findings with the curriculum from the Anti-Defamation League is used to better understand how experience can be reflected upon for educative purposes in educational settings. The participants of the study are the two professors of the course. Interviews with students from the courses were utilized to corroborate or contradict the information provided by the subjects. Detailed individual interviews, conducted in Spanish, were the main technique that was used to collect information for this research and were done in-person using a tape recorder; all quotes from these interviews derive from translation by the investigator. Closure for interviews with the two subjects was directed by saturation criteria. Observation of one of the parallels was also used to accompany the interviews. To
provide a format for the paper, the results are presented using the process outlined in David A. Kolb’s “Experiential Learning Cycle” (1984). The four elements of the cycle are Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation. In Concrete Experience and Reflective Observation, three categorical elements are expounded to distinguish the course and pedagogies of experience: Individual or Communal experience; Control of the Objective Conditions and Desired Outcomes; and the Dynamics of the Reconstruction of said experience(s). Under Abstract Conceptualization, the paper discusses how structured experiences are encounters that develop intra-personal awareness and interpersonal relations. The Active Experimentation stage concludes with postulations on how pedagogies of experience could be used to further facilitate participants’ confrontation of their lives and a proposal to re-imagine programs such as this one as a form of therapy for individuals and communities.

Key Words: Pedagogy of experience, experiential learning, intercultural education, student-directed learning

Introduction

Within the majority of rhetoric found during the contemporary epoch in pedagogy, it is easy to see a strong criticism that schools do not prepare students for their lives, to work, or for their futures in general. At the heart of this problem we can see that there is a drastic separation between the experiences students confront in schools and their actual lived experience. I believe that it is unwise to continue revising education; we need a completely new prototype. We must begin to experiment with other options; we must reemphasize the first pedagogy for of humankind, the pedagogy of experience. In this investigation my primary question is: How may we incorporate pedagogies of experience into more educative systems? But before creating suggestions, it is important to understand pedagogies of experience. The questions that spring forth are: What do courses based upon this paradigm utilize for their course content? How do interpersonal relations between participants of the learning experiences differ from ‘traditional’ classrooms? What types of experiences create value in the lives of the participants? What do pedagogies of experience value? And the most important question; what reflection processes are utilized so that the experiences constructed are educative? My objectives are to expound the elements of a pedagogy of experience, compare the dynamics of interpersonal relations in the course with a ‘traditional’ pedagogical model, analyze how participants transform their experience and how they are transformed by their experience, and present ideas on how we can translate pedagogies of experience into educative systems today.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this mini ethno-methodological study is based upon three fundamental texts “Experience and Education” by John Dewey, “Education for Creative Living” by Tsunesaburō Makiguchi, and “Man’s Search for Meaning” by Viktor Frankl. With these texts will analyze the experiences of the course in two distinct ways; (1) its effects on the individual, and (2) its effects on the community.

Pedagogies of experience share two elements, an inauguration in experience and energized through reflection, analysis, and reconstruction of said experience. In the text “Experience and Education” by John Dewey, he asks, ‘How can an experience be educative or miseducative?’ What he finds is that experience is comprised of two defining components, Objective Conditions which make up the environment, meaning “whatever conditions interact with personal needs, desires, purposes, and capacities to create the experience which is had” and Internal Conditions which denote the introspective processes of the experience. Further, he states that there are two distinct and separate outcomes of experience; the first is whether or not the person experiencing liked or didn’t like the experience; or another way this can be seen is if the experience left them happy or unhappy. The second is how that experience falls into their continuity of experience, whether it negatively or positively affects future experiences; if an experience positively affects future experiences it was educative. Dewey postulates that within these two, the most important is the second. It’s easy to find fun or likeable experiences, but that does not necessarily mean they are educative. An educative experience “arouses curiosity, strengthens initiative, and sets up desires and purposes that are sufficiently intense to carry a person over dead places in the future”. Due to the short timeframe of this study, and the importance on long-term effects of experience as the nucleus for this definition, I will be using the philosophical foundations of Tsunesaburō Makiguchi, Daisaku Ikeda, and Viktor Frankl to connect this definition to short-term conclusions.

For Makiguchi and Ikeda, it is the project of the school to facilitate educative experiences which ‘create value’ for the subject and for the community. In this case, experiences which ‘create value’ animate
empathy (this animation of empathy is also known as ‘global citizenship’); Theoretically, our ability to define a value creative educative experience falls on whether or not it made the student or the community happier; unfortunately, this stance is at odds with the initial postulation of educative experience as defined by Dewey. And so, as a theoretical imperative, I will be uniting the two concepts with the philosophical proposals of logotherapy outlined by Frankl which postulate that humanity is animated to search for meaning through their lived experience and that the human being has the capacity to reflect and enunciate the experiences which create ‘meaning’ or ‘value’ for them. Utilizing this framework and the words of Dewey, I will be defining value-creative experience and educative experience as that which “arouses curiosity, strengthens initiative, and sets up desires and purposes that are sufficiently intense to carry a person over dead places in the future,” experiences which challenge accepted perceptions and responses.

To present the results of this investigation with a complete praxis, I will use a pedagogical model called the ‘Experiential Learning Cycle,’ a theoretical framework based upon the work of David A. Kolb (1984), to provide the format for the paper. The four elements of the cycle are Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation. In Concrete Experience and Reflective Observation, three categorical elements are expounded to distinguish the course and pedagogies of experience: Individual or Communal experience; Control of the Objective Conditions and Desired Outcomes; and the Dynamics of the Reconstruction of said experience(s). Under Abstract Conceptualization, the paper discusses how structured experiences are encounters that develop intra-personal awareness and interpersonal relations. The Active Experimentation stage concludes with postulations on how structured experiences could be used to facilitate inter-community dialogue and the (re)design communities.

Concrete Experience and Reflective Observation

El Hombre y los Juegos

Although the majority of courses at La Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso utilize a traditional pedagogy, where the course material is based upon the past, with books communicating the ideas and the teachers passing down norms of conduct, ensuring the docility, receptivity, and obedience of the students, the course “El Hombre y los Juegos” deals its own exemplar. Established as a general education course over thirty years ago, the principle objective of the course is “conocer, vivenciar y valorar el juego como una cosa humana,” or to “understand, experience, and value games as something deeply human.” This course focuses on those participating and “experiences in which they develop as people.” Here, games are used as a tool for personal and interpersonal development. “You can integrate even those with a disability, if you get them to play… We use games as an educative tool… it’s an element you utilize to unite people, people who are completely different.” That idea serves as the underpinning of the entire course; “if you play a game, you’ll ensure that those playing interact with each other, and well, that’s the goal.” The other goals of the course include relaxation, alleviation of stress, and intrapersonal understanding, each of which is developed under four pillars: “first, unveiling of creativity, which is a very potent thing in education. Two, promotion of the expressivity of each participant, or what I mean to say is the capacity to allow it to flourish. For example, if they need to act in a play, they need to speak and express themselves, or when one draws, to bestow form and color to communicate one’s essence to the outside world. The third element has to do with intercommunication, me finding myself with others. And the fourth, which is not fourth in importance, I would like to point out, is to provide these objectives through a spirited and joyful environment. “Games, at least with the emphasis that we give it, should leave you happy.”

Structured Experience: Individual and Communal

The program of the course initially begins with structured and communal experiences. Later on in the course, individual experiences are placed at the fore. To understand the experiences provided in this classroom it is important to understand these elements first. As I previously defined, each experience is an interaction between man and his environment, the internal conditions versus the external, objective conditions. Natural objective conditions cannot be altered by man, but when the human being attempts to provide an educative experience for others, what is being created, through rules of play, processes, or rituals, is a structured experience. If this interaction is prepared for more than one person it is defined as a communal structured experience.
In the first days of the course, the professors facilitate heavily motor, group structured experiences. “The first classes involve a lot of physical games... in which students work with their body, jumping, running, rolling, learning their bodies.” During a normal day, they start with a ‘calentamiento’, a warm-up exercise, which is determined based upon the type of game they’re going to play and how much energy the students bring with them. “If it’s a fast game, we’ll do something that provides a lot of stimulation, but if the game is calmer, the warm-up will be too... it all depends on how the group comes in,” the warm-up can include songs, a short game, or stretching, and “If we start really tired, exhausted, they’ll bring little energy to the activity, so we’ll need a faster game.” From there, after the ‘calentamiento’, either the professors or the students present a game. “During the course, we pass through distinct experiences,” including sculpting, playing music, and theatre. To break the ice with the group at the beginning of the semester, the professors present a game of theatre involving the seven deadly sins; “they had to pick groups, and then decide how they were to represent their respective sin, and all without talking.” Recognizing their capacities as a whole group after their initial performance, the students chose those “cabros que eran más talentosos que otras,” the most talented of the group, and each of them picked out a group of four. “The talented became the directors of their own theatre company... I proposed a theme, one of which was, for example, a meeting between them twenty years after they graduated.” What they acted out was an interaction between each other twenty years in the future. Both of these are examples of communal structured experiences; after the passing of more time, the course converts to utilizing more individual experiences.

While individual structured experiences also construct educative situations for others, they’re designed for people to experience them individually. These focused more on creativity than group dynamics. Passing to the more artistic and holistic side of their humanity, the students began to work with their heart and soul as guides “and they began to create things. They worked with all that is creativity.” Although Professor Navarrete didn’t always share the objectives of the game, Professor Aguirre stressed that when they would work with more artistic activities that instead of having a ‘calentamiento’ that they’d share the objectives of the activity as a mental and spiritual warm-up. “If they need to paint, we’ll start by giving them all of the concepts concerning why we’re doing what we’re doing; we always explain it. ‘This is based in the idea of creativity,’ ‘this is why we’re doing that.’” During my time observing the course I was privileged to witness one of these individual structured experiences that were constructed in the classroom. The instructions were to paint and draw by starting off drawing random scribbled lines, allowing them to intersect and run over and through each other. When they were finished, satisfied with their lines, they were to paint inside and outside of these lines with various things, chalk, watercolor and anything else they could find. By the end of the class, each student finished with their own private masterpiece, something that they considered beautiful, something that many were proud of. At the beginning of the course, if someone were to ask these students, ‘Do you draw?’ ‘No.’ ‘But, are you sure?’ ‘No, no, it’s that I don’t know how to draw.’ ‘Do you paint?’ ‘No. Nothing.’ But in the moments that I was I able to witness, “in which these students started to paint starting from simple lines, they began to recognize that they were creative beings. The majority of our students arrive to our course believing ‘I’m not creative,’ the majority.’” The reality is that students don’t learn how to utilize their creativity in their secondary schooling. In the eyes of Dewey, these traditional schools fail to administer experiences that fortify the determination of the students, rob them of their native capacities leaving them incapable of confronting the circumstances they encounter in their lives. “So, we teach them that creativity is innate within each of us, intrinsic, it’s something that we all have.” Here, students re-learn their capacities.

Objective Conditions and Desired Outcomes

One of the most distinct things about the course is how the role of the teacher and the role of the student change. In this course the students are obliged to participate in the development of their games and game-play. “The feedback process is fundamental, if we don’t follow through, the work we do counts for nothing. If the students don’t provide feedback, all we do is for nothing.” The first opportunity for feedback that the students have is in whether to ‘accept, modify, or reject’ the activity presented by the professors; the second is in how the students and professors modify the activity during play; the third, when students are given the opportunity to present a game and they are given an opportunity to redefine the standard for the those played in the future. A lot is expected of these students; to just play a new game they must give their permission; “to prepare students, what we do is present our proposal and see if they’ll accept, modify, or reject it.” Sometimes, although the students don’t modify the games at that instant, a few of the students decide to change some rules in the midst of play to improve the game in the manner in which they prefer.
The students are obliged to “ensure that the rest play, and to do that, we ask that they always come in prepared with a game on-hand. At any minute during class, we can say, ‘Ya, you, what game can you present to the rest of the class?’ And there they’ll present one and we’ll keep playing.”**xv** Their role is to provide immediate and direct feedback to the professors. Complimenting this responsibility, the professors give the students the guarantee that they are obliged to change the game if the students want to play something different from what was presented. “Oh, yea, that’s super interesting, let’s do it,” ‘profe, could we change this?’ ‘Instead of doing this, could we do that?’ Or all that needs to be said is, ‘profe, that’s really boring,’ and we have the obligation to change it. That’s the guarantee we give. We give the possibility for that, and we develop from there.”**xvi** The dynamic processes of feedback don’t solely go in one direction, but in all. “And that’s how the class goes, them doing things, and us giving feedback on things. ‘Oye, why’d you decide to do this?’ ‘Ah! That’s going super well!’ ‘If you want to do that you could do it in this way. The whole course is like a conversation, that way they can learn while they’re doing.”**xvii** The feedback is so important, in many ways it reconstructs their experience during the experience as well as after, as is so essential that the professors include it in each process they utilize.

One of the ways that participants of the course critically reflect on their experience is through the feedback on their experience before, during, and after the activity. In this way the students are elevated to a position of control over the objective conditions of the activities, (from the design of the experiences to the materials that are to be used) because part of their role is to participate in the creation of the course. In different educational settings, where more traditional pedagogies form the center of practice, the expectation for students is that they stay seated, docile, receptive, and obedient.**xviii** But the question here changes radically; the recognition of their power of creation changes both teacher and student.

“Este curso me ha ayudado mucho a ampliar el sentido de juego…”

“Este año nos hecho mucha cambio, en base al retroalimentación del semestre anterior. Debido que, había un momento en que hacíamos teatro…”

Another more direct change:

“Oh, I don’t know... the ‘salida nocturna’ (night out), the one that we did together, this is only the second year that we’ve done it. And we started doing because of a proposal from one of the students who said, ‘Profe, it’d be really interesting if we went to get to know Valparaiso because there are many of us who don’t know the city well.’ And we saw how amazing it was and the trip has allowed us to get to know our students in a different environment, which is fundamental for us.”**xix**

It is obvious that the students have ample control over the objective conditions of the course, but it is also important to note that giving absolute control to the students is not necessarily a way to ensure that their experiences are educative. The problem with complete control or authority over these conditions is that it
disregards the need for balance between the years of experience using these tools that the professors offer, and the green naïveté and passion that the youth bring. “The greater maturity of experience which should belong to the adult as educator puts him in a position to evaluate each experience of the young in a way in which the one having the less mature experience cannot do. It is then the business of the educator to see in what direction an experience is heading. There is no point in his being more mature if, instead of using his greater insight to help organize the conditions of the experience of the immature, he throws away his insight; these professors recognize this as well.

To properly guide their course, they focused their work around desired outcomes for the class and for the course as a whole. “One of the objectives is to promote friendship, through games, lived through games” but one objective that was utilized multiple times was to develop the creativity of the participants with the exercise of creating games for themselves. If we pay attention to the curriculum of other pedagogies of experience, we can see examples of more explicit desired outcomes. In the curriculum of “A World of Difference,” organized through the United State’s based 501(c)(3) organization, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), a program to help youth confront their bias and prejudice, we can see the preference of clearly and definitively enunciating desired outcomes. In “The Circle Game,” the desired outcomes are declared in the Rationale; “to provide an experience which demonstrates how it feels to exclude others as well as how it feels to be excluded by others.” In programs like this one the objective conditions are never negotiated; if people intend to participate they must defer this control and participate. This is the way objective conditions and desired outcomes are handled by the majority of pedagogies of experience. If we compare this example with the course, we can see that the objective conditions in the classroom are more dynamic because various people at different times are able to modify them. While the other maintains a more static program due to the inability to negotiate these elements; but the reason for this must also be highlighted, if the objective conditions are altered by participants the degree of variance between the desired outcomes and the actual outcomes of an activity increase exponentially.

Reconstruction of the Experience, Objective Conditions and Actual Outcomes

While various processes were utilized by these professors to facilitate reflection, the most important segments truncate the experience to analyze it; this is the closure of the experience, also known as the reconstruction of the experience. For individual and artistic activities, “there’s always an exposition. If there are things that should be presented, you know, if there are pictures, they present it all, and if someone likes one of them, they can ask if they can have it.” That way, the community further connects itself by placing value on the work and creativity of the individual. But the class always ends in the same way, with a closure. The way this closure begins is through a question seeking feedback, “did you like it, or did you not like it?” If they didn’t like it, this next question is brought up, the ‘why not?’ And they might say something like, “It was too slow. There was a lot of time where we didn’t do anything.” Pedagogy of experience intends to utilize a closure to translate acquaintance with the past “into a potent instrumentality for dealing effectively with the future.” The closure attempts to connect the experiences in the classroom directly to a reconstruction capable of creating value for the students. An educative experience, a value creative experience, and reconstruction of said experience “arouses curiosity, strengthens initiative, and sets up desires and purposes that are sufficiently intense to carry a person over dead places in the future.” “In [the School of] Physical Education what we do is simply close the class asking what they’re feeling, and how may the lessons we’re teaching serve them in the future. Because if you feel that what we’re doing doesn’t help you at all, we need to guide the class or our activities to make sure that students can better understand the [ir] future.” The objective is to begin the dialogue concerning the feelings that came out during the experience until they arrive at an answer to ‘what purpose did that experience serve?’ It’s also important to recognize that the students do feel that their experiences in this course were educative:

“Además de toda la alegría que me da, tengo conciencia que es sumamente relevante para mi carrera...”

“Besides the joy that this course gives me, I’m also conscious of the extreme relevance it has for my career and course of study. Games are paramount in the educative process for children, and if they lose their playful nature, all importance of these lessons will be lost on them.”

She continues by continuing to close her own experience and finding new energy for the future:
“Sé que faltan muchas cosas por hacer aun en el ramo, pero creo que el recuerdo que tengo hasta el momento es el hecho de renacer el juego entre las personas jóvenes…”

“I know that there are still a lot of things to do/improve in the course, but the most important thing that I’ll remember is the importance of reviving games for youth. Children have the game as something integral to their lives, but once we start growing we start turning off that beauty little by little, maybe because we’re scared of being ridiculed, embarrassed, or solely because we don’t make time to play in this accelerated system.”

We can see how the experience of this course has left these students with renewed curiosity, strengthened initiative, intentions and desires reinforced, the criteria for an experience to be educative by Dewey. Here we can see a student closing her own experience; she actively separates her enjoyment of the course from what she perceives as it is future effects.

A divide in the way in which the professors hope to close the course and how it actually is closed began to become evident; by starting with the question ‘did the activity make you happy?’, ‘did you enjoy the game?’, ‘did you like what we just did?’, the closure process ended up almost entirely focusing on the first outcome of experience in lieu of the second, more important one. With respect to theory, it must be noted that starting with these questions does not guarantee a conversation concerning the emotions that came from the experience, nor does it guarantee a space to check whether an experience was educative. The space that a closure provides is where students create value for themselves by unraveling new knowledge by processing their experience. While the answers to these questions do inherently provide a reconstruction of the experience, unlike a reconstruction that flows naturally from the emotions of the participants, the response to these questions develops a reconstruction of the objective conditions of the experience, it leads into a very specific feedback process. To analyze the dynamics of the experience properly, the subjective experience of the participants must be focused upon. The narrative of the subjective experiences is also the fountain of information through which the educator may check if the desired outcomes of the simulation were accomplished.

I personally witnessed multiple times where there would not be enough time to sit and fully involve the thoughts and emotions of the students after the experiences and a professor would ask one of the aforementioned questions, all the students would say ‘YES!’ and then the class would break. This course of events happened each of the three times I observed the course. While this may not happen during each closure, and while closures may often begin with these questions and then follow with more questions dealing directly with the other outcome of experience, these observations delineate the points of analysis I have available to me. Due to the importance of the closure, it is paramount that enough time be allocated to ensure the availability of a space and time for this to happen; “If debriefing, i.e. the step of reflective observation, or abstract conceptualization, is shortened due to ‘lack of time,’ learning opportunities inherent in the experiential activity may be irretrievably lost.” Additionally, if one of the objectives is to “arrive at a point where the students may express their sentiments,” I believe that it would be easier and more effective to either begin with questions that involve these sentiments or ensure that these types of questions are always asked.

To solidify our understanding of different pedagogies of experience, let’s compare the closure process that the course utilizes with the curriculum of the ADL’s “A World of Difference.” In the structured experience “The Circle Game,” the activity maintains static elements, and so does the reconstruction. There are three reasons why the closure is static; (1) the format of the activity, the objective conditions, cannot be changed by the participants, (2) there is no process, there are only questions, and (3) the questions fail to connect the experience and analysis of the experience with what Kolb would describe as an Active Experimentation phase. It is important to note that the questions do form a process that asks for a description of the emotions that came out of the experience followed by an analysis of what happened, but it is equally important to recognize that because the questions are emphasized over a possible process that developed these questions, the likelihood that someone facilitating the activity would not mainly focus on them is extremely questionable. Further, while I am sure the purpose of the curriculum is to provide acquaintance with the past through the experience “into a potent instrumentality for dealing effectively with the future,” there is no question that directly connects these two things. Theoretically the course would have an Active Experimentation phase if they were able to ask and hear answers to the question ‘how may the lessons we’re teaching serve you in the future?’ or simply, ‘how will you change your life after this experience?’ But one really important thing to recognize is how the static nature of the objective conditions impact the desired and actual outcomes of the activities. As stated previously,
if the objective conditions are altered by participants, the degree of variance between the desired outcomes and the actual outcomes of an activity increase exponentially, but because the desired outcomes are never altered, these can be measured against the actual outcomes, and a standard for success concerning what was learned may be identified.

With the role of the professors and students altered, we can see that if the teacher is no longer the group leader, but a facilitator, students then take on the responsibility of each other’s experience, participating in the development of the program.

Abstract Conceptualization

The experience and the reconstruction of the experience represent two types of intercultural encounters. These encounters facilitate the community’s fluctuation between homogeneity and heterogeneity and the participants’ capacity to better understand themselves. To develop a space for this intercultural, pluralistic, and inclusive encounter, the professors moved away from the idea that each person stands as a representative of their culture, community, or communities; instead, experience was used as the principal tool for interpersonal encounters, not ‘cultural’ encounters.

In the course, the professors and the students construct communal and individual structured experiences to demonstrate a reality in which the two most important things are to understand yourself and to encounter the ‘other,’ all through a fun and creative space. Games are prototypes of society, with their own rules and social controls that can imitate cultural processes of an entire society, whether from the past, present, or future. To recreate, to alter our world, first it’s important to ‘jugar con la idea’ or ‘play with the idea’ of an ideal world, to envision a different reality. In the course, the students play with the idea of an ideal encounter where first we know ourselves and then we are given the opportunity to connect with someone else. In this course they intend to create a world, a culture that is intercultural, pluralistic, and inclusive. “With respect to learning, they begin to understand themselves. There are many people who are too shy, they don’t talk, they’re incapable of expressing what they feel, so imagine their reaction when they’re obligated to participate in a class focusing on theatre performance!” Here students are given the opportunity to learn and confront a different part of their being. “Ergo, if you’re a person that doesn’t speak, who’s unable to express, someone who always walks around timidly, ok, if you then say, ‘act,’ I swear to you, it’ll give that person a headache on impact,” but this challenge is important for those who find themselves overly timid. Without challenges, there’s only complacency. And no one confronts their challenges alone; it is always done with group support, this way the participants grow as individuals and part of a community. “At the end of the class, if he’s able to fulfill his challenge, if he’s able to do what we asked of him, he’ll leave content because he’ll know that he was able to do something. He’ll no longer try to avoid the things he normally does. Understand? That’s what has happened… I’ve spoken with students that say, ‘Profe, it cost me the world to speak, to express myself,’ but in the moment, when they begin to act in front of thirty other people, their friends and colleagues, more than anything, they’re able to follow through. They’re able to extract something that was hidden within them, that in that instant they’re able to call upon.” “Through this personal development, they’re ready to begin encountering those who are building their community with them and develop something strong and lasting.

If we were to examine this community of students based upon the idea of culture and ethnicity, we’d say that they were homogenous based upon nationality, socioeconomic status, etc, but by recognizing heterogeneity as the origin for any encounter, the participants are able to unmask the idea of the cultural proxy, connect with each other and develop ‘bridging capital,’ unravel their stereotypes of each other (specifically the ones concerning their academic fields), and facilitate personal development through their encounters with each other, with diversity of thought. The students in the course were from multiple career tracks; physical education, pedagogy of pre-school education, basic education, various types of engineering including construction, human rights, and agronomy, and each of them carries with them their own stereotypes concerning other people, students from other career tracks, and students from their own track.

“El del ingeniero es un tipo cuadrado…”

“Engineers are squares; attorneys are super legalistic, über serious… the theology studies type is a mystic, and walks around praying all day. Those are the types of prejudices they have. The trust is that they’re all youth between the ages of twenty, twenty-four, twenty-five who study different things, but that’s not to say that they embody a stereotype. It’s only once we get to know each other that we’re
able to discover the 'other.' It's only then that we begin to value them. And it's the same with games.\textsuperscript{lv}

This 'discovery' process, the process of the encounter, is what helps us unveil the idea of the proxy, the cultural 'representative,' as a person incapable of representing a group, but competent to present himself, competent to present the portrait of himself within the context of his community or communities (Spivak, 1994, pg 70-71). The program of this course facilitates various opportunities for interaction between participants because at the core of its pedagogy is the idea that through the encounter, through interaction itself, we're able to attain friendship and empathy.

"Y normalmente uno en cada uno de esa escuela está en si misma o en lo suyo…"  

“And usually each of them is completely enveloped in his own school… here there’s the possibility of learning who they are, having an exchange, sharing experiences, and one of the most gratifying things about this course is that they create bonds connecting each other, and a bond with me that lasts for years."\textsuperscript{lvii}

The professor postulates that from interaction itself, the students are able to break down the stereotypes that they brought and develop connections of friendship and romance, some that last through time, and others that do not. The students recognize and value that “the course is heterogeneous, referring specifically to the diversity of schools, to gender, and to personality,"\textsuperscript{lviii} but in other ways it's diverse; because by the end of the course, "they develop the courage not to fear or deny difference,"\textsuperscript{lvi} in fact, through their encounters they begin to “strive to understand people of difference cultures,” and grow from these encounters;\textsuperscript{lix} in the words of Daisaku Ikeda, they begin to develop the qualities of 'global citizenship.' Because they start with their interactions from the perspective that they’re from different communities, the first interactions of the course develop 'bridging capital,' but once the encounters begin to multiply and the participants feel that they share a community, it begins to develop 'bonding capital.'\textsuperscript{lx}

In the pedagogy of games the professors describe games as having the power to homogenize a group of participants whenever they internalize the fantasy or the play element that the game proposes. Games have the capacity to “unite people that are completely different, who have different mentalities. When you play, you forget it all, and leave the reality that you live and entrench yourself in the fantasy that allows you to interact with the other person."\textsuperscript{lxii} It's this fantasy that facilitates the intercultural project because the fantasy includes intercultural elements.

“That power to unite people regardless of whatever differences there are, independent from whatever separates them… you at the moment of play, you create a team with the other person, even if you don’t know that person, but you have to row with him, taking the allusion of a boat, row together to accomplish something. Or help that same person that you already know, maybe you only know that person’s name, to accomplish an objective together. Yes, I believe that these things bond people together, they form. It’s up to them whether or not these connections last or are lost."\textsuperscript{lxiii}

Within the description of the course provided by one of the students, she starts off acknowledging their heterogeneity, ‘referring specifically to the diversity of schools, to gender, and to personality,’ and then goes on to state that the course is united by their want to learn, have fun, and experience active and fun activities.\textsuperscript{li} What unite them are these activities, but they also help them distinguish themselves. The entirety of the continuum from heterogeneity and homogeneity can be experienced through this course. “For me, this class allowed me to get to know the School of Physical Education… they’re all people with very distinct personalities, who each work on distinct things, have different things, but when we play the games, they’re all equal, the same… games are a tool that unites them."\textsuperscript{lxiv} It is evident that to facilitate the formation of these connections, the professors must have a compassionate understanding of those they teach and understand what is actually going on in their minds, their necessities and their capacities.\textsuperscript{lxv}

Both professors also maintained that the connections that are formed in the course survive. Here are the two examples they shared with me: “I know people who, out of the blue, will find me on the streets and say, ‘Hey! Profe, you know what? Me and that person from the other school are still friends, every now and then we still get together.’ These relationships last through time."\textsuperscript{lxvi} In the next example, one of them shows how even they are included in the development of interpersonal relationships. "Sometimes I find myself with people who
took this course twenty years ago and they present me to their children and say, ‘this man was the professor of a course I took called ‘Man and Games’ (Hombre y los Juegos).’ Why do they remember me? Because they remember the connections that we developed inside the course.” There the answer to the question, ‘Why do they remember?’ can also be found in the voices of those who were still in the middle of the course:

“Solo considero que faltan mas actividades de presentación al inicio del curso…”

“I just think that we’re still missing more ice-breaking activities at the beginning of the course, we need more time to get to know each other so we can know the people we’ll be sharing the semester with from the beginning of the semester, and from there create stronger connections during it.”

She goes on to state; “I recognize that it’s a cool course (‘de buena onda’) with the intention of helping us get to know each other, but we need more activities where we can interact with people from different schools, not just the same people we’re used to seeing, and get to know each other’s interests, opinions with respect to our university, shared experiences, etc.”

Here there is a deep want to develop this element of global citizenship. We can see here how this participant even wants more interaction, stronger connections, and more opportunities to encounter and grow from diversity of thought and experience, both as an individual and as a university community. She did not stand alone in this sentiment.

Dewey postulates that if we base education upon personal experience that it is probable that the encounters between mature and immature will multiply and become more intimate than those we see in traditional schools. His hypothesis is corroborated by the two examples previously given, and we should also include that the encounters between the immature are also multiplied and made more intimate. The night of one of my observations, the professors and the students from each parallel met to go on an outing in Valparaiso to share their knowledge of the city. At the end of the outing, we all went to drink at a bar. There, I sat next to one of the professors with a few other students; while we drank, he began to share his experience of attending a conference on physical education in Brazil a few years earlier and why he chose to go into his field. At the same time, some of the other students sitting at a different table with our other professor were able to convince him to take shots of tequila with them. There we where, students and professors, partying together, celebrating together. Pedagogies of experience have the power to radically transform interpersonal relations inside as well as outside of the classroom. “When education is based upon experience and educative experience is seen to be a social process, the situation changes radically. The teacher loses the position of external boss or dictator but takes on that of leader of group activities.” When education is based upon a different dynamic, everyone wins; the professors develop a stronger capacity to select better experiences for the growth of their students on a more individual level, more preoccupied for those they are charged responsible for, and also become more capable of seeing how each experience facilitated effects their students during the experience. In this way, the students gain. But this dynamic also humanizes the students in a way that benefits the community.

Within the processes of the program, they develop a participatory and plural community. The way that Hirmas, et al, describes the pluralist program; “se estimula la participación en la vida social mediante el desarrollo de comportamientos democráticos,” or in English, “it stimulates participation in social life through the development of democratic behaviors.” This is a very different image from that of the traditional school which Dewey describes as a place where docility and obedience are learned. There are two main democratic behaviors students develop after taking this course; the first is that students learn to take responsibility for the experiences of others, which is the sentiment needed to develop “the compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy that reaches beyond one’s immediate surroundings and extends to those suffering in distant places,” another trait describing a ‘global citizen.’ The other is learning how to be part of a participatory community; one student proclaimed that now “we have no reason not create our own games!” These students feel completely integrated in the creative process of developing the course and its intentions; while the professors propose the games at the beginning of class, it’s always with “the flexibility of what the students would also like to propose.” It is this participation that the students ‘learn by doing’; from valuing their feedback, to asking for their permission to start any game, to being responsible to provide at least one experience or game for the rest of the class, what these students learn is the value of creating an educative, pluralistic community. What they learn, they put into practice; in this way, the community gains.
Through sharing experiences, this class creates an intercultural encounter in which participants cultivate an educative, pluralistic, and democratic community founded upon the unveiling of the false cultural proxy and focusing upon the development of interpersonal relationships. The program of this course creates value for individuals and communities through interactions that breakdown stereotypes, cultivate social capital, and inspire global citizenship. What we can see here is that when students and teachers fortify their relationship, when we focus on lived experience, when we strengthen our interpersonal connections, everyone wins.

**Active Experimentation**

The point of this form of experiential learning is to challenge established perceptions; first concerning participants’ knowledge of self, then their knowledge of the other people, and inspiring the development of an ideal, participatory, inclusive, pluralistic community of empathic individuals. To further develop this program as well as programs like this, I turn to the insights elaborated in Markus Ulrich’s "Links Between Experiential Learning and Simulation & Gaming," he argues that established perceptions are challenged during simulations (structured activities/games) because of the following three factors: (1) short feedback time quickly unveiling cause-effect relations resulting in a direct challenge of the established perceptions; (2) a framework which facilitates free experimentation in a safe environment; and (3) an abstracted and simplified learning situation which allows for “the effect under consideration” to emerge “more lucidly,” and “not messed up with other everyday events.” I believe that by continuing to emphasize these three elements, this course as well as others like it may continue to flourish.

One of the most important aspects of the course that both students and professors emphasized was feedback. Ulrich argues that with short feedback time, participants may quickly realize the cause-effect relations they experienced, “resulting in a direct challenge of the established perceptions,” and as long as the course incorporates individual and communal experiences where the objective conditions and desired outcomes aren’t always negotiable, this may continue to happen. During the course, objective conditions and desired outcomes are presented by the professors but negotiated by the students, and feedback before, during, and after the experience is essential, running in both directions to foster a creative and supportive space. When the objective conditions are altered, which intrinsically implies that the desired outcomes are as well, the comparison between the desired outcomes and the actual outcomes becomes irrelevant, and the constraints of individual and communal feedback are more difficult to ascertain. Without maintaining the constraints that the desired outcomes maintain, difficulty providing a space for participants to better understand themselves and encounter each other in a way that facilitates a participatory community (develop a sense of responsibility for the quality of experience of others (empathy), create the ideal community, or foster social capital) become harder to evaluate and further develop. One way to circumvent this result while maintaining a participatory program might be to allow for student input concerning the outcomes before the games conditions are even designed, and have very specific guidelines concerning which games may be altered during the activity, and which should just be played.

The suggestion of one of the students should also be noted; she wanted the course to help participants “get to know each other’s interests, opinions with respect to our university, shared experiences, etc.” The implication of this longing, which was also mirrored by other students, is that they yearned for the course to help them confront their lived situation. Ulrich’s conclusions support the notion that this type of approach would actually further challenge the participants’ current conceptions; he believes that the simulation, or what I have called the structured experience, should be an abstracted, simplified, or symbolic representation of the participants’ current context in a way that will help them find solutions and not get distracted by everyday events. This purpose of confronting the lived experience of the participants, may also be seen in programs such as the one outlined in chapter three of Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Structured activities, based upon anthropological research, could abstract the current context of the participants for them to confront critically and creatively by providing a safe environment and a framework for ‘free experimentation’; in this way, participants could ‘rapidly prototype’ possible solutions and apply them to their lives and communities. The reconstruction in itself, already devised with a conceptual framework that includes ‘Active Experimentation’ could be altered slightly to facilitate, develop, and direct these ideas to reach their potential as value-creative solutions to real-world problems.

While the reconstruction, closure, debriefing of the experience is inherently value-creative for the individual and community, the possibilities for value-creation may be expanded if the method accounts for rapid prototyping. The class always begins with the affirmation that any group of people is heterogeneous in
some way but when students share an experience they are homogenized in some way(s). A closure process heterogenizes the group once more by placing value in the different ways that we experience, interpret, and learn from our experience. The process of moving along the spectrum between heterogeneity and homogeneity create value for the community by developing social capital and maintaining individuality. One such process which is outlined in the “Experiential Learning Cycle” (ELC) was devised by a consulting group called the “University Associates” and utilizes Carl Roger’s facilitative teaching methods along with the theories of Kolb, Levin, and Dewey. The process of the ELC has four steps; Describe, Interpret, Generalize, and Apply. In Describe and Interpret, the participants are asked to share the thoughts and emotions that sprung from the experience and reflect upon why they feel the way they feel. The Generalize phase asks for them to abstract the activity and connect it to their previous experience or the experiences of others. Finally, in Apply they’re asked to enunciate how they will change based upon what they just experienced. These final stages allow for value-creation to happen for the individual. If the Apply stage concludes with postulations on how the participants may act to improve the quality of their shared experience just as they take responsibility for their individual experience, it could continue to strike a balance between heterogeneity and homogeneity by pulling upon the plurality of voices and perspectives in the community while continuing to base itself in what was previously shared. This way the plurality of possible solutions may be brought to the table for experimentation and validated to create value for the community.

I believe that one way we may begin to reframe this type of endeavor is as a type of experiential logotherapy in which participants confront their lived experience both individually and as a community. This course could represent one form of a communal therapy, focusing on the individual better understanding his or her self and the dynamics between people, while another could be seen in community liberation programs. Individual therapy could focus on what Weil and McGill (1989) label as Village One and Village Four of experiential learning endeavors which are “concerned particularly with assessing and accrediting learning from life and work experience” as well as being “concerned about personal growth and self-awareness.” Communal therapy could then focus on Village Two and Three which focus on learning as a basis for institutional change, social action and consciousness-raising. Prototyping programs such as the one analyzed in this paper may begin to change our definition of schools to encompass the school as facilitator for value creation in the community, and mentor for individuals seeking a value creative life, or a life where they pursue embodying their ideal selves. One thing remains certain in my mind, when experience is placed at the center of a reflexive education, learners seek experiences in which they can learn and grow from an encounter with themselves and each other.
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Can Active Citizenship Be Learned?

Dr. Namrata Sharma

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper will discuss some relevant issues in relation to citizenship education, learning from the examples of two Asian dissidents of the 21st century, ideology of Makiguchi and Gandhi who opposed the authoritarianism of their own governments – in Japan and India respectively. I selected the examples of these two thinkers also because they were influenced by both the east and of the west, and because their ideas are being used within the education and politics of their respective countries today. Makiguchi was an educator but today his ideas have influenced the politics of Japan. On the other hand, Gandhi, who is better known than Makiguchi, was a political leader, but he had also developed his own indigenous views on education like Makiguchi.

My long-term research on these two thinkers has culminated into my recent book which is an outcome of research work done for more than a decade that began in Japan, and continued through my stay and visits in India and Hawaii and was finally completed during my years at the University of London in autumn 2008.

While raising some issues from this book I will also showcase some examples of teaching citizenship within schools, and in particular the present use of this work within the Post Graduate Certificate Education course (for teachers) at the University of Nottingham.

2. Main Questions

I begin with the premise that education can enable young people to understand their rights, obligations and responsibilities as active citizens, within the most complex democratic societies.
However, we are aware that learning in the classroom alone does not necessarily lead to the development of students as active participants in their local communities or enable them to think as global citizens.

In fact, good examples of citizenship can sometimes be found through the civil movement of engaged citizens that have simply formed and arisen to occasion in the fight for justice and human rights because of a particular grievance. Such is the case of the African-American Civil Rights Movement in the United States, or the Chipko movement in which ordinary people embraced trees to shield them from being cut down.

The complex questions this paper raises are these: Who is a citizen? What does it mean to be an active citizen? Under what social, political or educational scenario does a person become a citizen?

Who is a citizen? A general agreement that we can reach, given the various substitutes for this term in different cultures, is that within modern, democratic, nation states a citizen is a resident with legal and political rights, including the right to vote.

II. 2 THINKERS AND THEIR MOVEMENTS

This paper shows that within the widening debates on teaching and learning in citizenship education Makiguchi and Gandhi make a significant contribution.

However, Makiguchi and Gandhi, who are today known as citizens who contributed to their respective societies, were (actually) troublemakers in their own time for their respective governments. This is a key concept and this paradox opens questions for us to re-think citizenship education. Such as, in what socio-political context is a person driven to take action as a citizen? The examples of people (Makiguchi and Gandhi) I have forwarded were working in the context of authoritarianism.

Further, the examples of Makiguchi and Gandhi show us the complexities that arise when values (such as peace and non-violence) engage in real-world politics, and I shall talk a little bit about that later.

Before proceeding with this issue, let me give a brief introduction to Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871-1944), a Japanese educator who developed his own theory of Value Creation Education through his thirty years of teaching practice. In spite of gaining some recognition by leading educators of his time, Makiguchi's ideas on 'child-centered education' failed to make an impact due to the militarization of Japanese education in the early-twentieth century. In this period, liberal views in education gave way to an authoritarian regime in which youth were instructed to participate in the World Wars.

(Show video introducing Makiguchi's life: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71dmQ5hmUAU)

Makiguchi wrote extensively, and 'value creation' was a key concept in his work. According to Makiguchi, 'value creation' exists in the 'relationship' between the subject and object. In his seminal work known as the System of Value Creating Pedagogy (published in 1930), Makiguchi put this theory into practice by starting the child’s education from her/his own local environment so that s/he could build a direct relationship with the learning material and content.

Learner <evaluating subject> ▼ Learning material and content<object of evaluation>

Value Creation exists in this relationship

Diagram 1: The Process of Value Creation

For Makiguchi, the aim of education is the happiness of the child, which, as he explains, is to enable the child to create value, that is, the capacity to find meaning, to enhance one's own existence and contribute to the well being of others.

Many contemporaries of Makiguchi, such as John Dewey, have emphasised the importance of the learner's local environment. Makiguchi's own theory of education and practice of Buddhist philosophy (which he encountered in 1928) brings a new dimension to this concept. For example, according to the Buddhist view
that Makiguchi subscribed to, not only is the individual influenced and shaped by the environment, but also impacts it.

At a fundamental level there is no separation between our internal life and our immediate circumstances. Therefore, the causes we make through our thought, word and action manifest in our external surroundings. Once we acknowledge that we shape our environment, both constructively and destructively, we become more confident to tackle the issues that cause us suffering.

This cosmological view that is found in Makiguchi’s work (similar to that of Gandhi) is hard to pin down in terms of how, first of all, we can enable teachers to understand this perspective on ‘interdependence’, and then for them to try and base their teaching on this understanding.

Within the module mentioned earlier that is running at Nottingham University (which is based on my book), I have tried to explain these innovative concepts, and yet try to base the activities within the module on resources that are useful and available for teacher’s education.

One such example is of teaching citizenship post-9/11 in the US that I picked from teacherstv.com (a very useful resource for teachers in the UK). In this video excerpt which we shall now see for a few minutes, the teacher undertakes an interesting activity to show student’s how they are connected through several global issues that face humanity today.

(Show excerpt from the video link: http://www.teachers.tv/video/31355 )

Some institutions in which Makiguchi’s ideas are directly being applied today are the Soka Schools in Japan. Soka Schools have been established by Daisaku Ikeda, who is also a Japanese philosopher and poet. The Soka Schools follow a national curriculum which is divided into two parts – the curriculum itself (kyouka) and the ‘outside curriculum study’ (kyoukagai). During ‘outside curriculum study’, for example, the students of the Soka Schools have organised activities for environmental protection within their local community.

In addition, as my research shows, the Soka Schools aim to foster ‘global citizens’ understood as ‘people of talent that can contribute to the world’. One of Makiguchi’s main influences in these schools lies in the normative aspect established by his role as a ‘martyr’ who died for peace. An emphasis is laid on the individual student’s role in contributing to world peace. One of the outcomes of the sense of mission for peace in these schools has been the absence of bullying (ijime) and school phobia (futoko), which are otherwise key problems for most schools in Japan.

Moving on to my other chosen thinker Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), (the Indian political leader), who is better known than Makiguchi. As a proponent of non-violence in real-world politics, Gandhi had to deal with the contending interests of leaders from different religious and political communities.

He was sometimes successful in his role as peace maker, but often caught in contradictions and simply misunderstood by various groups, including his own Hindu community, and was eventually shot to death by a fanatic Hindu believer in 1948, as you will see in the following three-minute video that introduces Gandhi:

(Show video on his life: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_-QoW3_jOZM&feature=related )

My study shows that Gandhi’s role as a citizen who was actively engaged in his own society showed two key aspects; there were two Gandhis. The first is Gandhi the person for whom truth and non-violence was his creed. There has been an attempt to engage with Gandhi in Indian education, however, this has been problematic. For instance, in 2001 within the controversial re-writing of history textbooks under the ‘macho’ BJP political party, Gandhi’s non-violence was portrayed as a ‘weakness’ by fundamentalist Hindus. This was eventually challenged and overturned by leading historians (Delhi Historians’ Group 2001: 24), although admittedly there is still no significant engagement with Gandhi in any of the national curriculums in India.

Then there is the second Gandhi, the great soul or Mahatma, the moral leader and a nationalist, who had to work through the problematic intercultural issues. How do we teach this aspect of Gandhi? Can we
enable students to learn to become active citizens? One conclusion I arrived at through my research was that instead of assimilating Gandhi’s ideas and distilling them in the classroom, (such as within citizenship education in some parts of India), we need to learn from his radicality. This work sheds light on Gandhi’s strategies, behaviours, and beliefs as a citizen. **Makiguchi and Gandhi did not provide a single, linear and reductive prescription for the needs of their respective societies, but instead, contended with the complexity of their respective social and educational contexts.**

So to address the second question: ‘what does it mean to be an active citizen?’ this study suggests that an active citizen has a strong normative position which propels individual self-reflection, and the propensity to effect a social change.

### III. Wider Implications for teacher’s education…(from PGCE course module)

Towards the end I would like to discuss some points related to the use of my book within the PGCE course.

**The Intended Learning Outcomes are through this unit,** is for the teachers to gain an awareness of:

- the educational ideas of two non-Western thinkers
- (also on) how (the) ‘value creating’ theory can offer benefit in the context of your own classroom
- (the) issues that arise in the teaching of values (such as (Gandhi’s) non-violence)
- (and) discussion on a qualitative approach to knowledge and values in citizenship education.

And I would like to touch upon this last point before I conclude my presentation today.

What I mean here by a qualitative approach to knowledge and values is that, currently in countries such as the US, UK, India, Japan, there is a great deal of emphasis on enabling students to perceive their connectedness to global issues, and to also empathise with other countries and cultures. While this is positive, my argument is that it is not enough. As demonstrated by the educational institutions I have studied in the lineage of Makiguchi and Gandhi, and many others have shown, unless the schools themselves become models of change, that is, unless there is a specific way in which schools are able to actualize normative values within the hidden curriculum, it will be hard to motivate students and enable them to act as critical global citizens.

As pointed out earlier, as my work sheds light on both Makiguchi’s and Gandhi’s strategies, behaviours, and beliefs as citizens, we need similar studies on other such thinkers, who were interested in the transformation of their own societies. This sort of future research should therefore question the key contradictions and paradoxes that can be identified in a grounded or ‘situated’ analysis of the thinker’s ideas and value systems. (What were their personal histories? Who were they influenced by? In what context did they frame their ideas?) These are the kind of ideas I tested out in the Masters in Higher Education course at the University of Nottingham, and students produced interesting results from similar studies on other thinkers like Kant, etc.

To conclude, Makiguchi, Gandhi, King, Mandela, and other such radical thinkers did not provide a single, linear and reductive prescription for the needs of their respective societies, but instead contended with the complexity of their respective social and educational contexts. So, the degree to which we as educators can enable students to become active citizens through their classroom experience remains as our main challenge in the 21st century. Thank you!
An Overview of the Editions of Soka Kyouikugaku Taikei

Simon Høffding
Class of 2008

Introduction

This paper will try to give a coherent exposition of the different editions of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi’s work on the educational philosophy of Soka education. With only very few English works available on Makiguchi, one might think this is quickly done, but this panel – consisting of Gonzalo Obelleiro’s paper, “Challenges and Possibilities for Soka education Research in Translation,” Nozomi Inukai’s paper, “Soka Kyouikugaku Taikei and Education for Creative Living: How Makiguchi’s Educational Ideas are Presented in English,” and my own – shall show that the contrary is the case. Ironically, I am in a very poor position to present a critical evaluation of the odd circumstances surrounding the different editions of Makiguchi’s work as I am not fluent in the Japanese language. My investigation is therefore based on a critical reading of the English sources, on support from Nozomi Inukai and on the expertise of Takao Ito, lecturer of philosophy at Soka University in Tokyo. Should any content of the present investigation be mistaken or misunderstood, my sources should not be blamed; I alone hold the responsibility and I will continue my investigation to produce the clearest possible picture of Makiguchi’s publishing activities and its ensuing history.

Very few final conclusions will be presented in the paper; I write it very much in the middle of my investigation. In order to limit the scope of my paper, I consciously avoid textual analysis, leaving Inukai to
competently critique the editing and translation of Makiguchi performed by Dayle Bethel. Moreover, I will not go into broader historical explanations pertaining to Makiguchi’s life, to the impact of WWII or to the development of the Soka Gakkai, which are all inextricable factors in gaining a full perspective of Makiguchi’s life and work. In all its simplicity, I shall outline which of Makiguchi’s, Josei Toda’s (Makiguchi’s direct follower), and Bethel’s works were published when, then briefly explain the differences of content between the editions and finally critique Bethel’s publication as lacking in lucidity and thoroughness.

To elucidate the internal logic of the project I will explain everything from the beginning: Over the past year, yet again trying to get to grips with the philosophical underpinning of Soka education and therefore yet again reading chapter one and two of Bethel’s Education for Creative Living (ECL), currently the best available English work on Makiguchi, I begin to question the arguments presented. This is no place for an elaborate philosophical analysis, but considered on its own, Bethel’s presentation of Makiguchi’s arguments often seems contradictory, naïve and underinformed. Yet at the same time, I know that Makiguchi is considered a reliable scholar. To substantiate this claim, I refer to the documentary For the Happiness of Children or to the words of praise from fellow Japanese intellectuals (Makiguchi, 1964: 181-197) in the preface to the first edition of Soka Kyoiku Taikei (System of Value Creation, from hereon: System). Pushing this seeming contradiction, I formulate a number of specific questions and bring them to Takao Ito, at Soka University in Tokyo. I first met Ito with other Soka University of America students in preparation of the first Soka Education Conference in 2005. He is very thorough in his approach, very knowledgeable about Makiguchi’s ideas and further, works on German-Japanese translation. Hence, he understands much of the original German philosophical debate pertaining to “Value” in the neo-Kantian tradition on which Makiguchi relies heavily. In one quick sweep, Ito dispels all my questions by pointing out that 1) most likely ECL is based on a contested and not quite original edition of Makiguchi’s work, namely the Kachiron (Philosophy of Value), edited by Toda, and further that 2) ECL 1 is not a translation of the System but Bethel’s own selective and interpretative rendition.

Editions of, Precursors to, and Commentaries on, the System

Let us first get a chronological overview of the different versions of the work pertaining to Makiguchi’s published educational ideas. Besides Bethel’s biography on Makiguchi, everything below is listed as authored by Makiguchi. In the following sections however, I want to point out that the content of the volumes differs to such an extent that their real authorship should be called into question.


1 Publishing Makiguchi the Value Creator in 1974 and Education for Creative Living in 1989, Bethel is so far the primary exponent of Makiguchi and Soka education to the English speaking audience.

2 Makiguchi has written on other topics and there are many book and articles written about him and Soka education. What I list here are the most central works pertaining directly to my two main questions.
Early and Later Versions of Soka Kyòukugaku Taikei

To avoid confusion between these many editions, it is best to start chronologically with the volumes actually stemming from Makiguchi:


The first work on education authored by Makiguchi is not, as one would think, the System, but the Soka Kyòukugaku Taikei Gairon (Introduction to the System of Value Creation, from hereon: System Draft), a short draft authored in the spring of 1930 but not published until 1984 as volume 8 of Makiguchi Tsunesaburo Zenshù (Collected Works of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi). The draft was lost to the public and kept by Makiguchi’s son-in-law, Mr. Tsutomu Watanabe and surprisingly reappeared in 1980. (Ito, email, Oct. 6 & Dec. 18, 2010)

The first four volumes of the System, compiled by Toda, were based on the System Draft and published from 1930-4 (Ito, email, Oct. 6, 2010). The System was envisioned as a twelve-volume work (Bethel, 1973: 41), but apparently Makiguchi and Toda found neither time nor resources to finish the intended work. During the same period, Kachiron (Theory of Value), which constitutes the second volume of the System, was published separately in 1931. In 1953, Toda re-edited the volume, which was translated in 1964 as Philosophy of Value - the first work on Soka education published in English. I will return to Toda’s edition, which ideologically marks a very central split in the original Japanese literature on Soka education. Makiguchi donated his original System manuscripts to the parents’ association of the Shirokane Elementary School, where he served as principal from 1922-8 (Bethel, 1973: 38) but they were burned upon his arrest in 1944 (Ito, mail, Oct. 6, 2010).

In the 1970’s, the original System was republished by Seikyo Shinbunsha, but the original kanji (Japanese characters) were replaced with more modern ones (Ito, mail, Dec. 18, 2010). To the reader unfamiliar to the development of the Japanese language, it should be clarified that it underwent a huge change in the fifty years between the 1920’s and 1970’s, making the original at best very difficult to read for the lay-person. The version from the 1980’s printed by Daisan Bunmeisha uses the original kanji and is thus held in higher academic esteem.

Toda’s Revision of Soka Kyòukugaku Taikei

So far, there is a simple lineage between the different publications mentioned in the last part. The difficulties begin to arise when Toda in 1953 publishes a re-edited version of Kachiron which pertains to the two following volumes:


Especially to the English speaking readers of Soka education material, the circumstances around Toda’s edition are of great importance, as shall be explained later when looking into Bethel’s work. With the publication of Kachiron in 1953, Toda altered the direction of the philosophy of Soka education in an explicitly Buddhist direction. It is well known that Toda after WW II changed the name of the educational organization he established with Makiguchi from Soka Kyòoukagaku (society for value-creating education) to Soka Gakkai (society for value creation) which refocused on a contemporary interpretation of Nichiren Buddhism. I find it very likely that this change in Toda’s ideological outlook also affected his publications on education. In the 1964 English translation of Philosophy of Value, based on quotations from Chinese and Japanese Buddhist scholars such as Tien-T’ai and Nichiren, Toda essentially concludes that value-creation should be brought
about by the practice of Buddhism (Makiguchi, 1964: 173-5). Although Buddhist references can be found in Makiguchi’s original work, Toda changed the emphasis to one explicitly adhering to Nichiren Buddhism.

One might ask, why did Toda republish the Kachiron? Toda writes that at the time of publication that: “the western way of thinking dominated the philosophical world” (Makiguchi, 1964: iv). Toda’s wish now is “to revise and enlarge his (Makiguchi’s) original text and appeal to the scholars of the world” (ibid: iv). But it is clear that such a wish was wanting of an English translation. Why did it take eleven years (from 1953 to 1964) to produce such a translation? If the wish was an appeal to scholars of the world, it seems strange that it should be 11 years in the making. Ito speculates that Toda likely wanted to present his Buddhist ideas to an English speaking audience in this format (Ito, mail, Dec. 18, 2010). It is also likely that a translation was not relevant to the Soka Gakkai in the 1950’s because it only spread internationally in the 1960’s when Daisaku Ikeda assumed presidency. Without more information, pushing this question is futile.

Toda’s changes wear of on the later publications, making the following publication especially interesting:


Whereas the 1970’s Seikyo Shimbunsha and the 1980’s Daisan Bunmeisha uses Makiguchi’s original manuscript, this Tozai edition uses Toda’s Kachiron to constitute the second volume of the System (Ito, email, Oct 6. 2010). Additionally, it might be that the language in the entire 1965 Tozai edition is changed from Makiguchi’s original into one complying with Soka Gakkai rhetoric at the time. It certainly would be interesting to make a close textual comparative analysis of the System published by Tozai and Daisan Bunmeisha respectively.

Bethel’s Work on Makiguchi and Soka Education

Finally, the analysis can proceed to Bethel’s works:


One ought to provide a strict critique of Bethel’s research. Although his two works, Makiguchi the Value Creator (from hereon: MVC) and Education for Creative Living (from hereon: ECL) provide an in depth perspective of Makiguchi’s life and work without which the English speaking audience would have been completely at a loss, they are also very selective, as Inukai will elaborate on in this panel. Bethel writes that MVC is a “result of more than 20 years of research” (Bethel, 1973: 10) and because of such claimed authority and expertise, one perhaps refrains from critically assessing his work. The translations of Makiguchi in MVC are Bethel’s own (Bethel, 1973: 12) which is problematic as Inukai shall explain in conjunction with her analysis of ECL. When looking at Bethel’s bibliography, it is surprising to observe that of his primary sources on Soka education, only one is Makiguchi’s original from 1930 whereas the two others are the translated Philosophy of Value from 1964 and the Tozai 1965 edition just mentioned (Bethel, 1973: 163-4). MVC might have been intended as a broader and more popular work, not wanting to bore readers with technical details on its source material. Yet, I believe that the discrepancies between Makiguchi’s original and Toda’s revised editions are of an importance naturally meriting a lengthy comment, if not in the work itself, then at least in a journal entry. To use merely one short paragraph describing that Makiguchi is difficult and confusing to read (Bethel, 1973: 11-12) is not an adequate substitute for a fuller explanation for the choice of one’s sources. For instance, the Seikyo Shimbunsha 1972 edition of the System appeared one year before the publication of MVC. Was this too late for Bethel to include? Did he not know of Seikyo Shimbunsha’s intention to re-publish Makiguchi? Another intriguing question pertains to Bethel’s relation with Mr. Watanabe, Makiguchi’s son-in-law, who kept the original and unpublished manuscript of the System Draft. Bethel writes that Watanabe gave him the only surviving copy of an important magazine called Kankyo (Bethel, 1974: 13) and it seems strange that Bethel at this occasion did also not come to know of the existence of Makiguchi’s original manuscript. However, without asking Bethel himself, it is impossible to answer these questions.

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Footnote: 1 The referencing is tricky here. The work is listed as authored by Makiguchi and so to keep a consistent reference I mark it so although the book de facto is authored by Toda.
In 1989, *Education for Creative Living* is published in Makiguchi’s name, with a new translator, Alfred Birnbaum. It should be kept in mind that by this time, Makiguchi’s original draft, the *System Draft* has been discovered and published as has the 1982-3 Daisan Bunmeisha version of the *System* with the original kanji. To a scholar of Soka education and Makiguchi, the differences between the editions must have been exciting to discover. While I am sympathetic to Bethel’s and Birnbaum’s exhortation to future scholars to further examine Makiguchi’s work (Makiguchi, 1989: 13), I am as provoked by their portrayal of the state of Makiguchi’s original work, making it sound as if they had to make sense out of scattered notes (Ibid.: 13), whereas they in fact had available several editions of the *System*. Inukai will in this panel explain the more technical nature of Bethel’s and Birnbaum’s translation errors and I will simply note that although Bethel and Birnbaum no longer rely specifically on the editions altered by Toda, in using the Seikyo Shimbunshaa 1972 edition (Makiguchi, 1989; 215-6) they again fail to use the most recent sources available without providing any justification. The gravity of the translation errors to which Inukai will point, makes one wonder how Birnbaum, the translator for a writer as popular as Haruki Murakami, could have committed this. Inukai and I have, through Birnbaum’s publication company, Hyperion, attempted to contact him, but thus far without any luck. Though it cannot be proven, I wonder whether Bethel’s original translations for MVC have been reused without much editing in ECL. Should this be the case, the 1965 Tozai edition, based on Toda’s Buddhist reinterpretation of the *System*, covery made its impact all the way through the English published Soka education material and further to the whole world as the ELC has been translated into several languages such as Spanish, French and Italian.

Before concluding, a note on Toda: In his 2005 presentation at the Soka Education Conference, Masayuki Shiohara, a researcher at the Soka education Research Institute at Soka University in Japan, remarked that after the initial publications of the *System* in the early 1930’s, ten years passed before Makiguchi’s imprisonment in which he did not publish anything. Shiohara says that his teaching was transmitted orally to Toda during this decade. Hence it is very likely that Toda’s *Kachiran* in fact, rather than distorting Makiguchi’s work, merely represents his later thinking. There is some scholarly disagreement on this, centrally on how much Nichiren Buddhism influenced Makiguchi in his later years.

In terms of his commitment to Makiguchi’s ideas and vision, Toda is possibly to be praised for his efforts. From an academic perspective, however, he ought to have mentioned how Makiguchi’s ideas changed in the late 1930’s and 40’s and how these changes were incorporated in the *Kachiran* 1953 edition. Bethel, on the other hand, can solely be assessed from an academic standpoint: As seen with, e.g., The Iliad, Plato, or Heidegger, when editing and translating a work, one provides comments on the editing and translation processes and perhaps explains specific word choices. Thus, the reader can fully appreciate the scope of the efforts involved in bringing about the presented work. Given the many decades of work dedicated to Makiguchi research, which cannot be copied as many individuals have passed away in the meantime, Bethel has regretfully wasted a unique chance to 1) provide works with clear descriptions of Makiguchi’s work and 2) mark himself as a prominent scholar of Japanese philosophical-educational thought.

**Conclusion: An Appeal for a New Translation**

As now presented, the history of published material on Soka education is fraught with inconsistency and confusion. Some of my suggestions are still highly speculative, but it is such speculation that in the first place has pushed the analysis to its current stage. I hope this paper will have proven useful in the near future. It concerns choices made in the past that currently color our understanding of Makiguchi and of Soka education in its philosophical inception. Yet, as soon as a new thorough English translation based on a critical investigation of all the Japanese material available appears, the need to understand these past choices almost entirely vanishes and we will be able to focus on what is essential: To understand Makiguchi’s original thought and translate it into an efficient contemporary pedagogy and philosophy, to apply Makiguchi’s past ideas into the new setting of the present.4

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4 I would like to thank Gonzalo Obelleiro and Nozomi Inukai for sharing ideas on the topic. Thanks also, to Professor James Spady for suggesting this panel.
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Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei and Education for Creative Living: How Makiguchi’s Educational Ideas are Presented in English

Nozomi Inukai
Class of 2011

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi’s Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei (lit. System of Value-Creating Pedagogy) was first published in 1930-1934 by Fuzanbo publishing company. Since then, multiple editions have been published. The reprint of the original copy was published in 1979 by Daisan Bunmeisha, and this is also contained in Makiguchi Zenshu (lit. completed works of Makiguchi) Volume 5 and 6 published by Daisan Bunmeisha in 1982-1983. In 1972-1980, Seikyo Shinbunsha published a new edition which changed some parts into modern kanji and pronunciation of kanji (vol.1, p. 3). The English translation of Makiguchi’s pedagogy was published as Education for Creative Living in 1989 with Alfred Birnbaum as the translator and Dayle M. Bethel as the editor. To this day, this is the only existing English edition of Makiguchi’s Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei. Education for Creative Living has greatly contributed to introducing Makiguchi’s educational ideas to the non-Japanese-speaking world. It even served as the basis for translations into thirteen languages and has inspired creative educational efforts in India and Brazil (Goula & Gebert, 2009, p. 118). However, it is not a full translation of the 4-volume Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei. According to Goula and Gebert (2009), Bethel’s work is “selectively edited, revised and, in places, liberally translated” (p. 118). Bethel himself asserted that Makiguchi’s Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei had to be edited before it was published in English:
The realization that the book we were charged with rendering into English was not a book at all but a collection of notes led us to the conclusion that in order to be true to Makiguchi and to the spirit of the assignment, that is, the preparation of a coherent statement of Makiguchi’s ideas and proposals on education in the English language, we would have to do the sifting and integrating of his notes that he was not permitted to do himself. This is what we have attempted to do. (Education for Creative Living, p. 13)

This statement indicates that Bethel omitted some parts he felt unimportant and changed the order, if necessary, in order to make a single coherent book-length statement out of Makiguchi’s multi-volume work. This makes Education for Creative Living problematic as a primary source of Makiguchi’s educational ideas. However, there is not yet a study published on a systematic comparison between Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei and Education for Creative Living to determine whether and, if so, how Education for Creative Living fails to accurately present Makiguchi’s ideas to English-only readers. Thus, the present study is the first effort to compare these works side by side. Through such comparison, it becomes apparent that Bethel puts emphasis on philosophy rather than pedagogy. Furthermore, Bethel simplifies Makiguchi’s ideas by cutting the complicated arguments on the concept of value and the distinction between cognition and evaluation. Besides these complex arguments, Makiguchi’s references to various scholars, such as Durkheim, Ward, and Dilthey, are deleted. Bethel also inserts and revises portions of the text based on his own interpretation of Makiguchi’s idea of value and pedagogy. All of Bethel’s editorial choices give a simpler, less sophisticated and less well-read impression of Makiguchi to the non-Japanese readers.

One effect of Bethel’s editing on non-Japanese readers is that there is much more emphasis on philosophy than pedagogy in Education for Creative Living. It is crucial to first understand that Makiguchi intended to develop pedagogy, not merely an educational philosophy. This is apparent from his usage of the two words “教育学(kyoikugaku),” pedagogy, and “教育(kyōiku),” education. Makiguchi scholar Shoji Saito points out that although Makiguchi frequently uses the word “創価教育学(Soka Kyoikugaku),” or Soka Pedagogy, he uses the word “創価教育(Soka Kyōiku),” or Soka education, only four times throughout the four volumes (2010, p. 628). Saito (2010) further explains that even those four times are used as a paraphrase of “pedagogy” by combining with the word “研究(kenkyu),” which means study or research, or implying in the context that it is about the research rather than the actual practice of education (p. 628-629). This indicates that Makiguchi was trying to develop pedagogy as a field of study separate from philosophy of education.

Then, how is it that pedagogy is underemphasized in Education for Creative Living? Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei is a 4-volume work composed of seven books1 and multiple chapters in each book, whereas Education for Creative Living is a one-volume work with 5 chapters. Book two to book six of Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei each corresponds to the five chapters of Education for Creative Living in the same order. This suggests that book one and book seven of Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei are not represented in Education for Creative Living. Chapter 1 of Education for Creative Living, “Reflections on Purpose in Education,” starts with book 2 of Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei (Purpose of Education) and then chapter 2, “The Fundamentals of Value,” proceeds to book 3 of Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei (Philosophy of Value). These two deal with philosophical topics. Opening the book with these two chapters gives a reader an impression that this is a philosophical work rather than a pedagogical one. In the omitted book, one of Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei, Makiguchi presents the structure of pedagogy as follows:

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1 Book is a unit smaller than volume.
The above chart can be translated as 1) theory of pedagogical organization (method of research), 2) purpose of education, 3) theory of educational institution, 4) theory of educational systems (students and preparatory policies), and 5) theory of educational method (teaching skills and materials). This chart also corresponds to the structure of *Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei*. Thus, the purpose of education, including the philosophy of value, is only one of the five components of Makiguchi’s pedagogy.

Although Bethel introduces Makiguchi’s insight of “the need for a science of education” as one of his core ideas in the introduction of *Education for Creative Living*, he only quotes several paragraphs and completely ignores the rest of book one, which establishes the scientific foundation of pedagogy and introduces the framework of Makiguchi’s pedagogy. Makiguchi first laments that all the pedagogies in Japan rely solely on philosophers and scholars and are not based on educators’ experiences; thus, none of them can help educators in their daily practice of teaching (vol.1, p. 23). Makiguchi, therefore, expresses a need for a creation of pedagogy based on assessments of successes and failures (vol.1, p.27). Makiguchi also asserts that pedagogy should be continuously tested for its effectiveness, and submits his own pedagogy to experimentation as well (vol.1, p.14). Here Makiguchi clearly distinguishes the difference between the purpose of education and the purpose of pedagogy. The purpose of education, Makiguchi argues, focuses on what students need and what parents and society want students to achieve, whereas the purpose of pedagogy is to provide a guideline for teachers on how to accomplish the purpose of education. Philosophy of education deals with the question of “why” whereas pedagogy deals with the question of “how.”

Makiguchi goes on to articulate a distinction between pure science and applied science. Makiguchi argues that pure science and applied science should be distinguished by the object (meaning not “aim” but “target”) of study (vol.1, p.73). Makiguchi states,

自然的因果関係若しくは無意識的因果関係を研究対象として、それの本質的恒常不変の因果法則を見出そうとしているのが、所謂純正科学で、就中人為的因果関係、即ち人間の意志の加わったが為に生じた、因果関係の現象を、研究対象として、変幻出没極まりなき外観の裏に存する、恒常不変なる因果の法則を見出そうとしているのが、謂う所の応用科学を意味することと余は解する。 (vol.1, p.70)  
I believe that pure science studies the causal law of nature or unconsciousness to reveal its fundamental unchanging law of cause and effect, whereas applied science studies the causal law that involves human will to reveal the unchanging law of cause and effect that exists behind the ever-changing appearance.  

He further states, “純正科学が自然の現象を対象とするにに対し、応用科学は意識の有無はともかく、恒正科学の成果なる存在の法則を適用した価値創造の活動を研究対象とするのである” (vol.1, p. 18) “whereas pure science studies natural phenomena, applied science studies the value-creating activities, whether conscious or unconscious, based on the application of the principle of existence revealed by pure science.” These two statements together indicate that the “causal law that involves human will” is the application of principles extracted from pure science into value-creating activities. Therefore, pedagogy belongs to applied science. As an example of a well established field of applied science, Makiguchi introduces medicine. In the medical field, doctors continuously seek better treatments through experimenting and sharing their findings at conferences (vol.1, p. 35). Makiguchi encourages pedagogy to be developed in a similar way. Later, Makiguchi slightly modifies his explanation of applied science:

本書第一巻を初めて発表した四年前には…普通の応用科学と同様、教育学もまた基本科学が発見した原理を応用するによって成り立つものと考えていたのだが、今や一歩進んでその基本科学の発見以前に於て無意識的に発明された技術そのものを対象として学者が研究し、それによって技術上の因果の法則を後から発見したものが、即ち応用科学であると信ずるに至ったのである。 (vol.4, p. 109)

Four years ago when I published the first volume of *Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei*, I thought that, like any other field of applied science, pedagogy is based on the application of the principles discovered by pure science. However, I came to believe that applied science studies the skills

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2 This and all the subsequent quotations in Japanese are translated by Nozomi Inukai
unconsciously invented before the discovery of basic science, later revealing the causal law of skills.

Here, Makiguchi claims that applied science does not have to be the application of principles discovered by pure science; rather, it studies the skills or technology itself and discovers the causal law of techniques. This idea confirms Makiguchi’s approach of developing pedagogy: induction from experience of successes and failures.

Another way in which Bethel underemphasizes Makiguchi’s pedagogical arguments is through the omission of book 7 of Soka Kyōikugaku Taikei. In volume 4 of Soka Kyōikugaku Taikei and chapter 4 of Education for Creative Living, Makiguchi states “everything in this book up to now has in a sense been preface” (Soka vol.4, p. 128; Education, p. 183). This clearly indicates that the arguments that follow are crucial to Makiguchi’s pedagogy. However, in Education for Creative Living, there is only an approximately fifteen-page long chapter left after this statement and the entire book 7 on “教育技術(kyōiku gijutsu),” or educational technique, is omitted. In book 7, Makiguchi expounds on the concept of “science of education” and defines the aim of teaching methodology. Makiguchi writes, "無意識に繰り返されて居る経験を意識して、之を言語に表現し、主観的に経験者、工夫者に限り秘蔵するところの技術を、客観的に伝承し得る精神の文化財に変化して、一般生活の技術科学と同格に、教育技術も客観化することが吾々の企図であって、教育科学の独立し且つ完成する基礎的工事であろう。(vol.4, p. 245-246)

Our intention is, just like science technology in everyday life, to objectify teaching skills by making the unconsciously repeated experience into conscious activities and expressing it in language, as well as by changing the skills subjectively and secretly possessed by those who have experienced into spiritual wealth that can be objectively transmitted to others. This is the foundation for science of education to be independent and complete.

Thus, science of education is to make the unconsciously repeated individual teaching experiences into objective methodology that can be transmitted and practiced by other people. Makiguchi insists that educational methodology should move from natural and primitive to scientific and refined (vol.4, p. 237). He asserts that the key elements for developing a refined and scientific methodology are consciousness of one’s actions, clarity of purpose in work, and well-planned means to achieve that end (vol.4, p. 274). Makiguchi further declares that “教育学の本当の問題は、教師自身の働き方よりは、子弟をして如何に価値ある働きを為さしめるかの指導法を研究するのにある” (vol.4, p. 280) “the real issue of pedagogy is not so much studying how teachers should act, but rather, how to teach students how to act valuably.” Therefore, teachers not only must be conscious of the means and the end of their own actions (teaching) but also must make students conscious of the means and the end of their work (studying). Educational methodology should provide the techniques to meet the above goal of teachers. In Soka Kyōikugaku Taikei Gairon, Makiguchi outlines his plan to publish 12-volume pedagogy of which eight volumes are on teaching methodology of specific subjects such as geography, math, science, and history. However, only the first four volumes on the pedagogical foundation were published and the rest on the teaching methodology were never published. The discussion on teaching methodology provided in book 7 was supposed to serve as the basis of the specifics to be followed. Thus, it is an important part of Makiguchi’s pedagogy, yet it is omitted in Education for Creative Living. All of the above editorial choices of Bethel deemphasize the pedagogical aspect of Makiguchi’s work.

On the other hand, even though the philosophy of value is emphasized in Education for Creative Living, it is presented in a much more simplified manner. In order to fully understand Makiguchi’s Soka Kyōikugaku Taikei, it is crucial to understand his philosophy of value. This is clear from its name Soka, which means value creation in Japanese. Makiguchi explicitly states that the understanding of the concept of value is critical in fully understanding his Soka pedagogy in the following sentence: “マルクス経済学理解のためには是非とも基礎たる価値問題を理解しなければならぬと同様に、創価教育学の真の理解にもこの問題の理解を回避しては到底不可能と信じざるを得ず” (vol.2, p. 18) “in order to understand Marx’s economic theory, one must understand the issue of value which is the basis. Similarly, I believe that it is impossible to avoid this issue [of value] to truly understand Soka pedagogy.” Because the concept of value is such a crucial part of Makiguchi’s pedagogy, a slight edition can cause a significant difference in the understanding of Soka pedagogy.

Nevertheless, Bethel simplifies the concept of value and the relationship between cognition and evaluation.
Makiguchi divided value into three categories: beauty, benefit, and good. In *Education for Creative Living*, it is stated that “we may thus conveniently picture a hierarchical system of value as a pyramid with aesthetic values at the bottom and moral values on top” (p. 75). However, in *Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei*, Makiguchi states that “価値の体系をピラミッド型に想像し、道徳的価値の優位を認め、共の頂点に置こうとする学説は…” (vol.2, p. 158) “Because there is no objective demonstration, I cannot agree to the theory that pictures a hierarchical system of value as a pyramid with moral value on top.” These two statements are in stark contrast because, in the original, Makiguchi states that he cannot agree to the idea of making value into a hierarchical system. Instead, Makiguchi defines value as follows:

> 人生の目的なる生命の保全に対し、有利と判断される各々の種類程度に則して善といい、利といい、美といい、将之を総括して有価値といい、価値多し、或いは不良なりと云ふ。面して生命の維持保全に対して有害と認められる其の種類程度に応じて悪といい、害といい、醜という。（vol.2, p. 129）

We call beauty, benefit, or good according to its type and strength of how beneficial to the preservation of life, which is the purpose of life. Also, we call them positive value altogether and say whether there is great or little value. On the other hand, we call bad, detriment, and ugliness, depending on its type and strength of how detrimental to the preservation of life.

According to the original writings of Makiguchi, the measurement of value is whether or not it is advantageous to the preservation or expansion of life. Makiguchi further claims that the value of benefit serves as the basis of explaining the other values as it is shown in the following statement: “利の価値はその他の価値の説明の基礎をなすものである” (vol.2, p. 159) “the value of benefit is the basis of explaining other values.” How so?

He states, “利といい、善といい、も、対象なる性質の相違に基づくのでなくて、これを評価する標準、即ち対象に対する反応の状態を表わす主観的態度の差異に基づくのではあるまいか” (vol.2, p. 152) “whether you call benefit or good, is it not based on the difference in the quality of the object itself but the difference in the subject or the evaluator?” Here, he argues that the value of good is the same as the value of benefit in its quality. The only difference between the two is in the evaluator. He further asserts, “善といい悪という評語は社会自身の専有語である。団体生活に於てこの団体が要素又は部分たる各個人に対する賞讃又は制裁をなす場合に於てのみ使用することを許された言葉である” (vol.2, p. 164) “the phrases good and bad are propriety of society. They are only allowed to be used in group life when the group as a whole praises or punishes individuals, who are its elements.” Makiguchi’s argument is that the value of good and bad can only be determined by society or group against individuals. Thus, the same object can possess the value of benefit if the evaluator is an individual or the value of good if the evaluator is the society.

On the other hand, Makiguchi defines aesthetic value as “個我以上の全体の生命には直接関係せずに、人間の感覚器官を刺激して、そこで人間の快楽感情の反応によって評価されられて、美醜の判断を受けるものである” (vol.2, p. 150) “objects that stimulate the five senses without involving the life of an individual as a whole. They are evaluated as beautiful or ugly by humans’ response towards pleasant or painful emotions, thus not directly affecting the presence or absence of life.” It means that the value of beauty is a sensory value that provides pleasure but does not affect the person’s life as a whole. Makiguchi mentions recreation as an example of aesthetic value because it relieves some emotional distress such as exhaustion, loneliness, and sadness, and gives pleasant feelings (vol.2, p. 104-105).

Thus, the activities or objects that are defined to possess the value of beauty also benefit humans; the only distinction is that they benefit only a part of one’s life, not the entire being. These discussions indicate that the three values of beauty, benefit, and good are not in a simple hierarchical relation; rather, these are interrelated and the distinction is not always clear-cut. Such uncertainty makes it impossible to answer questions such as “What is the most important value?” or “What happens if individuals’ belief in ‘good’ and society’s evaluation of ‘good’ is different?” However, it demonstrates Makiguchi’s acknowledgment and understanding of the complexity of human life and the world.

Another missing piece that is simplifying Makiguchi’s idea of value is his discussion on “person value.” In volume 1 book 1, Makiguchi writes that the purpose of education is to enhance person value (人格価値) (p. 19). Then, what is this person value? On page 86 of *Education for Creative Living*, Bethel’s text suddenly starts discussing how to evaluate person value correctly, but there is no part that directly addresses what person value is. Makiguchi explains the purpose of education in *Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei*, “人生は畢竟価値の追求である。
その価値の獲得実現の理想的な生活は幸福である。従って幸福生活への指導を目的とする教育の職能は、価値創造能力の豊富なる所謂有価値の人格を養成するにあたる” (vol.2, p. 226) “life is a pursuit of value, and the ideal state of life that has attained and manifested value is called happiness. Therefore, the aim of education that guides people to happy life is to foster people who are capable of creating value, or so-called valuable character.” This “person value” is not a separate category of value from the beauty-benefit-good value system, but rather, personality is an object of evaluation as a creator and manifestation of value (vol.2, p. 205)

Makiguchi further claims as follows:

人格という詞は既に或る評価を意味し、而してその結果たる価値を表わすものである。殆ど価値という言葉と同意味に使用されている。価値の有無、高低、尊卑等は、人格という言葉と交換しても差支えなき程である (vol.2, p. 209) "The word 'character' already implies the existence of evaluation and is used almost interchangeably with the word 'value.' There is no problem using these two words interchangeably in the context such as there is or is not a value/character, high or low in value/character, or noble value/character.

Then, Makiguchi describes that there are three different categories in people’s character: 1) “居ることを一般から希望される人。泰平無事の時には左程問題にされなくても、一朝有事の場合に、もしも彼が居ったならばと追慕される性質の人で常に社会の結合勢力として存在する者” (people who are society’s unifying power, and therefore, highly valued and needed, especially in times of emergency or catastrophe), 2) “彼が居っても悪くはないが、居らぬでも大した影響はないという人。言わば殆ど仲間から存在を認められて居ない程の平凡人” (ordinary people who do not make a difference by being or not being there), and 3) “彼あるが為に困って居る。希わくば居らざらん事をと嫌われて居る人。その更に甚だしきは公然社会から嫌忌されて居る所の罪悪人で、常に社会を脅威するもの、即ちとかく分解的勢力として存在する者” (people who are society’s dividing force such as criminals, and therefore, are wished by others not to be there) (vol.2, p. 205-206). When Makiguchi says that the purpose of education is to foster people of person value, he means fostering people of the first category, those who create and manifest positive value. They can be said a “man of character,” and therefore, “value of one’s character” might be a better translation than “person value.” This categorization also demonstrates how positive value, no value, and negative value manifest in human beings. Therefore, the discussion on person value, which is missing in Education for Creative Living, provides a deeper understanding and a different aspect of the concept of value as well as the purpose of education.

Another important concept that needs to be addressed is the relationship between cognition and evaluation. In Education for Creative Living, Makiguchi claims that cognition is “the perception of the thing among things” and evaluation is “the perception of the thing in relation to the self” (p. 63). He repeatedly asserts that cognition and evaluation are different kinds of mental processes and should not be confused. Although Makiguchi does make this distinction between cognition and evaluation in Soka Kyoiku Gakushu Taikei, he further writes, “吾々は今まで価値と真理、評価と認識との区別をなすについて関係の有無という粗大なる言葉を使ってきたものを幾分修正しなければならぬ” (vol.2, p. 88) “we have thus far simply used the existence of relationship to distinguish value and truth or cognition and evaluation, but this must be modified to some degree.” According to the modified explanation, there are three types of mental processes: 1) “全く無関係のもの＝無評価、無認識” (objects with completely no relation to oneself = no evaluation, no cognition), 2) “知的反応に留まるだけの関係性＝評価” (relation that only involves intellectual response = cognition), and 3) “情的反応を促すだけの関係性＝評価” (relation that urges emotional response = evaluation) (vol.2, p. 88). Makiguchi explains, “何等かの意味に於て生命に関係のない認識は認識とすら言わぬを得ない。認識には価値判断があるといわれるのも此の理由からである。意識から認識に移るためには意識の上に何ものかが加わらねばならぬ” (vol.2, p. 83-84), “we cannot call recognition if there is no relationship to our life in any way. This is why cognition involves evaluation. There needs to be something added in order for consciousness to move to recognition.” Makiguchi further argues that evaluation occurs based on cognition, which means that one can only evaluate objects that one recognizes. He uses a word “価値認識(kachi ninshiki)” (recognition of value) and explains as follows: “関係の概念中、認識主体の伸縮又は増縮に関係ある客体に対しては...或程度の感情たる主観的状態を以て反応し、或は進んで接近せんとし、又は退いて疎隔せんとする” (vol.2, p. 86-87) “the subject of recognition responds with
some degree of emotions or actively approaches or retreats from objects which relate to the subject’s expansion and contraction.” The element that distinguishes evaluation from cognition is that evaluation involves subjective feelings that actively seeks or rejects the object of evaluation. Makiguchi concludes that cognition also involves a relationship between the object and the subject, and evaluation is based on cognition. Thus, cognition and evaluation are intertwined, not a clear-cut distinct mental process which only works for either truth or value. This demonstrates that the concept of cognition and evaluation is not as simple as is presented in *Education for Creative Living*.

In addition to simplifying Makiguchi’s arguments, Bethel deletes many references Makiguchi makes in his original writings. In the four volumes of *Soka Kyōgaku Taikai*, Makiguchi mentions not only various newspaper and journal articles, but also over thirty scholars from the east and the west, ancient and modern, and from various disciplines. For many of them, though, Makiguchi merely notes their names, and these are often completely cut out from the text in *Education for Creative Living*. However, there are also some, such as Emile Durkheim, Lester Ward, and Wilhelm Dilthey, who are quoted at length with their references. Even those are excluded in the English translation. For example, Makiguchi quotes from Durkheim’s *Education and Sociology* (vol.1, p. 54-59, 180-183, 229-230), *Sociology and Philosophy* (vol.2, p. 113-114, 118-120), *The Divisions of Labor in Society* (vol.4, p. 17, 54-55, 110-112, 257–259), *Ward’s Applied Sociology* (vol.1, p. 75, vol.2, p. 155), Suketoshi Tanabe’s book on Ward *ウォードのスペンサー批判* (lit. *Ward’s criticisms of Spencer*) (vol.1, p. 64, 231-133), and Dilthey’s *デイレイの哲学* (lit. *Dilthey’s Philosophy, but most likely either Philosophy of Existence or Philosophy of Essence*) (vol.2, p. 63-65, vol.4, p. 50-51). However, although their names are mentioned in some parts, none of the actual quotations are included in the English. Even worse, some of Makiguchi’s explicit claims on those scholars’ contribution to his own ideas are omitted. Makiguchi states, “実証的研究の態度によって社会学を建設し、且社会学の基礎の上に教育学を築き上げて吾人を啓発した、デュルケーム氏の思想は、本邦の教育学界に一大革命を招来するもといわけばならぬ” (vol.1, p. 178) “I must say that the philosophy of Durkheim who established sociology based on empirical research and enlightened me by building pedagogy on the foundation of sociology will bring a revolution in the field of pedagogy.” Here, Makiguchi explicitly writes that Durkheim’s philosophy has enlightened him. However, the corresponding part in *Education for Creative Living*, chapter 2 p.32, does not include this sentence. Makiguchi also writes that “デイレイ氏によって論述せられた所で、吾人の思想を巧みに表現されたものである” (vol.1, p. 145) “Dilthey’s arguments well express my own thoughts” when discussing the purpose of education and that “デイレイ氏の左の意見こそ、吾人の経験を最も適切に表現したものといわけばならぬ” (vol.4, p. 50) “Dilthey’s opinion on the left best expresses my experience” in the discussion of individuality. Although these two sentences do not say that Makiguchi has been influenced by Dilthey’s ideas, Makiguchi clearly states that Dilthey’s ideas are similar to his own. However, these are also omitted in the English translation. Another thing to note is that, although he does not claim the influence of Nichiren Buddhism on the development of his ideas, Makiguchi refers to or cites Buddhist texts and Nichiren’s writings several times (vol.2, p. 109, 187, 191, 193-194, 204, vol.3, p. 22–23, 32, 77, vol.4, p. 80, 286). However, these are also completely omitted in *Education for Creative Living*.

The omissions of references to various scholars influence Makiguchi’s impression for the readers. It not only takes away Makiguchi’s wide knowledge and understanding of Western philosophies and literature in various disciplines but also disregards the resemblance between Makiguchi’s ideas and other scholars’ ideas. Among the various scholars quoted, Durkheim seems to be the most influential in forming Makiguchi’s ideas as indicated in the previous paragraph. According to Durkheim (1956), there is no one single ideal education, but rather, “each society sets up a certain ideal of man, of what he should be” (p.70). Durkheim defines education as follows:

> Education is the influence exercised by adult generations on those that are not yet ready for social life. Its objective is to arouse and to develop in the child a certain number of physical, intellectual, and moral states which are demanded of him by both the political society as a whole and the special milieu for which he is specifically destined. (p.71)

He further states that “to the egoistic and asocial being that has just been born it must...add another, capable of leading a moral and social life” and that education consists of methodical socialization (p.72). Durkheim emphasizes that “Man is man, in fact, only because he lives in a society” (p.76). Durkheim’s perspective on individual people’s lives and the role of education is inseparable from the values and ideals of the society. Makiguchi’s idea resonates with Durkheim’s idea that education is socialization of the younger generation so
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that they can live fully in their society, and as a result, so that society as a whole will advance. Makiguchi further declares that “the purpose of education is to enable children to become responsible, healthy cells in the social organism, to contribute to the happiness of the society, and, by so doing, to find meaning, purpose, and happiness in their own individual lives” (Education, p.22; Soka, vol.1, p.147) and that “it is essential that any true conception of happiness contain the promise of full commitment to the life of the society” (Education, p.25; Soka, vol.1, p.157). The major underlying theme in both Makiguchi and Durkheim’s philosophy is the interconnectedness of individual and society. Although Makiguchi disagreed with Durkheim in certain points, it is clear from his own statements and from the resemblances in their ideas that Makiguchi’s reading of Durkheim was central in the development of his pedagogical ideas.

The issues pointed out thus far are all regarding Bethel’s omissions of texts, but Bethel also inserts some texts that do not exist in Makiguchi’s original writings. The sentences on the left column do not exist in Makiguchi’s original text and are all inserted by Bethel. The right column provides the sentences before and after Bethel’s insertion with the word “inserted here” indicating where Bethel inserted his sentences listed on the left column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In this the humanist will concur with the pragmatist: We cannot live truth; we must live value. Life may give us access to truth, but it forgives ahead on value. Life looks on at truth, but it comes in contact with value. (Education for Creative Living, p. 59)</th>
<th>利用厚生は必ずしも人文主義者の嫌忌する程度の性質を有するものではない。利用厚生を「個人的」と限定する所に於てのみ厭うべき性質を帯びて来るのである。… (inserted here) …真偽というのは対象たる実在と表現のとの間の関係の正否を指示したのに留まり、対象と吾人の生活との関係には触れる事がないのに対して、美醜・善悪・利害の標準に照らして判定した価値は、対象が主観の生命に対する何等かの或る程度の力的関係を表明するもので此の両者は全く比較にならぬ異別性質の概念であることをハッキリと認識して置かねばならぬ。（Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei, vol.2, p. 39-40）</th>
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<td>Either way we must admit that learning plays an integral role in our daily lives…We must relive our experience under changing circumstances in order to really know we have grasped the constant truth of it; we must re-experience things differently to fully fathom why they always happen the same way. (Education for Creative Living, p. 68-69)</td>
<td>第二節 本質と非本質（Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei, vol.2, p. 73-79） (inserted here) 第四節 直観及思考（Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei, vol.2, p. 90-100）</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would prefer to use the less awkward breadth of the word value. Things that can harm us certainly relate to us and wrest us from indifference no less than things that aid us. (Education for Creative Living, p. 72)</td>
<td>後に反価値として説明する。… (inserted here) …故に価値は対象と主観との関係力若しくは力的関係という方が適当であると思う。（Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei, vol.2, p. 112）</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For example, water in and of itself has no value…The value is not inherent in the subject (person) nor in the object (water) but is the manifest in the attracting or repelling force between them. (Education for Creative Living, p. 72)</td>
<td>故に価値は対象と主観との関係力若しくは力的関係という方が適当であると思う。（inserted here）対象の関係性は内在性か、即ち価値は対象の内在性に基づくかの疑問に関して、デュルケーム氏は左の考察を為しているが、果たして如何。（Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei, vol.2, p. 112-113）</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not talking about minor changes. The entire structure is wrong for the avowed ends…How much does its retention or elimination affect the cumulative ability to attain those educational aims? (Education for Creative Living, p. 99-100)</td>
<td>内部より能率増進に向かって教育事業の総てを改善しなければならぬ。… (inserted here) 教育目的達成に関する国家社会の政策的方法の根底として教育機関を大局より見渡し考究するときは少なくとも左の問題に亘って整理改造を研究せねばならぬことが首肯されるで...</td>
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Here is where the similarity stops, however... The evolution of educational systems and the roles involved therein are considered in the following section. (Education for Creative Living, p. 101-102)

I myself cannot simply remain silent and let the harm come to pass. Teaching must be brought under stricter supervision, and that means raising society’s consciousness and expectations of teaching and educational administration. (Education for Creative Living, p. 109-110)

At the same time, we must be careful to avoid the pitfalls of Western medicine when it loses sight of the patient as a whole person. In this sense, traditional Eastern medicine has much to say. (Education for Creative Living, p. 182)

And this is, in the final analysis, what value-creating education is about... It is within this context that I have stressed the need for teachers to develop understanding of the principles of learning through objective, scientific examination of their own and other teachers’ experience. (Education for Creative Living, p. 185)

In an organically structured curriculum, every course should have its contributive function, and every individual purpose its own corresponding course – just as each organ of the body is there for a reason... If anything, that is the problem of today’s curriculum – a body divided against itself. (Education for Creative Living, p. 197-198)

Because there are numerous parts that are omitted in the English version, it is impossible to list everything. However, the above list is everything that has been added when publishing in English. The fourth one provides an example in the context of the topic of whether value is inherent in the object or the subject. In all the other it seem that Bethel is either providing a concluding statement based on Makiguchi’s previous arguments or supplementing Makiguchi’s arguments based on Bethel’s own interpretation of Makiguchi’s arguments. Although similar statements appear in Makiguchi’s original writings, it is important to acknowledge that the actual wordings and examples listed above are created by Bethel and are not a direct translation of the original work.
Furthermore, Bethel revises Makiguchi’s words, although some might be simply due to mistranslation. The following quotations are corresponding parts in *Education for Creative Living* and *Soka Kyōikugaku Taikei* that illustrate some of Bethel’s revisions.

Truth does not allow us to select the theory we favor most among the literature in the offhand presumption that each must have its own merits. We are not choosing lenses for a camera. But neither should we discard one set of values as wholly invalid merely because it contradicts another, as if they were mutually exclusive, true or false. (*Education for Creative Living*, p. 57)

I think it especially important that we examine what is happening abroad, because the questions that are now being debated by the Ministry of Education—largely centering on whether separate teacher training universities should be established or whether teacher education should be simply one department major within a more comprehensive liberal arts university—are not limited to Japan but are common to progress in teacher education worldwide. In America, perhaps the leading innovator, and even in Germany since the Great War, we find that neither proposal has won out entirely, but instead both approaches are being implemented simultaneously. Both countries have established special teacher training universities as well as university-level programs in larger institutions. Perhaps because of their size, however, neither Germany nor America chose to follow one set policy nationwide. Which of the two approaches is preferred depends entirely on the region. In Germany, for example, Saxony, Thuringen, and Hamburg have not set up separate teacher training universities, whereas Prussia has. In America, areas west and east are different, as again is the south; programs even vary from state to state. Some discussion persists as to whether one specific type of teacher, say elementary school teachers, are better prepared under one system or the other, but wherever either approach is used we should note that it is university-level training that has become standard practice, and all graduates are thoroughly tested before being granted credentials. Moreover, in Prussia, full credentials are not granted until after five years of actual service as an associate teacher. We have much to learn from other countries toward perfecting our own system. (*Education for Creative Living*, p. 124-125)
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Furthermore, it is unavoidable that the state, in the person of the minister of education, will specify the qualifications and credentials required of teachers, as well as regulate duties to a vast number of regional officials who will oversee, enforce, and promote the quality of education received. (Education for Creative Living, p. 97)

Natural phenomena – roughly divisible into celestial, terrestrial, and human realms
   Astronomical phenomena
   Land phenomena
   Aquatic phenomena
   Atmospheric phenomena
   Biological phenomena
   Inorganic phenomena
   Human phenomena
      Means of living
      Means of grouping
      Social groups
      Social classes
      Division of labor in society
      Political phenomena
      Economic phenomena
      Educational phenomena and transfer of culture
(Education for Creative Living, p. 189)

The good life can be realized only through the fulfillment of the individual, and this goal of happiness can in turn be attained only through the fulfillment of the group on which the individual depends for life and livelihood. (Education for Creative Living, p. 192)

Natural phenomena
   天体現象
   陸界の現象
   水界の現象
   気界の現象
   生物界の現象
   無生物界の現象
   人類界の現象

人生現象
   生活の方法
   団結の方法
   社会団体
   社会の階級
   社会の分業
   政治現象
   経済現象
   教化現象
(Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei, vol.4, p. 163)

The good life can be realized only through the fulfillment of the individual, and this goal of happiness can in turn be attained only through the fulfillment of the group on which the individual depends for life and livelihood. (Education for Creative Living, p. 192)

The good life can be realized only through the fulfillment of the individual, and this goal of happiness can in turn be attained only through the fulfillment of the group on which the individual depends for life and livelihood. (Education for Creative Living, p. 192)
In the first two examples, other people’s words are written as if they were Makiguchi’s own words in *Education for Creative Living*. Furthermore, the order and some content are revised. The fourth example illustrates a slight difference in the chart that originally two separate charts are combined into one in the English. In the third example, the underlined word “unavoidable” does not exist in the original. The original Japanese version simply explains the current situation, whereas the English one gives the impression that Makiguchi believes it is unavoidable to have state regulation on education. Similarly, in the fifth example, it says that the good life “can” be attained through the fulfillment of the individual in the English, but says it “cannot” be in the Japanese. The final example is from the foreword of *Soka Kyōiku Gakushū Taikei*. Although the translation is well written, the English one gives an impression that Makiguchi did not have time to organize and edit his notes before publishing. On the other hand, the original Japanese seems to put more emphasis on his belief that, as a scholar, he should make logical connections among his ideas before publishing.

This final point leads into the speculation of why Bethel has done all the editing discussed thus far. Reading the translated version of Makiguchi’s foreword, Bethel might have received an impression that the *Soka Kyōiku Gakushū Taikei* is an unedited compilation of notes. In the introduction of *Education for Creative Living*, Bethel writes as follows:

> It should be understood, first of all, that Makiguchi’s *Soka Kyōiku Gakushū Taikei* is not a book but a collection of notes that he jotted down and accumulated over a period of thirty years. It was these notes, with little in the way of editing, that were published as *Soka Kyōiku Gakushū Taikei* in 1930. (p. 13)

If Bethel truly believed that *Soka Kyōiku Gakushū Taikei* was not edited or organized before it was published, he might have felt the responsibility to edit and organize on behalf of Makiguchi.

Another possibility is that Bethel tried to avoid some controversial issues or less familiar and accepted ideas in the West when publishing Makiguchi’s book in English. For example, how much had been influenced by Buddhism Makiguchi had when he published *Soka Kyōiku Gakushū Taikei* is still under question. Therefore, in order not to give readers an excessive impression of Buddhist influence, Bethel might have omitted all the parts that refer to Nichiren Buddhism, even the ones used merely as examples and are not contributive factors in his ideas. It is also understandable to put less weight on the concept that value of benefit serves as the basis of other values because morality is what is often emphasized in educational philosophy. Furthermore, Makiguchi’s emphasis on society being the evaluator of the value of good and the aim of education being the acculturation of individuals might go against the ideals of many Western nations that revere individuality and individual freedom. Thus, Bethel might have less emphasized these points in order to immediate rejection of Makiguchi.
by English readers. This explanation might also account for Bethel omitting two very important parts of Makiguchi’s writings. One is what Makiguchi advocates as a slogan for developing new pedagogy, which is “経験より出発せよ。価値を目標とせよ。経済を原理とせよ” (vol.1, p. 37) “Start from experience. Aim for value. Make economy/efficiency as principle.” The other is what Makiguchi presents as “創価教育六大指標 (Soka Kyoiku rokudai shihyo)” (six principles of Soka education), which aims to change characteristics of nature into characteristics of culture. It is illustrated as the following chart (vol.3, p. 18).

Yet another speculation is that Bethel tried to attract as many English readers as possible. It was more likely for English readers to read a book by an unfamiliar Japanese educator if it was shorter and simpler. Omitting long quotations by various scholars would greatly reduce the amount of text. Moreover, paraphrasing their arguments and revising them to sound like Makiguchi’s own arguments would give more credit to Makiguchi for those ideas, which might attract more readers.

Finally, Bethel might have used an edited version of Makiguchi’s work in Japanese to begin with. Bethel cites the 1972-1980 Seikyo Shinbunsha edition of Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei in his notes of Education for Creative Living (p. 215-216). Because this is the only edition Bethel cites in his notes, the 1972-1980 edition was used for the present study among the multiple editions of Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei. However, Bethel never explicitly states which edition he used. Therefore, if he had used a different edition such as Kachiron for translating Education for Creative Living, some differences from the original might be unavoidable.

Although I present some of the possible reasons for the misrepresentation of Makiguchi’s ideas in Education for Creative Living, these are only my speculations based on my study on the comparison between 1972-1980 edition of Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei and Education for Creative Living. Only Bethel himself can accurately answer as to the intentions behind his editorial decisions. Furthermore, in the process of comparison, I may have missed some important differences because Bethel often skips portions or changes the order of sections, making it very hard to compare side by side. Though it might not be complete, the present study points out some important discrepancies between Education for Creative Living and Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei. It is clear that Bethel has made many editorial choices without notifying the reader such as putting more emphasis on philosophy than pedagogy, simplifying Makiguchi’s arguments on the concept of value and cognition versus evaluation, omitting Makiguchi’s references to various scholars, as well as inserting and revising portions of texts based on his interpretation of Makiguchi’s ideas. These edits by Bethel significantly alter the understanding of Makiguchi’s ideas for non-Japanese readers. Therefore, a further investigation of the validity of Education for Creative Living and comparison with Makiguchi’s original work is crucial. It is my hope that the present study initiates an effort for a better representation of Makiguchi’s educational ideas in English.

3 Vol.2 of Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei edited by Josei Toda
References


Challenges and Possibilities for Soka Education Research in Translation

Gonzalo Obelleiro
Class of 2005

Introductory Remarks

Together with papers by Simon Hoffding1 and Nozomi Inukai,2 this piece is part of a tripartite exploration of issues related to the availability and reliability of English translations of texts in the Soka education tradition and some implications for research.

Makiguchi’s magna opus, The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy (Soka Kyoikugaku Taikai), was published in four volumes between 1930 and 1933. We know from Makiguchi’s notes that the project of his system was to span for twelve volumes, four dedicated to an introduction and eight to discussions on the particularities of the core concepts. Eventually, the introduction grew to span five volumes; the unpublished, fifth volume was confiscated and lost at the time of Makiguchi’s incarceration. What is available to us is only an incomplete version of the introduction to Makiguchi’s system.3 The only available English translation of Makiguchi’s Pedagogy is Education for Creative Living, translated by Alfred Birnbaum and edited by Dayle Bethel. Bethel’s Education is a single volume selection of passages from the four-volume 1930-1933 Pedagogy. As Hoffding and Inukai show in their papers, an examination of editorial and translation issues in Education reveal this sole

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English translation of Makiguchi’s *System* as questionable as an introduction of Makiguchi’s educational ideas and inadequate for research purposes.

Hoffling and Inuiki show us how Bethel’s *Education* fails to meet standards of reliability. However, the fact that it *does* is not news. And yet, despite its well-known shortcomings, *Education* continues to inspire a global network of educators and scholars and remains the theoretical backbone of a growing network of non-Japanese-speaking Soka teachers around the world. This is testimony, I believe, to the merits of Bethel’s edition: that it captures the sense of urgency and conviction with which Makiguchi committed to the happiness of his young students. Taking into account the good and the bad, in this paper I explore some issues concerning limitations and possibilities for research on Soka education in English.

Because I work in the field of philosophy of education and because the question of textual analysis is of particular relevance to the problem of translation, I will reserve most of my comments to discussions on conceptual analysis. However, research on Soka education is by no means limited to the humanities. What we refer to as Soka education research consists of a constellation of research efforts in a wide range of disciplines. This includes historical research on the life and work of founder Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, educational research on the implementation of curriculum design and teaching methodologies derived from or inspired by the educational philosophy of Soka, comparative analyses between Makiguchi or Ikeda with thinkers from other traditions in the field of the history of ideas, and research in related fields with direct implications for education like peace studies and comparative religion. Because of the limited available literature in English, scholars typically read across disciplines, rendering the field truly interdisciplinary.

For research in some of the disciplines mentioned above, limited availability of English translations of works by Makiguchi and of significant secondary literature by Japanese scholars poses significant obstacles. Archival research is clearly impossible without access to the original sources. Even the prospects of development in the foundational areas of philosophy of education and the history of ideas are bleak within the available sources in English translation. Naturally, command of the original language is a reasonable expectation for a professional scholar. However, until the problem of reliable translations availability is overcome, the ability of scholars to broadly engage the ideas of value-creating pedagogy in their professional communities remains seriously hampered.

On the other hand, the interdisciplinary nature of the field renders it flexible in the face of obstacles posed by the question of translation. Not all approaches to the study of Soka education depend heavily on textual and conceptual analysis, and with ingenuity and tenacity, some work of conceptual analysis and development is possible working almost exclusively off translated materials. One of the aims of this paper is to entertain certain possibilities for research in light of the current state of scholarship.

The task of unpacking the concept of value.

From a philosophical perspective, there is much needed work of interpretation and even concept development in relation to the ideas of value and value creation. For a number of reasons, what is available in English translation makes for an inhospitable environment for this type of work. Here are some considerations.

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1 I mean “non-Japanese-speaking” rather than “English-speaking” because Bethel’s edition of *Education* is not just the only version available in English, but it is also the basis for a number of translations in other languages.
In the history of Western thought, the concept of value, in the way we employ it today, especially in relation to the questions of its genesis (value creation), developed only in the second half of the 19th century. Questions concerning what we today refer to as matter of value, used to be articulated in terms of virtue (Arete) or good. By the late 19th century, thinkers in the neo-Kantian tradition had made the question of value central to their concerns. Wilhelm Windelband and Heinrich Rickert of the so-called Southwest German School interpreted and systematized Kant’s writings on epistemology, ethics and aesthetics in terms of the values of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. Kumagi tells us that Makiguchi’s thinking on values was influenced by this tradition particularly through the work on philosophy of economics by Kiichiro Soda. Windelband’s most influential works date from the 1870s and 1880s; Rickert systematized these ideas in the decades following through the late 1930s. Through his theory of value, Makiguchi was not engaging perennial questions of philosophy but rather addressing his contemporaries and partaking in a vibrant theoretical debate of his day.

Beyond what influenced Makiguchi’s thinking directly, a diverse array of claims to the concept of value flourished amongst thinkers of his time. Let us consider some examples as illustration. Perhaps the most famous amongst Makiguchi’s contemporaries who spoke about the creation of value was the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. In his On the Genealogy of Morality of 1887, Nietzsche criticized what he called resentment as a symptom of lack of power and an embodiment of a negation of life. Instead, he advocated for what Volker Gerhardt has termed ‘the virtue of singular self-legislation, the ethics of sovereign uniqueness’. Values, for Nietzsche, were not dispensed divinely as guidelines for constraining moral, economic and aesthetic life toward good and away from evil. Values were created by humans who have cultivated the power to assert what is good, despise what is bad, and create themselves. Around the same time, across the Atlantic, William James articulated a psychology of religion in his The Varieties of Religious Experience. There, James argued that what he called religious experience, an expression he coined, reveals the absurdity of a world of mere fact on which values are superimposed. For James, the world is a world of value and what we describe as specific values like justice, love, and beauty are cases of “a sense of value in general.”

During the first decades of the 20th Century, while Makiguchi worked on his Pedagogy, Japan saw the rise of another important thinker. Kitaro Nishida, influenced by James and Zen Buddhism, developed what he called the logic of place (basho) or topos, through which he showed how any form of judgment is limited and framed by the logic of its context, or place, for which the judgment cannot account. Empirical judgments, cannot account for the experiencing subject, which is their logical context. Judgments that include the context of empirical judgments, the experiencing subject, are idealist judgments. In turn, Nishida argues, idealist judgments cannot account for their logical context, which is a “place of absolute nothingness.” This, according to Nishida, is the ground of value. Back on the American continent, another heir to James’ intellectual legacy, John Dewey, formulated a theory of values from a naturalistic perspective. Dewey argued that values are formed through a process of valuation. The seeds of values are to be found in the simple and natural, vital impulses of the desire to restore equilibrium with the environment whenever equilibrium is disrupted. The process of valuation involves a critical assessment of desire, preferences and paths of action to restore harmony in light of actual experience. Values, Dewey argued, are formed by means of a process of engagement with problematic circumstances and deliberation, yielding by means of creative imagination a conception of the desirable in contrast to the merely desired.
These are just a few salient examples of the wonderfully diverse array of approaches to the questions of the nature and genesis of values undertaken by Makiguchi’s contemporaries. Even my overly simplistic characterizations reveal that the meaning of the term “value” is, at the very least, not unproblematic. We cannot simply assume that when Makiguchi uses the word that in translation is rendered as “value” he means what common sense would dictate. For example, when he writes, “Human dignity arises from value creation,” we must ask about the nature of this “human dignity.” Surely a charged word like that would have different meanings in the different theories of value mentioned above. Makiguchi claims that we can create value, but what makes that possible? Is it that we live in a “world of value” like James suggests, or that there is a “place of absolute nothingness” that is the grounds for value and value creation, like Nishida proposes?

To take another example, Makiguchi writes:

“The living organism meets this challenge to the status quo either with acceptance or approval or with resistance and rejection; hence we are moved to feel pleased or displeased. The standards we establish on the basis of this process of subjectively relating the perceptual object to ourselves are termed values by societal consensus. And the ideas we abstract from those characteristics of greatest consistency and commonality among such perceptual objects are said to be truths.”

The resemblance with Dewey’s logic of the process of valuation is very suggestive. The passage emphasizes that values find their origin in the natural phenomena of acceptance and rejection. That, for Dewey, is an indication of the continuity of nature, the realm of facts, and values, but Makiguchi uses this type of epistemological progression to demarcate two separate realms of truth and value. The question is puzzling. We would need to go to other sources, check the original Japanese and see what exact words are there in place of philosophically charged terms like “values,” “societal consensus,” “ideas,” “abstract,” etc. We would also seek support in secondary scholarship to help us interpret these passages correctly.

I hope the reader can appreciate the poignancy of these conceptual complications. Here, I am not earnestly engaging the text in analysis. This is simply a performance to demonstrate that when inquiry reaches certain levels of depth, we find a need not only of access to the original Japanese, but also of support by relevant scholarship in the process of interpretation. These could be circumvented if properly annotated translations with supporting commentary and a rich body of secondary scholarship were available, but they are not.

By providing this brief historical context, I want to offer a glimpse at just how complicated the task of conceptual analysis can get and how much context is needed to make sense of texts. Based on the state of research on Makiguchi in the English language, my provisional diagnosis is that serious work of textual analysis and interpretation is very difficult. However, as I mentioned in the introduction, not all paths toward the development of Soka education research are tied to disciplinary forms heavily reliant on good translations. In the following section I would like to explore some potentially promising directions for future research.

**Directions for future research**

In this final section, I would like to discuss three possible research directions that can be developed with relative independence from the obstacles posed by the limited availability of reliable English translations of texts in the Soka education tradition. This list is by no means exhaustive or even what I necessarily consider the most profitable options. I simply want to use this as an opportunity to imagine possibilities, more as a way to begin a conversation rather than as stating the conclusions of prior reflections. The three directions I would like to discuss here are: I) Ikeda studies; II) Canonization; and III) Reinterpreting Soka education in new contexts.

**I. Ikeda studies.** For the occasion of the first Soka Education Conference (2005), Masayuki Shiohara of the Soka Education Research Institute presented a paper in which he argued for the legitimacy of studying the educational thought of Daisaku Ikeda as part of Soka education research. Shiohara bases his claims on the fact that between the publication of the last volume of the *Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei* in 1933 and his incarceration

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22 Ibid. p. 56
in 1943, Makiguchi made little progress towards the completion of his _gyōgen_, which was left unfinished. What we have is four published volumes out of five produced (the manuscripts for the fifth volume were lost when Makiguchi was captured), out of twelve originally envisioned. Shiohara explains the reason for this halting of writing and publication efforts as follows: “Makiguchi shifted from publication activities to one of enlightening each and every individual.”24 From this, Shiohara concludes that in order to understand Makiguchi’s educational philosophy, a study of his writings must be supplemented by a study of his teaching practice and, in particular, a study of the philosophical legacy as found within the Soka education movement. Most scholarship on Soka education is in accordance with Shiohara’s advice in taking into account Makiguchi’s intellectual legacy as it is embodied in the Soka Gakkai and the Soka education movement.25 Against Shiohara, some critics question the fidelity of Toda’s and Ikeda’s interpretations of Makiguchi’s ideas.26 However, considering that Makiguchi’s ideas developed beyond what we find in his published works, it is plausible that Toda’s and Ikeda’s interpretations of Makiguchi’s philosophy represent an accurate expression of Makiguchi’s mature philosophy. Inconsistencies between Makiguchi’s published works and his disciples’ interpretations can be considered manifestations of developments in Makiguchi’s own thought.27 On the other hand, it is also well known that while both Toda and Ikeda embraced Makiguchi’s interpretation of Nichiren Buddhism in terms of his theory of value, they rejected what they considered a mistake on the part of Makiguchi’s to reduce Nichiren Buddhism to a theory of value. However, this criticism for the part of Toda and Ikeda is raised only in the context of specific Buddhist doctrinal issues and have no apparent implications for the educational philosophy of Soka.

A focus on the writings by Ikeda opens up a rich landscape for research in English that is not available for Makiguchi’s writings. I identify three reasons for this. First, much more is available in English translation by Ikeda than there is by Makiguchi. Second, in Ikeda, translation is not a mere appendix to his work, but part of his daily life. He is in constant correspondence with people from around the world, working constantly with professional translators and interpreters who are full time members of his supporting staff. Ikeda’s ideas are often inspired by dialogues with non-Japanese speakers; translation mediates his writing process even from the very inception of thought. This provides, of course, no guarantee of the quality of translation, but merely legitimacy. The quality of translation must be evaluated on its own merits. Finally, the third reason is that we find in Ikeda’s writings, particularly those in Buddhist metaphysics, a clear connection between ideas about Soka education and some foundational concepts that come from the tradition of Mahayana Buddhism. For work in conceptual analysis, this is immensely valuable because it opens up a universe of scholarly resources in Buddhist studies, comparative religion and the philosophy of religion and makes it available for the analysis and interpretation of Soka education. For example, in my own research I have been able to make substantial progress towards developing a conception of value and value creation within the Soka education tradition by means of textual analysis and interpretation of Ikeda’s writings on Buddhist epistemology and ethics.28

**II. Canonization.** The idea of a canon denotes the selection of important works that, as a whole, compose a coherent totality representative of a tradition. Metaphorically, the idea of canonization as a strategy for formulating ideas refers to the selection of works from eclectic and possibly unrelated sources to compose a meaningful whole. In the case of Soka education, canonization would involve selecting theories or aspects of theories to explain concepts in the philosophy of Soka education. These include dialogue, value creation, the teacher and student relationship, human revolution, peace education, education for social justice, etc. The canonizing of these concepts would involve, for example, invoking existentialist philosophers of dialogue to help articulate a vision of the role of dialogue in teaching and learning. Or, to help develop a conception of the teacher devoted to the students’ happiness, we can enlist the theoretical resources that the ethics of care approach can provide. In this way, assembling selected aspects of various theories, making sure there are no resulting dissonances a the level of conceptual frameworks, a whole picture of a theory of Soka education can be constructed in dialogue with different traditions.29

24 Ibid.
28 Some of that work was included in my presentation at the 2010 Soka Education Conference.
29 The extent and effectiveness with which different concepts are developed in the philosophy of Soka education are uneven. For example, Ikeda has much to say about human revolution, but his treatment of the idea of peace education, for instance, is much more superficial. A cautionary note on employing canonization of an underdeveloped concept is that the theory that is brought in to provide theoretical resources can, as it were, take over.
III. Reinterpreting Soka education in new contexts. A third type of research project that I think can be successfully carried out with relative independence from reliable English translations is the task of critically engaging Makiguchi’s original project and reinterpret it in light of different historical, political, cultural and economic conditions.

For example, some aspects of Makiguchi’s philosophy, like his conception of science and his epistemology, are difficult to accept today (David Norton already issues that complaint30, and one can hear a choir of pragmatists, poststructuralists and feminists joining him here). The work of interpreting ideas in new contexts will involve theoretically distinguishing what is essential and must be preserved from what is contingent and content-specific and must be updated. Undoubtedly, if pedagogy is to be rooted in the scientific method, that is, informed and transformed by experience and knowledge, then it must have changed in eighteens. One aspect in which teaching has been transformed beyond anything Makiguchi could have imagined involves the emergence of information technology and media in the teaching practice and, perhaps more poignantly, all-pervasively in the lives of young people. This is a question of central concern for the development of Soka education. Makiguchi wrote in the context of a society in rapid transition towards industrialization and modernization. The transitional moment we experience today is towards post-industrial economic models and a switch to educational practices that will conceivably rely more and more on technology. In Makiguchi’s time it was the great development of the social sciences, especially psychology and sociology, that offered hope for the future of education, for us is the development of the cognitive sciences and information and communications technologies that open up possibilities for deep changes.

The challenge for us is how to respond with the same sense of responsibility and determination exhibited by Makiguchi, but in circumstances for which the specific proposals that Makiguchi made 80 years ago offer little guidance. For example, one important area of future research on Soka education will be, I am convinced, the question of the possibilities and limits for value creation in technology-mediated learning environments. In a few decades, wealthy societies like the US will be exclusively populated by generations of digital natives. It will be their challenge to learn from pre-digital cultures much in the same way that we learn a foreign language and transform our ways of experiencing the world when immersed in a foreign culture. These are dimensions of education that Makiguchi could not have anticipated.

Just as teaching has changed, so has educational research. A number of new quantitative and qualitative research methods have been developed since Makiguchi’s time. An important interpretive task for Soka education research is to determine, in light of current techniques and technology for research, what kinds of empirical data are most relevant to the development of a value creating science of education. These questions are crucial for today’s debates on educational policy31.

Ikeda’s writings on education are examples of translating the philosophy of Soka education into new contexts. For example, Ikeda seems to place an emphasis on the humanistic philosophy of Soka education and has developed themes in humanistic education over the question of efficient teaching methods and school administration. One obvious reason might be that Ikeda simply does not have the training and experience required to authoritatively speak of technical matters in education. But equally valid is the question that arguably our times do not suffer a technical deficiency, but a moral and philosophical draught (at least in rich developed societies like Japan and the US, which constitutes the implied audience of Ikeda in most of his


31 For example, Secretary of Education for the Obama administration Arne Duncan recently delivered a speech at Teachers College, Columbia University in which he emphasized the concept of data driven educational policy. With the exception perhaps of fundamentalist groups who believe educational decisions should be informed primarily by tradition and especially by scripture, our society in general would agree with Secretary Duncan’s statement. Compared to Makiguchi’s Japan, contemporary American society has reached a wider agreement on the value and effectiveness of practices informed by scientific data. The question of contention is, what counts as data. Is it just only data from standardized tests that count? What about the subjective experience of teachers working as part of a functional and healthy community of practice and inquiry-in-practice? What about their narratives and perhaps narratives by students and parents? What about other types of data?
writings). At any rate, these interpretive claims must be made explicit to open up spaces for genuine and potentially productive debate.

Concluding Remarks

Our commitment to the development of Soka education as a theory of education is not merely intellectual. As Soka educators and scholars of today and tomorrow, our efforts to sharpen our understanding of Makiguchi’s vision are rooted in a moral commitment. I am referring to a moral call to social reform through developing and making widely available a more humane education for the sake of the future generations. As Ikeda once remarked, echoing former Teachers College President Arthur Levine, “while education is perhaps the slowest means to social change, it is the only means;” this task will require patience and persistence. Without a doubt, the ongoing work of translating and interpreting the primary sources of the Soka education tradition is such an endeavor of patience and persistence, and it will require years of work until we reach a point where the issues discussed by Hoffding and Inukai are be settled. At the same time, the moral imperatives of social reform demand with urgency that we continue the work of developing Soka education. With this in mind, I wanted to highlight both the challenges and possibilities for research on Soka education under the current conditions of scholarship.

Bethel’s editorial choices might have been motivated by similar concerns. When he writes that his selection of passages is an “expression of [Makiguchi’s] ideas in a form in which he would have expressed them himself if he had been in a position to do so,” (Education for Creative Living, p.13), he does so from the standpoint of half a century apart. From that perspective, it is perhaps the passages on the theoretical foundations of education, rather than ideas about specific techniques for implementation, that appear more relevant.

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Conditions of Creativity: A Reading of Descartes, Kant, and Leibniz in the Context of Soka Education

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The term “Soka” in “Soka education,” in Japanese, means “to create value” or “value-creating.” In Education for Creative Living, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi in great detail expounds on the meaning of “value,” but only twice mentions what is meant by “creating” (1989:50, 56-7). Behind the verb “to create” lies the noun “creation” or “creativity;” in order to create anything, one must be creative, one must possess creativity. The aim of the present paper is therefore to answer the question: what are the conditions of creativity? I shall separate the answer into an epistemological part and an ontological ditto. In the first part, which will comprise the bulk of the paper, I shall use the philosophical systems and starting-points of Descartes, Kant and Leibniz in addition to a critical review of more recent and mostly psychological literature on the area. The second part is a tentative introduction to the Buddhist notion of “Ku” (空 or 無空) meaning emptiness or potential, as expounded by Daisaku Ikeda. And it is through Daisaku Ikeda’s central idea of “Human Revolution” that the analysis shall come full circle, by a demonstration of some curricular initiatives that could increase creativity in education.

First, it might be appropriate to define the method of progression, the scope of the general inquiry, and provide a tentative definition of the subject.

It is difficult to define creativity without tautology. For instance, Halford and Wilson’s opening definition of creativity is that it “depends on using our mental processes to create novelty” (Halford and Wilson,
2002:153). Perhaps it is from this difficulty that the interest in measuring creativity springs and quantitative methods are present in most of the modern literature, taking approaches from neurology (Evans and Deehan, 1988, Perkins, 1996), evolutionary theory (Finlay and Lumsden, 1988), sociology (Martindale, 1996), AI theory (Boden, 1996), and primarily psychology (with more sources than can be listed here). There are very few strictly philosophical entries on the question of creativity, which is a pity because the epistemological approach to creativity points is a direction unreachable by the social sciences. The social sciences can point to instantiations of creativity, but a product of creativity or a person’s creative acts cannot account for the experience of creativity which is the most direct indicator of its nature. In other words, the present paper seeks to establish a priori the necessary principles in creativity through a phenomenological approach. This approach will aim to extrapolate the epistemological conditions of creativity from the system-forming processes underlying the philosophies of Descartes, Kant and Leibniz. In addition to these two methods, a third is represented by the humanistic psychoanalysts, for example Rollo May, Erich Fromm, and Carl Rogers, whose results I shall also draw upon.

Everyone knows what it feels like when a new idea surfaces, when one is in a creative mind state. An approach considering the experience of creativity on its own brackets out any importance of the results of creativity (Eysenck, 1996), social preconditions, or other empirical considerations. Opposed to productivity, creativity is unpredictable (Piguet, 1988:128) – yet another reason why any empirical method cannot fully account for it. I posit creativity as a value in itself, to be pursued in its own right. Further, I believe that its quality is phenomenally the same whether giving rise to quantum mechanical theories, new architecture, comic books or philosophical insights; a conclusion also shared by May (1975: 40-1). To possess creativity, to be creative, is to see possibility, to see something that is not yet there, to see that things could be different or that empirical reality is not absolute. I will primarily focus on the strongest or ideal sense of creativity, to be termed radical creativity or creativity as redrawing the map, because it is easier to define and simultaneously defines all weaker cases of creativity, to be labeled creativity as recomposition of pre-existing elements.1

The core thesis of the paper is that doubt or wonder are the central, necessary, epistemological conditions for creativity, and further, that a thought-process leading to creativity has three phases: 1) coming from the given, 2) negating the given, and 3) facing the contradiction. This subdivision somewhat resembles Rollo May’s description in the inspiring The Nature of Creativity (1975: 36-55), but also follows with a high degree of necessity, as I shall try to demonstrate throughout this paper. Doubt cannot arise out of nothing, one must doubt something, which is why the first step is 1) Recognizing, or coming out of, the given. I define the given in its broadest possible sense as the surrounding world we perceive, conceive, construct and often preconceive or mis-construct. It can take the form of language (Piguet, 1988:129), familiar objects (Evans and Deehan, 1988:24), facts and ideas (Sinnott, 1959:23), or just general constraints (Boden, 1996:79). 2) Negating the given entails questioning whether the given is as it appears, or even refusing to believe so. It is the first step of “de-absolutization,” the realization that the given is somewhat conditioned by my preconceived notions, by my sensory and conceptual apparatus. Thus a contradiction or bi-polarity is realized which needs to be 3) faced or confronted directly for its solution. The more problematic the contradiction, the deeper the creativity necessary for its solution. Hence, I wish to emphasize that creativity is no idealistic or metaphorical idea: It is conditioned and bound by the given and consequently, the human capacity to doubt and be creative is ultimately a certain kind of positioning towards the given.

Further, creativity is different from inspiration. One can seek inspiration in a piece of art, in a landscape, or an artist can feel inspired by some “other-worldly” force. But, one cannot seek creativity outside of oneself; it is an entirely internal and private occurrence. One can enable oneself to be creative, but not to become inspired and therefore – given that one can find a method of being and becoming creative — creativity is more essential to positive activity and productivity than inspiration, although the two phenomenologically resemble each other. Inspiration does not position itself against, but merely accepts, the given and therefore lacks the energy existing in the dichotomy of creativity as a recognition of, but also a breaking away from, the given.

If the definition and distinction still seems vague, let me focus on the idea of radical creativity as redrawing the map: In ordinary, weak-case creativity, one simply re-arranges ideational or empirical elements to make a seemingly new product. Boden (1996:81) gives an example from music history in which composers

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1 The terminology of “redrawing the map” and “recomposition of pre-existing elements” is inspired by Boden, who makes a similar distinction between “exploring” and “transforming conceptual space” (Boden, 1996: 79-82)
gradually modulated away from the tonic of the given piece. There is no necessary relation between creativity in its strong or weak senses and its visible effects in society. Thus Gutenberg’s invention of the printing press was revolutionary, but resulting from the recomposition of the idea of the seal, the coin-stamping process, and the wine-press (Evens and Deehan, 1988:46), it is still an example of creativity in its weak sense. Radical creativity is perhaps what Boden (1996:82) calls transforming conceptual space, in which it is not the position of the elements that is changed, but rather the conceptual space in which the elements exist that changes. To Perkins (1996:133-4), what I call radical creativity, is the question of how “genuine mental leaps occur.” Einstein’s development of the Theory of General Relativity is a great response to Perkins:

For example, Einstein’s personal account of the event leading up to his formulation of general relativity may exemplify the critical role played by the conflation of two apparently inconsistent themes. Here the paradox arises from the notion that an observer in free fall is simultaneously both at rest and in motion (Rothenberg, A. American Journal of Psychiatry 136, 38-43). This combining of two or more antithetical ideas can be viewed as requiring an infrastructural variant of a fundamentally computational procedure: additive operations in linking knowledge structures yield paradoxical results, prompting the system to shift to a different computational procedure under whose aegis the discrepancy is gradually resolved. (Findlay and Lumsden, 1988:51-2)

In order to solve his problem, Einstein had to redraw his mental map. To assert that time and space are relative and that the speed of light is what is absolute, cannot be called a recomposition of elements, simply because the possibility of relative time and space supposedly did not figure as elements in Einstein’s prior conceptual scheme. Einstein is perhaps also a good example of Pasteur’s saying that “chance favors the prepared mind” (Perkins, 1996: 134) in the sense that he had great knowledge of his field, but also the ability to negate this knowledge, for instance, about the nature of time and space in order to arrive at his revolutionary theories.

After a hopefully satisfactory conceptualization and delineation of the nature of creativity, it is now time to extrapolate the preconditions of creativity from the classical philosophers.

**Descartes’ Doubt as “De-absolutization”**

As argued, to be creative is to cease from considering the given as absolute. In order to “de-absolutize” the world, doubt is necessary:

In the first meditation, Descartes begins with doubt, but he also makes it clear that it is not enough to just doubt everything: “for familiar beliefs return constantly and, almost in spite of me, they seize hold of my judgment” (Descartes, R., 1998:21). In order for doubt not to fall back into acceptance of the given, he must make a more active stance of negation, holding his former “beliefs [to be]…completely false and imaginary” (Descartes, R., 1998:21). The power of doubting is weak when employed on its own, i.e. “I doubt whether this desk is really a desk, but I cannot see what else it could be,” but becomes more potent by means of active negation i.e. “I assume that this is not a desk.” Boden also recognizes the difference between mere doubt and negation. She believes that to “consider the negative” constitutes a transformation of conceptual space (Boden, 1996:82). Another psychologist, Harold Anderson, paraphrases Henry Eyring, the Descartes of chemistry one might say:

If one wanted to become a creative chemist one should certainly learn all he could about chemistry. He should then decide to refuse to believe any of it. From then on he would be free to select on the basis of his own thinking the relevant ideas and reject the irrelevant. (Anderson, 1959:125)

If one thus approaches doubt through negation in its strong sense, it must give rise to deep and intense speculation which is essential to creativity. In this context, creativity presupposes a “de-absolutization” of the given which can only be obtained through doubt in its active sense. Whether one arrives at the “Cogito” or the existence of God is irrelevant to the question of creativity. Descartes did not fully doubt his own starting-point, namely the anxiety that he would have to recast all his knowledge if he does not sooner or later commit to his critical investigation. In other words, he does not question that something: “firm and durable in the sciences” exists (Descartes, R., 1998:18). The context of creativity is different, however, and brackets out this starting

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2 This analysis of the Meditations of course relies on believing that Descartes is in good faith. Perhaps he first discovered the Cogito and then tried to justify this discovery by forging a method of doubt.
point, for the only thing one commits to is questioning whatever one is faced with. One may then object that if one doubts in order to become creative, then one is not doubting the existence of creativity, but this is conflating the level of the pure inquiry, which is a primary experiential level, and the level in which the value of creativity is recognized which is a second order incentive. If there is the thought of harnessing creativity in the moment of doubt, this is no longer a pure doubt and therefore less “efficient”; the moment of doubt and the moment of creativity must be chronologically distinct for the experience of untainted doubt. Thus, what could be called the sincerity or depth of the doubt is an epistemological precondition for creativity; a fact recognized by Rollo May in his description of “the intensity of the Encounter” (1976:44-6). Creativity requires a certain measure of courage; for if one just leaves the contradiction established, the doubt finds no resolution. Kant potently illustrates this.

Kant’s Critique as Facing the Contradiction

Chronologically, Kant probably began the First Critique with the Antinomies of Reason as summarized by Peter Krausser:

Now, let us take this together with what J. Schmucker (1974) has shown rather convincingly: the problem of the antinomies had agitated Kant already before his transcendental turn. This is supported by Kant’s own remark that it is the antinomy which “operates most powerfully to awaken philosophy from its dogmatic slumber and move her to the difficult undertaking of the critique of reason” (Proleg. Section 50, cf. Footnote to Section 52b and Kant’s letter to C. Garve on Oct. 21st 1798) (Krausser,1988:4)

In maintaining the idea that the world must have a beginning in time and space - working from the given - and showing that it does not - negating the given - he arrived at a contradiction so stark that he had to reconsider the nature of knowledge. The conclusion of Kant’s Copernican Revolution, claiming that we can only speak intelligibly about the conditions of our own knowledge rather than of the ding an sich could not have been predicted by him, or anyone else, in the moment of posing the contradiction: the limitation of knowledge is in no way included in the question of whether the world has a beginning or not, and therefore Kant’s creativity is an example of redrawing the map.3

Kant must have excelled in the third step necessary for creativity, namely to face the contradiction head on: An ability that characterizes the humanistic psychoanalyst’s description of creativity. Eric Fromm says that “Creativity is the ability to see (or to be aware) and to respond” (1959:44), that it “requires the capacity to be puzzled,” and that “the obvious becomes a problem” (1959:48). He does not mention doubt as such, but his description of being puzzled and in wonder, together with “the ability to accept conflict and tension resulting from polarity” reveals a striking similarity. Fromm’s idea is echoed again and again by May, Rogers, Maslow and Anderson in an absolutely wonderful collection of lectures edited by Anderson (1959).

May and Fromm give a powerful account of the radicalism of radical doubt. They both establish the contradiction in absolute terms between being and non-being (May, 1976:78; Fromm, 1959:51-2). Death is the ultimate barrier and with the human ability to imagine events after one’s passing, one negates the absolutely given which can spark great creativity. The life-death dichotomy consideration is ideal for creativity because the perspective (imagining the given after the annihilation of one’s consciousness) always is already a negation of the given. In other words, imagining one’s death constitutes the ultimate active negation.

Leibniz’s Wonder as De-absolutization

While doubt can be described as a mentally bracketed operation, insofar as one always doubts something, often one object at a time, wonder is more open and without object. Compared to the specificity of doubt, wonder is more existentially exemplified by Leibniz’s question “Why is there something rather than nothing.”4 Although

3 The possibility of redrawing the map can also be taken as an affirmation of the existence of synthetic a priori knowledge.

4 The mind-state in deep, sincere contemplation of this specific question, which is a mind-state of wonder, may phenomenologically resemble the mind-state appearing when thinking about one’s own death, which is why wonder is more “existential” than doubt in general.
there may be many good reasons why there is something rather than nothing, upon sincerely wondering about this question, one thoroughly realizes the contingency of the given. One entertains the possibility of there actually being nothing rather than something and in this process of “de-absolutizing,” the world is perceived in a new way, as if one had just woken up.

In the following paragraphs, I shall try to demonstrate that Leibniz formed his idea of the “principle of sufficient reason” from the question of why there is something rather than nothing. He writes in On The Ultimate Orighination of Things: “Therefore, to whatever earlier state you go back, you never find in it the complete reason of things, that is to say, the reason why there exists any world and why this world rather than some other” (Leibniz, 1898:338). If trying to put oneself in the position of Leibniz, it is unintelligible to formulate the principle of sufficient reason as a first position, out of nothing: One would not, ex nihilo, postulate nihil est sine ratione without first coming upon the question of why there is something rather than nothing. One can imagine Leibniz in the process of doubting, “why is there something rather than nothing?” and then resolving “because nothing is without reason.” In other words, everything must have some kind of reason of cause of its existence, if it did not, it would not be there.\(^6\)

To ask why there is something rather than nothing leads to wonder, and how one then chooses to resolve wonder is of secondary importance in the case of creativity. This follows from the phenomenologically established principle that creativity is a value in itself. From the perspective of phenomenology, it is only the experience of creativity that counts as significant data. All that needs to be demonstrated is that wonder makes the philosopher creative. In Leibniz’s case, from initial wonder, he likely formulated the principle of sufficient reason, a classical, though disputed, principle to philosophy.

Before progressing to the final part of the paper, a little summing up might help clarify the main-points so far:

Firstly, it has been shown that one must have something to doubt. The more knowledge one has in one’s respective field, the more questions can arise. So knowledge of the given is an epistemological precondition for doubt. Ontologically, however, the ability to doubt does not arise from the given. The negation of the given cannot arise qua “givenness,” the given cannot negate itself. The given is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for doubt, which is a human capacity to imagine the negation of the given.

Secondly, doubt and wonder are equally potent in bringing about creativity, but are nevertheless distinct. Doubt is to wonder as fear is to angst: The former with object, the latter without. But from a phenomenological perspective, they are of the same order and what matters is how deeply and sincerely one can doubt or wonder. Martindale says that in order “[t]o produce a novel idea, one must regress to a primordial level. To produce an even more novel idea, one must regress to an even more primordial mode of thinking” (Martindale, 1996:164) and May likewise defines his second element in creativity as the “intensity of the Encounter” (May, 1975:44). This points back to the idea that the depth of wonder or doubt is proportional to the width of the creativity and this can be seen in the case of Kant and Leibniz, for what question can be deeper, when sincerely reflected upon, than whether there is Free Will, as in the third antinomy, or why there is something rather than nothing?

Thirdly, creativity can be separated into two orders: Creativity in the weak sense seeks answers to contradictions, but will have to give up in deep or existential questions, because the answer here does not lie in a recomposition of elements. Only radical creativity, as redrawing the map can solve these questions, and when it does, it never does so by directly solving the contradiction, but by producing a new conceptual space, in which the contradiction is no longer a contradiction. Einstein’s theory of relativity perfectly exemplifies this. When one needs to redraw the map, it is discovered that one’s question is the wrong question. It is wrong in the sense that it does not directly partake in the solution, but serves as an expedient means, a point of departure.

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3 It is interesting to look at the etymology of the vocabulary connected with deeply existential questions: In the case of mental illness which is too often connected with great creativity, May points to the related adjective, “diabolic”, from the Greek dia-ballein, “pulling apart” (1976: 127). Further, in German, the word for despair is “Verzweifelt”. “Zweifel” means doubt, “zwei” of course meaning two i.e. a split between two. In the relation between the given and its negation, doubt, there is dia-polarity strong enough to pull one apart.

4 The world’s existence as contingent or necessary is of course much more complex than presented here. For a modern and intriguing detailed treatment of this question, I refer to Meillassoux’s After Finitude. An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency (2008). For specific objections to my argument for the importance of existential wonder, see chapter 3 and especially pp. 72-3.
When one encounters a question for which one thinks radical creativity is necessary, one also knows that one is asking the wrong question and that the possible answer will be an answer to the conditions of the question rather than to the question itself. In other words, if one thinks one is working with a contradiction that requires radical creativity, one should stop looking for obvious answers and instead “regress to an even more primordial mode of thinking.”

The Condition of “Ku”

The general epistemic condition of doubt cannot account for the emergence of creativity. Although the forced contradiction is a necessary condition, does creativity just come out of nothing? After all, a definition of creativity is to bring something out of nothing. In order to investigate the emergence of creativity, I would tentatively like to suggest working towards the Buddhist principle called “Ku.”

Sinnott claims that: “However creativity may manifest itself in the affairs of men, it in the inherent creativeness of life, I believe, that its ultimate source is to be found” (1959:28). Sinnott does not substantiate this claim, but the humanistic psychoanalysts throw some light on the idea: “The mainspring of creativity appears to be the same tendency which we discover so deeply as the curative force in psychotherapy – man’s tendency to actualize himself, to become his potentialities” (Rogers, 1959:72). Taken literally, to become one’s potentialities is to become something one is not yet, to become something that does not exist in any material sense. Nevertheless, self-actualization is not a nonsensical, metaphysical idea, for everyone knows that by practicing any activity continually, such as reading, playing the cello, or writing philosophy papers, one (hopefully) becomes more skilled, one actualizes an inherent potential. Similarly, May and Fromm attribute the origination of creativity in its strongest sense to the dilemma involved in considering one’s own death – between being and non-being. “Inherent creativeness in life,” human “potentialities,” and “non-being” cannot be said to exist in any measurable, empirical way, but does this mean that they do not exist in any way possible?

The Buddhist idea of “Ku” simply translated means “emptiness.” The idea can be traced back to Nagarjuna in India, 2nd century AD and was systematized some 300 years later by Chi-i T’ien-T’ai in China (Swanson, 1989) as one of three levels of reality: The first level is manifest object, “Ke,” the second is un-manifest objects, “Ku,” and the third encompasses both the manifest and the un-manifest, “Chu” (Ikeda, 1982:64). “Ku” is the un-manifested realm, but according to Ikeda, is neither existing, nor non-existing (ibid.:56). It is a potentiality that can “cause activity in the visible superstratum” (ibid.:55) and in this fashion it comes surprisingly close to the definitions given by Rogers, Fromm, and May. Ikeda also compares Ku to the subconscious (ibid.:56), which is interesting since most of the literature on creativity asserts some relation or other between creativity and the subconscious. Buddhist criteria for truth and academic discourse are different from Occidental ones, and therefore I merely wish to introduce “Ku” as a stimulating, general and homogeneous principle offering a possible account for the ontological origin of creativity and not as a scientific, absolutist claim. If creativity arises in the tension between the given and its negation, then this paper might be able to offer insights into more than just epistemology.

Doubt and Wonder as the Microcosm

Indeed, everyday life offers plenty of occasions for doubt and wonder, and calls for the ability to face contradictions head on. To include a psychological consideration, a trait of creative people is their being able to do this. Indeed, everyday life offers plenty of occasions for doubt and wondering, of the development of strength, of what one used to call conflict and doubt in a new way. To include a psychological consideration, a trait of creative people is their being able to face conflict and doubt in a new way.

Strengthening the human being through considering obstacles and conflict as the source of expressing one’s potential is a key-stone in Ikeda’s educational philosophy. Inspired by the Buddhist struggle towards

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7 “Ke”, “Ku”, and “Chu” are the Japanese pronunciation used by Ikeda and the Japanese Buddhist tradition for the corresponding Chinese characters.
8 See “Ku” is the Japanese counterpart to the Sanskrit “Sunyata.”
9 Something unmanifested can of course not be an object, but language is slippery in these kinds of cases.
enlightenment, Ikeda talks of “Human Revolution” (2001:99; 1982: 27) as a development of wisdom, courage and compassion through peaceful struggle in everyday life, perhaps comparable to the humanist psychoanalysts’ “self-actualization”.10 The quotation from Fromm above, therefore provides the link from doubt and wonder for creativity as the microcosm of macrocosmic everyday problems employed for the sake of self-improvement or human revolution.

I return to the outset and consider creativity in the context of value-creating Soka education, as it is now clear that such an education must give ample room for doubt and wonder, but also provide real-life situations that stimulate peaceful conflict. At Soka University of America in California, this is done primarily in three ways:

1) The first course all students take is a three week intensive class with three hours of seminar a day, entitled “Enduring Questions of Humanity.” Here, one discusses the “big” philosophical questions through reading the Classics of different civilizations including Plato, Aristotle, Kant, the Bible, the Koran, the Gita and Upanishads, Confucius and Lao Tzu. Many students, having never been exposed to philosophy, are thus likely forced into deep layers of questioning and wonder. Placed as the first course to be taken by all students, I believe it is intended to generate a philosophical backbone, providing students an extra layer to resort to when personal or academic challenges call for “regression to a more primordial level.”

2) The students have many opportunities to create their own intensive courses, called “learning clusters” and to do independent studies alone with a professor. In these courses, students are expected to structure the courses and do research in advance to provide reading-lists and curricula. In the role of the course-creator, rather than the course-taker, students are forced to be creative, facing a range of conflicts that naturally go into structuring university courses.

3) Most important of all is the one semester mandatory study abroad to China, Japan, or a Spanish speaking nation. Struggling with a new culture in a language in which one is not fully proficient leads to many moments of doubt and to many obstacles in the process of integrating oneself in a foreign culture.

More points, such as the versatility of inquiry invested in a multi disciplinary liberal arts curriculum could probably be added, but for now I will conclude my inquiry.

Conclusion:

To wrap everything up, it has been established that creativity originates from a three step process in which one first exists in the world with knowledge of the given, then starts to doubt or wonder about certain elements within it, to arrive at a contradiction to which the solution is creativity. Further, I have claimed that the depth or sincerity of the initial doubt is proportional to the strength of the creativity that will emerge in solving this contradiction. If the doubt or wonder is sufficiently deep, the answer will not come out of a recomposition of one’s prior knowledge, but will only be provided through radical creativity in which one redraws one’s conceptual map. This has been shown in the example of Einstein. For Descartes, Kant and Leibniz, their main works have been exposed to a possibly new reading that does not consider the intentions of their particular philosophical systems, but instead extrapolates an underlying principle of creativity that can be pragmatically applicable in the university setting or even in ordinary life.

In the context of education, if the goal of a pedagogical system is to foster creative students, it must be able to instill a sense of doubt and wonder. For this, the suggested reading (Descartes, Kant, and Leibniz and the humanistic psychoanalysts) focusing on creativity might be fruitful, provided that one can enable one’s students to engage with, e.g., Descartes’ doubt to the extent that they internalize it and start negating the given. In addition, for an educational system to be able to create value, as should be the case with Soka education, the students must face doubt and wonder not merely in thought, but in real life, in society. This can be done in many ways, for example through various internships, through giving students co-responsibility for curricular and administrative decisions, or by teaching them a new language and having them apply it in a foreign country.

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10 The entirety of Ikeda’s writings can perhaps be seen as an exposition of human revolution, the movement between Ke and Ku, but in the context of creativity there is a highly apt passage from the text Be Creative Individuals. In speaking of the relation between freedom and constraints (“de-absolutization” and “the given” in the terms of the present paper), he writes: “Inexhaustible fonts of creative thinking can only be tapped where mind and spirit can roam freely exploring all perspectives and possibilities.” However, on the other hand: “True development can take place only in the presence of both expansive liberty and a high degree of self-discipline.” Finally: “Both in Plato’s Academy and in the ancient Buddhist university at Nalanda there were freedom; but there was also stern confrontation with truth. Thus there was creative, original thinking. And it was precisely for this reason that the Academy and Nalanda were able to bequeath such rich spiritual heritages to their respective spheres of civilization.” (Ikeda, 2006: 28)
Such an approach is a practical actualization of fostering creativity, because, as is shown in the analysis of Descartes, Kant, and Leibniz, doubt, whether practical or intellectual, is a necessary, epistemological condition of creativity.\textsuperscript{11}

\footnotesize{My thanks to Barry Dainton, Professor of philosophy at University of Liverpool, for helpful comments and suggestions. I also appreciate the valuable correspondence on the topic with present and former professors at SUA, Robert Allinson, Seiji Takaku, and Alain Vizier.}
Bibliography


Education in Rural El Salvador: Looking at Rural Development through Soka Education

Garrett Braun

Class of 2011

“Do you know the role of a female? Or the role of males in life? Well in The Bible it says that there are certain roles that each gender\(^1\) is to play in life.” These are the words I heard come out of the teacher's mouth while the kids were playing around in a class I observed in Estancia, El Salvador. The kids were like any fifth graders, full of energy and soaking in every influence in their lives. The only thing that separates their experience from ours is that they were born in a “developing” nation with a very bloody recent history.

In the summer of 2010, I spent three months in Estancia, El Salvador, implementing an art education program with youth aged 8-16 when I had this experience in their local classroom. The program consisted of weekly meetings with four different youth groups. We met after school for two hours where we used drawing and painting projects to critically reflect on their community and experience. The people of Estancia live almost entirely on subsistence farming, and their access to information is limited due to the absence of electricity while there, I began to ask myself, how could Tsunesaburo Makiguchi’s Soka education pedagogy benefit the development of rural, impoverished communities like Estancia?

For the purpose of this paper, I will use development in a generic way to mean the process that a group of people, which forms a society, go through to secure their basic needs of survival. This process can

\(^1\) Translation note: In Spanish there is no word for gender, they only use the English of sex. Therefore, this is stating that certain sexes of individuals maintain certain roles in life, it is not based on the socially constructed idea of gender that we maintain in the US and other western cultures.
take any form, but still refers to the means by which a group of people decide what they need to live a more secure life away from uncertainty about food, education, shelter, etc. To be developed, in this context, is to recognize a future for the self and the family where one is able to pursue what makes them happy and the people in the society happy because they are not using all their energy for the tasks of surviving to live another day. There are also three fundamental principles of Soka education that I will focus on in my analysis of Estancia and educational reform there.

First, Makiguchi explains, the purpose of education “should be derived from the purpose of life itself; and the purpose of life is deduced and recognized by the general public from their own lives as they live them.”2 From this type of education based in human life, the happiness of the learner is the second tenet of Soka education. The happiness that Makiguchi proposes is one based on a deep social consciousness where the learner awakens to the interdependence of all individuals in the society. He states, “For education to perform this socializing task, it must raise the individual consciousness above the limited focus on personal rights and privileges of private life to accept the duties and responsibilities of collective social life as well.”3 Thirdly, the objective of education is to help the learner recognize their potential to create value. If the learner is savvy to the interconnectedness of individuals in a society, and finds happiness in their life, they will be likely to use their creative capacity for the good of those in their community because they recognize that it will benefit them as well.

It is my belief that the connection between conscious awareness and development are inexorably linked through education. Many different “development theories” exist that focus on the importance of economic stability alone in the pursuit for a “better life.” Some theories are broader and less limiting than others, and include many different factors of life that need to be assessed in order to determine what is needed for development. Several theories include education in their prescription, but usually they only focus on a broad need for universal education, while some include vocational training, health education, or technical training; however, most never go into detail about the processes and theories of education that will best achieve development. Furthermore, the foundations of these other “development theories” lack foresight on the importance of a holistic education that cultivates the individual potential of the learner. For example, Jeffrey Sachs’ book, The End of Poverty, the least reductionist model of development I have encountered, only mentions the word education on five occasions. In his optimistic appeal for international cooperation in the pursuit of a more peaceful and safe world, he only stresses the need for community involvement in determining the steps to ending rural poverty.4 The goal of this paper is to show how certain values of the children and the conditions in the community of Estancia already support some of the fundamental tenets of Soka education; and that implementing Soka education in Estancia would satisfy the educational needs of the community to achieve development.

Values of the Children in Estancia

Through my weekly interactions with the children, their artwork taught me much about the aspects of life which they value. From one week to another we discussed different ideas about values, dreams, treasures of the community, and problems in the community. To my surprise, many of the kids chose to draw their school building to represent the thing they value most in the community. Sometimes they drew themselves in class, listening to the teacher or writing at their desk. With each drawing, they gave an explanation of why they drew what they did. The ones that drew education as the thing they value often wrote that they enjoyed learning to read and write. In Estancia, literacy is not a given. About ten percent of the people in Estancia have basic literacy skills, so learning to read and write is definitely a new skill in the community which they have still not integrated into daily life. I asked them why they valued the ability to read and write, or more specifically, how it serves them in life. However, most of the kids answered vaguely: “Learning will help me in the future to get a degree” or “I can continue to learn more.”5

Two conclusions come from the answers the children gave: 1) they experience very little critical analysis of how the things they are learning relate to their lives; and conversely, 2) most of what they learn is imposed externally and does not derive from their experience. I believe, observing the classroom setting, they

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2 Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, Education for Creative Living: Ideas and Proposals of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1989), 22
3 Ibid, 29
5 See Figures 1 - 4
are being taught that literacy is important, but for reasons that are not connected to their lives as subsistence farmers.

The children showed me many other aspects of life which they value in the community that led me to believe that they maintain a social consciousness. Some other pictures they drew were of the church, nature, and good behavior. The manner in which they drew each of these parts of the community tells us something about the way that the kids have learned to see the community as a whole. They drew the church as a communal place where they come together every week to study the words of God, but refer to this practice as educational. In fact, they considered the church more informative about life values than the school building. They constantly mentioned how they work to preserve their environment so they can preserve the rivers and crops on which the community relies. Finally, they showed me they understand that behaving badly hurts the people around them. These values show that they definitely have the desire to learn and use their creative potential.

Here, I would like to shift my focus to how certain conditions of life in Estancia support the ideas of Soka education, and therefore, make Soka education a perfect fit for helping the people of Estancia develop their lives.

**Purpose of Education = Purpose of life itself**

In 1991, the Ministry of Education in El Salvador created a new education law called EDUCO. The goal of this law was to decentralize the national education system and create community councils to run the daily operations of rural preschools and primary schools. From a World Bank report on the EDUCO system, they are experiencing higher levels of parental participation and better educated teachers working in the schools.\(^6\) That the national policy on education seeks to include the community in the decision making of the school provides for a good chance that the education the kids receive will be more pertinent to their lives. The only problem is that the children themselves do not participate in setting the learning objectives of their own education. This is not a problem in itself, however, from what I saw, and have explained above, the curriculum in Estancia does not reflect the experience of the children because it follows the national curriculum. I cannot comment with certainty on the state of the community council making decisions, but I would believe that they probably follow the national recommendations instead of setting their own curriculum. One way to alleviate this incongruence is to empower the committee members with options outside the standard, often urban-based, curriculum.

Some argue that this system cannot work in rural areas where the adults themselves have not received higher than a first grade education. However, if you ascribe to the benefits of Soka education, and believe Makiguchi when he says, “the purpose of life is deduced and recognized by the general public from their own lives as they live them,”\(^7\) than you will agree formal education is not essential for knowing what is best for your own life. I believe an uneducated individual can certainly decide what elements of life are most important for survival in their own environment. Even though the people of Estancia are not literate or educated in the governmental structures of El Salvador, they can name certain aspects of their lives that are lacking. For example, if they are noticing a decline in the outputs of their crops, they may suggest that the education council find a teacher to come in and teach modern farming techniques. Or, if they notice that the price of the hammocks they produce is declining, they may ask the council to bring in artisans that can teach new skills they can use to make more money.

Overall, the school system is set up to allow for the community to decide the purpose and objectives of the education the children receive, but they have not moved away from the modern, industrialized curriculum which does not communicate with their experiences. They have little use for the same instruction as children in the capital San Salvador because their lives are not based on the same standards. Furthermore, if the children themselves were able to integrate their ideas into the council’s decisions, they would take more interest in what they were learning and be able to derive more happiness from their work.

**Happiness of the Learner**

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\(^7\) Makiguchi, 22
Makiguchi refers to the happiness of the learner as the ultimate purpose of education. The happiness he speaks of is not an egotism centered on personal gain separate from the social context of the learner, but rather the “dynamic, growthful nature of happiness.” Furthermore, he sees happiness not as “a fixed mark to be achieved but as a sense of becoming.” These aspects of happiness, due to the nature of being human, cannot grow out of an individual that lives in solitude, disengaged from those around him. Seeing individual life as “something above and beyond the individual sees the actualized self as instrumental or elemental toward the greater goal of social realization.”

Interestingly, there are signs in Estancia that show recognition of this interconnectedness of each individual in the community. Cultural psychologists have recently concluded that eastern and western people differ systematically in cognitive activity, specifically in the attention paid to contextual information. Western cultures tend to pay more attention to the individual apart from the contextual information, and heavily base decision-making on logic and reason, whereas eastern cultures pay more attention to the contextual information of the situation, placing less emphasis on logic and individuality to understand a situation. Overall, the two cultures are categorized as independent (western) and interdependent (eastern). Several cultural psychologists studied the cultural manifestations of art and aesthetics significant to observe the differences in eastern and Western art based on the differences in cognitive activity. They found several interesting results that pertain to the children of Estancia. I will only focus on the findings in eastern art because of its similarities to the art I found in Estancia.

In eastern art, the horizon line in paintings and photographs is traditionally much higher, and there is always more field information included in the art. In terms of people in a scene, “The ratio of the size of the largest face to the size of the entire visual field was significantly smaller in East Asian than in western paintings.” This shows that the people in the paintings are not as important for judging a situation as all the information involved in making up the entire context. The focus is more on the environment and the things around people, noting the interconnectedness of the information.

What I found in the kids’ paintings and drawings is that they almost never drew a human form alone on the page, and that the horizon line is usually at the top of the page, which allows them to include more physical information in their art. Often, there was no human figure, or it was drawn so small you could barely see it. Even when they drew pictures of what they wanted to be in the future, they drew the entire context of the job to the point they knew it. For example, they drew the entire team playing futbol instead of them alone with a ball. Based on the findings of Masuda et al., the children in Estancia see the interconnectedness of people and with the environment they live in. This makes perfect sense since they live almost entirely off what the earth can provide for them through their cultivation.

If Estancia embraced the educational paradigm reflected in Makiguchi’s ideas on social consciousness and the ensuing happiness of the learner, the education would be able to reflect the natural awareness of the interdependence of the people in the community. The kids cannot be expected to realize this connectedness without concerted attention given to this aspect of their lives. From this realization of the connection between them all, one result would be a better commitment to cooperative living.

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**Value Creation**

8 Makiguchi, 23
9 Ibid, 23
10 Ibid, 31
12 Ibid, 1264
We begin with the recognition that humans cannot create matter. We can, however, create value. Creating value is, in fact, our very humanity... 

This is what Makiguchi means by value creation. When someone is educated based on the two previous tenets I have outlined, they will automatically want to provide the most benefit for their community because it is directly tied to the happiness of the individual. Makiguchi calls a major part of this value creation "cooperative living." The advantage of cooperative living is that each person is assured the necessities of life with much less work because each person is contributing to the whole. When a person recognizes this "sociological division of labor" they can apply themselves in a way that assists them in creating the most value in the most efficient way.

In Estancia, the division of labor remains on the family level and does not expand to the community level. I found out, through interviews with the community elders, that before the civil war in the 1980's and early 1990's, people used to collaborate with one another to finish the work on each person's land faster. There was far more communal activity and far more unity within the community. There were no fences and no one stole from each other. Today, the community is divided along political party lines and people do not trust one another at all. One of the most valuable things to gain from education is awareness of the connections between previously unrecognized stimuli in our lives. I submit that the concept of value creation could go far in unifying the community behind a revitalization of their shared history. In the highest level of schooling in the community they do not even have a history class, or more specifically, a local history class. If the school in Estancia taught based on these ideas of value creation, the children would be able to begin to question the different ways that they place value on standards of living in their community.

How to make it work...

An exciting addition has arrived in Estancia: electricity. The possibilities for access to information are endless. The director of CDH has plans to start a computer training center so that kids can access the internet and all the valuable information it amasses. Most importantly, giving the community the license to direct the curriculum of the schools in the community from their own experience of what is important, giving the kids more opportunities to discover their own interests, basing lessons on harnessing the interdependence of their community, and cooperative living initiatives are only a few options for how to implement the ideas of Soka education in Estancia. There are many conditions already existing within the social setting and culture of Estancia that lend well to the implementation of Soka education. These conditions exist in many other places outside of Estancia throughout the developing world, but I remain humble to the amount that I know about other locations due to the inexperience I have in such other locations. I am, of course, not trying to suggest that Makiguchi's ideas can work in exactly the same way in other places due to the individual nature of each community and the people that make it up, but I am certain that the fundamental ideas are universal. I do hope my thoughts inspire a discourse on Soka education as a pedagogical paradigm that resonates deeply with the goals of development throughout the world.

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13 Makiguchi, 6
14 The director of the private NGO, Campesinos para el Desarrollo Humano (CDH), that runs the local health clinic, nutrition program, micro-finance program, and kindergarten schools told me this when I asked him what he thought was the largest obstacle to unifying the community.
15 On more than one occasion I was warned to not leave a plastic chair outside my house because someone would come and steal it.
The questions in the citations are from me and answered by the student the following week below the question.

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Academic Sovereignty, Technology, and Soka Education: From a Culture of War towards a Culture of Peace

Ryan Hayashi
Class of 2012

“There are many superlative universities and research institutions where learning is directed to the acquisition of power. But what have they done for humanity?”
(Ikeda, “Soka education” p. 208)

How can we transition from a culture that glamorizes violence and war towards a culture of peace? Although one could offer various answers to this question, education is undoubtedly the most important tool in this endeavor because it has the ability to foster the self-transformation and empowerment of individuals. The problem is that education itself – our last stronghold and hope for liberation – is under attack by the very forces of authority and aggression that it aims to transform. In this paper, I will explore the ways that society has utilized tools such as technology, education, and media to support war. In addition, I will envision alternatives that would allow these fields to be used for the purpose of human liberation. To change our culture of war into a culture of peace, we must establish an educational system that genuinely encourages the
inner transformation of the student and then make this education the fundamental goal of all social endeavors.

After briefly discussing the history of Soka education and Makiguchi’s call for academic sovereignty, the first part of paper will be about universities that have surrendered their intellectual independence by signing contracts with the Department of Defense (DoD) to do military research. I will also explore the ways that the DoD has utilized technology, education, and the media to support a culture of war. In part two, there will be a discussion of technology’s rapid pace of growth to show how the tools of the future are becoming much more powerful and how the stakes of this problem are becoming much higher. This also shows how imperative it is to create an educational system that helps students undergo an inner transformation, so that they can develop the wisdom to use these tools. In part three, I will offer three proposals that will explore ways that we can do this. To conclude, I will argue that because education has this ability to foster self-transformation and empowerment, we must undergo a dramatic shift of perspective to place education as the ultimate goal of all social endeavors.

The History of Soka education and its Call for Educational Sovereignty

During the period leading up to WWII in Japan, Tsusenaburo Makiguchi developed the revolutionary pedagogy of Soka education as outlined in his book “Soka Kyouikugaku Taikei,” or “The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy.” In the years leading up to the war, the Japanese government began pursuing a path of militarization, imperial expansion, and educational indoctrination. Makiguchi was deeply disturbed by the government’s efforts to mold the nation’s youth into “loyal subjects” based on a blind obedience to the state and a belief in the supposed “divinity” of the emperor. His outrage at the senseless squandering of youthful lives and their unfulfilled potential led to his direct confrontation with the military authorities and his imprisonment and ultimately his death in prison on November 18th, 1944.

As these events demonstrate, Makiguchi’s deep-seated conviction was that society should not use education for its perceived needs or for the purpose of the state. Instead, education exists for the happiness and growth of the learner. Underlying this belief is the concept of educational sovereignty. Schools should have the independence to pursue their mission and fulfill their responsibility to the students without being influenced by state interests. Daisaku Ikeda spoke about the importance of this spirit of intellectual independence in an address he gave at Soka University of Japan entitled “The Flowering of Creative Life Force.” It is difficult for public universities to remain free from political influence since they are funded by the government. Ikeda argued that “the private university must be a stronghold that resists interference from government authorities and offers an unfailing haven for true learning and culture.” (Ikeda, “To the Youthful Pioneers” p. 43) In short, educational institutions have the mission of intellectual and cultural contribution—a mission that should never be impeded upon by political or military agendas.

Part One: Technology, Education, and Media for a Culture of War

In this section, I will show how the Department of Defense has been making efforts to ensure that technology, education, and the media are utilized to expand a culture of violence and war.

The Department of Defense’s Intrusion into the University

Regrettably, today’s reality is that the autonomy of education has been compromised by the intrusion of various authoritarian state interests. This unfortunate phenomenon is most clearly demonstrated by the research in military weapons technology that is now occurring at many universities across the country. The days of organized military research began with the Manhattan Project which, at its peak, employed over 130,000 scientists that worked towards the development of the world’s first atomic bomb during WWII (Klare, p. 327). Although these research programs were designed to last only as long as the war, President Truman’s science adviser, Vannevar Bush, and General Eisenhower decided to order their continued operation after the conflict ended (Kolko, p. 328). Since the university was the only place with the adequate facilities and trained personnel necessary for such an endeavor, many of the nation’s institutions of higher learning became sites of military research.
Unfortunately, this work has continued to this day. The organization responsible for sponsoring this research is the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) which is a branch of the US Department of Defense. DARPA operates by sending out a wish list every year, receiving proposals from universities, and awarding grants for desired projects. In 2002, DARPA spent a total of $2.153 billion on academic research grants at 350 universities across the country. (Hamel, p. 39) In 2003, DARPA awarded two contracts to MIT and John Hopkins which totaled over $842 million dollars. (Guntzel, p. 1) The figures of funding for educational or peace initiatives are tiny in comparison. For example, during the 2010-2011 year, the state of California is planning on to spend $22.7 billion on all areas of higher education (roughly ten times the funding of DARPA) and the budget for the United Nations, a global organization for peace representing 193 countries, is $4.89 billion (two times DARPA’s funding). (United Nations GA/AB/3925). These figures offer upsetting points of comparison.

Proponents of military research often argue that their work benefits society because their discoveries can lead to breakthroughs in consumer technology. However, they over-emphasize the degree of these benefits. The military’s goal is to develop technology that will be useful in waging war and killing enemy soldiers. Creating consumer technology is irrelevant to their goal as an institution and only comes as an afterthought if possible. In addition to the creation of dangerous weapons, military research also has a negative impact on the quality of university education. Pentagon sponsored projects take up large amounts of teachers’ time and resources which results in huge lecture classes taught by poorly qualified teachers’ assistants (Klare, p. 329). As a result, undergraduate education suffers.

Some universities have defended their work with the Pentagon by arguing that researchers should have the freedom to pursue whichever projects they desire. In defense of their programs sponsored by the Department of Defense, the University of Toronto stated, “Any attempt to restrict the sources of funding for research undertaken at the university is a form of censorship and an attack on the freedom of academic inquiry.” (Hamel, p. 4) In reality, these institutions are destroying the very “academic freedom” that they claim to be defending. Intellectual independence is a scholar’s freedom to pursue research and without the interference or constraints of political, corporate, or military interests. To be influenced by authoritarian forces and claim to be defending intellectual sovereignty is utter hypocrisy.

In an essay investigating the relationship between the university and the Pentagon, UPenn professor Gabriel Kolko writes, “the essence of freedom and creativity is the ability of the scholar to decide, in the manner, place, and time of his own choosing, what research to do and how to release the product of his efforts . . . Academic freedom is based on self-motivation as well as freedom to publish, and requires a discriminating selectivity of problems of significance beyond those written into contract specifications” (p. 329) Daisaku Ikeda was motivated by a similar sentiment when he argued that, due to their independence from external interests, private universities have the ability to pursue research and ideals “unhampered by the intrusions of national authority” (Ikeda, “To the Youthful Pioneers” p. 42). In an age when the line between the purpose of university and the purpose of the state is becoming increasingly blurred, it is crucial that educational institutions courageously defend their academic freedom.

Education for a Culture of War

In addition to its presence at traditional educational institutions, the Department of Defense has also used a variety of unconventional educational efforts such as video games and Hollywood films to create support for a culture of war and violence. In 2008, the army closed four training centers in the Philadelphia area and, in their place, opened up a “virtual educational facility” called the Army Experience Center. (Swanson, p. 5) Inside the facility, children can play a variety of war-themed video games, including two life-sized simulation games that use a Blackhawk helicopter and a Humvee. Military recruiters mill around the center answering questions and encouraging youth to enlist. The army argues that the purpose of the facility is to allow kids to learn about the real army experience. Community groups such as the National Network Opposing the Militarization of Youth have protested and accused the center of using video-gaming technology to glamorize war.
This video game training is especially disturbing when considering the development of the predator drone (which the Department of Defense created at university). A drone is an unmanned aircraft that can fly at ten times the speed of sound and deliver explosive payloads (Guntzel, p. 2). The drone can be controlled by a military pilot who operates the vehicle from thousands of miles away in the United States. The operator views the plane’s surroundings on a big screen and uses controllers to deploy the drone’s weapons. Many have raised the claim that the use of these weapons is similar to the experience of playing video games such as those at the Army Experience center. Because the pilots are physically separated by vast distances from the enemies that they kill, it is even more difficult to recognize the humanity of an individual that appears as an image on a screen.

Daisaku Ikeda has also expressed concern that virtual reality can prevent one from recognizing others’ humanity. In his essay “Reviving Education” he argues that a fundamental cause of violence is the sense of an isolated self. He explains that “The ‘self’ lacking identification with the ‘other’ is insensitive to the pain, anguish and suffering of the ‘other’. It tends to confine itself to its own world, either sensing threat in the slightest provocation and triggering violent behavior, or nonresponsively turning away in detachment” (Ikeda, “Soka education” p. 55) Ikeda continues on to argue that technology has contributed to this negative conception of the self when he states that “We have more recently witnessed the birth of virtual reality, which can also, I believe, further obscure the ‘other.'” The drone separates the attacker and victim in space and time and creates a dehumanized conception of the ‘other’ because death and suffering is not experienced in one’s immediate environment.

As can be expected, the drone has been deadly. A report conducted by the New America Foundation found that US predator drones killed anywhere between 1,359 and 2,171 military personnel and civilians in Pakistan from 2004-2011 (New America Foundation). In the case of the Army Experience Center, the military has used technology as an “educational” means to recruit young soldiers and train them to use these powerful weapons that blur the line between virtual reality and reality and negate the value of human life.

**The Mass Media’s Glorification of War**

In addition, the military has forged an alliance with the mass media to create a public discourse glorifying war. This alliance influences minds on a large scale and is a major obstacle to the development of a culture of peace. For example, in the creation of many war films, directors need to rent helicopters, planes, tanks, and other military vehicles. For these projects, the Department of Defense gives Hollywood access to military equipment, vehicles, and off-duty soldiers to serve as extras. In return, however, they get access to the scripts and can suggest edits or refuse support altogether if the narrative doesn’t provide a positive image of the US military. The Pentagon has created a special department for this task called the “film liaison unit.” In one instance, after the events of September 11th, George W. Bush sent his most trusted advisor, Karl Rove, to Hollywood to seek support in bolstering public opinion for the War on Terror.

As a result, an overwhelming majority of war films glorify war and portray a positive image of the American military as a benevolent force in the world. Any directors that wish to take a critical perspective will not be supported by the Department of Defense. They must either spend large sums of money to hire military equipment or compromise their perspective by permitting the censorship of their script. The result is that there have been very few commercially-successful films that criticize America’s role in armed conflicts. Because a society’s understanding of its past is based on the narratives it receives, the media’s glorification of American militarism profoundly impacts public perception and in effect rewrites history.

As all of these examples demonstrate, the Department of Defense has utilized technology, the university, unconventional forms of education, and the mass media to support the cause of war.
Part Two: Technology and Wisdom

In this section, I will demonstrate how the rapid development of technology will raise the stakes of the issue because the tools of the future are becoming increasingly more powerful. I will also emphasize the point that wisdom and a desire for social contribution will be important factors in using these tools for positive purposes.

The Exponential Growth of Technology

Technological growth expands human potential for good and evil. In this context, our current moment in the history of scientific development provides another reason to emphasize the extreme importance of the issue at hand. As science has progressed over the course of human history, new scientific theories have continued to provide humanity with cause and effect knowledge that can be used to create technology. For example, Einstein’s discovery of $e=mc^2$ equated the two variables of energy and matter and revealed that one can be converted into the other. The positive application of this principle is the ability to use matter to create large amounts of useable energy with nuclear fusion. The negative application of Einstein’s discovery was the nuclear bomb; it created unimaginable suffering for many innocent, Japanese citizens. Scientists can choose to use discovered causal mechanisms for purposes that are either life-affirming or life-negating, good or evil, constructive or destructive. Science is ethically neutral. Technology is not inherently good or bad, but it is definitely powerful.

As technology advances, it will expand the potential for good and evil to unimaginably greater extents in the future. The work of computer scientist and futurist Ray Kurzweill provides an insightful analysis of this process. Kurzweill classifies biological growth and its extension of technological growth as evolutionary processes. By analyzing key developments, Kurzweill shows us that all evolutionary processes are exponential functions that occur at an increasingly faster rate. In addition, our current time in history is the point when this process, which has been happening since the birth of life on this planet, reaches the “knee” of the curve and shoots directly upward. He writes: “From a strictly mathematical perspective, the growth rates will still be finite but so extreme that the changes they bring about will appear to rupture the fabric of human history” (Kurzweill, p. 9). Because of this exponential trend, Kurzweill estimates that we won’t experience another 100 years of progress in the 21st century; we will experience 20,000 years of progress (when measured by today’s rate of progress).

In this century, technology will become increasingly more powerful and expand human capacities for good and evil to degrees that we cannot yet imagine. For what purposes will we use the incredibly powerful tools of the future? What could be a thousand times worse than the nuclear bomb? Will humanity use technology for war or for peace? These questions are of utmost importance. If the tools of the future continue to be utilized for the agenda of DARPA and the military industrial complex, the future prospects of humanity are bleak. Society’s decision on the purpose and direction of science and technology will be one of the most crucial factors in determining the self-destruction or ultimate triumph of humanity.

Knowledge vs. Wisdom

Having outlined the problem, I would now like to move away from critique and begin developing a positive vision for the future. To begin with, we must first recognize that we cannot stop the growth of technology. Instead, our efforts must be focused on guiding it in a positive direction based on a humanistic philosophy. We cannot allow authoritarian forces to hijack technology for the purposes of violence and war.

How can society guide science in a positive direction? Makiguchi’s theory of value provides valuable insight for this question. Makiguchi defined truth as an objective fact, property, or observation of an object. In contrast, an object’s value is determined based on its relationship with the observer. While the discovery of objective scientific facts represents truth, the development of technology represents value because it involves the process of evaluating the relationship of scientific discoveries to human beings. In Makiguchi’s scheme, the highest value is “good” which is given to objects (or in this case, technologies) that are collectively useful and valuable to humanity as a whole.
On a similar note, in a message for the commencement of SUA’s first graduating class, Daisaku Ikeda wrote about the distinction between knowledge and wisdom. While we can liken knowledge to Makiguchi’s concept of truth, wisdom is the ability to use knowledge in a way that creates the maximum value. If it isn’t guided by wisdom, knowledge can serve destructive and life-negating purposes. Ikeda cited the example of the Wannsee Conference which was a meeting of the top Nazi officials during WWII to plan the extermination of Europe’s Jewish population. Of the fourteen officials at this meeting, eight had earned doctoral degrees. Ikeda also noted that the major proponents of Japan’s militaristic march towards WWII were the intellectual elites at the universities. Knowledge, like technology, is ethically neutral and can be used for either good or evil. In the same speech, he noted that:

Knowledge alone cannot give rise to value. It is only when knowledge is guided by wisdom that value—defined by the father of Soka education, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, as beauty, benefit, and goodness—is created. The font of wisdom is found in the following elements: an overarching sense of purpose, a powerful sense of responsibility and, finally, the compassionate desire to contribute to the welfare of humankind. (p. 97)

Knowledge-disseminating education and degree-getting education are not enough. Instead, we need an educational system that helps students undergo an inner transformation so that they can acquire the type of wisdom that Ikeda describes. Technology will continue to grow. What is needed most is the inner growth of individuals so that humanity can use these tools for positive purposes.

Part Three: A Positive Vision: Soka education’s Role in the 21st Century

Science and technology must be guided by a wisdom that aims for the overall well-being of society if we hope to create a culture of peace. In this section, I will make three proposals that, if implemented, would help students develop the spirit of social contribution that gives rise to wisdom. These ideas would steer the direction of science, education, and technology towards value-creative purposes. First, efforts must be made to ensure that the academic sovereignty of educational institutions remains intact—especially those of higher learning. Second, Soka pedagogy should be incorporated into science education to link discoveries to social problems. Third, the international community should make efforts toward the universal acceptance and implementation of peace education and human rights education.

Academic Sovereignty

To begin with, I would like to emphasize the importance of academic sovereignty—especially in the context of the military research that is currently occurring at the university. The protection of academic institutions from political pressures is imperative if we hope to establish an educational system that contributes to the development of a culture of peace. Makiguchi came to the same conclusion. One of his central claims was that the purpose of education should not be the pursuit of state objectives, but rather, the lifelong happiness of the learner (Makiguchi, p. 5). In response to the nationalistic and militaristic education of his day, he concluded that intellectual independence is imperative for student development and social progress.

In his essay “The Flowering of a Creative Life Force,” Daisaku Ikeda explained the important ability that private universities have in maintaining academic sovereignty. He argued that:

Fundamentally, the significance of a private university is found in the autonomous pursuit of the ideals on which it was founded, unhampered by the intrusions of national authority. . . . Unfortunately, publicly funded, government-operated universities, for all their undeniable good features, can never fully ignore the demands and strictures placed on them by the state. The private university, while responding to the needs of one’s own country and its people, is free to look beyond, to the needs the world in general. (Ikeda, “To the Youthful Pioneers p. 43)

Private universities have the ability—no, the responsibility—to sponsor learning that contributes to humanity because the nature of their funding allows them to do so. Unfortunately, even private universities that include peace and social justice in their mission statements have signed research contracts with the Department of Defense. (Guntzel, p. 10) In contrast, the fact that Soka
University of America is funded by common people from all over the world allows it to pursue its ideals without interference. In the future, we must continue to support other academic institutions that have the capacity and the courage to defend their independence.

In an address entitled “Serving the Essential Needs of Education,” Ikeda proposed political reforms that would support academic sovereignty. He suggested that Japan establish a permanent central commission devoted to “the long term reconstruction of the entire framework of the educational system.” (Soka education, p. 92) This commission would be an independent body completely insulated from all government interests. All too often, politics interferes with educational reform as decision-makers aim for changes that will produce immediate results and win them reelection while neglecting to make efforts for sustainable, long term progress. While Ikeda made this proposal for Japan, America would benefit from implementing this reform as well. Such a decision would lead to policy changes that would give academic institutions the freedom to pursue important ideals such as social justice, democracy, and peace.

A Soka Science Education

Teaching science using Soka pedagogy would give rise to scientists that use their skills for positive purposes. Makiguchi believed that one of the goals of Soka education is to help students develop a “social consciousness” so that they can use their knowledge and skills to contribute to humanity. He believed that if students realized the degree to which they were indebted to society, they would come to appreciate the connections between their life and their world and develop a spirit of social contribution (Makiguchi, p. 26). With my own eyes I have seen students on this campus reflect, grow, and undergo radical inner transformations in the development of the social consciousness that Makiguchi describes.

For this reason, Soka pedagogy could be a valuable tool if applied in the context of science education. Traditional educational models are often overly-specialized and teach science from the perspective of a very narrow discipline. Because of this, it is often difficult for students to connect their skills to related fields for use in addressing social problems. If Soka pedagogy were implemented, students would come to see the connections between scientific knowledge and practical ways to use these tools for social contribution. Rather than forming students into cogs that use their skills to perpetuate the system, a Soka-based science education would create scientists and critical thinkers with the breadth of vision to see the misguided direction in which the system is currently heading and the ability to use their knowledge for positive social transformation.

Another reason to support a liberal-arts-backed science education is the fact that technology’s increasing rate of growth is causing society to change faster as well. By the time that many science students graduate from university, their technical knowledge will soon be useless because the equipment they were trained on will soon become obsolete. As we enter an age of rapid change and complex problems, the skills of creative flexibility and adaptability will be crucial. In the future, it will become increasingly important that students develop the ability to learn how to learn, to think critically, and to think creatively for the purpose of connecting seemingly unrelated concepts to create innovative solutions.

I am convinced that if we can create an educational system that helps students develop Makiguchi’s concept of a “social consciousness”, their efforts will help the applications of technology begin to move in a positive and life-affirming direction. If scientists, teachers, and students decide that they are committed to using technology for ethical purposes, there will be no place for military research at the university. In the past, there have been many cases in which protests by the faculty and students have forced schools to end their contracts with the Department of Defense. (Kolko, p. 330) If students and teachers change, universities will change. When this happens, research will no longer be directed by the military’s goal of war but by educational institutions’ goal of humanity’s wellbeing.

Human Rights and Peace Education

At the same time, I do not expect Soka education to be immediately and universally implemented in every locality around the world. Therefore, we must explore other methods that will supplement the acquisition of knowledge by supporting students’ inner transformation. In this context, Daisaku Ikeda has
continually stressed the point that peace and human rights education can play an important role in this endeavor. In his 2008 peace proposal to the United Nations, Ikeda called for the participation of civil society in the drafting of a human rights education declaration that would establish an international framework for its worldwide implementation. In this address, he urged “governments and civil society [to] work together to actively promote concrete programs that bring human rights education to all” (Humanizing Religion, p. 17)

This past January, SUA was fortunate enough to welcome former UN Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury to SUA to teach a month long learning cluster on the Culture of Peace. Chowdhury played a crucial role in working towards the development of the UN Declaration and Programme of Action for the Culture of Peace which is the only internationally recognized document that defines the concept and has also been accepted by all 192 nations of the UN. With the same spirit as Ikeda’s proposal, Chowdhury also emphasized the importance of introducing peace and human rights courses into universities’ curricula. This move would actualize Culture of Peace’s first action area of establishing educational systems that help students develop “the values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and ways of life to enable them to resolve any dispute peacefully and in a spirit of respect for human dignity and of tolerance and non-discrimination.” (United Nations A/RES/53/243)

Throughout his course, Chowdhury continually emphasized his belief that human rights abuses occur because people are unaware of the human rights that they are entitled to. Like Ikeda, he stresses the importance of introducing courses on this topic into all schools. Chowdhury also shared his experiences of encountering difficulties when urging universities to teach the Culture of Peace course. In addition, he praised SUA’s decision to take the initiative in this undertaking. In a message about the course, he wrote:

With its mission to foster a steady stream of global citizens committed to securing peace, human rights, and the sanctity of life, Soka University of America has been the pioneering seat of higher learning in the world to include a course on The Culture of Peace in its curricula two years ago. It did so out of the conviction that the flourishing of the culture of peace will generate the mindset that is a prerequisite for the transition from force to reason, from conflict and violence to dialogue and peace. (Chowdhury, p. 2)

Human rights education empowers students by helping them cultivate a spirit of non-violence and by giving them the tools to address violations of their fundamental freedoms if such abuses should occur. For these reasons, courses on these topics would actualize Makiguchi’s call for students to develop a “social consciousness” and a desire for social contribution. These capabilities would ensure that students’ skills and knowledge – whether in science or in other fields – would be used for the betterment of humanity.

Part Four: Conclusion

The Transition from Economic Growth to Human Growth, from Corporations to Education

The implementation of these three proposals would allow the tools of education and technology to begin to transform our current culture of violence towards a culture of peace. At the same time, we mustn’t forget that these two are not the only fields that have lost sight of their ultimate purpose. Unfortunately, all fields of society including politics, economics, religion, culture, music, art, and medicine have been subjugated to the market and directed towards the ultimate goal of economic growth, regardless of the human cost. What Dwight Eisenhower first called the military-industrial complex has now become the military-industrial-corporate-political-academic-scientific-media complex in which profit and power are the bottom lines. The US government is run like a business, hospitals are run like businesses, the criminal justice system is run like a business, art has become commercialized into a business, religions often run like businesses – and worst of all, schools are now being run like businesses. The commercialization of education can best be seen in the example of universities that sell their academic integrity in exchange for profits gained from military research contracts.

The intrusion of corporate forces into the realm of academia is especially worrisome because education is the place of individual empowerment. Because education has this ability, it will determine the direction of science, politics, religion, and all other social endeavors. I deeply believe that this is why Daisaku Ikeda has written:
I have said that I will devote what remains of my life to the cause of education, and I have acted true to this resolve. Education is my mission as a successor to the ideals of Makiguchi and Toda. Furthermore, I believe that humanity’s peace and prosperity for the coming centuries can be built only upon the foundation of education. (“Soka education”, p. xiv)

I am worried that the most important tool in building a culture of peace - education, the field whose direction will guide all others - has become subject to capitalist predation. To combat these negative developments, Ikeda has continually emphasized the importance of education. He writes, “Hence, as I consider education in the twenty-first century, I would like to assert that what is most urgently needed is a paradigm shift from looking at education for society’s sake to building a society that serves the essential needs of education.” (“Soka education”, p. 83) In the same essay, he expressed his admiration for Professor Robert Thurman of Columbia University. When asked in an interview what he thought the role of education in society is, Thurman replied, “I think the question should rather be: What is the role of society in education? Because in my view education is the purpose of human life” (Ikeda, “Soka education” p. 84). I am convinced that if we actualize the paradigm shift that Ikeda and Thurman describe and place education and human growth at the center of all pursuits, every aspect of society will begin to function in a positive manner that contributes to the well-being of all.

In this paper, I have focused on education and science in particular. I have chosen to explore the role of science because technology is developing at an exponential rate and the purposes that we decide to use it for will determine between a future of human triumph or a future of self-destruction. I have chosen to focus on education because the inner transformation of individuals is absolutely necessary if we hope to use these tools of the future for positive purposes and choose the former path rather than the latter.

During a dialogue with Club of Rome founder Aurelio Peccei, Ikeda was moved by a statement that Peccei made about this need for an inner transformation. Reminiscing about their conversation, Ikeda writes, “Leaning forward in his chair, he would tell me with great intensity that the human race has experienced three revolutions thus far: the industrial revolution, the scientific revolution, and the technological revolution. All of these were external. The problem was that the wisdom to use the fruits of those revolutions was never developed” (Bosco, p. 34) Without an inner revolution, all of these external revolutions will be useless at best and extremely dangerous at worst.

In a society ruled by the market, we must emphasize the importance of education and replace economic growth with human empowerment as the ultimate goal of all social endeavors. If this vision is actualized, the US government will be run like a school, hospitals will be run like schools, the criminal justice system will be run like a school, art institutes will be run like schools, religions will be run like schools – and most fittingly of all, corporations and perhaps even the military, will be run like schools. The media will educate people instead of blinding them by glorifying war. Schools will fulfill their responsibility to empower students and end their military research contracts that perpetuate fear, violence, and insecurity. And scientists will use the unimaginably powerful technologies of the future for purposes that eliminate human suffering rather than causes that perpetuate misery. Only then will we be able to create a truly just and peaceful society that lives up to the vision that Makiguchi and Ikeda have envisioned.
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Science Education for Value Creation

Tyko Shoji and Scott Williams

Class of 2011

Introduction

Science and technology have provided the foundation of our modern industrialized society and are thus an integral part of the daily lives of all people. The scientific worldview is an integral part of society, no longer partitioned off as a discipline contained only in academia. With the 21st century’s advent into the digital renaissance and the acculturation of science into every strata of society, the laymen and the scientists are in need of science education which is relevant to the world they collectively engage. There is a need for science to have an aim of social utility, and thus it is essential for scientific education to be grounded in society and taught in relation to the humanities and other disciplines. Scientific education should emphasize to students the relationship between scientific inquiry and society. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate how the theoretical framework of Soka education, provided by Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Daisaku Ikeda, can contribute to constructing a holistic science education.
Science in Isolation from Society

Without clear principles to guide the development and use of scientific knowledge, there will always be opportunities to misuse science for ill purposes. Here we will cite two examples to illustrate the point.

Example 1)

It is often the case that technology is developed in order to fulfill some sort of need or to engineer a solution to problems that peoples or societies face. Such was the case in America, which, like many developed nations, has a large population who demand the availability of enormous food supplies. Technological and scientific advances have allowed many industrialized countries to produce food on a large scale, but food security remains a problem. Threats to the food supply can include: conditions of climate, human interference, and threats posed by insect species. In 1939 the chemical DDT (dichloro-diphenyl-trichloro-ethane) was discovered to have strong properties as an insecticide, and it quickly came into commercial agricultural use, responding to the insect threat to the agriculture industry. The multimillion-dollar pesticide industry rose as a front-line defense against insects that posed a threat to national food security. DDT was sprayed from crop-dusters, over vast agricultural fields to fight off unwanted pests. However, those who understood the composition of DDT recognized it was a highly hazardous and poisonous substance but failed to prevent the mass production and usage of the chemical. With the appearance of a solution to a serious problem, the use of DDT was guided by the profit motive, rather than societal benefit. DDT was hailed as a saving grace but the devastating consequences to human health and natural ecosystems which followed its widespread use serve as a testament to the need for individuals to understand their tools and technologies and to utilize them for social benefit even above individual profit. The use of science and technology for the sake of profit in itself is not a negative thing, however, as with the case of DDT, it can have far-reaching consequences.

Example 2)

During World War II, in response to allegations that Germany was developing nuclear weapons, the United States initiated the Manhattan Project aimed at accelerating research toward creating atomic weapons. In 1945, the world’s first atomic bomb was tested in New Mexico. Shocked after seeing the destructive power of the weapon that they had created, many scientists working in the Manhattan Project signed a petition to President Truman to protest the use of atomic bombs on Japan. By this time, Germany had already lost power, and Japan was nearing defeat. Many members of the Manhattan Project began to question the morality of using atomic weapons on Japan. Some of the project staff had even already begun to have second thoughts about their work during development. However, when the Manhattan Project was initiated, the fear of Nazi Germany becoming a nuclear threat persuaded researchers to join the project. It was only later (when the potential threat of Germany faded and after seeing the terrible power of the atomic bomb) that members of the Manhattan Project began to have second thoughts. Unfortunately, the petition from the members of the Manhattan Project was not heeded and in August of 1945, the United States dropped two atomic bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Circumstances in the environment can sway the decisions that individuals make and what may seem to be the best path may instead cause destruction. A goal of Soka education is to foster individuals dedicated to achieving peace and creating value. Education which instills a strong commitment to values within students will help guide them toward value creation despite any external forces that lead them astray.

The members of the Manhattan Project cannot be blamed for the United States’ decision to drop atomic bombs on Japan. Similarly, it would not be productive to seek punishment for the people who first synthesized DDT. However, as we move forward into the 21st century, scientific discoveries may open up possibilities for creating even more harmful weapons or damaging chemicals. In order to avoid any more barbarous loss of human life caused by fellow human beings, individuals must be taught to pursue and use scientific discoveries to create value, rather than to cause destruction.

Soka Education as a Framework for Holistic Science Education

Science has provided the ability to improve health, living standards and the general quality of human life. But as Daisaku Ikeda explains, “Knowledge itself is a neutral tool that can be used for good or evil” [i] and there is no shortage of examples of the misuse and abuse of science and technology throughout human history.
As scientific knowledge advances, the potential of our technology to create either enormous suffering or benefits for humanity increases proportionally in magnitude. In this age where technology and science are integral parts of human life, our use and continued pursuit of scientific knowledge must be tempered by something more than knowledge for knowledge’s sake. Our science and use of technology must be directed with greater purpose as Daisaku Ikeda explains:

Knowledge alone cannot give rise to value. It is only when knowledge is guided by wisdom that value is created. The fount of wisdom is found in the following elements: an overarching sense of purpose, a powerful sense of responsibility and, finally, the compassionate desire to contribute to the welfare of humankind [ii].

At this time it should be noted that this suggestion for a holistic approach to science does not necessitate or in any way call for the removal of objectivity in scientific inquiry. Objectivity is a vital aspect of the scientific method and paramount for pursuing sound scientific inquiry. However, restricting ourselves to objective cognitive analysis limits the ability to broadly apply our knowledge. To address this disconnect between objective and subjective reasoning, Makiguchi proposes an integration of the two for the cultivation of whole individuals, capable of effectively contributing to society, through the mastery of objective empirical observation and subjective emotional analysis. He entitles this convergence a “comprehensive orientation to life” [iii].

Makiguchi associates objective observation with cognition, which he defines as the processing of factual information. This type of information is classifiable as true or false and refrains from making judgments about whether the information is good or bad, appropriate or inappropriate. Such judgments are reserved for evaluation, the mental activity which Makiguchi associates with subjective emotional analysis. Evaluation places value on knowledge or information based on the relationship between the subject and object. Cognition and evaluation are separate types of mental activities, but they are interrelated and exist in continual interplay, perpetually feeding into each other. The two are inseparable, one cannot occur without the other [iv].

Together, cognition and evaluation can be used for value creation. Makiguchi’s notion of value can be broken down into the three categories of good (characterized as public gain / social utility), benefit (individual or private gain), and beauty (judgments of beauty). Of these three types of value, Makiguchi holds good to be the highest. It is therefore axiomatic in Soka education that we place good as the guiding force for education and scientific inquiry.
However, often people tend to misunderstand the connection between cognition and evaluation. Science education often attempts to disassociate the two, however, this would lead to poor decisions for society at large. It is therefore important in fostering holistic education to understand this connection Makiguchi outlines between cognition and evaluation. “The problem occurs in combination; thus evaluation often takes the place of cognition, or evaluation bases itself on incorrect cognition. Hence we have doctors and lawyers who become unduly concerned with cutting a dapper, well-kept figure because clients judge by appearances rather than inquiring into their actual abilities” [v]. The two must constantly inform one another, a combination of experience and interaction – without the two informing one another, faulty reasoning or decisions can be made. If in science education, students are taught that science is only the objective cognition of information, then they will not develop an understanding of the full potential of science when cognition is combined with evaluation. Science education must therefore strive to incorporate evaluation, to give rise to value creation, and non-science students must have a rudimentary understanding of science in order to better inform their evaluation. Makiguchi helps structure a framework for integrating wisdom to guide our scientific knowledge when he states:

[Pre]occupation with objectivity can lead scientists to arrive at the narrowest, most shortsighted conclusion because of lack of synthesis. Outstanding scientists may thus become intellectual reductionists and regard their cognition as the entirety of the object investigated. They cling to principle and ignore feelings and hunches that arise even in the course of research, let alone further application toward value. What stays in their minds to clog their thinking is the dregs of knowledge – objective but dead afterimages. This attitude is a negation of the real aims of science. If we are to learn all there is to know about the mental and physical world, we must fully develop a harmonious cooperation between experience and interaction, lest we find ourselves snared by prejudice [vi].

The scientific method is the primary tool for understanding phenomena and the underlying laws that govern reality. It is how we attempt to discover truth and understand how the world works. Knowledge of the scientific process is thus beneficial for any individual to make well-informed decisions as a member of society. The average person does not necessarily need to be concerned with facts and details of the size of an atom, but awareness of how knowledge is discovered is important and can help one distinguish between science and pseudoscience.

In her article entitled “Reshaping Their Views: Science as Liberal Arts,” Judith Bramble recalls an instance where she introduced a study to her students that had found the hypothesis that first-year college students on average gain fifteen pounds to be false. While the students understood the results of the study, they still tended to maintain their belief in the “Freshmen 15” because their own experience seemed to support the idea [vii]. The disconnect in this instance is a lack of understanding and appreciation for what scientific research has to demonstrate. Perhaps the paper that Bramble showed to her students was lacking in some aspect of its investigation, but her story highlights how first-hand experience can be more convincing than a thorough scientific investigation for many people. Similarly, there are people who believe in horoscopes and fortune-telling because they believe that their experience supports the precognition, even when numerous studies have disproved the validity of such claims. Beliefs in horoscopes and superstitions may seem of minor importance, but an issue arises when individuals maintain superstitious belief over scientifically-demonstrated truths. The issue can extend beyond horoscopes and modern beliefs as well. If individuals choose superstitions over science, how likely is it that they will be able to discern true science from pseudoscience or poorly-conducted science? A basic science education thus serves as not only a gateway into learning how we obtain our knowledge of the world, but it also has the potential to teach students what ‘good science’ is and how it differs from ‘bad science’.

Science education, in the broadest sense, should provide a cognitive basis for discerning facts from objective reality, allowing students to evaluate those facts from the point of value creation to result in a comprehensive orientation to life for the student and good for the society. If science education is conducted with value creation as its aim, then the connection between scientific inquiry and societal gain would become more explicit. Scientific study could be linked in an unambiguous relation to the social-cultural challenges faced in society at large. The concrete contribution that Soka education, as a pedagogical framework for holistic education, can make towards enhancing science education is in the general instruction for students of science courses. If social utility is the aim of science education, the individual student’s orientation shifts towards a holistic understanding of science in relation to society and other disciplines.
Makiguchi and Ikeda assert that education must be embedded in the process of value creation and the process of education must therefore contain this emphasis on value from the starting point. Traditional education works in the format of cognition and evaluation in linear progression, but because of the interplay between the two, a model for a more holistic science education may resemble the above figure. Instead of a simple linear progression containing only the two levels of cognition and evaluation, Soka education would provide a framework for the overall process to take place in. The cognition would be objective though not free from the original subjective premise: that education serves as a means for value creation at the societal level, thus, social utility. The cognition thus would result in new evaluations which would cycle in a feedback loop with an aim of value creation education.

It is important to make the pursuit of value creation in science more explicit to students to facilitate this process. The overarching premise introduced in the Soka education model for science education would naturally lead students and instructors towards a more interdisciplinary approach, even in the most technical schools. Soka education can be employed in this way to foster a holistic science education. The science education Soka could build is for the sake of allowing the individual to engage in society through a process of value creation.

[iii] Education for Creative Living 66
[iv] ECL 64
[v] ECL 65
[vi] ECL 66
Soka Journalism Education: On Value Creative Subjectivity

Jihii Jolly

Class of 2011

They never say to you, “What does his voice sound like? What games does he love best? Does he collect butterflies?” Instead they demand “How old is he? How many brothers has he? How much does he weigh? Only from these figures do they think they have learned anything about him.

Antoine de Saint-Exupery, The Little Prince

Like Zeus’s undisturbed reign over Olympus, objectivity, as American journalism’s moral compass, once reigned high. Whether the ethic of objectivity first took root during the Jacksonian Revolution of the 1830s or during the Progressive Era of the 20th century is debated, however, it came to be considered an important tool for successful democracy as it “supposedly secured a space for neutral, factual information and public deliberation outside the corruption, rancor, and partisan spin that normally characterizes public discourse” (Kaplan 25). In 1923, the American Society of Newspaper Editors directly equated ethical journalism to objective journalism. (Kitty 2) For the unfortunate reason that objective pieces are inexpensive, while interpretative, investigative journalism is expensive and time consuming, “ethical objectivity” continues to be a standard for journalism today. When profit is the driving force, interpretative journalism is not favorable;
in the words of Philip Meyer, it “requires a level of skill not much in demand from a system that conceives of news media as mere platforms for attracting eyeballs to ads.”

Also like Zeus, objectivity eventually came to be undermined by thinking men. In reality, it is an unattainable ethic, particularly in writing, and this premise is supported by research in communication theory, linguistics and psychology. The Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure for example, asserted that words attain meaning diacritically, that is, through mental associations based on exclusion; we understand signs by differentiating them from other signs. Language is therefore inherently ideological as words only gain meaning from particular social usage and “need a community with shared assumptions to confer them with any meaning” (Loomba 35). In 1947, the Commission on the Freedom of Press concluded that no fact exists without context and no factual report is uncolored by the opinions of its creator. (22)

Problems of Objective Writing

Despite this recognition of its fallacy however, objectivity, or “only reporting the facts,” continues to be a standard for journalism, and this paper contends that such a standard negatively contributes to public discourse and opinion, in many cases allowing for violence and injustice. According to Professor Paul Many of the University of Toledo, focusing on facts that are easily publicly verified has lead to a great omission of information.

That one air disaster, car accident, bank embezzlement, prostitution arrest, madman spraying bullets, street riot, coup d’etat, war, ceasefire or house fire is more like the others that preceded it and not a unique event in its own right. It persuades us to believe that the mystery of the human condition is a muddle, and its misery is infinitely repetitious and renewable, and further, that there is nothing we can do about it.(4)

Though objectivity is a wonderful solution to the time and resource constraints journalists face, it does not allow them to adequately or creatively analyze the information they are given and “it is reaction, not reflection that makes it to print or over the airwaves” (Kitty 7). In a 1997 interview, Theodore Glasser of Stanford University’s Department of Communications stated

To be objective in modern American journalism is to essentially distance yourself from the sense of substance of the story and to maintain a degree of disinterest in it. [But] you can’t at the same time claim to be disinterested in the substance of your story and accept responsibility for the veracity and validity of the claims made in your story. I’m not arguing against balance and fairness but I am arguing against this ideal of language as a transparent means of conveying an empirical world. (Kitty 6)

Glasser challenges the notion that objective reporting is truthful as he contends against the implication that language can be used for impartial description, and his challenge is supported by Saussurean linguistics. The same 1947 Commission report alludes to the untruth in objective, non-interpretative journalism: “The account of an isolated fact, however accurate in itself, may be misleading and, in effect, untrue” (22). In this vein, the Commission advocates the need for interpretative journalism, as the United States “has many groups which are partially insulated from one another and which need to be interpreted to one another,” lest antagonisms between them become intensified. Thus the infamous line from the Commission report: “It is no longer enough to report the fact truthfully. It is now necessary to report the truth about fact” (22).

The ultimate dilemma faced by ethical objectivity is deciding whether objectivity ought to be a method of investigation and discussion seeking all sides of a given story, or simply a reality in which injustice and disorder are commonplace and therefore, those perspectives with accessible objective evidence should be given greatest coverage. (Kitty 4) Though the former is most often advocated, the fact is that most newspapers do not have the resources to support objective investigative reporting and are wary about injecting (subjective) human interest elements into “hard” news stories. “True” objective reporting often requires access to resources (information, interviews, training) beyond reach.

Furthermore, strictly factual writing tends to dehumanize its subject. Alexandra Kitty of Skeptic writes,
Emotional detachment, by its very essence, does not allow reporters to take full advantage of their humanity. When misused, objectivity takes normal, feeling human beings and makes them seem callous and unaffected by their surroundings, it is as if they do not care about what is happening around them. (9)

Paul Many believes the answer lies in literary journalism, which employs the elements of literature to add dimension to a factual story:

As a first step, reporters should promise that they’ll never write another number with lots of zeros unless they attach a flesh and blood person to it… By giving us living, breathing people through language that allows us to metaphorically see, hear, taste, smell or touch, journalism might convince us of the variety of ways that individuals react to situations. (6)

He goes on to suggest that we believe in opinions, emotions and attitudes as real, rather than discounting them for not being as easily verifiable as empirical or numerical fact. Literary news could tell honest truths about people “who live in ways that don’t fit the old bromides which tend to dehumanize” (8). And he is not alone in his battle against dehumanization.

Amanda Udis-Kessler, for example, ascribes social inequality to dehumanization in journalistic writing. She writes

I become, not Amanda with my many complexities, gifts, and struggles, but ‘that queer.’ Someone else becomes ‘a welfare mother’ or ‘an illegal immigrant’ or ‘a retard.’ Adjectives mutate into nouns, and people get lost. Once someone is dehumanized, it’s easy to ignore their wants and needs, easy to reject their wisdom, and in extreme cases, easy to kill them. (2)

**Subjectivity A & B**

If objectivity is both a fallacy and inclined to dehumanize, what about subjective writing? The debates continue, and some advocate factually, well-researched, investigative journalism, while others advocate personalized, humanized literary writing. In both cases, interpretation on the part of writers is necessary and the likelihood of niche readership versus mass appeal is high, as is the case with The New Yorker or The Nation.

How can a journalist delve deeply into stories, attach human beings to issues and still discern between the subjective and objective? As an informer of society, what sort of interpretation would be most valuable for society? First, I propose that the continuum be revised. Rather than debating between Objectivity and Subjectivity, which are loaded with connotations, I propose, for the purpose of this paper, that we place Subjectivity A on one end of the spectrum and Subjectivity B on the other. Subjectivity A is the emotional, biased writing we know of today—literary journalism where the writer is present in the story: travelogue, opinion pieces, and political columns. Subjectivity B is what I define as value-creative writing, informed in large part by the educational pedagogy of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi. In short, value-creative writing is informative writing that turns the reader into a critical thinker. In a sense, value-creative subjective writing fulfills the same imperative that objectivity does: it informs the reader. However, data is chosen based on value, not availability or profit, and facts are respected and placed in broader contexts. How can such journalism be fostered?

Paul Many writes,

Journalism schools increasingly realize they owe their existence to acceptance by their liberal arts colleagues. Professors might give more emphasis to developing work habits which would encourage sprouting reporters to go beyond the superficial “who, what, when, where, why, and how” in developing a story. Other standards of evidence might be developed which are just as respectful of fact, but more accepting of a wider range of the facts available. (7)

To this ode to liberal arts education, I apply Tsunesaburo Makiguchi’s ideas on truth and value, which are also the foundation for Soka education. I contend that the “standards of evidence” that “might be developed,” could directly be influenced by the ideals of Soka education, and Makiguchi’s emphasis on value-creation could become a paradigm for value-creative subjectivity in
journalism, that is, a standard for truth and value rooted in the same humanization of subjects that
Many, Kitty and Udis-Kessler argue for.

Makiguchi opposed following the Shinto religion because it was an ideology whose origin
could not be substantiated by actual proof. That he spent such great energies pondering the
definitions of truth and value then, is quite in line with his fervent belief in truthful perception. He
strongly opposed Japanese education because it was non-value-creative and he deemed such
educational experiences as “little more than mental gymnastics and memorization of material
unrelated to [student’s] lives” (Bethel 48). This emphasis on awareness, understanding and relation to
individual experience is the starting point of my comparison of Makiguchi’s educational ethics and
contemporary journalistic ethics. Makiguchi wrote,

*Humans take no heed of things that have no bearing on them. They often go without noticing that such things
even exist. It is only those things with some effect upon us that demand distinct awareness and acquire a sense
of personal immediacy. And the more critical these things are to our life, the less we can afford to ignore them.*
(55)

Thus, the urgency for awareness becomes apparent because human beings do not naturally
think critically or broadly about information that does not directly affect them. Similarly with
journalism, Kitty’s admonition against the apathy attributed to detached objectivity provokes a sense
of urgency for awareness. Critical thinking must be cultivated both in the classroom and in news
media, and facts must be reported based on value.

Makiguchi differentiates between truth and value:

*In seeking to discover a truth, we isolate some commonality or universal property from among the myriad
objects of the universe. With value, however, we attempt to determine the particular or uniquely characteristic
way in which some object differs from all others in its relationship to our own lives and to the life of the
community…Truth implies an objectified treatment of perceptual data so as to isolate like qualities, whereas
value connotes a subjective reaction to the affective quotient or the quantity of influence that the perceptual
data is felt to exert on our being…Truth does not vary with the person or the times, but value cannot be
separated from people.* (56)

In this manner, Makiguchi illustrates that value produces a bond that humanizes an object or
subject. This assignment of value is the same value that ought to be assigned in journalistic reporting,
that is, humanization of subjects should allow readers to see particularly those people, places and
subjects that do not directly relate to them, as multidimensional and humanistic. He ends his passage
with “Unlike truth, which identifies an object in its essential qualities, value emerges as the measure of
the appropriateness of the object for the evaluator.” In this case, the evaluator is the journalist,
appropriateness refers to the role the journalist plays in society, and the evaluation is an obligation the
journalist fulfills on behalf of the public. He or she fulfills the role of the teacher in Makiguchi’s
model. Like a teacher, the journalist helps people navigate information rather than accrue it:

*The aim of education is not to transfer knowledge; it is to guide the learning process, to enable the acquisition
of [the methods of] research. It is not the piecemeal merchandizing of information; it is to enable the
acquisition of the methods for learning on one’s own; it is the provision of keys to unlock the vault of
knowledge.* (Bethel 285)

An educator’s responsibility is to awaken students and connect them “with broader human
concerns, rather than uncritically accepting whatever students happen to desire or want to
do.”(Hansen 75) I would add, Makiguchi’s warning against the merchandizing of information is
precisely that merchandizing that occurs in the world of news media. Makiguchi sees learning as
intertwined with living; study and living inform one another and continue to exist well past student
life. Does the maintenance and further development of a critical awareness of value then, not also
become the job of the journalist both as an informant and member of society?

Makiguchi gives the example of news of an earthquake or fire as fact (objective), irrespective
of judgment or degree. Value however, is a subjective discernment and is evaluated in relation to a
person’s own society, as well as with respect to the continued well-being of society. Subjectivity A might report the earthquake from the perspective of the journalist who interviewed community members with extreme or moving experiences. Subjectivity B however, would interview ordinary people affected by the earthquake as well as give information about the community in which they lived. The writer must use his subjective judgment to conduct interviews, but the people he selects will not be those with the most dramatic stories just to make a headline, and the information about their background helps the reader form his or her own critical response to the situation they are in as well as understand the workings of a community, rather than simply taking note of another natural disaster. In this vein, Makiguchi contends that the pursuit of truth is not as useful as the pursuit of value. Here I believe that the answer to our question of whether a journalist should add subjective interpretation into news is yes, precisely because of Makiguchi’s emphasis on the well-being of society. He defines happiness (which encompasses well-being) as only achievable by an individual and society together, as they are interconnected:

I will not say the pursuit of truth is selfish, for both verification and value creation are necessary, but without selflessly providing good for all, truth has no meaning. In this the humanist will concur with the pragmatist: We cannot live truth; we must live value. Life may give us access to truth, but it forges ahead on value. Life looks at truth, but it comes into contact with value. (20)

Soka Journalism Education

Soka education views knowledge as a method of learning, the means by which value-creation can be injected into subjectivity. Daisaku Ikeda writes

Culture may be thought of as the wisdom that enables us to make the best use of knowledge… Knowledge is actually the means by which wisdom is brought forth and manifested from within. Knowledge alone cannot give rise to value. It is only when knowledge is guided by wisdom that value—defined by the father of Soka education, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, as beauty, benefit, and goodness—is created.

He continues to explain that wisdom strengthens one’s ability to remain unaffected by superficial judgments of society (which is perhaps the cause for the journalist’s fear of subjectivity in the first place). Rather, wisdom enables one to “discern what is of genuine value and what is, in fact, detrimental.” In terms of journalistic training, writers learn to discern how to present information in an informative manner that helps the reader think critically about the subject.

Objective journalism that reports fact in the formulaic Who-What-When-Where-Why-How manner can dehumanize subjects to the degree that it perpetuates violence. Dean Carter of Morehouse College says, “The failure of empathy makes violence possible.” He supports Soka education’s emphasis on compassionate wisdom that develops empathy toward life in its infinite diversity.

Perhaps what is missing from journalism is simply a standard for discerning value. If aligned with anthropocentric stories and a desire for the greater good of society, such a standard can be easily fostered by a curriculum for journalism education founded upon Soka education. Subjectivity B, or value-creative subjectivity, if accepted by the writer, humanizes the subject—this is not to say that readers ought to be convinced to suspend judgment, feel positive or always experience empathy—and at minimum, helps the reader view the subject, event or issue in a multidimensional light, and ultimately, leave the page thinking.
Works Cited


Exploring the Narrative Approach

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Class of 2005

As scholarly work, both theoretical and empirical, is only just emerging in Soka education research, varied methodologies for research will be crucial. Each research method is like a lens that sheds a different light, featuring a new perspective dependent upon the viewpoint from which researchers examine their study. Such perspective highlights a certain phenomenon about reality. Likewise, each research method can provide an added layer for deepening and expanding our knowledge in Soka education scholarship. At the same time, research, both quantitative and qualitative, has its strengths and limitations; for this reason, we need to embrace all methodologies. However, in research communities, quantitative methods have gained stronger recognition from academia which is most likely due to the current societal needs.

In recent years, with an increasing push for global competition and an economically-driven society, educational purposes have also, in response to such trends, become narrowly focused to meet those needs. This phenomenon seems to be evident when we find political and corporate leaders focusing on public schools as the means for developing a stronger labor force that can contribute to the nation’s economy and compete globally (Stromquist, 2002). Such focus has shifted our educational reform to one that is dependent on market-preferred systems.

Accordingly, research that is scientifically-based with experimental designs and randomized trials has become recognized as valid education research. This recognition came to the fore when such research was standardized in the government’s No Child Left Behind Act, “presumably to insure research that yields
Likewise, Connelly and Clandinin (2000) state, “retelling…is to offer possibilities for reliving, for new direction, and new ways of doing things” (p.189). And because, in large part, teachers’ knowledge of teaching comes from their practice in the classrooms, stories provide a way to access that knowledge.

Narratives Approach in Context

In the discourse of qualitative research, Rabinow and Sullivan (1979/1987) question the notion of standardization in the social sciences. In its place, they state that, “There is not going to be an age of paradigm in the social sciences. We contend that the failure to achieve paradigm take off is not merely the result of methodological immaturity, but reflects something fundamental about the human world” (as cited in Lyons, 2007, p.610). Likewise, Reissman (2008) dismisses the notion of a paradigm with “standards or criteria” in qualitative research and “warn students away from the ‘paradigm warfare’” (p.185).

In a similar vein, but in the context of narrative research, in an interview with Elliot Mishler, Clandinin and Murphy (2007) highlight Mishler’s emphasis on the fluidity and situational circumstances:

Elliot notes that we cannot police the boundaries of narrative inquiry. For him, the field of narrative inquiry will be defined from within the different communities of narrative inquirers with researchers picking up on each others’ work that helps them address issues salient to their own research problems. We can learn from various alternative approaches, picking up and applying what seems appropriate to what each of us is attending to. (p.636)

The narrative, then, becomes defined from within the inquiry. Thus, Rabinow and Sullivan (1979/1987) suggest “a return to the human world with all its lack of clarity, its alienation, and its depth, rather than continuing the search for a formal deductive paradigm of the social sciences.” Instead of searching for “universals or laws,” Rabinow and Sullivan urge researchers in social sciences to “explore context and world” (as cited in Lyons 2007, p.611). By exploring various backgrounds, situations, and the world, we are examining the stories embedded within these contexts. Communication of such stories takes place through narratives.

Narratives Approach in Education

Consequently, Connelly and Clandinin (2000) argue that narrative inquiry is the study of the ways humans experience the world: “If we understand the world narratively, as we do, then it makes sense to study the world narratively…[experience] is what we study and narrative thinking is a key form of experience and a key way of writing and thinking about it (p.17). Likewise, Carter (1993) uses stories as a “mode of learning that captures… the richness and the nuances of meaning in human affairs (…) The richness and nuances cannot be expressed in definitions, statements of fact, or abstract propositions. It can only be demonstrated or evoked through story” (p.6). In the context of school settings, the teachers play an influential role, the position and responsibility they carry on, to education and student learning and growth. Therefore, the teachers’ experiences and perspectives are rich data with meaning to investigate (Cortazzi, 1993, p.10). Literature highlights the importance of allowing space for teachers to share their experience and their knowledge. By providing opportunities for teachers to share their stories, possibilities for new insight and understandings can emerge. Likewise, Connelly and Clandinin (2000) state, “retelling…is to offer possibilities for reliving, for new direction, and new ways of doing things” (p.189). And because, in large part, teachers’ knowledge of teaching comes from their practice in the classrooms, stories provide a way to access that knowledge.
According to Cortazzi (1993), “we do not know much about how they [teachers] come to learn. Yet what teachers know and learn is clearly crucial to our understanding of educational processes and how children may be taught” (p.8). Similarly, Makiguchi (1989) states that research must begin from the teachers’ experience. Thus, I argue that what Soka teachers' know is important to our potential examination of how students may be taught Soka education.

Teachers develop their knowledge from personal and professional experiences which are “event-structured” (Doyle, 1990, as cited in Cortazzi, p.8). The knowledge teachers have about certain instructions or approaches is most likely connected to a particular experience that they had in the classroom. In other words, for many teachers, their understanding of teaching (or teacher knowledge) is developed through their own observations of their teachers when they were students (Cortazzi, 1993). Taking this concept into the discourse of Soka education research, I argue that former Soka graduates who are currently teaching, with the intent to be Soka educators, have considerable knowledge (about what Soka education means) that was developed when they were students.

Doyle, thus, argues that teachers’ knowledge is “case knowledge” (p.8) while Connelly and Clandinin (1988) may call it “personal practical knowledge” (as sited in Cortazzi, 1993, p 7). In other words, through stories we can examine how teachers construct knowledge of their lived experience. Thus, “we cannot study experience narratively…without understanding experience as a storied phenomenon” (Clandinin, Murphy, Huber, & Orr, 2010, p. 82). Squire (2008) calls such “stories of experience” the experience-centered narrative approach. She suggests that experience-centered narratives are sequential and meaningful, a means of human sense-making, “re-present” and reconstruct experience, and, finally, are transformative (p. 42).

Teachers' biographies are notably recognized for making aware the connection between teachers’ previous school experiences as a student and their current teaching practice in the classrooms. Thus, putting this literature in the context of my research topic, Soka teachers’ knowledge and values of the Soka philosophy can be explored from their personal experiences. By examining case studies of teachers’ stories, both from their experiences as students and as teachers, I suggest that researchers can develop an understanding of how some educators view Soka education. The narrative approach, therefore, can examine the culture and meaning of Soka education being both defined and applied. Likewise, Lyons (2002) cites Bruner (1984) to stress that “Narrative promises more than action vignettes… narrative operates by constructing two landscapes simultaneously, two planes, one of action and one of consciousness” (p.16). Therefore, through teachers’ stories, we can explore how they “know, think, or feel” (Bruner, 1984, as cited in Lyons, p.614). From this theoretical framework, I develop the narrative biographical vignettes.

**Introduction to Narrative Biographical Vignette**

Narrative research comes in various forms and methods. To some, narrative methods are introduced in structures and for others, like Mishler (Clandinin & Murphy, 2007), they might depend on the field or type of research that the researcher is pursuing. For this particular research, I take Mishler’s approach to narrative and select methods from other narrative works, which seem most appropriate for this research, to help address my research questions.

To organize the narrative styles, Reissman (2008) identifies from the numerous literatures of narrative approaches four categories including: thematic, structural, performance, and visual. Here, I will focus on the thematic and structural analysis approach Reissman introduces. According to Reissman, thematic analysis directs attention entirely to the content of the narrative. For this reason, the focus is on what has been said rather than the process of how it was shared. Thus, “There is minimal focus on how a narrative is spoken (or written), on structures of speech a narrator selects, audience (real and imagined), the local context that generated the narrative, or complexities of transcription.” (p.54). In thematic analyses, data is collected through

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1 Here, I would like to point out that I will be calling the Soka graduates who became teachers as Soka teachers to make a distinction between the literature that speaks on teachers and teachers who are specifically my research participants who have been educated through Soka education. Thus, I would like to strongly stress that these teachers are not the official Soka teachers who teach at the Soka institutions. They are graduates of the Soka institution who are currently teaching outside and in the public system of Japan.
various methods including interviews, observations, written documents, and group conversations. The forms of narrative presentation can be diverse to fit the purpose of the narrative; for interview methods, presentation is in a form of narrative biography or using segments of interview texts.

Structural analysis, on the other hand, directs its attention from “exclusive focus on a narrator’s experience to the narrative itself…structural analyses are concerned with content, but attention to narrative form adds insights beyond what can be learned from referential meanings alone” (Reissman, 2008, p.77). That is, language formation and expressions uniquely shared by the narrator are examined. Although Reissman assigns characteristics to the various narrative approaches, like Mishler (Clandinin & Murphy, 2007), Reissman is mindful of the complexities in narratives and encourages researchers to cross boundaries when appropriate, not bound by one approach. Although most of the narrative in this research is in the form of a thematic analysis, structural analysis is used at times when language formation, certain facial expressions, or situational context seems significant to address.

Similar with Reissman’s notion of structural analysis, many approaches to narrative in fields of education focus on the process of how teachers share their experiences. Cortazzi (1993) states that, “In education, the aim is to make sense of teachers’ thoughts, actions, experience and attitudes by studying the formation of their professional consciousness through their experience” (p.14). In short, the inquiry includes the development of a narrative. Furthermore, Cortazzi draws attention to the multiple narrative planes within the interview that are important to examine including: the organic experience when first lived; the present experience of interpretation and development of the story through sharing with the researcher; and lastly, the experience then formed into a story by the researcher and participant. Cortazzi calls this final narrative which represents the culminating work of both researcher and participant the collaborative biography.

In order to develop biographies that depict teachers’ knowledge, Cortazzi (1993) highlights four necessary questions to be explored and shared by the teacher:

The first question, ‘What is the nature of my working reality?’, asks teachers to depict their current working environment. The second question, ‘How do I think and act in that context?’, asks teachers to describe their current pedagogy and curriculum in use. The third, ‘How, through my worklife and personal history, did I come to be that way?’ encourages teachers to record reflections on their personal and professional lives, related to their present professional thought and action. The fourth, ‘How do I wish to become in my professional future?’ asks them to project their narrative forwards to the future? (p.15)

I use these questions as a guideline for my research to develop my narrative biographical-vignettes. Specifically, I ask teachers to explore the following: 1) what are my memorable moments at the Soka school that describe my Soka education experience? 2) how would I describe my current philosophy of education, and how would I define Soka education? 3) what is my story of how I decided to become an educator? and, 4) what are some examples of teaching moments that I experienced recently as a teacher?

Examining Validity

The two important validity factors to address when examining validity claims in narratives are: 1) the story shared by the narrator to the researcher and, 2) the story, then, reconstructed by the researcher (Reissman, 2008).

In narrative research, the meaning of validity is not necessarily relative to the term that many evidence-based researchers might use. Evidence-based research tends to have “fixed criteria for reliability, validity, and ethics” and “are not suitable for evaluating narrative projects” (Reissman, p.185). Rather, the focus of the research allows attention to be given more towards examining the meaning being developed by the narrators than the factual truths of the stories.

Generalizability, in the same sense, is also reconceptualized to see how particular case studies can be of value to the research community. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997, as cited in Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis) finds that “as one moves closer to the unique characteristics of a person or a place, one discovers the universal” and further states that “the scientist and the artist are both claiming that in the particular resides the general” (p.4).
Similarly, Reissman (2008) notes Flyvbjerg (2004, as cited in Resissman) and suggests counter views for generalizability. She states that case-studies can deepen and produce “context-dependent knowledge,” examine details that other research might see as insignificant, contribute to important growth in “scientific knowledge,” and that extreme cases can bring light and perspective to ordinary cases (p.194).

My purpose in writing this paper is not to define Soka education or to make any generalizations about it. Instead, I aim to use this paper to highlight the effect that Soka education can have on these educators and, more importantly, how these individuals have applied Soka education in their own teaching practices. According to Polkinghorne (1995), “The power of a storied outcome is derived from its presentation of a distinctive individual, in a unique situation, dealing with issues in a personal manner” (p. 18). Likewise, this qualitative research eschews focusing on certain data to make a general statement by instead highlighting particular individuals and their experiences. Thus, by examining such individual cases, the researcher can portray what might be the effects of Soka education. As Carter (1993) argues, “Whatever story we select a particular conception of teaching,” (p. 10) and, in this case, I suggest that individual case stories or narrative biographical vignettes can convey notions of Soka education. In the next section I introduce an example of a narrative biographical vignette.

**Narrative Biographical Vignette – Story of Kyoko**

*Kyoko’s past experience*

Kyoko attended the Soka schools from elementary to graduate school, and as a young middle school student, she was determined to pursue a career in teaching. As a student of Soka, Kyoko was constantly showered with words of encouragement; her Soka teachers instilled confidence that nurtured her to feel unique, capable, and important. For Kyoko, this teaching philosophy was the heart of Soka education. As a young student, she felt the founder Daisaku Ikeda was teaching the Soka students that every life is irreplaceable. Regardless of their academic performance, at Soka, she learned that each student has his or her own unique possibilities.

For Kyoko, her most memorable moment of Soka education was with her favorite teacher, Shiraishi-sensei, who best exemplifies Kyoko’s understanding of what teaching embodies. A couple of years ago, after working in a company for a few years, she came across a job opportunity in the educational sector and decided to apply without much thought. To Kyoko’s surprise, a high school in Saitama offered her a position. Although teaching was her future career goal, she was unsure whether she was equipped to teach high school students. After calling her elementary school teacher, Shiraishi-sensei, to seek guidance, Kyoko went to her former school to meet with her. When Kyoko told her the situation, Shiraishi-sensei kept reassuring her:

Her [Shiraishi-sensei’s] response was “Kyo-chan, I know you can do it!” Although at first I couldn’t respond positively… in the end, she again spoke assertively that I can do it. I still remember her words, her soft and gentle voice, and her warm smile. They remain deeply in my heart. I replied with determination, “Okay, I will try.” And when I was leaving, she saw me off from the entrance of the school until I passed through the school gates. The distance between the entrance and the gates must have been at least twenty meters but she stood and sent me off the whole time with her warm smile. When I would glance back at her, she was smiling and just stood seeing me off until she could not see me anymore.

Kyoko first lacked the courage and confidence and doubted her own potential. She could not believe in herself to take such an important responsibility. Therefore, her meeting with Shiraishi-sensei was significant. Through meeting with her former teacher who believed in her, she built the confidence to challenge and move forward in this career path. As she was revisiting her moment with Shirashi-sensei, she described her impression of her teacher with a “soft and gentle” voice almost as if to mirror and echo what she had experienced. It was not just

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2 Sensei (先生) means teacher in Japanese. The former way to call a teacher is sensei or adding their last name before sensei and calling them —sensei.

3 Kyo-chan is a nickname. In Japanese, —chan is a way to call younger people with affection. Many times an older person will use this language to a younger person whom they know well.
words of reassurance but it was enacted by Shiraishi-sensei’s presence. As Kyoko was leaving the school grounds, she had her back to Shiraishi-sensei as she walked towards the gates of the school. Although Kyoko did not visually know her teacher was smiling, just by the brief moment of glancing back and seeing her teacher still standing and seeing her off, she knew her teacher had been smiling the whole time. For Kyoko, this action portrayed the compassionate teacher who sincerely believed and cared for her students; Shiraishi-sensei depicted how Kyoko believes teachers should behave and act. In other words, from this teacher, Kyoko develops her own understanding about teaching - one that is relationship-based, showing a way of being with one another.

*Kyoko’s present experience – Encouragement passed down*

After graduating college, Kyoko decided to teach at the high school level. In order to teach high school students, she felt it was important to have work experience in the real world; she wanted to know for what kind of society she would prepare her students. Thus, she worked at a certain company as an office-lady for a few years and, then, decided to take the teaching exam. She was immediately offered a job to teach high school in Saitama, where she has been teaching for three years.

Kyoko believes the challenge for teachers is how much teachers can believe in the latent potential of each life. Through the interaction she has had with her students, she feels many students are struggling with the lack of confidence. She constantly hears her students repeating the words, “I’m not” or “I can’t.” Therefore, Kyoko believes her job is to encourage and to empower those youth to never give up so that they can say “I can do it, I am going to make my own flower bloom. Even if the time [season] is not right, I will blossom my own flower no matter what.” For Kyoko, the pillar of Soka is encouragement and assistance to learners in uncovering their potential; because what prompts each student to feel confident or encouraged is different according to their personality and situation, Kyoko makes effort to encourage each student in relation to their circumstance.

As a high school teacher, Kyoko is confronted with many current students who lack the willingness to work hard and study. In Japan, high school seniors have to pass one of the three entrance-exams to be accepted into the college of their choice. While the other two exams focus on academic proficiency, the first exam is an interview. For many of Kyoko’s students, this first exam seemed the easiest. But many were rejected and Kyoko supposed this was a result of her students’ poor work ethic. She believed their carefree attitudes were most likely reflected during the interview:

One day during my ethics class, there was a female student who burst into tears and abruptly ran out of the classroom to the girls’ bathroom. It was during class and very sudden, so I was perplexed and not sure what had happened. I immediately went to the girl’s bathroom and asked her what happened. It turns out that she had just learned about her rejection notice through a cellular-phone text-message. She thought she was not going to get accepted to any college. I said to her, “This is the perfect opportunity for you. If you run away from this, you will continue to run away from your life. I am confident that you can do this.” From the bottom of my heart and life, I shared and encouraged her to overcome this no matter what. Until that moment, she had never come to talk to me. Even in class, she was sleeping or apathetic to learning; however, through this event, she started to seek me out and talk to me. And when there is something, she would always seek me and ask me to share some good guidance.

Although this incident happened during the middle of class, Kyoko chose to go after her student rather than to ignore her and continue teaching. She mirrored her own teacher’s (Shiraishi-sensei’s) approach when she encouraged her student by saying, “You can do this!” These were the same words Shiraishi-sensei had once given to her. Kyoko’s encouragement and compassion reached this student; this was evident from the change in behavior prior to and preceding the incident. Kyoko exhibited her values of Soka education by acting out what she had learned.

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4 Terminology used in Japan for women who work in offices.
Conclusion

In this paper, I introduce the narrative biographical vignette to present how the narrative approach can provide insight into new perspectives about Soka education that most likely could not otherwise be found in research focused on quantitative or experimental data alone. Kyoko’s story illustrates the relationship between teacher and student that becomes the platform for her knowledge about what a teacher should be like. The relationship between mentor and disciple, the teacher student relationship, is a common concept shared by many students of Soka education. Notably, the founder of the Soka schools, Daisaku Ikeda, often introduces this language in his narratives:

Soka education (…) is based on a solid (…) universal view. If I were to express this in a single phrase, it would be the spirit of shared commitment between teacher and learner, mentor and disciple. Just as a diamond can only be polished by another diamond, it is only through intense human interaction engaging the entire personality that people can forge themselves, raising themselves up to ever greater heights. It is the relationship between teacher and learner, between mentor and disciple that makes this possible. (p. 181)

Ikeda’s narrative is reflected in the relationship between Shiraishi-sensei and Kyoko, and furthermore, between Kyoko and her student. From her experience as a student and as a teacher, not only does she observe this notion of teacher-student relationship, but she also models this in her behavior, and also in her language, as she encourages her student. From this narrative biographical vignette, readers can see how the process in Kyoko’s development and how she practices teaching today is deeply shaped by her narrative.

Narrative method helped discover, examine, and establish the unique connections of the two separate events shared by Kyoko. Without the detailed account of Kyoko’s interaction with Shiraishi-sensei, we would not have made the rich connections between the encouragement Kyoko received as a student and the encouragement she then shared with her student. As Carter (1993) argues, narrative is a mode of learning which provides rich and deep meanings. Likewise, Cortazzi (1993)’s notion of the connection between the teachers’ previous experiences as students and their current experience of teaching practice can be examined through Kyoko’s narrative biographical vignette. Her experience with Shiraishi-sensei was the foundation in developing her understanding of Soka education. From Kyoko’s narrative, we can also recognize the ways in which qualitative research can challenge and explore fields that quantitative methods cannot. Narrative approach to research, from this perspective, provides alternative ways to understand and, further develop meaning to Soka education research. Therefore, as interest in the field of Soka education increases, both the quantitative and qualitative research will become necessary methods for the further growth of this scholarship.
References


Soka Education Research in China: Possible Contributions of Soka Education to Educational Reformation in China

Nozomi Inukai

Class of 2011

研究池田先生的思想尤其是和平思想，把和平观念传播到世界的每一个角落，播散到每一个人的心中，建设一个正义，和平，和谐的世界是我们一致的愿望。
- 华中师范大学校长 马敏

It is our common wish to establish a just, peaceful, and harmonious world by studying Mr. Ikeda's philosophy, especially philosophy on peace, and spreading it to every corner of the world and in every person's heart.
– Huazhong Normal University President Ma Min

With globalization and rapid modernization, education in the People's Republic of China is facing many problems similar to other industrialized nations. Because the utmost emphasis is placed on economic growth, education has become a tool for training students for specific jobs. The focus of education has also

1 All the non-English quotations from here on are translated by Nozomi Inukai.
shifted from fostering character to transferring massive amounts of knowledge. These problems in education have extended to problems in the larger society where there is little harmony between people and nature, among people, and within a person. Thus, people started to realize that in order to restore such harmony in society, there needed to be an educational reformation. Many people are searching for a guiding philosophy for such a reformation, and a growing number of Chinese scholars are turning to Daisaku Ikeda’s educational philosophy, often known as Soka, or value-creating, education. Soka education is an educational philosophy that was first proposed by Japanese educator Tsunesaburo Makiguchi in 1930, and has been developed by Josei Toda and Daisaku Ikeda. It is considered to be a branch of progressive or humanistic education. However, compared to the philosophy of other progressive educators such as John Dewey, Paulo Freire, and Maria Montessori, Soka education has not yet been studied or applied to school curriculums much. Thus, Soka education might be able to greatly contribute to the establishment of a new educational system.

Although Soka education, especially Ikeda’s philosophy, is not yet widely researched in Western academia, it is a fast-growing research topic in China and Taiwan. The first Daisaku Ikeda research organization was established at Beijing University in 2001. In the past decade, the number of Ikeda research organizations in mainland China and Taiwan together has grown to almost thirty, many of which are established in teacher-training universities (shifan daxue). The Ikeda researchers include both professors and doctorate students. Among the more than two hundred research papers published, one fifth are dedicated to educational philosophy (Takahashi, 2008). However, comprehensive research on the ideas produced by these Chinese scholars is yet to be conducted. Therefore, the present study is the first effort to synthesize the published works on Ikeda’s educational philosophy by Chinese scholars.

This study will be a combination of archival research and open-ended questionnaires conducted through e-mail. The study attempts to answer the motivation for the Chinese scholars to research Ikeda’s educational philosophy, their interpretation of Soka education, their perspectives on modern Chinese education, and the significance of their research. Through such comprehensive research, I hope to expand Soka education research in the English-language academia and to analyze the possible contribution of Soka education to educational reformation in China. This new field of research can contribute to a better understanding of Soka education and to an educational reformation on a global scale.

**Literature Review**

*Education in China*

Since the end of the Cultural Revolution, modern Chinese educational philosophy has become a combination of Confucian tradition, western philosophies, and Marxist ideas (Zhu & Zhang, 2008; Morris et al., 1997; Jin & Dan, 2004). According to Jin and Dan (2004), the core of Chinese philosophy of education is the Confucian idea of guiding humanity toward goodness and benevolence. Modern Chinese education is also greatly influenced by Western philosophies such as American pragmatism and Kantism (Zhu & Zhang, 2008; Jin & Dan, 2004). Since the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949 to the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, China was under Mao Zedong’s leadership, and education served as a means to construct a socialist nation by reinforcing the overall focus of the Communist Party (Sun, 2008). During this period, Marxist theory had a strong influence on Chinese education. The main characteristics of Marxist ideology are the revolutionary spirit to improve the society and the “moral education that indoctrinated a collectivist moral code” (Jin & Dan, 2004, p.577).

After Mao’s death, Deng Xiaoping applied education to meet the needs of inadequately trained workforces for economic growth (Sun, 2008). However, realizing the negative impacts of economic-centered strategies and policies, Hu Jintao, the current President of China, addressed the needs of another educational reform in which people’s needs are recognized as the core and root. According to Tang (2007), establishing a “socialist harmonious society” has become the nation’s goal. Led by Hu Jintao, China’s educational policy is transitioning toward the aim of creating “harmonious society.” According to Xinhuashe (2010), the Chinese government launched a 10-year educational reformation and development plan, which stated that the main

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2 社会主义和谐社会 in Chinese

3 国家中长期教育改革和发展规划纲要（2010-2020）is the official title of the document
focus of education is to establish “modernized socialism,” to serve the people, and to holistically cultivate students’ morality, intelligence, bodies, and artistic sense.

Based on the change in educational policies, schools are starting to put reformation into practice. The educational reformation in China can be divided into four parts: transnational education, classroom reformation, school evaluation, and decentralization. Since the Open-Up policy in the 1980s, transnational higher education in China is growing rapidly. As educational exchange increases, cultural exchanges are also growing (Yang, 2008). The second component is classroom reformation. Beginning in 1994, the New Basic Education Project has focused on teacher development, value promotion, and motivation internalization (Lan, 2007). In order to create a better learning environment for students, teachers must not transmit knowledge; rather, they should guide students to create value in their own lives through interactive processes (Lan, 2007). Furthermore, the students’ motivation should not come from external standards but should be cultivated within by making connections between study materials and their own lives (Lan, 2007). The third reformation movement is the change in school evaluation method. In China, school evaluation used to solely rely on students’ two exam scores, one after completing middle school and the other after high school (Wen et al., 2006). However, school evaluation criterion is shifting from the exam result itself to students’ progress during a certain period (Wen et al., 2006; Lan, 2007). The final aspect of educational reformation in China is the decentralization of authority. Beginning recently, the central government is promoting decentralization by either giving authority to local governments or allowing more school autonomy (Ma W., 2007; Lan, 2007). All these reforms require not only a change in policy but, more importantly, a new philosophy to sustain and further promote such changes.

Soka education

Soka education might serve as such a philosophical foundation for educational reformation in China. Soka education originates from one Japanese educator, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi. Makiguchi was born in 1871, and became an elementary school teacher after graduating from Sapporo Normal University in 1893. He not only excelled in teaching classes, especially geography, but also cherished and respected each student. There is an anecdote that Makiguchi prepared hot water for students to warm their hands when they come to school in snow. Makiguchi also is said to have once carried a student on his back and took the student home in the snow. His care for students continued when he became elementary school principal at various schools in Tokyo. There is another anecdote that Makiguchi prepared box lunches out of his own pocket for poor students who could not bring lunch to school. Moreover, he left those lunches in the janitor’s room for students to take freely so that they would not feel ashamed. Makiguchi was working during the time leading to the height of WWII, a time when the country’s militaristic government forced citizens to practice Shintoism, revere the emperor as a god, and prioritize the nation’s welfare before individual life. Any type of education or practice that deviated from these principles was strictly punished. In contrast, Makiguchi believed that education should cultivate individuals to reveal their fullest potential and to attain happiness through nurturing wisdom, without having to become a mere pawn for the country. From his deep belief in humanistic education, Makiguchi decided to publish his notes on education that he had been compiling throughout his thirty-plus year of teaching career. In 1929, Josei Toda, Makiguchi’s disciple who had dedicated his life to realizing Makiguchi’s educational dreams, came up with the word “Soka education” (“value-creating education” in Japanese) to best represent Makiguchi’s educational ideas. The following year, the first volume of Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei, Makiguchi’s work on education, was published.

In Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei, Makiguchi states that “the realization of happiness is the primary purpose of education” (1989, p.17). However, in Makiguchi’s definition, happiness is not mere pleasure, an accumulation of wealth, or social status; rather, he explains as follows: “True happiness comes only through sharing in the trials and successes of other persons and of our community. Hence it is essential that any true conception of happiness contain the promise of full commitment to the life of the society” (1989, p.24-25). He also asserts that “[t]he purpose of education is to enable children to become responsible, healthy cells in the social organism, to contribute to the happiness of the society, and, by so doing, to find meaning, purpose, and happiness in their own individual lives” (1989, p.22). As we can see from these statements, the underlying theme in Makiguchi’s educational thought is the interconnectedness of all life. How, then, can we lead a happy life as defined by Makiguchi? He states, “人生は畢竟価値の追求である。その価値の獲得実現の理想的
Although Makiguchi wanted to put his pedagogy into practice by establishing his own school, he could not accomplish that dream while he was alive. Because his educational thoughts as well as religious beliefs were against the militaristic government of Japan, Makiguchi and his disciple Toda were both arrested. Makiguchi died in prison in 1944, but Toda came out of prison in 1945 and determined to carry on Makiguchi’s dream of establishing a Soka school. In 1947, Toda met a youth named Daisaku Ikeda who later became his disciple and realized Makiguchi’s dream of building a school to practice value-creating education. Ikeda has established educational institutions from kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, and junior colleges to universities and graduate schools around the world.

Moreover, Ikeda has developed Makiguchi’s idea on Soka education in the contemporary context. Ikeda (2001) states, “The ultimate goal of Soka, or value-creating, education is to foster people of character who continuously strive for the greatest good – that of peace – who are committed to protecting the sanctity of life and who are capable of creating value under even the most difficult circumstances” (p.115). Ikeda has repeatedly addressed that the purpose of education and the mission of those who have received education is to serve humanity. Ikeda defines those who create value on a global scale as global citizens and declares the following three points as essential elements of global citizens:

- The wisdom to perceive 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 (2001, p.101)

Ikeda (2005) also points out that the respect for cultural difference is one of the most important qualities education should cultivate in students. This becomes especially important in today’s globalized world and diverse society. Another theme central to Ikeda’s philosophy is “human revolution,” a fundamental, positive inner transformation in our own and others’ lives as a way to transform society (Ikeda, 2005). Ikeda (2001) also states, “Creativeness means pushing open the heavy door to life…opening the door to your own life is more difficult than opening the doors to the mysteries of the universe” (p.174). Therefore, it can be said that Ikeda’s main aim of Soka education is to foster global citizens who can contribute to world peace and others’ happiness by going through their own inner transformation.

To this day, both Makiguchi and Ikeda’s educational ideas remain philosophical in nature and there is not yet an established Soka teaching methodology. However, an educational program called Makiguchi Project in Action in Brazil made the first effort to systematically implement Makiguchi’s value-creating education in elementary school classrooms. This project is based on the collaboration of school, home, and society throughout the process, from planning to actual classroom teaching and the application of what students have learned in class (Akashi & Nakano, 2000) (see figure 1). This clearly reflects Makiguchi’s idea that not only the school but also the home and society play a crucial role in educating children. Furthermore, the new curriculum is designed so that students can take an active role in their learning while making connections between study and their actual lives (Akashi & Nakano, 2000; Silva, 2000). All the classes at the Makiguchi Project, such as gardening, flower arrangement, and theater, start from exploration of the surrounding environment, proceed to discovery through study, and are completed by value-creation, or the application of learning to daily activities (Akashi & Nakano, 2000) (see figure 2). This process from exploration to discovery leading to creation involves the process of induction from daily life, recognition, evaluation, value creation, and deduction to other activities, which is what Makiguchi laid out in his Soka, or value-creating, pedagogy. The study by Silva (2000) shows that
the Makiguchi Project in Action produced many positive outcomes in students, such as positive behavioral changes, a decrease in absenteeism, an improvement in study habits, and an increase in constructive interaction with other students and instructors.

Besides this study on the practical application off Makiguchi’s educational ideas, there are many Makiguchi scholars researching Makiguchi’s Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei, or The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy. They include Dayle Bethel, Jason Goulah, and Andrew Gebert from the U.S., Shoji Saito, Kazunori Kumagaya, Koichi Murao, and Atsushi Furukawa from Japan, and Namrata Sharma from India, to name a few. Their research includes various topics such as Makiguchi’s life, his educational ideas, development of Makiguchi’s thoughts through his various publications, and comparison with other philosophers such as Emile Durkheim, John Dewey, and Mahatma Gandhi. All of these contribute significantly to a better understanding of Soka education.

Although there is a substantial amount of research on Makiguchi, not much research exists on Daisaku Ikeda’s philosophy, especially in English-language academia. To my knowledge, Peace, Value, and Wisdom: The Educational Philosophy of Daisaku Ikeda by George David Miller is the only book comprehensively presenting Ikeda’s educational philosophy. This might be due to the fact that Ikeda is still alive and continues to publish his ideas by himself. The Soka Education Research Institute, which was developed from the former Soka Education Research Center in 2006 at Soka University of Japan, also initially started with research on Makiguchi and Toda, and only recently started to focus more on Ikeda. They regard Ikeda research as a crucial element in fully understanding Soka education. Obelleiro (2011) also wrote that Makiguchi research should be supplemented by the study of the Soka education movement and that “considering that Makiguchi’s ideas developed beyond what we find in his published works, it is plausible that Toda’s and Ikeda’s interpretations of Makiguchi’s philosophy represent an accurate expression of Makiguchi’s mature philosophy” (p.10). Although Ikeda research has been started in India and Argentina, China and Taiwan are currently the leading figures in this field of research.

Ikeda Research in China

There are twenty-eight Ikeda research organizations in China and Taiwan, collectively, as of December 2009 (see table 1 for the full list). These scholars hold annual International Academic Symposium on Daisaku Ikeda’s Philosophy, with 2010 being the sixth year. The academic papers presented at those symposiums are later published as books or in university journals. This indicates that a substantial amount of Ikeda research has been conducted in China and Taiwan. If the publications related to Ikeda’s educational philosophy were assessed, they could significantly contribute to a better understanding of Soka education. However, many of the research papers are not translated from the original Chinese language, making them less accessible to potential Ikeda researchers in the world.

Furthermore, to this day, Tsuyoshi Takahashi, a professor at Soka University of Japan, is the only person following the Ikeda research conducted in China. He has been writing articles regarding the newly established Daisaku Ikeda research organizations throughout China and Taiwan and the annual Ikeda symposiums held jointly by the Daisaku Ikeda Research Institutes and Soka University of Japan. They include the primary documents indicating the purpose of establishing Daisaku Ikeda research organizations as well as the titles of the academic papers presented at the symposiums. These articles written by Takahashi are contained in the annual Soka Education journals published by Soka education Research Institute at Soka University of Japan. However, these articles are more like reports and not academic analyses of the Ikeda research in China. In 2008, Takahashi also published a book titled Chongokun no Sekigun ga Mita Ikeda Daiisaku – Sono Ningenkan Heiwakan, which contains some organized information on Ikeda Research in China, such as approximately what percentage of the published research on Ikeda’s philosophy is on education. Takahashi (2008) also presents his opinion that Ikeda research is rapidly growing in China because of Ikeda’s contribution to the China-Japan relationship and the popularity of the book Zhanwan Ershiyi Shi ji, the dialogue between Ikeda and British historian Arnold Toynbee. However, the majority of the book is dedicated to presenting some of the original research papers in Japanese translation. Therefore, analyzing the research on Soka education conducted by Chinese scholars is a completely new field of research, and there is not yet literature on this topic.

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1池田大作思想国际学术研讨会 in Chinese
Methods

As shown in the literature review, there is no study commenting on the possible influences of Soka education research in China or making a direct connection between Chinese education and Soka education. Therefore, in order to fully understand the potential impact of Soka education research in China, this research combined archival research and open-ended questionnaires conducted online. Archival research was comprised of two parts. One was the documents related to the establishment of Daisaku Ikeda Research Institutes. This was intended to reveal what made these Chinese scholars start researching Ikeda’s philosophy and their focused field of study. The other part of archival research was an analysis of the published works by Chinese scholars on Ikeda’s educational philosophy. From the published works, themes on their interpretation of Soka education, their perspectives on the problems of modern Chinese education, and the significance of Ikeda’s educational philosophy in Chinese educational reformation were extracted.

The results from archival research were cross-checked with direct correspondences with Chinese scholars. The participants were professors and doctorate students who have published an academic paper on Ikeda’s educational philosophy. Among them, eleven people whose email address was either published in a book or possessed by Soka University Beijing Office were contacted via email. The email contained a brief explanation of the present study, informed consent, and a link to a survey on Angel software. The survey contained the following questions (originally presented to the researchers in Chinese): 1) How did you get to know Ikeda’s philosophy?; 2) Why did you start researching Ikeda’s philosophy, especially his educational philosophy?; 3) How do you think is Soka education?; 4) What is your perspective on current Chinese education?; 5) How Ikeda’s philosophy might contribute to the educational reformation in China?; and 6) What do you think is the significance of your research? Their names were attached to their responses in order to compare them with the published works.

Results

Motivation for Ikeda Research

In order to understand the significance of Ikeda research in China, it is crucial to understand the motivation for studying Ikeda’s philosophy. First of all, Daisaku Ikeda is well respected by these scholars. This is apparent from the descriptions they attribute to Ikeda in the published articles. Because all the articles selected for this study were related to Ikeda’s educational philosophy, most of them introduced him as an educator, or often a prominent educator. They regarded both Ikeda’s educational philosophy and educational practices as outstanding. Furthermore, most of the articles also included other descriptions such as religious leader, thinker, philosopher, social activist, peace activist, pacifist, international humanist, China-Japan envoy, cultural personage, photographer, writer, poet, and cultural scholar. This shows that Ikeda is respected from a multi-disciplinary perspective. It is also significant to note that some of the Chinese scholars regard Ikeda as a “scholar,” though he does not have a university degree. Among the three hundred honorary degrees Ikeda has received from academic institutions around the world, about one third are from universities in China. This signifies that Chinese scholars regard Ikeda’s philosophy very highly and academically. Furthermore, it is explicitly stated by Hunan Normal University that “多くの学者は、池田博士が宗教哲学者として備えている智慧と思想の深淵性は、世界宗教思想史上に顕著に出来ない学術的地位を有するに至ったに足る” “many scholars came to recognize that Dr. Ikeda, as a religious scholar, possesses profound wisdom and philosophy which have attained an academic status that cannot be neglected in the history of world’s religious philosophy” (Takahashi, 2008, p.164-165). This high level of respect makes it convincing that Chinese scholars view Ikeda’s philosophy as worth listening to and considering for implementation.

This can also be seen in personal interaction between Ikeda and one of the respondents Jia Huixuan, a professor at Beijing University and President of Beijing University’s Daisaku Ikeda Research Association. She encountered Ikeda in person when he visited China in 1974 for the first time. At that time, she was working at a China-Japan relationship association and was part of a group to welcome Ikeda. She also attended Ikeda’s lecture at Beijing University, visited Ikeda in Japan with many Chinese political leaders and scholars, and taught at Soka University of Japan for one year as an exchange professor. She thus had multiple personal exchanges.
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with Ikeda. She states that, through such experiences, she was deeply moved by Ikeda’s character and realized that his words are outstanding and inspiring. This was the initial reason why she became interested in studying Ikeda’s philosophy. When she read Ikeda’s writings, she realized the depth and breadth of Ikeda’s philosophy, and deepened her commitment to studying further and spreading Ikeda’s philosophy. She proposed to establish the Daisaku Ikeda Research Association at her alma mater Beijing University, and became the president of this first Ikeda research organization in China in 2001. In response to my e-mailed questions, she stated that “研究池田大作先生的思想初衷, 就是把他的好思想介绍给中国” “[her] original intention of researching Mr. Daisaku Ikeda’s philosophy was to introduce his great ideas to China.” She also wrote, “池田先生的教育思想对纠正中国教育的偏差很有启迪与参考, 是当今中国教育改革的重点, 对中国教育改革有参考意义” “Mr. Ikeda’s educational philosophy is very illuminating and can be referred to in correcting the mistakes of Chinese education, which is the focus of the current Chinese educational reformation. Therefore, Mr. Ikeda’s educational philosophy is worth consulting for Chinese educational reformation.” After studying Ikeda’s philosophy, it seems that she has even more respect for Ikeda and sees more potential contribution to educational reformation in China.

Besides the mere fact that Ikeda is well respected and worth listening to, there seems to be three major motivations for studying Ikeda’s philosophy: bettering the China-Japan relationship, promoting world peace and value creation, and improving education in China and around the world. For example, a document from Tourism Institute of Beijing Union University explained that “中日友好を推進し、世界平和の為に多大な尽力のあった池田大作博士の思想・行動を研究することを、設立目的としている” “the purpose of establishing [the research organization] is to research the philosophy and actions of Dr. Daisaku Ikeda who has greatly promoted China-Japan friendship and contributed to world peace” (Soka education Research Institute, 2007, p.47). A similar document from Wuhan University also stated that “中日友好を多年にわたり推進し、「国際的に著名な哲人」池田大作博士の思想・行動を研究する” “[we] study the philosophy and actions of world-renowned philosopher Mr. Daisaku Ikeda who has promoted China-Japan friendship for many years” (Soka education Research Institute, 2007, p.48). Some articles, for example by Ma (2007), pointed out Ikeda’s contribution to the betterment of the China-Japan relationship such as his “Proposal for the Normalization of Japan-China Relations” in 1968 when there were no diplomatic relations between China and Japan. Ever since, Ikeda has conducted dialogues with many Chinese leaders such as Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, and Hu Jintao. The Komei party, a Japanese political party founded by Ikeda also greatly contributed to the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and Japan. Furthermore, Ikeda has promoted various academic and cultural exchanges between the two countries. Thus, the document from Daisaku Ikeda Research Association at Anhui University stated that “中日学術文化交流を更に展開し、池田博士の進歩的思考理念を研究し紹介することを目指している” “[we] aim to further develop academic and cultural exchanges between China and Japan as well as to research and introduce Dr. Ikeda’s progressive philosophy” (Soka education Research Center, 2004, p.167). All the documents just mentioned signify the betterment of the China-Japan relationship.

Another motivation for Ikeda research found in research articles and documents is to promote world peace and value creation in all human beings. They acknowledge Ikeda’s consistent efforts in promoting peace, culture, and education through dialogues with the world’s prominent leaders, cultural exchanges, and university lectures. Moreover, they view Ikeda’s philosophy to live a meaningful, harmonious, and contributive life as inspiring. A document from Daisaku Ikeda Research Center at Chinese Culture University in Taiwan declared, “池田博士の世界的な崇高的な地位と貢献に鑑みて、その思想と行動を系統的に研究することは極めて有意義で、そうすることにより人類の共通の財産とし、世界平和を促進することが出来るのである” “Considering his globally noble status and contribution, it is significantly meaningful to systematically study Dr. Ikeda’s philosophy and actions. Through such research, we can make them into common wealth of all humanity and promote world peace” (Soka education Research Center, 2004, p.168). Daisaku Ikeda Peace Culture Research Institute at Liaoning University also declared:
This institute was established in order to explore the significant meaning of peace and development of China and the world and the advancement and perfection of human spirituality by revealing the deep cohesion in Dr. Ikeda’s philosophy related to world peace, view of life, education, and environmental protection, all of which are based on Buddhism and will lead the era. (Soka education Research Center, 2006, p.190)

The responses to the questionnaire from the Chinese scholars correspond with these purposes. Liu Jianrong, a professor at Hunan Normal University also stated his hope for the outcome of his own research as follows:

不仅能使池田先生的思想让更多人准确了解和理解，而且对社会的和平与文明进步是一种有价值的呼吁与揭示，能够让更多的人了解世界，促进世界和平与教育事业的健康发展。

[I hope my research] not only makes more people accurately understand Mr. Ikeda’s philosophy but also calls for something valuable for peace in society and advancement of civilization. I hope that it can make more people understand the world and promote world peace and the healthy development of education.

His response indicates that studying and spreading Ikeda’s philosophy will contribute to creating a better society. Whereas the above three were focused on world peace, some organizations put more emphasis on individuals living a valuable life. For example, the Zhou Enlai Daisaku Ikeda Research Association at Nankai University stated its aim as “周恩来総理、池田大作博士の思想や実践を共同で研究し、人生の視野を広げ、創造能力を向上させ、学業を重んじ協調的精神でもって、価値ある人生を創造する” “to broaden the perspective of life, to enhance the ability to innovate, and to create a valuable life which values study and collaborative spirit by researching the philosophy and actions of both Premier Zhou Enlai and Dr. Ikeda” (Soka education Research Institute, 2007, p.48). Thus, one of the major motivations for studying Ikeda’s philosophy is to promote world peace and the development of humanity as well as to broaden the perspectives on life and to live a value-creating life.

The third major motivation for studying Ikeda’s philosophy is specifically to improve education in China and the world. Shanghai Shanda University wrote their purpose of establishing the Daisaku Ikeda Educational Philosophy Research Center as “池田博士の教育思想と教育理念を研究する” “researching Dr. Ikeda’s educational ideas and educational philosophy” (Soka education Research Center, 2006, p.189). Guanxi Normal University also stated their purpose of establishing the Daisaku Ikeda Educational Philosophy Research Institute as “池田大作博士の教育思想と教育実践を研究し、更に中日両国の教育理念と実践の比較を探求し” “researching Dr. Daisaku Ikeda’s educational philosophy and educational practice, as well as comparing the educational philosophies and practices in China and Japan” (Soka education Research Institute, 2007, p.48). The purpose of research focused on education can also be seen in the responses to the questionnaire. One respondent, Chen Zhixing, a lecturer at Nanchang University, answered that the significance of his research on Ikeda’s educational philosophy is “吸引更多有识之士关心中国教育问题，为今后问题的解决提供一点的参考作用” “to attract more experts to be concerned about the problems of Chinese education and to provide some useful ideas in solving the problems hereafter.” Thus, many Chinese scholars seem to perceive Ikeda’s philosophy as worth implementing; in fact, they have conviction that it will contribute to solving some of the problems of modern China.

Themes in Ikeda’s Educational Philosophy

The Chinese scholars studying Ikeda’s educational aspects highly regard Ikeda’s actions, such as establishing schools and promoting educational exchanges, yet most of the research papers are focused on philosophy. The main theme they extract from Ikeda’s writings and speeches is that the purpose of education should match the purpose of life itself. Many articles (Ceng, 2004; Ceng, 2007; Ceng, 2008; Chen, X., 2007; Huang, 2008; Ji & Liu, 2008; Li & Xu, 2002; Yuan, 2008; Wang, 2005; Wang & Chen, 2008) quoted the following passage from Ikeda’s dialogue with Arnold Toynbee: “The most important questions in the field of education are the ones devoted to helping man see clearly what he ought to be and how he ought to live.”

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8 This quote is taken from the official English-language text.
Thus, education should provide answers to the questions of how humans should live our lives. Huang (2008) wrote that “教育的根本目的在于创造人生的价值和意义” “the fundamental purpose of education is to create the value and meaning of life” (p.142). Zhang (2008) also stated that a university “不只是知识，技术的传达与学习，还要成为学生思考人生意义，学习人生态度的场所” “is not only a place to transmit and learn knowledge and skills but also a place for students to reflect on the meaning of life and to learn the attitude toward life” (p.4). Both of these statements indicate that education must address the meaning of life and create value in students’ lives. In response to the questionnaire, Jia confirmed this view. She answered that “批判教育就是创造人生价值” “Soka education is to create the value of life.” Her interpretation of Soka education is in complete accordance with Makiguchi and Ikeda’s statements, as are indicated in the literature review.

In order for education to teach the meaning of life, education itself should be valued as an important aspect of humans, not a mere tool serving or fulfilling the aims of governments. In the past, education was often used by the government as a means to achieve its goals. For example, during WWII in Japan, education was used to instill Shintoism and patriotism in students. In most of the industrialized nations, including Japan and China, education has become a tool to promote further economic development. However, the status of education should be enhanced so that education in itself is regarded as a critical and fundamental aspect of human life. Inspired by Professor Robert Thurman of Columbia University, Ikeda wrote, “I would like to assert that what is most urgently needed is a paradigm shift from looking at education for society’s sake to building a society that serves the essential needs of education” (Ikeda, 2001, p.70). Many articles (Ceng, 2007; Ceng, 2008; Chen, X., 2007; Jia, 2004; Qi, 2008; Wang et al., 2006; Yuan, 2007; Zhang, 2008) quoted this passage to express their belief that such a paradigm shift from “education for society” to “society for education” is needed. This means that although education has often been used for fulfilling the goal of the nation or as a mere preparation for future career, it should instead teach a way of living and foster students as a whole, integrated human beings.

Then, how should humans live? What is the purpose of life? The next two themes, “harmonious education” and “moral education,” respond to these questions. First, humans should live in harmony with themselves, nature, and other human beings. The phrase “socialist harmonious society” first appeared in October 2004 at the Chinese Communist Party plenary conference. Since 2005, the current president of the People’s Republic of China, Hu Jintao, has repeatedly advocated for a “socialist harmonious society” (Tang, 2007). Many of the Ikeda researchers in China view Ikeda’s philosophy as being in line with this national goal of creating a “socialist harmonious society.” Ceng (2007), Ceng (2008), Chen, D. (2007), He (2007), Huang (2008), Qiao (2007), and Wang and Chen (2008) all used the word “harmonious education” to describe Ikeda’s belief in education cultivating harmonious relationships. First of all, education should cultivate students’ minds, bodies, and hearts in a harmonious condition, not only develop a fragmented part of a student. Huang (2008) wrote, “池田大作认为，教育之目的就是使学生身心得以全面发展，使学生，品德，智力，劳动和美感等方面都得到发展” “Daisaku Ikeda believes that the purpose of education is to holistically develop the students’ mind and body; it is to develop all aspects of students such as body, moral character, intelligence, work skill, and artistic sense” (p.142). In response to the questionnaire, Jia also answered that “中国一直提倡:‘德智体美全面发展’” “Chinese education has always encouraged well-rounded development of morality, intelligence, body, and artistic sense.” Furthermore, education should foster in students a sense of respect for nature and all life rather than a desire to conquer them. This kind of mindset should encourage a harmonious relationship between humans and nature as well as among humans. Qiang (2007) stated that “学校不仅要培养业务精良的有用之材，更要唤起人性，道德，培养推动社会和谐发展的人” “school should foster not only people with refined knowledge and skills but also those with moral character who can promote harmonious development of society” (p.302). The response from Tang Yanbo, an Ikeda researcher in Taiwan, also advocated an education for harmonious society. He stated, “品格教育目標方面，更期盼培養公民成為地球市民，不斷創造價值，進而為促進社會和諧，並維護世界和平盡一己之力” “the purpose of character education is to foster global citizens, continuously create value, promote harmonious society, and contribute to world peace.” Therefore, it can be said that many Ikeda scholars in China view creating a

7 为了社会的教育 in Chinese
8 为了教育的社会 in Chinese
9 和谐教育 in Chinese
10 社会主义和谐社会 in Chinese
“harmonious society” in which there is a harmonious relationship within an individual, between humans and nature, and among humans as a major purpose of life that needs to be encouraged by education.

Another term that appears frequently in the articles is “moral education.” Wang (2005), Wang et al. (2006), and Yuan (2008) wrote, “教育的目标应该超越功利色彩，最终为人生的价值服务，其根本目的是培养人的道德品质和道德能力11” “the purpose of education should transcend mere utilitarianism and ultimately serve the value of life. The fundamental purpose is to cultivate people’s moral quality and moral ultimate strength.” They all regard fostering morality in students as the fundamental aim of education. Although moral education might sound to be teaching rules of conduct, Wang et al. (2007) wrote that it is crucial to “从外化的，强制性的灌输走向内化的自觉性” “shift [moral education] from external forced instillation to internal initiation” (p.329). What, then, is internalization of moral education? Wang and Chen (2008) stated that “德育是教学生做人的学问” “moral education is to teach students how to be a human being” (p.286). Ji and Liu (2008) also defined moral education as “塑造，育人格” “molding and cultivating character” (p.291).

Similarly, Ceng and He (2008) wrote that “道德教育作为一种培养人格和塑造完美人格的过程的教育方式” “moral education is a process of cultivating and molding perfect character” (p.303). A response to the questionnaire by Jia resonates with this idea. She answered, “把教育作为完善人格的最好方法，换言之，突出了德育…即培养学生正确的人生观，价值观，培养具有良好的道德品质和正确的政治观念” “to make education the best way to perfect character is, in other words, moral education…which develops in students a correct concept of life and value, as well as fosters students with excellent moral character and correct concept of politics.” Therefore, it can be concluded that the aim of moral education is to foster people of character who have the right attitude toward the meaning of life. Thus, both “harmonious education” and “moral education” serve to develop students’ characters to live a meaningful life, and therefore, such an education is not a mere tool for the society but is valuable in itself.

The bases of “harmonious education” and “moral education” are the dignity of life and humanism. Wang et al. (2006) quoted the following statement from Ikeda’s dialogue with Toynbee: “the worth of man and the dignity of life meet the requirements for this common foundation”112 (Toynbee & Ikeda, 1989, p.317).

Many other scholars (Ceng, 2007; Qiao, 2007; Tang, 2007; Wang, 2005; Wang et al., 2006; Zhong, 2007) also viewed the dignity of life as the core or the foundation of Ikeda’s educational philosophy. Ceng (2008) also quoted Ikeda, “The dignity of life has no equivalent: nothing can be substituted for it”113 (Toynbee & Ikeda, 1989, p.367). Although people may value different things, Ikeda believes that there is nothing more valuable than life itself. Wang and Chen (2008) declared, “和谐德育必须超越现有的功利性，复归到其本真性，关注人的存在和发展，关心人的生命价值和尊严” “harmonious moral education must transcend the current utilitarianism and return to its real nature, which is to focus on the existence and development of humans and to care for the value and the dignity of human life” (p.280). Acknowledging and embracing the idea of the dignity of life is the basis of world peace and harmonious coexistence.

Another important element that serves as the the basis of “harmonious education” and “moral education” is “humanism” or “human-centeredness.”114 These two words together are the most used phrases in Ikeda research (Ceng, 2007; Ceng, 2008; Chen, D., 2007; Chen, X., 2007; He, 2007; Jia, 2004; Qi, 2008; Wang, 2005; Wang et al., 2006; Wang et al., 2007; Yuan, 2007; Zhang, 2008). Many of today’s problems are caused by devaluing humans and putting pursuit of materialistic pleasure, economic benefit, and social status at the center of their lives. This is the same in the educational field. Tang (2007) quoted the following statement by Ikeda: “It is my view…that the root of all of these problems is our collective failure to make the human being – human happiness – the consistent focus and goal in all fields of endeavor. The human being is the point to which we must return and from which we must depart anew”115 (Ikeda, 2001, p.99). The paradigm shift from “education for society” to “society for education” can be attained only if we can bring back the “human” at the center of focus, cherishing each individual as a unique and valuable person. This is the common understanding of “humanism” and “human-centeredness” among the Ikeda researchers in China. Based on this definition of

12 This quote is taken from the official English-language text.
13 This quote is taken from the official English-language text.
14 Either以人为本 or 人本主义 in Chinese
15 This quote is taken from the official English-language text.
“humanism” and “human-centeredness,” Liu and Zhang answered to the questionnaire that Soka education is “humanistic education.” Therefore, dignity of life and “humanism” or “human-centeredness” are the bases of “harmonious education” and “moral education,” whose primary emphasis is to fully develop each student as a human being.

If the goal of education is to fully develop one’s character, what specifically does that “character” mean? This has three components: human revolution, value creation, and global citizenship. The word “human revolution” is used in many articles (Ceng, 2007; Ceng, 2008; Chen, X., 2007; Ji & Liu, 2008; Jia, 2004; Qiao, 2007; Shi, 2007; Tang, 2007; Wang, 2005; Wang & Chen, 2008; Wang et al., 2006). Jia (2004) defined human revolution as follows: “教育就是自我变革，扬善抑恶，创造价值，有利社会。若以池田大作的话而言，就是人性革命” “through education, one can develop insight and ability to understand other people, cultivate love, and become a mature person willing to contribute to others. [Such a person] can produce a sense of happiness and increase confidence” (p.182). Ceng and He (2008) explained that human revolution is “能控制‘恶性’彰显‘善性’” “the ability to control ‘negative nature’ and manifest ‘positive nature’” (p.304). Similarly, Tang (2007) explained that “教育就是自我变革，扬善抑恶，创造价值，有利社会。若以池田大作的话而言，就是人性革命” “education is to transform oneself, repress negativity and manifest positivity, create value, and contribute to society.” If put in Daisaku Ikeda’s words, this is human revolution” (p.128). As stated in the literature review, Ikeda himself defines human revolution as a fundamental shift in one’s orientation of life that affects others and the society at large. It means to break through the lesser and egoistic self and develop into a greater compassionate self. Besides religion, Ikeda considers education as a crucial function in accomplishing human revolution (Wang & Chen, 2008). Therefore, the people “harmonious education” and “moral education” are aiming to foster those who are awakened to the greater self and can manifest virtuous character through human revolution.

Another quality of a person of character identified by the Chinese scholars is the ability to create value. Jiang (2010) mentioned that the aim of education is to foster people who can create the value of beauty, benefit, and good (p.1). As explained in the literature review, this was central to Makiguchi’s Soka pedagogy and was expanded by Ikeda. Zhang (2008) quoted from Ikeda’s lecture at Teacher’s College, Columbia University, “value creation is the capacity to find meaning, to enhance one’s own existence, and contribute to the well-being of others, under any circumstance.” (Ikeda, 2001, p.100) This shows that creating value means to live fully and contribute to the happiness of others. Qiang (2007) and Zhang (2008) also used the following quote from Ikeda’s lecture at Beijing University to demonstrate that value creation is central to the purpose of education: “[Education] nurtures and tempers the infinite potential latent in all of us, and it directs our energies toward the creation of values.” (Ikeda, 1996, p.23) Thus, many Chinese scholars regard value creation as one of the aims of “harmonious education” and “moral education.” Some of the responses to the questionnaire correspond to this view. Jiang Ju, a lecturer at Zhaoqing University, answered, “任何人皆可创造有价值的人生,是实现从个体幸福到人类幸福,进而实现和谐社会和全球文明的基础性教育” “Soka education is to create a valuable life. It is to shift from individual happiness to the happiness of all humanity, and then to actualize social harmony and to lay the foundation of global civilization.” Tang also defined Soka education as “创造人类和平与希望的崭新价值” “creating innovative value of peace and hope for all humanity.”

The third aim central to “harmonious education” and “moral education” is to foster global citizens. As stated in the literature review, Ikeda (2001) stated that the three essential elements of global citizens are “the wisdom to perceive interconnectedness of all life and living, the courage not to fear or deny difference…and the compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy that…extends to those suffering in distant places” (p.101). He (2007), Ji and Liu (2008), Tang (2007), Wang (2005), and Zhang (2008) all stated that global citizenship is a central theme in Ikeda’s educational philosophy. Especially in the current globalized world, it is crucial to have a global perspective. Yuan (2007) quoted Ikeda’s following statement: “教育是为了解决人类的问题，教育必须有国际视野，而不能以狭隘的民族观念和国家观念来对待教育” “education is to solve the problems of humanity. Education must have a global perspective, not a narrow ethnic or national

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18 Either 人性革命 or 人间革命 in Chinese
19 This quote is taken from the official English-language text.
Inukai

The theme of global citizenship is also apparent in the responses to the questionnaire. Chen stated that "I believe that the aim of Soka education is to foster global citizens with wisdom, courage, and compassion." Tang also answered as follows:

Mr. Ikeda advocates that education must shift its focus from 'national benefit' to 'humanity's benefit.' The key is global education which accepts and understands diverse value systems and culture. It is also vital to foster people who have global perspective and can understand others through open and honest exchanges.

These statements indicate that global citizenship is an important character to be cultivated in order to fully achieve "harmonious education" and "moral education" in today’s globalized world.

Now that the aim of "harmonious education" and "moral education" is clear, the content of such education needs to be addressed. In order to facilitate human revolution and value creation and foster global citizens, education cannot be a mere transmission of knowledge. Ceng (2007) and Chen, X. (2007) wrote that "one of the main educational goals was...not simply inculcating the young with received knowledge, but also developing their latent potential." This means that education should not only increase students' knowledge but should also cultivate wisdom to use knowledge. Chen, X. (2007) further wrote:

Education should not be satisfied by only giving knowledge to students but should create a circumstance in which students can actively explore and think freely. Education must be a process of active exploration and discovery, as well as a process of developing wisdom and appreciating a spirit of freedom.

This statement also encourages the cultivation of wisdom and students' active engagement in their learning process. Yuan (2008) and Zhong (2007) also expressed the need to cultivate wisdom by quoting Ikeda's following statement: "knowledge cannot bring out creativity in people. Creativity can only be developed through flexible application of knowledge, which is wisdom." Chinese scholars defined such education as "spiritual education," in opposition to a mere accumulation of knowledge for the sake of knowledge. This means that "spiritual education" is an education which cultivates wisdom and creativity. Ceng (2007), Ceng and He (2008), and Wang et al. (2006) further explained the content of "spiritual education" through Ikeda's words. "If we delve further into the content of education, it is to develop 'intellect' and 'feeling.'" So-called intellect is fundamentally wisdom as a part of one's character...furthermore, what I call 'feeling' is the rich heart, which is the criterion to truly be human." Therefore, the content of "harmonious education" and "moral education" can be said to be "spiritual education."

The final aspect of Chinese scholars' analysis of Ikeda's educational philosophy is the concrete means to achieve "harmonious education" and "moral education." They identify the following five points as possible means: collaborative relationship among school, home, and society, improvement in the quality of teachers, student centeredness, and a system of life-long learning.

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21 This quote is taken from the official English-language text.
22 Quoted from Ikeda, D. & Matsushita, K. (2002). Rensheng wenda (人生问答)
23 Quoted from Ikeda, D. (2004). Renjian geming (人间革命)
24 Either 灵魂教育 or 灵魂教育 in Chinese
First, in order to ensure a full development of a child, the role of parents and society cannot be ignored. Many Ikeda scholars in China addressed that either/both home education or/and education in the community is an important element of achieving “harmonious education” and “moral education.” (Ceng, 2004; Ji & Liu, 2008; Jia, 2004; Jiang, 2007; Jiang, 2010; Wang, 2005; Wang et al., 2006; Yuan, 2007) Ceng (2008), Jiang (2007), Li and Xu (2002), and Wang and Chen (2008) especially pointed out the importance of home education. Wang et al. (2006) quoted Ikeda’s following statement:

学校教育把重点放在开发人的生命的智能上。而在家庭教育中，一方面固然要把重心放在‘情’与‘意’上，同时恐怕还应当为人的全面发展教育进行不懈努力…家庭教育是人的教育基础，在这一基础之上，学校教育才有可能很好地开花结果。26

Education at school focuses on developing one’s intelligence. On the other hand, education at home focuses on children’s emotion and wish, and should also make tireless efforts toward their full development. Home education is the basis of one’s education, and school education can only succeed on this basis of home education.

This statement declares that home is the basis of education. This is because home education focuses on developing children as a whole, not just one aspect such as intellectual ability. Moreover, parents are the first adults from whom children will learn the meaning of life and the sense of what is right and wrong. Children will naturally imitate and follow their parents’ attitudes and actions. Ji (2007) quoted Ikeda and stated, “父母亲的态度, 家庭中的气氛, 对孩子的性格, 人生观影响至深。最近我更切身感受到父母的信心和家庭之重要性”27 “The attitude of the parents and the home atmosphere both greatly influences the child’s personality and perspective toward life. Recently, I am increasingly feeling the importance of parents’ confidence and home.” Therefore, it is critical that parents serve as examples that embody a humanistic way of living. Besides home, society or the local community also play a crucial role in education. Through community services and volunteer work, children will learn how to live a contributive life by actually experiencing such a way of living. Moreover, by interacting with people in the community, children can learn the interconnected web of people and how to live in harmony. Ji and Liu (2008) quoted Ikeda’s statement:

Learning divorced from the facts of everyday life can become intellectual pursuit for its own sake. But learning reinforced by application in daily living and working ceases to be temporary, become assimilated in the learner, and can ultimately grow into wisdom creating firm basis for thinking and acting and enabling the person to see things in their correct relations to each other28 (Peccei & Ikeda, 1984, p.147).

Although education should not be a tool for the sake of society, an education that forgets the society and the world at large becomes empty. Thus, the roles of both home and society are critical in accomplishing “harmonious education” and “moral education.”

Second, “harmonious education” and “moral education” require improvement in the quality of teachers. Ceng (2008) asserted that teachers are the most important learning environment and that there is no educational reformation unless there is a revolution of teacher quality (p.46-47). First and foremost, teachers should have passion and commitment in fostering capable people as well as the sense of responsibility that they are the ones determining the future. Ceng (2006) and Wang and Chen (2008) wrote:

[...] any person doing any kind of work that contributes to the good of society should take pride in his labor as a calling. We can expect nothing fruitful from educational activities conducted by people who have lost enthusiasm and awareness of the tremendous importance of their vocation as the personality-formers of people who bear the responsibility for the future29 (Derbolav & Ikeda, 1992, p.189).

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26 Quoted from Ikeda, D. & Matsushita, K. (2002). Rensheng wenda (人生问答)
28 This quote is taken from the official English-language text.
29 This quote is taken from the official English-language text.
Furthermore, teachers should be attentive to the uniqueness of each child. Ceng (2006), Huang (2008), and Qi (2008) quoted Ikeda, “教育是以每个具有不同性格的人为对象，这每一个生命在每一瞬间都在进行微妙的活动。我认为教育是最艰难的事业，从事和献身于它的人是最值得尊敬的”30 “the object of education is people whose personalities are different personalities. All of these living beings are acting minutely every moment. Therefore, I believe that education is the most challenging job and that those who devote themselves to education are the most respect-worthy.” Besides passion, commitment, and morality, professionalism is also crucial. Here, professionalism is defined as “不断地改进，完善和创造” “continuous improvement, perfection, and creation” (Jiang, 2008, p.63). Like any other career, teaching is a profession. Thus, teachers should continuously seek to increase their knowledge and improve their teaching skills. This way, not only the quality of classes is enhanced but also teachers will serve as a role model of life-long development for students.

Another vital element in pursuing “harmonious education” and “moral education” is a good teacher-student relationship. Huang (2008) explained the ideal relationship between teachers and students as follows: “教师和青少年之间不是对立的关系，而是共同成长，争取未来的过程中获得教育的成果”31 “The relationship between teacher and student is not that of opposition; rather, they should grow together and obtain educational achievement in their struggle for the future.” Wang and Chen (2008) also stated that “在德育过程中，教师要与学生进行双向对话，平等沟通，以增进彼此的相互理解与信任” “in the process of moral education, teachers must conduct dialogue with students and communicate on equal grounds, thus developing mutual understanding and trust” (p.286-287). These statements indicate that, in order to achieve “harmonious education” and “moral education,” teachers and students must develop mutual understanding and trust through dialogue. Although knowledge can be transmitted easily, students’ character and wisdom can only be cultivated through sincere interaction between teachers and students. Ceng (2004) and Ceng and He (2008) quoted Ikeda’s perspective that “知识本身是可观的，利用讲义，传声器完全可以传授。而人格形式，人性等应当如运用知识的价值创造问题，是通过教师和学生之间的交流和接触才会自然刻印在生命中的”32 “knowledge itself is visible and can be transmitted using teaching materials and sound devices. However, activities which involve application of knowledge and value creation, such as forming characters, must be naturally engraved in one’s life through exchange and communication between teacher and student.” The important thing is that both the teacher and the student are in the same endeavor to create a better future. This concept can be explained by the term “oneness of mentor and disciple.” Jia (2004) defined the “oneness of mentor and disciple” as “教师要把学生当作自己的孩子一样，应该怀着慈爱之心，进行知识和品格教育，学生则尊敬教师，努力学习” “teachers treating students as their own children, caring with compassionate heart, and developing intelligence and character in students, as well as students respecting the teacher and studying diligently” (p.190). Wang and Chen (2008) also wrote that “在师生关系上，[池田] 一直主张‘师生不二’。也就是说，师生之间应该‘异体同心’，通过相互接触和交流，走进各自的心灵世界” “in teacher-student relationship, [Ikeda] always advocates for the ‘oneness of mentor and disciple.’ He also says that teacher and student should be ‘many in body one in mind’33 Through mutual communication and exchange, one can enter the world of thought of another” (p.286). Teacher and student having the same mindset and attitude toward learning and life is vital. Therefore, developing a relationship of the “oneness of mentor and disciple” is an important means to achieve “harmonious education” and “moral education.”

The fourth aspect of achieving ideal education is “student centeredness.” This has two aspects: 1) respect students as the most important part of educational system; and 2) students take responsibility and participate in creating their education. According to Yuan (2007), Ikeda stated three educational principles, first of which is “在办学过程的各项管理制度和一切办学的活动中，要贯彻'学生第一’，‘学生参与’的原则”34 “the principle of ‘student-centeredness’ and ‘student involvement’ in all the aspects of running and managing a school.” First, school, teachers, and everyone involved in the educational system should recognize that students are the core of education. Zhang (2008) quoted Ikeda’s speech at Soka University in 2003, “The

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31 Quoted from Ikeda, D. (1992). Wo de renxue (我的人学)
32 Quoted from Ikeda, D. & Matsushita, K. (2002). Rensheng wenda (人生问答)
33 I translated as ‘many in body one in mind’ because this is the official translation or ‘异体同心,’ but ‘separate in body one in mind’ might be a better translation in this context.
core of the university as an institution, then, is neither its buildings nor administrative policies, nor even its noteworthy scholars. It is the students, gathering together with a burning passion to study, that are the heart and soul of the university. Because students are the heart of education, teachers should treat students with respect, sincerity, and care. However, “student-centeredness” does not mean that students can do whatever they want to. Students also have the responsibility to take an active role in improving their own education. Liu (2010) explained, “学生参加の原則とは、まず、学生が自分が大学管理の主役であるという自覚を持ち、責任を持つことである” “the principle of ‘student participation’ starts from the awareness and responsibility of students that they are the leading role in constructing the university” (p.4). He further stated that “人間教育は学生の参加と自治を大変に重視する” “humanistic education emphasizes students’ participation and autonomy” (Liu, 2010, p.4). Because humanism is the basis of “harmonious education” and “moral education,” “student-centeredness” can be said to be one of the core elements of “harmonious education” and “moral education.”

Finally, a system of life-long education is essential in fulfilling the goal of “harmonious education” and “moral education.” The process of creating harmonious relationships and developing moral character is a life-long endeavor. Furthermore, there is no end or limit to how much knowledge, wisdom, and experience one can accumulate. Therefore, education should not be limited to the traditional school years. Lin (2006) wrote,

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一个大学生或研究生毕业时，所获之学位，不能成为一生的评价，其学识也仅能表现在当时的工作能力。世界知识与技术日新月异，进步快速，因此必须是全人的终身教育。在职人员能不断进修，在工作上才能永远有好的业绩表现。
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A degree one obtains when graduating from a university or graduate school cannot be an evaluation of that person’s entire life. Knowledge can only indicate working ability of that time. Because knowledge and technological skills are growing every day in the current world, life-long education is necessary. Only by unceasingly studying can employees succeed in work (p.26).

This statement indicates that one should strive to learn throughout one’s life. Besides the limitation of time, life-long education addresses the issue of financial challenges. Higher education should not be limited to those who are privileged to receive it in their youth as a full-time student. Ji and Liu (2008) quoted Ikeda’s perspective toward life-long education:

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每当想到那些由于经济和时间的原因而在青少年时代未能充分受到教育的人们，我就不得不感到，必须要有群众一方面从事职业，同时可以进行学问研究的制度——即有能力的人可以平等地从事学问的所谓终身教育的制度。
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Every time I think of people who couldn’t receive enough education in youth due to financial reason or time, I feel strongly the need to establish a system of life-long learning in which one can simultaneously work and study. This way, everyone who possesses the ability and wish to study has equal access to education.

If education is only limited to those who have time and money, even if “harmonious education” or “moral education” is put into practice, it will not see full fulfillment of its aim. Therefore, it is crucial to establish a system of life-long learning, in which all people have equal access to education regardless of their socio-economic status, in order to see the full blossom of the results of “harmonious education” and “moral education.”

**Problems of Modern Chinese Education that Ikeda’s Educational Ideas can Address**

The reasons why these Chinese scholars study Ikeda’s philosophy and how they interpret Ikeda’s educational philosophy have been discussed. How can Ikeda’s educational ideas identified above address the issues of modern Chinese education? The problem of modern Chinese education is addressed most often is utilitarianism. Chinese scholars view that in today’s China, education is used as a tool for further economic growth of the nation. Many articles (Ceng, 2004; Ceng, 2007; Ceng, 2008; Chen, X., 2007; Huang, 2008; Wang, 2005; Wang & Chen, 2008) wrote, “In modern technological society, however, some people regard learning and

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35 This quote is taken from the official English-language text.

science as no more than the servants of utilitarianism”37 (Toynbee & Ikeda, 1989, p.64). Even more articles (Ceng, 2004; Ceng, 2007; Ceng, 2008; Huang, 2008; Ji & Liu, 2008; Li & Xu, 2002; Wang, 2005; Wang & Chen, 2008; Wang et al., 2006; Yuan, 2008) further quoted Ikeda’s following analysis:

By devoting itself to a utilitarianism that overemphasizes intellectual knowledge and technological skills, education in modern society has had two major bad consequences. First, by making learning a tool of politics and economics, it has robbed learning of its inherent dignity and independence. Second, people engaged in learning and education become the slaves of intellectual knowledge and technological skill, which are the only aspects of learning prized today38 (Toynbee & Ikeda, 1989, p.65).

Utilitarianism, here meaning the belief that only knowledge and skill with practical usage have value, is a serious problem of modern education in China, especially since the open-up policy. However, as Liu (2010) stated, “学問と学歴は人より抜きんでるための道具ではなく、人々の幸福に貢献するためにあり” “education and academic credentials are not a tool to become superior to others but exist to contribute to the happiness of people” (p.2). In order to tackle utilitarianism, Chen answered to the questionnaire that “池田先生の人本理念、尊重孩子独特个性的教育方法，已经对现代工具理性主导的教育现状的反思，对中国的教育改革都有很好的启示作用” “Mr. Ikeda’s humanistic philosophy and the teaching method of respecting children’s uniqueness have had enlightening effects on rethinking the current utilitarian and rationalistic educational circumstances and on Chinese educational reformation.” Many Ikeda researchers in China believe that Ikeda’s educational philosophy, especially “harmonious education” and “moral education” grounded in dignity of life and humanism, has the potential to tackle this problem of utilitarianism in modern China. They also believe that Ikeda’s call for a paradigm shift from “education for society” to “society for education” will restore appreciation and value in education itself for cultivating moral and well-rounded character. In order for education not to be used by the government and economics, Ikeda proposes to establish education as an independent entity from other governmental functions. In addition to the three branches of government- legislative, administrative and judicial- Ikeda asserts that education should be an independent branch (Lin, 2006). Therefore, the Ikeda researchers in China view Ikeda’s educational philosophy beneficial for reforming both the content of education and the educational system.

Related to utilitarianism, another problem of modern Chinese education pointed by scholars is materialism, or more importantly the loss of spirituality. Wang (2005) claimed that “物质文明与精神文明的脱节是摆在当今各国社会中的一个普遍的问题” “the separation of material culture and spiritual culture is one of the common problems of many countries today” (p.38). In modern education, because there is an overemphasis on transmitting a massive amount of information and knowledge, cultivating character and seeking of the meaning of life has become underemphasized. In the response to the questionnaire, Zhang Yang, a doctorate student at Nankai University, shared a similar concern.

As illustrated in the previous section, Ikeda’s educational philosophy focuses on humans and how to live a valuable life as citizens of the world. This kind of spirituality is exactly what is lacking in modern Chinese education; thus, many Ikeda scholars see potential for contribution to educational reformation.

37 This quote is taken from the official English-language text.
38 This quote is taken from the official English-language text.
Another problem of modern Chinese education is the exam-oriented teaching methods. Liu answered to the questionnaire, “Today, although China calls for character education, exam-oriented education has not changed. Because of exam-oriented education, students have become rootless.” Chen also wrote a similar response. “Chinese education is facing many problems, and the most serious one is exam-oriented education. Because the training of intellect is the main focus, development of other abilities is ignored and children’s creativity is repressed.” They both point out that because classes are focused on cramming information and knowledge in students and on teaching how to do well in exams, students’ creativity and other important aspects as human beings are not being cultivated. This concern is also seen in the published articles. For example, Ji and Liu (2008) quoted Ikeda’s following statement: “The mass production of today’s university education has lost interaction between people, leading to the lack of emotional development. Even in the aspect of intellect, there is only simple instillation of knowledge without any cultivation of intelligence related to character.” Again, they view Ikeda’s humanistic education as the key to solving this problem. Jian answered in the questionnaire:

Education which treats people as most important serves as the basis for moral education and teacher-student relationship, both of which are essential in breaking through the exam-oriented education.

Besides these problems related to spiritual aspect, modern Chinese education also faces the problem of educational inequality. Zhang answered in the questionnaire, “The most fundamental and real problems Chinese education faces are population overflow and unequal development by area.” Jian and Tang also pointed out that budget is distributed unequally between city and countryside, thus creating unequal educational opportunities and educational development between different areas. Education levels in the rural areas often remain relatively low because the government might not feel the need for farmers to receive higher education. Thus, the budget might also get distributed unequally based on the government’s perspective on which part of the country needs to be developed. Again, Ikeda’s proposal for an independent educational branch might be able to alleviate the inequality. Furthermore, Ikeda’s idea of life-long education might also increase opportunities for higher education for the unprivileged. Some people who live in the countryside may not have an opportunity for higher education. However, Ikeda proposes to create a system in which students can work during the day and study part-time in the evenings and night. Ikeda’s perspective on life-long education also includes allowing those who have already retired to come back to school. These educational proposals made by Ikeda have the potential to resolve the existing educational inequality in modern China.

Discussion

The problems of modern Chinese education addressed above such as utilitarianism, materialism, exam-oriented teaching, and inequality are all applicable to many other countries. Thus, Ikeda’s educational philosophy has the potential to tackle these issues elsewhere. Why, then, is Ikeda research growing rapidly only in China and Taiwan and is still very limited in other parts of the world, especially considering the fact that a substantial amount of Ikeda’s books are also published in English and other languages? One possibility is that Ikeda is far more respected in China than in any other country. As mentioned before, about one third of the honorary degrees Ikeda has received are from academic institutions in China. He has also made continuous

efforts for the betterment of the China-Japan relationship and has conducted open dialogue with many Chinese political leaders such as Deng Xiaoping, Zhou Enlai, and Hu Jintao, as well as cultural personage such as Jin Yong, a famous writer in China. Furthermore, Ikeda has repeatedly declared that Japan owes most of its culture to China and admitted Japan’s crimes committed against China during WWII. All of Ikeda’s actions and attitudes toward China could have contributed to his receiving of a higher respect in China as compared with other places. However, the situation is also applicable to other countries. For example, Ikeda has dialogued with Alexei Kosygin and Mikhail Gorbachev, two prominent leaders of the Soviet Union and Russia. The very first honorary doctorate Ikeda received was from Moscow University in 1975, about ten years earlier than the first academic honor from China. This is just one example, but Ikeda has received academic honors, honorary citizenship, and awards from various parts of the world. He has also conducted dialogue with leaders of many countries, and he has praised the culture and history of the person with whom he is having dialogue. Ikeda has also tirelessly promoted educational and cultural exchanges with many countries. However, Ikeda research is still very exclusive to China and Taiwan. This indicates that the growing Ikeda research movement in China and Taiwan is not only due to respect for Ikeda.

One possible reason for the exclusive growth of Ikeda research in China and Taiwan, then, can be the similarities between traditional Chinese philosophies and Ikeda’s philosophy. Chen (2007) and Ma M. (2007) both stated, “池田先生强调对生命的尊重和‘以生命的眼光’看人，其落脚点以人中心，以‘爱人’为旨归，而这来源于孔子儒学的‘仁者爱人’的精神” “Mr. Ikeda emphasizes the respect for life and seeing people through the ‘eyes of life.’ The starting point is human-centeredness and the principle is to ‘love people.’ The origin of this is the Confucian spirit of ‘the benevolent loves people’ (p.81; p.6). Moral character, such as represented in the word “仁(benevolence),” is the core of the Confucian teaching, and this is very similar to Ikeda’s concept of humanism and compassion. Not only in the articles, but also a questionnaire response pointed out this similarity. Liu answered, “人格教育本是中国儒家文化的精髓,但在长期的科举考试及现在的升学制度中慢慢遗失,池田大作先生在现代提出创价教育,强调重视学生的人格教育” “character education is the core of Chinese Confucian culture, but has gradually been lost in the long tradition of imperial examination and today’s exam-oriented education. Today, Mr. Ikeda proposes Soka education to emphasize students’ character education.” Furthermore, Chen (2007) wrote, “池田大作的思想和中国的‘天人合一’的思想也是有致性的。人们要建立和平,实现与自然的共生,中国传承的‘和谐’智慧就体现的很重要了” “Daisaku Ikeda’s philosophy and Chinese philosophy of ‘oneness of heaven and humanity’ are similar. The Chinese tradition of the wisdom of ‘harmony’ becomes extremely important if people want to establish peace and realize coexistence with nature” (p.82). The “oneness of heaven and human” and creation of harmonious society are both central to traditional Chinese philosophy. These themes are also clear in Ikeda’s philosophy. Another important aspect of traditional Chinese education that is similar to Ikeda’s philosophy is the emphasis on home education. Jiang (2007) stated that “中国古代历来都非常重视儿童的早期家庭教育” “Since ancient times, China has put utmost value in young children’s education at home” (p.14). As explained in the result section, Ikeda also emphasizes the importance of the role of home and parents in moral education. All of these similarities between Chinese traditional philosophy and Ikeda’s philosophy might have led many Chinese scholars to accept Ikeda’s philosophy.

Besides the similarities between Ikeda’s philosophy and Chinese traditional philosophy, China’s quest for the positive aspects of Western philosophy might also be the reason Chinese scholars are attracted to Ikeda’s philosophy. China is currently going through rapid modernization and Westernization since the “open-up policy.” Consequently, China has achieved huge economic growth and has become one of the most powerful countries in the world. At the same time, China is also experiencing many problems of modern society, such as materialism and the lack of harmony and morality. However, they might be also seeing potential in the new value system of the West. One Ikeda scholar stated that Ikeda incorporates some of the positive aspects of Western philosophy, such as democracy, equality, and philanthropy with the traditional Chinese philosophy of harmony and benevolence (Ma M., 2007, p.7). Therefore, it might be that these Chinese scholars want to bring back some of the good Chinese traditional philosophy and blend them with the superior parts of Western philosophy. It is likely that they see this fusion of Eastern and Western philosophy in Ikeda’s philosophy, and thus, view it as very beneficial for constructing a new China.

However, although Ikeda research is becoming more and more prevalent, educational reform in China still has a long way to go. Although Ikeda research has been growing at an increasingly rapid pace during the past ten years, many of his philosophy and proposals have yet to be implemented. As introduced in the
literature review, there are some educational reformation movements and concrete actions taken toward that goal, but they still remain in a relatively small scope. Furthermore, although Ikeda proposes educational system to be independent from other governmental functions in order for its free and humanistic development, the Chinese government exerts control over educational systems. The Chinese government issued the 10-year national direction for education in 2010. The government's active involvement in educational goals implies that the government has no intention of giving up that control. Therefore, it is not very likely that education can function independently in the near future. Not only has the government's unwillingness to give up control but also citizens' unwillingness to speak up against the government contributed to the current stagnation. It seems that, especially after experiencing the Cultural Revolution, people stopped questioning the government, at least in public. Even these Ikeda researchers who identify the current problems and see the potential in Ikeda's philosophy are very careful in their expressions. For example, when discussing Ikeda's concept of education for harmonious relationships, some of them stated that it may contribute to establishing “socialist harmonious society,” even though Ikeda himself has never mentioned the word “socialist.” This suggests that many of them conform to the government's ideal. Moreover, many of the scholars wrote that Ikeda's philosophy “can be referred to,” “worth consulting,” or “can provide meaningful ideas,” but only one scholar wrote that it “can guide” educational reformation in China. This signifies that, although they highly regard the value of Ikeda's philosophy, they do not place it in the position of guiding philosophy aside from the national direction. Therefore, although they might suggest Ikeda’s philosophy as worth considering, it is unlikely that they assert its implementation. Thus, although the growing Ikeda research in China is definitely a significant first step and has a positive outlook for educational reformation, the realities indicate that such a reformation cannot happen or accomplished instantly.

Thus far, this study has assessed the motivation of Chinese scholars for Ikeda research, themes in Ikeda's educational philosophy, and the significance and potential contributions of Ikeda's philosophy to educational reformation in China. It has also attempted to answer why Ikeda research is growing rapidly in China and Taiwan compared to other countries in the world, as well as to provide an outlook for the implementation of Ikeda’s philosophy and proposals. However, this is a new field of research and the present study is the first attempt to do such an analysis. This means that there is not yet a different interpretation of these Ikeda studies in China. Furthermore, the resources, including both the written articles and personal contacts with the Ikeda scholars in China, were limited to what I attained through personal connections with the Soka University Beijing office. Moreover, I provided my own translation for all of the quotations from Chinese scholars and for most of the Ikeda’s statements cited because they don’t have official translations except for a few of the Ikeda's books. Thus, in order to make a better assessment of Ikeda research in China, there is a need for a better collection of and access to resources, English translations of the articles, and more research on this topic. These will provide a broader perspective to the connection between Soka education and Chinese education and how Soka education might be able to contribute to educational reformation in China. Furthermore, because Ikeda research is very limited outside of China and Taiwan, scholars from different cultural and social backgrounds might interpret Ikeda’s philosophy and Soka education differently from the Chinese scholars. Therefore, in order to analyze the potential contribution of Soka education to the global educational reformation, there needs to be more research on Ikeda’s philosophy in various social and cultural contexts.

Conclusion

In this study, the qualitative approach of combining textual analysis and personal correspondence provides a holistic perspective on Ikeda research in China. The most apparent reason for starting Ikeda research was the fact that Daisaku Ikeda is very well-respected in China. Other motivations for Ikeda research included promoting world peace and value-creating life, improving the China-Japan relationship, and improving education in China and over the world. The major themes the Chinese scholars identified in Ikeda’s educational philosophy were “harmonious education” and “moral education” by shifting from “education for society” to “society for education.” Dignity of life and humanism are the basis of such an education. They see in Ikeda's philosophy a potential to tackle some of the problems of modern Chinese education, such as utilitarianism, materialism, and exam-oriented education. Despite the limitations of this study and the need for further research, I believe that the present study has shed light on a new field in Soka education research. Although the Ikeda research in China and Taiwan has grown rapidly in the past decade, it is not well known to Western academia because of the language barrier. However, the Ikeda research in China is significant in that these scholars have not only initiated the Ikeda research movement but also attempted to explain some
Buddhist concepts such as “human revolution” and “oneness of mentor and disciple” in Ikeda’s writings from a non-Buddhist perspective. I hope that the present study has served to introduce this new field of Soka education research to the English-speaking world and to stir interest in other Soka education scholars to look into these resources. I am confident that the Ikeda research in China will be acknowledged as essential resources for Soka education research in the near future.
References


http://www.daisakuikeda.org/sub/resources/works/lect/lect-10.html


Inukai


### Table 1.
*List of Daisaku Ikeda Research Institutes in China and Taiwan*

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**Data collected from Soka Kyoiku Kinkyu vol.3-6 and Soka Kyoiku vol.1-3**

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**Figure 1:** The relationship between school, home and society in Makiguchi Project
Figure 2: Layout of class instruction
Creating Sustainability in an Urban School: A Lotus Out of Muck

Patrick Noon

Class of 2006

Soka education seeks to create global citizens, or people who perceive the world as an interconnected whole and meanwhile act in their immediate environment to make positive change. Of all the places in the local community, the school can be the location/institution where the microcosm influences the macrocosm of society most immediately. By instilling positive ideals in children at a young age, we hope they will eventually go out in the world and make a major change. The current global environmental crisis requires a remodeling of the way in which humans interact with the earth. Elementary school is the perfect place to initiate this type of change in society.

Turning sustainability into reality takes place in the school garden. There, the child leaves the urban environment and immerses himself in a new wonderland filled with magical surprises. The child starts to perceive where their food comes from and how challenging the process of growing food is. The idea is that the child will develop the perspective of a global citizen early on in life. Teaching them to think global and act local starts in the garden. Through the childhood participation in the miracle of life, they get hands on experience in the work required to produce food. In helping the child realize their place in the local community, the interconnectedness of all life becomes easier to grasp.
The creation of a garden program at my school was a great challenge that required intense perseverance and a stand-alone spirit. As a teacher at a private school called Monticello, I have had the wonderful experience of creating a garden program with the children. What started as an empty desolate plot has been transformed into a luscious garden, which produces food that is sometimes served in the cafeteria. Where once only weeds grew, is now thriving with healthy populations of worms assisting the roots of broccoli, beets, spinach and lettuce. The change did not happen overnight, as much as I wished it would. I was taught a great lesson of patience through my experience.

When I arrived, the garden program at Monticello was non-existent. When I was hired, we sparked excitement during a conversation about the gardening program they had. My first glance of the garden revealed some serious soil issues. Clay and soot seemed to permeate the soil, making the development of the plants’ root systems near impossible. Like humans, who have built a strong foundation in life, plants too need to develop their roots early on in order to ensure a prolific life. What I saw was a bunch of plants that had nowhere to grow, causing them to have stunted growth and nutrient deficiencies.

Native Americans believe that humans should be the stewards and protectors of the earth. To me this philosophy deeply resonates with the principles of Buddhism. I have been blessed to work with a dedicated member of the Native American community, who happens to be one of my fellow teachers. Through our efforts we have transformed the ecological consciousness of the school, giving the children many opportunities to interact with the earth in a way never before possible. Last year we put on an Earth Day celebration, in which we had numerous exhibits that educated the children about environmental issues and what they can do to solve them. That day we had an exhibit called “Local vs Imported,” where the children were able to try an imported fruit or vegetable and then try the same vegetable that was grown locally. Luckily that year we had grown broccoli in our garden so we were able to compare locally grown organic broccoli with one grown conventionally and sold at Safeway. The children loved the taste of our local broccoli and could barely stand the broccoli that was bought at the store. This experience instilled a sense of healthy eating in the children and created a new positive association with broccoli. This is just one example of the many activities that have imparted a sense of global citizenship on the children, one that will hopefully remain with them for their entire lives.

As an educator I believe sustainability should be a cornerstone of school activity and philosophy. With the current environmental crisis at hand, the importance of environmental protection has become all the more pertinent. The world needs a generation of environmentally aware youth to take the lead in environmental protection. Schools, although essential places of learning, have a negative impact on the earth because of consumption and waste production. With the implementation of a sustainable system on site, the school’s impact on the environment can be greatly reduced. Equally as important as reducing environmental impact, a sustainable system instills a sense of earth-based stewardship in the children. The garden allows the child to participate in the cycle of life through the process of sprouting seeds, watering the plant, eating the vegetables and eventually harvesting the seeds for use the next season. Through experiencing the cycle of life, the child sees the struggle of life.

The children with whom I have worked in the year and a half of my time at Monticello Academy come from a diverse variety of backgrounds. The majority of my students are sons and daughters of engineers. The Silicon Valley attracts people from all over the world to participate in the perpetual evolution of technology. Easy access to the latest technology results in great efficiency, which invariably creates an incredibly fast pace of life. The children I work with seem to be at the mercy of all this chaos, and as a result suffer from a myriad of behavioral disorders ranging from ADD to mild autism. In my opinion the earth is the best medicine, and by helping the children connect to the earth they have come to better understand themselves.
As I have spoken generally up to this point I will now delve into specific cases of the effects of sustainability on the children. In the early stages of the garden at Monticello we had great difficulty in getting the garden “growing.” Lack of sunlight and nutrient deficient soil created a poor environment for the growing of vegetable. Although there was little we could do about the lack of sunlight, we definitely built up the soil a lot, which has greatly helped the plants.

**The Broccoli Garden**

In the fall 2009, my class and I did a seed-sprouting project. The children picked the seed of their choice and they sprouted them using the wet paper towel method. After the seeds had sprouted we transferred them to cups, that were recycled from lunch and they grew slowly from there. We sprouted a variety of veggies: onions, radishes, beets, broccoli and carrots. Because of the lack of sunlight in the garden, the growth times of these plants was greatly decelerated. For example a broccoli plant that normally would have taken 95 to 110 days, took 150 days to produce. This turned out to be a blessing in disguise as it taught both the teachers and the children a lesson in patience. The children slowly became fond of the garden and were often eager to help take care of the plants. As the broccoli started to produce buds, which is the part humans eat, their excitement grew even more. They could hardly wait till the day that we ate the broccoli. We saw the children’s interest in gardening shift from a slight intrigue to a mild hysteria. The process of seeing the plants’ life cycle showed the children how much work and dedication growing food is. And the day we finally harvested and ate the broccoli changed the children’s perception of the vegetable forever.

Our broccoli actually tasted sweet and was delicious to the children! Broccoli, a vegetable usually dreaded by children, was transformed to a beautiful living being that produced a wonderful delicious treat. The children could hardly contain themselves when we were passing out the broccoli on that day; their excitement was the result of all the time and dedication that it took to make the broccoli grow. We pretty much had a broccoli party in which all the kids excitedly waited in line to get a try of the most delicious broccoli they had ever eaten.

**The Potato Project**

Akshay Rao is a small Indian boy in my 2nd grade after-school class who is filled with tons of energy; his trouble is that he has a difficult time focusing his mind on the task at hand.

Akshay showed me the dramatic change that can happen in a child when they are exposed to gardening and sustainability. To give you an idea of the garden set up, we have what are called raised beds, which are basically small plots of 6’ x 3’ which have a soil depth of about 8” to 16”. In between these plots, towards the ends of the garden, there was unused space so I decided to dig some deep holes to grow potatoes in. Potatoes are famous for their virility and easiness to grow. Basically if you dig a hole and bury a potato, it will find a way to grow. The Irish are well known for their staple of potatoes. Being of Irish descent, potatoes hold a special place in my heart and are one of my favorite foods.

The kids had the wonderful experience of digging a fairly deep hole, planting the potatoes, burying them and then patiently waiting for the first leaves of the plant to emerge from the earth. Akshay was extremely eager to get in the garden and dig. That day he was exhibiting some serious problems in listening, and showing signs of what a psychiatrist would call ADD. Luckily, he is not on medication and can learn to deal with his hyperactivity naturally. He dug a hole very rapidly and then was eager for the next so I allowed him to continue. After he was done, we took the potato cutting that had sprouted an eye, and proceeded to bury it. A potato eye is basically the growth that stems out of the potato when they are exposed to moisture.
After we finished, Akshay did not want to stop working in the garden. The difference in Akshay before and after his time in the garden was like night and day. He seemed almost like a different person, calm and much more attentive to what was going on around him. The earth seemed to have a drastic effect on his behavior, helping reduce his hyperactivity and center his thoughts. The “ADD” that seemed to affect him before had dissipated and now he was truly able to focus at the task at hand. I reported the change in Akshay to his parents, and after some discussion we decided to put a garden in their backyard at home so the child would have consistent access to growing life.

I believe that many of the behavior problems we are seeing in the schools these days are the result of a deficiency, not in brain chemistry, but in connection to nature. Humans evolved in the natural world, depending on Mother Earth directly for their survival. As we have developed our civil society, we have learned more and more ways to control and dominate the natural world, thereby further separating ourselves from the source which we came from. We are destroying the earth and threatening the possibilities of mankind’s future existence on earth. Through the behavior of the children, we are seeing firsthand the effects of this disconnection to nature. They are warning us to dramatically change the way in which we interact with the earth. And in the meanwhile they are guiding us back to the earth by showing us the positive effect connecting to the earth has on their development. My students are always very eager to help in the garden; the difficulty is finding a task for each child as our garden space is somewhat limited.

Besides growing vegetables, we have successfully implemented a compost program, which simultaneously reduces the school’s impact on the earth and creates wonderful soil for our further growing of vegetables. When I arrived, all the school’s organic matter was thrown directly in the trash, which would then travel to the landfill where the potential energy was wasted. Trash can be transformed into soil, which can be recycled into the garden to assist in the process of growing life. Our initial compost system was simple, we dug two holes and waste was dropped into one and then transferred back and forth between the two holes. Moving the compost between the two holes gave the compost the oxygen necessary for decomposition. After we had established a successful compost and garden system the administration decided to support our program financially. We were able to invest in two upright compost bin that were sold to us by the city. The system is simple. You place waste in the top and through stirring the compost the process of decomposition is accelerated. The art of composting is to have a balance between browns and greens so the compost decomposes at a steady rate. Too much greens and the compost will rot and too much browns the compost will stand still. This was a bit of a challenge as the majority of the schools waste would classify as greens composed mostly of vegetable waste. Luckily we had an abundant supply of tanbark, which classifies as a brown, from the bedding of our playground. Initially the compost was infested by flies, but this soon changed after the addition of a steady stream of browns.

Another example of the effect of sustainability on children was shown by a 5th grader named Aaron Atkins. He is a very bright child and like many smart children had great difficulty in functioning in a traditional school system. For the first few months of the compost I had to manage and take care of the system myself but once we had the system down, we decided to form a compost team. I started the compost team with a group of 5th graders who were eager to take on the task. Children these days are extremely bright and receptive to new knowledge. They quickly grasped the concept of brown and greens and for the first day of activities we had to solve the problem of too many greens in the compost bin. I asked the children, where they thought we could find browns, first describing what browns were and what they are used for. To my amazement, they were able to solve the problem almost immediately; figuring out that tanbark was the best, most readily available source of browns. Aaron, who still has trouble with the school system, is a dedicated member of the compost team. On the days we do not meet, he is often asking when can we do the compost, and I can see by his attitude that he is fascinated by compost and truly enjoys it. A child that does not fit the traditional model can be left behind in the school system. Aaron finds his peace during our time with the
compost team. He constantly begs me, asking if he can be the leader of the compost team. I have told him that when I move on, he will become the leader of the compost team so that we can continue the tradition of composting at Monticello.

When we look at the school from when I arrived to 19 months later, we can see a dramatic change in the way the school interacts with the earth and the way the children perceive that interaction. We have created a culture of sustainability that has permeated to the children. They love to garden and are excited to help the earth in any way they can. We are training the next generation of sustainable leaders whom the earth desperately needs. In the microcosm of our school, we have initiated a change that will hopefully spread to the macrocosm of the world. In the words of Gandhi, we must “be the change you wish to see.” We have created a positive change for the earth and the children amidst a difficult situation. The hope is that the ideals and principles we have instilled in the children will affect the decisions they make towards the earth in the future.

In the end we can only change ourselves, and hope our internal reformation reverberates to our environment. Through my experience at Monticello, I have seen the effects that the internal change of one person can have on an entire community of people. This gives me great hope that if enough people make a change within themselves, we can change the world at large through the transformation of our individual communities. Piece by piece and action by action, like the falling of raindrops, we can create a tidal wave of change that can transform the entire world. When we heal ourselves, we heal the earth. Thank you.

Tunesaburo Makiguchi “A Geography of Human Life” Dayle Bethel
From Local to Global: Soka Education’s Potential for Sustainable Development in Ecuador and Beyond

Yui Takishima

Class of 2012

Sometimes I tell myself, I may only be planting a tree here, but just imagine what's happening if there are billions of people out there doing something. Just imagine the power of what we can do.

—Wangari Maathai (Quiet Revolution 2007)

Introduction

Environmentalism has become a major movement in modern society. Modifications of nature that human beings made in the past two centuries are noticeably catastrophic. The situation has reached the point where solutions can no longer be forgone. In the history of Soka education (education for value-creating life), environmental education has not been the center of discussion; however, Soka education is concerned with environmental issues. The founder of the Soka schools and a Japanese peace activist, Daisaku Ikeda, has mentioned environmental crises and education as a challenge to humankind and has emphasized the importance of environmental education in the modern age. I conducted my case study at Rio Muchacho community school in rural Ecuador in order to examine Soka education’s contribution to the local environmental situation. Without knowing Soka education, the community school has adopted educational practices and philosophy that are remarkably similar to what Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the founder of Soka education, proposed. On one hand, installation of the half-day school system has succeeded in fostering local leaders in sustainable agriculture. On the other hand, the curriculum is too locally focused and limits student's
potential. With a deeper and more inclusive understanding of Soka education, the community school could become a grassroots movement that contributes to sustainable development on a global scale.

Background

Environmental issues are one of the crises that globalization has brought to modern society. The revolution in transportation and information technology has allowed the most rapid development that human history has ever seen in its history. As a result, human beings continue to drastically modify the natural environment without knowing the consequences: pollution, climate change, deforestation, and acid rain—the list seems endless. Although some of these issues are considered controversial in today’s society, the events have concrete facts.

In response to these environmental issues, the idea of sustainable development was introduced in the 1990s. Sustainable development is a framework that aims for “development that is socially equitable and protective of the natural resource base on which human activity depends” (Dernbach 1998). This concept embraces the idea of development; however, it emphasizes the fact that natural resources are a limited treasure on which the future generation will also depend. Thus, the primary goal of sustainable development is to create a balance between resource development in the present and nature conservation for the future. This concept has become widely acknowledged throughout the world as awareness of environmental crisis rises. Symbolizing urgency of environmental protection, the United Nations included sustainable development as one of the Millennium Development Goals.

There have been a lot of debates on environment; however, in reality, it does not matter which side you stand for. Many changes in favor of the environment delay or prevent other activities in society, especially the economy and business. However, as matter of fact, environmental improvements help solve other social problems. The 1997 Thessaloniki Declaration of the International Conference on Environment and Society insists that “the concept of sustainability encompasses not only environment but also poverty, population, health, food security, democracy, human rights and peace” (Ikeda 2010, 38). The environment is deeply connected to the fundamentals of human life; therefore, considering the urgency of environmental and other vital issues in human society, we can no longer procrastinate facing this environmental crisis. Ikeda says, “Because environmental issues are so deeply interlinked with these other global issues, their resolution requires a fundamental rethinking of our way of life—as individuals, as societies and in terms of human civilization itself” (Ikeda 2010, 38). Although this interconnectedness is a cause of disunity in today’s society, it is also a reason why the entire world has to be united toward finding a solution for environmental issues.

Ikeda has pointed out the role of education in the environmental movement. In order to overcome the lack of solidarity toward the resolution of environmental problems, he emphasizes the importance of education that teaches the clear picture of a global society and empowers people.

Together with the provision of accurate information, it is crucial that the ethical values we share are clarified. This is particularly important in the case of environmental issues, which can be so vast and complex that information and knowledge alone can leave people without a clear sense of what concrete steps they can take, wondering what this all means to them. To counter such feelings of powerlessness and disconnection, education should encourage understanding of the ways that environmental problems intimately connect to our daily lives. Education must also inspire the faith that each of us has both the power and the responsibility to effect positive change on a global scale (Ikeda 2010, 41).

In this passage, he talks about the clarification of information and the empowerment of people. Specifically, he points out the importance of shifting people’s mindsets about their capabilities. In Makiguchi’s words, this is the realization of global citizenship—the notion that people have power to make a difference on a global scale. This shift in mindset is crucial in solving environmental problems. Ikeda sees the potential to achieve this realization through education. Environmental education is different from other types of education because it has to deal with people’s lifestyles and cultural change. The purpose of environmental education is not only to offer specific knowledge about the topic but also to encourage students to be actively involved and be part of the solution. In other words, the ultimate goal of environmental education is the empowerment of the younger generation toward environmental protection and sustainable development.
Case Study: Community School—Experiment in Modern Society

Even though the theory and practice of Soka education have been remarkably well established in the last eighty years, there are few places where its principles are practiced aside from the Soka School System. Fortunately, however, during my study abroad program, I encountered one community school whose practices resemble Makiguchi’s theory. The Rio Muchacho Environmental School is located in Manabí, one of the coast-forming provinces of Ecuador, South America. The school was founded in 1992, and since then, it has been successfully fostering leaders of an agricultural revolution in the community of Rio Muchacho (Rio Muchacho Organic Farm 2011).

Within the country with the highest rate of deforestation in South America, the devastation that Province of Manabí went through was noticeably catastrophic. Manabí is located on the northern coast of Ecuador, facing the Pacific Ocean. Except the one area of tropical savannah, the dominant climate is tropical monsoon. Therefore, the entire region was originally covered with rich vegetation. The economy of the province mostly depends on agriculture. People practice on plantations of coffee, rice, palms, bananas and passion fruits (Gan 2009). The wave of monoculture is relatively new to the region. Ecuador is one of the first countries to export coffee beans to the international market, and people of Manabí were economically dependent on the money they made through coffee exportation. Nevertheless, when competitors such as Colombia and other African nations joined the coffee exportation competition, native species of Ecuadorian coffee lost their stable position in the international market. In order to rapidly recover the income for their family to survive, farmers adopted slash-and-burn cultivation and shifted from traditional coffee agriculture to modern monoculture plantation and cattle farming. Since native coffee plants grow in the shade of the jungles, people used to maintain the forests. Therefore, there was not much open land in the region, and people had to cut down the trees to introduce new agricultural practices. Thus, agriculture has been the major driving force of deforestation in the Province of Manabí.

The story of Manabí was changed with the establishment of a small organic farm. Darío Proaño, the regional minister of tourism during the 1980s, was deeply concerned about destruction of local ecosystem and became an organic farmer in 1989. With the help of his wife Nicola Mears, who is an organic horticulturist from New Zealand, he succeeded in demonstrating agro-ecological practices in the local community and become an inspiration toward sustainable life in the Province of Manabí (Gan 2009). The farm’s primary purpose is not only to grow healthy foods but also to change dietary and agricultural habits in the local community. To achieve this goal, Proaño and Mears designed the farm based on the principle of “permaculture” — a form of sustainable human settlement that mimics natural ecological systems (Glover et al. 2007). As a role model, the farm succeeded in becoming 99% self-sustainable with fifty residents at maximum. Meals are all vegetarian, and all inorganic waste is brought to the City of Canoa (Proaño 2010). All organic wastes including excretion are recycled into the rich soil with domestic animals’ digestion system. Rain water is collected and processed for the residents to shower and wash dishes.

Proaño would spend decades looking for a way to spread his ideal. Despite his sincere solicitude for his homeland, Proaño found it difficult to entrench this “strange idea (Proaño 2010)” of permaculture in the community. He describes the situation back in the 1990s as that people had their own way of growing things and making money out of it. He pointed out that the preoccupation to their agricultural practices made it extremely difficult to change their mindset (Proaño 2010). In order to spread the sustainable culture, the farm started a number of projects for the locals as well as tourists from all over the world in 1990. The farm constructed facilities for people to stay and experience permaculture and the beauty of nature in Manabí.

After all the attempts, the main focus of the farm is now “Rio Muchacho Community Environmental School.” The school is unique in the sense that it is community-founded. The idea of community school was started by local parents who were concerned about the corruption and violence taking place in the local governmental school. The locals started asking Proaño for a new, and he understood their urgent needs. After a series of discussions, they decided to make the school environmental school for the future of the community. The mission of the school was decided to be “to integrate human values, environment and local culture in a practical, fun way with mainstream subjects” (Rio Muchacho Organic Farm 2011). The Organic Farm covered costs to hire teachers, buy study materials and provide breakfast for the students, and the community provided building materials. With their collaborated efforts, the school was founded in 1992. Since then, the school has
been mostly run by the profits on the ecotourism to the farm with some support from various organizations; therefore, the parents are asked for two dollars per month for tuition (Proaño 2010).

In the community school, approximately forty students from the first to sixth grades learn how to connect school materials to their daily life. They study general subjects required by the government in an agricultural context. For instance, they are asked to calculate how much manure is needed for the thirty-day operation of the vegetable garden. School ends at one o’clock in the afternoon and the students then go home to help their parents on their farms (Personal Interaction 2010). In addition, they are assigned projects to go out to the field and grow vegetables in an organic and sustainable manner. In this way, students learn how to connect what they learn in the classrooms with what they face in society. For their final project in the sixth grade, students use their parents’ farm to do a permaculture project. In this way, the parents can see how organic agricultural practices work (Proaño 2010).

Method

This study is based dominantly on informal, personal interactions that took place in July and December, 2010 (a week in total) at Rio Muchacho Organic Farm and Community School. Two interviewer took place with the two founders of the organic farm, Darío Proaño and Nicola Mears. Informal interactions happened with two current teachers and three graduates of the community school. The purpose of the conversation with Proaño and Mears was to clarify their primary purpose of founding the school and the direction in which they are aiming. Questions asked included the reasons for founding the school, issues they see in the current system and their future plan. The conversations with teachers and graduates were done in order to confirm to what extent the curriculum and vision Proaño and Mears have are implemented. Teachers were asked their reasons for teaching at the community school, their teaching methods and their understanding of the founding principle of the school. Graduates were asked about the advantage and disadvantage of going to the community school, things to improve and their future careers.

Result and Discussion

Correspondence between Soka education and Rio Muchacho Environmental School

Through interactions with interviewees, it became evident that the community school has several features that correspond to the methods and philosophy of Soka education. First of all, the philosophy on which the school’s foundation was based is quite similar to what Soka education upholds. Makiguchi defined the purpose of education as the happiness of individuals and communities. In the second chapter of Education for Creative Living, he explains why education should serve the happiness of the people and society. Education provides knowledge for students to realize truth and training to create value in their lives. These two main aims of education serve as the way that leads students to happiness (Makiguchi 1997, 24).
Through examining the history of human society and education, Makiguchi points out that there are three stages of different educational purposes and social values that humanity goes through. The first stage is of the education for people to fit into their social status, for example literature for nobilities and agricultural techniques for farmers. At the second stage, education provides the ability to attain freedom and prosperity in individual life, or techniques to pursue an elite career. The third and the ultimate stage is that of realization that individuals are part of society and that the collaborative life is the form of happiness (Makiguchi 1997, 26-27). In other words, people dedicate their life for the good of their society to seek their individual happiness. Makiguchi insists that this is the ideal and ultimate relation of the education and society. This idea about the purpose of education is clearly represented in the development of the community school. The very first step taken by the local parents came purely out of their concerns for their children. The second step, deciding curriculum, manifests the depleted concern for the future of the community. Agricultural practices of the past were destructive and depleted the resources for future generations. Their decision of teaching permaculture at the school was to preserve the gift from nature that the present generation was enjoying. Ultimately, this school serves the happiness of the students and the community by providing high quality environmental education. In this sense, the community school is practicing Soka education in their own way.

Another concept in common between Soka education and the community school is the half-day school system. This is the idea of teaching specialized knowledge and general subjects at the same time from elementary school to university. When Makiguchi published Education for Creative Living, general the understanding of education was strictly separated from the real living. Makiguchi, who was concerned about the separation between conceptual knowledge and life in society, proposed the half-day school system where students spend half a day studying general subjects in classrooms and another half gaining practical skills that are desired in society. In this way students can develop academic and professional skills, mental and physical strength and the skills of, collaboration and individual work (Makiguchi 1997, 44). At the community school, school ends at one in the afternoon so that students can go back and help their parents in their fields. In this manner, students can receive the physical and technical training they need in order to work in fields and also learn how to apply what they study at school real life. This is nothing but the manifestation of what Makiguchi insists: there should be no separation between learning in the classroom and in the community (Storz 1989, 220).

In addition, the community school practices what Ikeda suggests specifically for environmental education. Believing in the potential of education, Ikeda and the Soka Gakkai International (An international Buddhist organization of which Ikeda is president) has made a suggestion to set “an international decade of
environmental education for sustainable development to follow the UN Decade of Human Rights Education from the year 2005 (Ikeda 2010, 38). Following the suggestion, he lists three specific goals to follow in order for the decade to be successful:

- To learn and deepen awareness of environmental issues and realities.
- To reflect on our modes of living, renewing these toward sustainability.
- To empower people to take concrete action to resolve the challenges we face (Ikeda 2010, 39).

Students at the community school go on field trips to learn the beauty of nature; at the same time, those sites are the frontiers of deforestation. Students thus have the opportunity to learn the reality with firsthand experiences on a daily basis. Also, students’ learning permaculture is a shift of people’s “modes of living” into sustainable ones. In regards to the third point, the last part of the discussion is dedicated to examine student’s empowerment at the school. Ikeda also points out the importance of elementary school’s role in environmental education.

It is vital to incorporate such efforts particularly into the early years of the school curriculum, the stage of growth when children are most rich in their sensitivity, imagination and creativity, when their desire to learn and absorb is at its height. A number of countries already promote environmental education as an integral part of their school curriculum. To cultivate in children’s heart’s the desire to treasure nature and protect the Earth is a vital step toward protecting their future (Ikeda 2010, 40).

The Community School’s Contribution to Society

One of the biggest contributions of the school to the community is the gradual but steady change in agricultural practices. In the last five decades, agriculture has been destroying the ecosystem of the region, and it is required to renew the modes of living in order to stop the destruction (Cassell 2008). When the organic farm started, the locals did not pay attention to what they were doing at the farm. However, students at the community school are now spreading new agricultural practices to the community faster than ever. The students’ final projects have been significantly impacting their parents, especially their mothers. Students grow vegetables that are eaten at home, while their parents usually grow passion fruit to export. When mothers see foods growing from their farms, they realize the value of cultivating vegetables and fruits that they consume locally (Proaño 2010). Also, fathers recognize different benefits of permaculture. Permaculture’s aim is “edible forests” (Whitefield 1993). Forests are productive and self-reliant; permaculture tries to bring these characteristics to farms through creating a diversity of species. Species diversity has several benefits: preventing nitrogen and minerals from escaping from the soil, preventing pests, and making the farm self-maintained (Whitefield 1993). According to Proaño, the fathers often find their children’s plants growing better than theirs without fertilizers or pesticides. They become convinced by the actual example of permaculture in front of their eyes. In this manner, the community school has achieved their mission of serving for the happiness of an individual and community, which Makiguchi recognized as the ultimate goal of education. It also corresponds to Daisaku Ikeda’s principle of higher education: “Universities exist to benefit those who are unable to attend them” (SGI-USA Culture Department 2009). Even though the community school is not a higher education institution, its high ideals have brought the school to the level where it can empower students to make a difference in society. The students now serve for the community who did not have an opportunity to receive environmental education.

Moreover, graduates are now becoming leaders who lead the community to sustainable development. There is a graduate who is working at the community school as a teacher of agriculture. He is also working at the organic farm, and he is teaching the knowledge he gained through his education at the school and also his career at the farm. Another graduate, who is also working at the farm, will be receiving a good amount of land from his father. As the educated generation takes over control over the use of land, there will be a drastic change in the agricultural impact on nature (Personal Interactions 2010).

Criticism: Local Revolution and Global Citizenship

Despite the great success it has achieved, the community school still faces challenges. Proaño and Mears shared their concerns with me during the interviews. Among various problems, they worry about the students’ life after the community school. In this region, students have to go outside of their communities to
continue their education after graduating from elementary school. Students from Rio Muchacho often experience culture shock in the cities, and some of them lose control over themselves. For instance, due to the lack of sexual education, girls often become pregnant not long after graduating from the community school. Proaño is also concerned about the students going into careers in cities. According to him, the perception of jobs in general in Ecuador is a means of earning money. He is therefore concerned about students living a life that does not create value in society. For this reason, he strongly believes that the best career for students is to stay in the community, although there are not many career options available (Proaño 2010).

In order to address the cultural adjustment after graduation, a colegio, which is equivalent to a middle school and high school in the U.S., will be established this year (2011). This issue is partially due to the curriculum that is strictly focused on agricultural and rural aspect of life. This selective curriculum comes from their belief that environmental consciousness has to be deeply planted of students’ life while they have flexible mind. In this colegio, students will receive education on different subject that the elementary school does not teach.

The colegio may solve some of the problems; the it limits students’ future options. At the colegio, the main focus will still be permaculture. The design of colegio is based on the assumption that all the students seek to be farmers. This generalization causes two problems. First, students who desire other jobs besides agriculture have to leave the community or give up their dreams. Second, it is ethically controversial that educational institution strictly guides students to a specific direction that educators believe right. Thus, the colegio may be one solution but does not address the roots of the problem.

Through analyzing Ikeda’s suggestions to environmental education and the community school’s founding principles, it becomes clear that the fundamental cause of this issue is the lack of global citizenship. Ikeda insists,

Maliguchi described the local community as the world in miniature. He stressed the importance of opening children’s eyes to the world through learning rooted in the local community—the place where history, nature and society intersect... I believe that this kind of cyclical movement—viewing the world from the perspective of the local community, looking at the community through the lens of the world—is vital if we are to develop an ethical understanding and appreciation of nature that is truly rooted in the felt realities of daily life (Ikeda 2010, 43).

In this passage, Ikeda emphasizes the importance of putting local matters into the international context in order to appreciate their true values. Since the community school attempts to teach the value of nature in the region, this idea can be applied to the school as well.

By teaching a global context of issues, students will receive a few benefits. First, they can deepen their understanding of the issues in their community. In today’s global society, every community is influenced by other parts of the world, especially in terms of environmental problems. Through studying internal and external factors that cause environmental issues, students will have a better understanding of why they have to protect forests in their community. Moreover, with a deeper understanding of those issues, students will be able to defend their values when they go outside of the community. When students study only one argument repeatedly, they do not learn how to argue back in front of opposing opinions. Nonetheless, if students learn critical thinking skills through being exposed to different point of view on daily basis, they can protect their values in a chaotic society as well.

Additionally, this new perspective makes it possible to unite the entire community. Ikeda points out that our society has to unite for a common goal.

[What] is even more fundamentally lacking [than the commitment of knowledge, technology and funds] in my view are such intangible elements as a sense of solidarity and common purpose with our fellow inhabitants of Earth and a real sense of responsibility toward future generations (Ikeda 2010, 35-36).
In fact, successful environmental movements, such as Green Belt Movement led by the African biologist Wangari Maathai, had unity and shared sense of mission among the people who joined. One of the major movements that Henderson has led called Citizens for Clean Air is also an example. Henderson states,

Most of us who started Citizens for Clean Air were mothers. Since we knew what a big task it is to bring up children, we were anxious that our children have the best futures possible. Thinking back, I realize that's what gave us the strength to endure numerous persecutions and keep pushing ahead (Henderson and Ikeda 2002, 138).

In order to unite as humanity, it is crucial to teach environmental education in a global perspective. It is because (1) it provides better understanding of the consequences that destructive activities cause and (2) people become motivated by knowing that they are part of a worldwide movement. It is difficult to realize the consequence of local deforestation because the change appears quite gradual to the locals. However, it is easier to see the distractive reality in other parts of the world from outside. Also, through knowing that they are making a difference together with other grassroots movements throughout the world, people obtain a stronger sense of mission. In this way, education can fuel local environmental movements through teaching a global viewpoint.

In order to be successful at this educational revolution, the concept of global citizenship has to be mentioned. There are various definitions and interpretation of global citizenship. Makiguchi once described that it is a notion that one individual is a citizen of more than a single nation (Henderson and Ikeda 2004, XI). This is a strong statement that empowers people. By removing national boundaries from people's concept, he teaches that the power of people is not limited within the countries to which they belong. This empowerment will be followed by a realization that everyone else is also global citizens. Ikeda's essay reads,

Perhaps the clouds and winds high above the blue waters of the Bosporus are whispering among themselves as they gaze down upon humanity; “Wake up! From up here, it is clear that the world is one. You are all citizens of Earth. There is no such thing as Americans, no such thing as Iraqis. There is only this boy, this life, called Bob, who happens to live in America; there is only this boy, this life, Mohammed, who happens to live in Iraq. Both are children of Earth” (Ikeda 2002, 101).

He wrote this essay to point out the foolishness of people passing down hatred against other nations; however, this can be applied to environmental context as well. Behind the disunity in environmental protection, there is a structure where stronger countries exploit weaker ones. This obstacle can be overcome by citizens who realize that all people are equally important citizens of this planet. With this realization of mission as global citizens, grassroots movements will be fully empowered.

At Rio Muchacho Community School, therefore, it is important to teach environmental education in global context together with the concept of global citizenship. Its focus on integrating local culture, environmentalism and general subjects deserves attentions from educators from all over the world. In addition to current curriculum, I would suggest the inclusion of programs that open up students’ eyes to the world. By doing so, environmental education and permaculture will have greater values in students’ lives. This new addition will ensure that the local movements moving forward.

**Conclusion**

Rio Muchacho Community School happened to be an experimental case of Soka education in environmental context. On one hand, its half-day school system has been precisely providing education that is needed for the students to be successful farmers. Permacultural skills specifically contribute to the sustainability of the local community by offering organic food for its people and conserving healthy soil for future generations. As Makiguchi insisted, simultaneous teaching of practical and conceptual knowledge connected the Rio Muchacho community and classrooms. On the other hand, due to its close focus on local agricultural matters, the curriculum is not designed to empower community members to contribute to a global scale movement. With his strong priority in the wellbeing of the community, the founder Proaño attempts to let students remain in the community as permaculture leaders. This action is noticeably caused by the absence of understanding, or misunderstanding if it ever exists, of the connection between a local community and
global society. With Makiguchi’s vision of global citizenship, this community school would develop its capability of fostering world class leaders and spreading the movement throughout the world.

To conclude, I would like to share a line from one of the SUA student songs named *On the Path of Peace*. It reads, “Our footsteps in the present will be paths of peace one day.” The song was composed in 2007 by more than forty SUA students with a variety of backgrounds in order to engrave the mission of Soka education in students’ hearts. Peace—or happiness for all living beings, in other words—would not come to us; rather we have to walk toward it. It is neither a short nor easy way to go. However, the faith that each footprint is part of the process of paving a path of peace empowers us in front of despair and keeps us moving forward. This is the core of the philosophy of value creation. This is why Soka education shines as a hope in the dark of powerlessness in which humanity is caught. Let us, as Soka students from around the world, embark on our endeavor to fulfill this immense mission of spreading the light of hope to every corner of the world.
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Environmental Department: An Example of Soka Education at SUA

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As an environmental group in the student government, Environmental Department strives for the materialization of the University’s noble principle of “[fostering] leaders for the creative coexistence of nature and humanity” through initiating activities and developing policies that instill the culture of eco-friendliness in the SUA community (Environmental Department Charter).

To ensure the concrete advancement of SUA’s sustainability, ED focuses on the following areas: amending SUA’s environmental policies, conducting research, and promoting community outreach and environmental education. Currently, ED is collaborating with the SUA administration through the Environmental Committee in making substantial changes on school policies affecting facilities and general management, toward the goal of making SUA a sustainable and carbon neutral institution. Despite the potential progress of facility-efficiency improvements and school environmental-policy implementation, the human factor still remains at the core of the environmental impact. Therefore, environmental education is crucial.

In 2002, SUA founder Daisaku Ikeda called for the need to advance education on sustainable development stating:
Resolving this crisis [degradation of the earth] will require the commitment of more knowledge, technology and funds. But what is even more fundamentally lacking in my view are such intangible elements as a sense of solidarity and common purpose with our fellow inhabitants of Earth and a real sense of responsibility toward future generations (Ikeda 2010 p.35)

To tackle environmental issues, Ikeda suggested three goals: to learn, to reflect, and to empower.

To learn is to deepen people’s understanding of the issues and realities; to reflect emphasizes the importance of bringing these lessons into our modes of living, seeing how our communities are directly or indirectly influencing or being affected by the problems; and to empower articulates the fundamental changes through concrete actions (Ikeda 2010 p.39).

Ikeda’s three guidelines encompass the spirit of Soka education, founded by Tsunesaburo Makiguchi. According to Makiguchi, the fundamental purpose of education is the student’s “realization of happiness.” Ikeda explains what Makiguchi meant in the following passage:

Education should encourage youth to realize their precious potential and to display their unique individuality with enthusiasm and vigor. Furthermore, education should teach youth to uphold the sanctity of life—for both self and others—so that they may create supreme value in their own lives as well as for society” (Ikeda 2010 p. xi).

Through learning, reflecting, and empowering, Soka education encourages an intellectual understanding of society and instills substantial changes in people’s actions, starting from their communities. There are three features of Soka education that are designed to achieve the purpose of what is truly beneficial for the welfare of future generations: community study, the role of the teacher, and an emphasis on the purpose of education. I believe that Environmental Department is exploring these areas and has the potential to enhance Soka education at SUA through environmental education.

**Community Study**

For Makiguchi, personal-experience building is essential for learning and is one of the functions of community study in Soka education. The American educator John Dewey, called this concept “the organic connection between education and personal experience” (Dewey 1997 p.25). Dewey used babies as an example to explain the relationship between experience and learning:

As the infant learns to reach, creep, walk, and talk, the intrinsic subject-matter of its experience widens and deepens. It comes into connection with new objects and events which call out new powers, while the exercise of these powers refines and enlarges the content of its experience (Dewey 1974 p. 374).

When the concept is not familiar (due to the absence of such personal experience with the subject-matter) it is difficult to contextualize the application of the concept. Furthermore, without proper experience, learning becomes passive and turns into mere information cramming. Although a learner can still acquire the necessary information under this condition, the knowledge becomes meaningless because the “fact” has no connection to the student’s life. To bridge this gap, imagination may compensate for the lack of experience. Traditionally, for example, when students struggle to comprehend a concept, a good teacher will use her experience to guide the students to “imagine.” However, the student may not be able to relate to the experience suggested by the teacher.

Even if the students could imagine or comprehend the concept through the teacher’s explanation, it does not necessarily resolve the problem. For those students who are unable to The concept remains foreign to the students, those who are unable to evaluate transferred knowledge without understanding based upon personal experience; the understanding would remain the teachers’, but not the student’s. This creates a serious problem in which the students have to follow and fully rely on teachers’ guidance. Makiguchi discerned this problem in Japanese education and was concerned about students becoming unable to distinguish opinions from facts and values because they do not have the experience needed to confront what teachers teach.
To Learn

To cope with the problem regarding personal experience, Makiguchi propagated community study, which can also mean “cultural study” in Japanese. By community study, he meant learning about one’s immediate environment:

When related to pedagogical concerns, the community becomes the interconnected network of personal and structural relationships that occur in the geographic area in which one’s life is sustained (Bethel 1994 p. 60).

In A Geography of Human Life, Makiguchi recounts the story of how this type of education is profound and important in our civil society. In the story, a feudal lord called Katsutoshi Doi demonstrates how knowing the origin of a seemingly insignificant 30 cm piece of string, which he picked up randomly from the road, can give us an in-depth picture of contemporary societal economics. More importantly, this education teaches people how to appreciate the life they have, which Makiguchi further stated,

It would be foolish to narrow our vision to our own small portion of the world, to worry uselessly about bygone troubles or busy ourselves in disputes and arguments over trivial matters. At the same time, we should avoid blindly following those who would have us neglect our immediate environment and community in the name of a misguided cosmopolitanism (Bethel 2002 p.12).

To enhance community study, Makiguchi suggested a half-day school plan, which was similar to progressive education or experimental curricula. Viewing the entire community as an extension of the classroom, he encouraged students after school to use the other half of their day to engage in creative or productive work experience. “Work” could be activities that students were interested in or related to the subjects they studied at school. Makiguchi valued these hands-on experiences in the half-day work. He saw that students could expand their personal experiences by working in the community, which allowed them to draw on these personal experiences to help them understand school subjects. Such experiences help learners to overcome the gap between facts relayed by the teacher or textbook and its connection to their personal lives. Furthermore, experience enabled learners to cultivate their own direct relationship with the subject matter, as opposed to one inherited from their teacher.

To Reflect

In addition to becoming handy points of references for learning, these relationships can be useful for reflecting on people’s modes of living as well. Often, people learn about issues in distant places, such as in schools or from media that evokes awareness. However, if one cannot reflect on the issue in relation to oneself, awareness is only temporary and fades away over time. C. Wright Miles, an American sociologist, pointed out that the key to behavior change lies in “sociological imagination.” He believed that people have to be able to imagine and hold their social responsibilities within the community, instead of blindly following. Miles considered that the crisis of modern people is the incapability of grasping the essential “interplay of man and the society, of biography and history, of self and world.” In other words, modern people lack “the capacity of an individual to understand himself in relation to his society” (p. 145). Miles’ view was shared by Dewey and Makiguchi as well. Ikeda declared that it is important for people to reflect on and renew their sociological responsibilities. When people are passive in thinking about their social responsibilities, they may obey the societal decrees created by previous generations, but at the same time, ignore the ones that are needed for their own evolving society. As technology continues to expand people’s influence in the international community, many issues still feel extremely distant. To reflect is an important element to strengthen sociological responsibility and reinforce our moral behaviors, especially in relation to environmental issues that affect the entire globe. Ikeda stated,

We need to learn to empathetically understand the realities of those who suffer, embracing their pain as our own and conscious of our interconnectedness. Such an effort will give birth to renewed awareness and determination to act (Ikeda 2010 p.39).

When learning about distant issues, if one can also learn about similar issues within one’s community, the problem can become intimate to daily life. As reflection creates constant reminders of distant issues in people’s lives, these renewable stimulants eventually lead to constructive actions.
Teacher's Role in Education

In Makiguchi’s time, and still even today, formal education was and is dictated by the “authorities,” which could be in the form of a teacher, written textbook or social and ideological belief. These authorities are forces that prevent individuals from thinking differently, forming personal opinions, and generating a customized education that addresses specific needs and benefits the students. An Indian philosopher, Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986) expanded on the implications of such “authorities” on students, claiming that they create fear in education. In his view, fear ceases further thinking. What he meant by fear, for example, are the pressures of failing, of not meeting others’ expectations, or of embarrassment. All these factors force conformity in students’ creativity; obedience becomes the easiest solution under these conditions. Dewey and Makiguchi believe that if education dictated by teachers becomes merely the passing of knowledge from teachers to students, it is difficult for children to learn about things they need for the constantly changing world. Accordingly, instead of empowering students to take action, traditional education coerces students to follow, which is not beneficial for future generations.

In addition to the notion that “fear prohibits learning,” Krishnamurti also believed that people are able to learn most when there is no fear and people’s senses are opened with great attention to things around them. Because qualities such as curiosity and attention cannot be taught, teachers often thought the students were responsible for their own learning. However, they did not take into account the external factors such as how teachers’ attitudes toward the students can affect students’ learning. Makiguchi, Dewey, and Krishnamurti, agreed that it was the teachers who were often the barriers to students’ learning.

Despite all the above, Dewey and Krishnamurti were not advocating the elimination of all sorts of authority. It is necessary to eliminate fear of learning, but only by taking out the unhelpful authorities or turning them into educative ones. Addressing the teachers’ role, they believe that learning takes place when teachers and students view each other as equal in the learning process. Along with Dewey and Makiguchi’s ideas, Krishnamurti expressed,

I think learning can exist only in that state of communion between the teacher and the student, as between you and me—not that I am your teacher. You know what the word “communion” means: to communicate, to be in touch, to transmit a certain feeling, to share it, not only at the verbal level but also at an intellectual level and also to feel much more deeply, subtly. I think the word “communion” means all that, and in that state, at all levels, in that atmosphere, in that sense of togetherness, is it not possible for both the teacher and the student to learn? I think that is the only state in which to learn, not when you sit on a pedestal and pour information down the throat of the student (Krishnamurti 1974 p. 102).

In addition, they believed that teachers play the most important role in education, and it is in part the teachers’ responsibility to draw out students’ interests in learning different subjects. Dewey especially emphasized the importance of connecting the subject-matter with the importance of learning it:

In the educative environment, the knowledge, judgment and experience of the teacher is a greater, not a smaller factor, than it is in the traditional school. The difference is that the teacher operates not as a magistrate set on high and marked by arbitrary authority but as a friendly co-partner and guide in a common enterprise (John Dewey 1974 p. 10).
Purpose

Furthermore, Dewey believed that it is important to explain the purpose of the subject-matter to direct students’ interests. He thought that many of the interests in learning were for getting jobs and attaining higher social status. He suggested that the purpose for education should be for solving problems in society.

Dewey’s idea about learning for the society is strongly connected with Makiguchi’s educational philosophy (Bethel 1994 p. 50). For Makiguchi, the purpose of education is the happiness of the learner who can create value with his or her life. He considered the highest form of happiness as the contribution of each individual to the welfare of both self and society, and education should be a process of empowering people to be able to create such value (Bethel 1994 p. 51).

Synthesizing the ideas about progressive learning, eliminating fear, and triggering students’ interests, Makiguchi’s half-day schooling and half-day experimental curriculum is a solution for the paradox faced by traditional and progressive education. With teachers acting only as observers and facilitators in the process, the community study curriculum provides students with opportunities to gain hands-on experience free from pressure, gaining positive feelings toward learning.

Environmental Department

The function of the Environmental Department (ED) can be thought of as close to a community study curriculum, embodying Ikeda’s three guidelines, to learn, to reflect, and to empower in Makiguchi’s education pedagogy.

Community Study

The department’s main objective is to strive for sustainable development in its community. Students create their own projects addressing environmental needs on campus, decide how they want to initiate them, and divide the work among team members. Members study the problems and utilize resources that are available for solutions, for example, multimedia, faculty, staff, community members, and fellow students. In general, ED looks at campus environmental issues in three areas: policy, research, and outreach and education. According to their respective interests, students choose to join one of the three committees. Due to the intimate relationship between the students and their learning environment, Makiguchi thought the community study would deepen their understanding of the function of the campus and integrate people within the society.

Teacher’s Role

As part of the Soka Student Union (SSU), Environmental Department is a student run organization. Besides having a faculty advisor, ED is student-only and because members join voluntarily, they are actively engaged in events and are easily motivated. As these projects are self-directed with little restraints, students are allowed to be creative. Within this egalitarian environment, anyone within the community can be a teacher and everyone of the departmentare teachers of one another. There is little competition or pressure of failing. However, students do have to take up responsibilities and cope with the disappointments of their mistakes. To ensure safety and progress, Makiguchi envisioned that guidance would be required from both parents and someone who is qualified to teach certain skills. Students can use any resources they can find. For example, based on the projects, they can decide whom to ask for information or assistance. Accordingly, students are able to develop skills in which “[they are] interested and [have the] capability” (Bethel 1997 p. 76).

Purpose

Based on the central value of Soka education and the spirit of the Soka Student Union, projects and activities within the department should be beneficial for the SUA community, which includes the department and others. However, first and foremost, the educative aspect is to encourage individuals with intellect and propensity to take initiative. At SUA, students have many opportunities to be exposed to, and learn about, issues that can easily be ignored by society at large. For instance, every year, we have students going to countries around the world and experiencing the unique struggles that people there have to live through every day. During winter block, there are also students who go abroad to do research for learning clusters. In regard to these aspects, the current Soka education we have, in my opinion, raises students’ awareness.
However, these inspiring experiences can easily fade once students return to their “normal” lives. Therefore, keeping the inspiring or devastating stories in mind and taking concrete actions based upon what they experienced is not an easy thing to do. Furthermore, it is difficult to see how issues such as poverty and environmental degradation in other countries are related to our lives on campus. Imagining these sociological responsibilities is not only difficult as C. Wright Miles mentioned, but to take these concepts into people’s hearts could be likened to upholding a spiritual belief. As founder Daisaku Ikeda has suggested the three guidelines, a holistic approach to the issue is needed, in which “education should encourage understanding of the ways that environmental problems intimately connect to our daily lives” (p.41).

Environmental Department is fortunate because, with the newly founded environmental studies concentration, it has the capacity to provide opportunities for students to hold discussions outside of the classroom. Furthermore, it can extend the environmental issues to our living community, transcending learning toward reflecting. Last but not least, it also has given students space to exercise their ideas. Ideally, through these processes, students should have the right environment to cultivate their intellect and transform their behavior.

There are many student groups on campus that do take concrete steps but their efforts are often under recognized. As a small campus with students that come and go on study abroad and graduation, SUA has great population dynamism in the student body. This can be refreshing but can, at the same time, be frustrating for students who are eager to take initiative. Sometimes, these obstacles can be challenging due to the timing and situation, in which the more people try hard to work on issues they care about the more depressed they become. On the other hand, we also have students who are not aware of the issues going on around the world, waiting to be inspired. In order to spread awareness and encourage student-driven activities, I propose a student classroom, where people can share their ideas and achievements.

Proposed Idea

One proposed idea is the Student Environmental Classroom that would be coming up next semester. The idea is to have students who did or are doing research projects related to the environmental field to share what they have learned. There are several challenges that are presented in both teaching and learning science. I believe that this project, while raising environmental awareness, can provide some solution in resolving such challenges. In addition, these are all in line with the educational values removed mentioned above.

First of all, the ideas are shared through presentation. A presentation gives a clear picture of what the topic is and explains the purpose of the project, minimizing the feeling of confusion amongst the students. Even if students might not be able to fully comprehend the topics, they will have a general idea.

Secondly, it can help students overcome the fear of the technical terms that are used specifically in the field. John Dewey explains:

“They are not used as friendly speech is used in ordinary life, and so for the child they become abstract, a kind of mystery that belongs to the school but not to life outside the school (Dewey 1974 p. 11).”

Through presentations, students can see how academic concepts are applied to current events. Even if they are not able to comprehend the concepts, students can gain familiarity through exposure to these concepts. By the time they see these difficult things in class, students already have a basic understanding of the terms.

Ideally, the student teacher could use the “language” to help explain concepts for the students. As a student herself, the student teacher could discern some difficult parts that should be given more attention for explanation to people who have similar backgrounds. Furthermore, because of their similar backgrounds, seeing that the student teacher who was also once a student is now capable of contributing by helping others learn will provide positive feelings towards the field of study.

Thirdly, presentations are problem based, which means they are social problem-oriented. In other word, they serve to deepen understanding of social problems, and they intrigue thoughts about solving and contributing to human society. In turn, this project can possibly encourage more humanistic actions taken by the students.
Perhaps the greatest need of and for a philosophy of education at the present time is the urgent need that exists for making clear in idea and effective in practice that its end is social, and that the criterion to be applied in estimating the value of the practices that exist in schools is also social (Dewey 1974 p. 12).

Lastly, because the presenters are students, the audiences has less fear to raise questions, promoting mutual learning. Students, by asking their own question can help clarify their own difficulty in understanding concepts. For the student-teacher, by presenting and explaining the research context, she also gains a better understanding of her topic. It is often through teaching others that the teacher is able to find new understanding through the students’ perspectives.

Conclusion

Despite the difference in emphasis of respective academic disciplines, the common goal of Soka education is to cultivate individuals with intellect to live a contributive life for society. The concept of sustainable development is not unique to environmental studies, but is common to everyone. My hope is to stir a movement that motivates people to become actively involved in the issues that they care about. In my view, ignorance is a common cause that jeopardizes the harmony of society and nature. To eradicate ignorance and build social stability, dynamism of intellectually capable people is needed within societies. This is the objective of Soka education.

At SUA, humanistic ideas are often decorations of our essays, and these words are used as if we inherited them when we came to this campus. However, real education and value creation does not happen and end within the classrooms. My view may not be accepted by everyone, and I may not be able to motivate everyone, but I will hold on to my belief and continue my efforts, and encourage people who agree with me to do the same. At the same time, if I can claim myself to be value creative or humanistic, I bet you can seek Soka education from your perspective. To join this game, please put your money where your mouth is, and let us start a humanitarian competition.
Reference


Global Citizenship as an Educative Ideal

Kenji Yamada

Class of 2011

1.

Over the last three and a half years here at Soka University of America (SUA), I have taken dozens of classes, classes that strive to embody the essence of “Soka Education.” Classes that attempt to educate, liberate, and train students to be more than just students. Classes that strive to fulfill the lofty ambition of the school: "to foster a steady stream of global citizens committed to living a contributive life." But as I approach my final semester here at SUA, I have found myself asking the question: What does it mean to be a Global Citizen? When I graduate this May from SUA, will I have successfully completed my education as a Global Citizen, and will I join the “steady stream” of Soka alumni “committed to living a contributive life”? Maybe I will. However, the more I ask myself this question, the more I think that maybe I will not.

2.

Perhaps, this is just the cynic in me speaking, but the concept of Global Citizenship seems like a distant ideal—the kind of ideal that politicians hold high above the heads of everyday citizens in emblazoned and utopian speeches of world peace—which sound nice in theory, but remain all too distant in practice. Perhaps, Global Citizenship is nothing more than an idealistic dream that no one can achieve. Or perhaps, as
German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche writes, “Everyone has his [or her] good days when he [or she] discovers his [or her] higher self; and true humanity demands that everyone be evaluated only in the light of this condition and not merely in light of his [or her] workaday unfreedom and servitude” (HH I:624). While it may be true that each and every individual can discover a higher self, as I look up at my global self, I think: Today is not a good day to be a Global Citizen.

3.

Today is not a good day to be a Global Citizen. I repeat these words to myself and wonder at which point does grounded rationalism slip dangerously into bleak pessimism. Today, as I fail to achieve a “higher self,” I realize that maybe I can never achieve the ideal of Global Citizenship. Thus I wonder: What purpose does the ideal of Global Citizenship actually serve? Does its loftiness serve to pull me up or is its loftiness overwhelming? As Nietzsche writes:

The dangers are always great when things are made too difficult for a human being and when he [or she] is incapable of fulfilling any duties at all. . . . The hardest task still remains: to say how a new circle of duties may be derived from an ideal and how one can proceed towards so extravagant a goal through a practical activity—in short, to demonstrate how an ideal educates (SE p. 156, trans. Amended).

Overwhelming ideals are impotent. For ideals without action are nothing more than dreams. So the question, then, is this one: What makes an ideal educative?

4.

In an address at Teachers College, Columbia University, Ikeda distills the abstract notion of a citizen of the world down to three succinct virtues:

- 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 (p.g. 20 to 21 Soka Education Daisaku Ikeda).

In doing so, Ikeda does not dictate some kind of strict formulated moral imperative that one must adhere to at all times. Rather, these three virtues create the space, freedom, and framework for an all-inclusive notion of Global Citizenship. In providing this definition of Global Citizenship, Ikeda opens up a world of possible practical activities that is available to all people—from world leaders to ordinary citizens. As Ikeda writes: “I have many friends who could be considered quite ordinary citizens but who possess an inner nobility; who have never traveled beyond their native place, yet who are genuinely concerned for the peace and prosperity of the world” (100 Soka Education). I think to myself: Global Citizenship is not an “extravagant goal” limited to only United Nations ambassadors, world travelers, and polyglots. But it is a much more practical goal—an educative ideal.

5.

The question, then, is what does the educative ideal of Global Citizenship based on wisdom, courage and compassion look like? Not surprisingly, I am reminded of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the founder of Soka education, who believed that education should instill a sense of belonging and commitment to not simply one’s
Thus if one must be educated to bring forth one’s humanity, then one must also be educated to bring forth the ideal of the Global Citizen. What I once thought of as a distant ideal far above is now something much closer. Yet paradoxically, I cannot think of anything harder to attain than self-knowledge and an understanding of one’s humanity. In a speech to the students of Soka University of Japan, Ikeda writes: “You must never slacken in your efforts to build new lives for yourselves. Creativity means pushing open the heavy door to life. This is not an easy struggle. Indeed, it may be the hardest task in the world. For opening the door to your own life is in the end is more difficult than opening the door to all the mysteries of the universe” (Soka Education 174). To be creative, to be self-reflective, to have a conscience, to be noble, to care about the world, these require no special talents. Yet it seems that no one is able to do it. What stops us from knowing ourselves? What stops us from seeing our own humanity? Nietzsche writes:

[C]ulture is the child of each individual's self-knowledge and dissatisfaction with himself. Anyone who believes in culture is thereby saying: 'I see above me something higher and more human than I am; let everyone help me to attain it, as I will help everyone who knows and suffers as I do; so that at last the man may appear who feels himself and boundless in knowledge and love, perception and power, and who in his completeness is at one with nature, the judge and evaluator of things (Schopenhauer as Educator 162/163).

Thus, the assiduous influence of culture upon oneself can limit one’s ability to perceive one’s humanity. But as Ikeda writes: “Well-educated individuals do not remained locked in their own nation’s culture; they study the cultures of the world and absorb what these cultures have to offer. This is the first requirement for being considered truly well-educated—in other words, to be capable of transcending one’s own narrow world” (188 Soka Education Daisaku Ikeda).

I believe that Nietzsche, Makiguchi, and Ikeda would all agree that education (although it is not the only means) is a vital way of discovering oneself and one’s humanity. In short, to be a Global Citizen is to enact and engage with one’s inherent human nature—a task that as Ikeda writes “may be the hardest task in the world.” But as we begin the slow but steady upwards spiral toward the lofty ideal of Global Citizenship, do we ever achieve it? Rather as Uruguayan poet Eduardo Galeano writes: “Utopia lies at the horizon. When I draw nearer by two steps, it retreats two steps. If I proceed tens steps forward, it swiftly slips ten steps ahead. No matter how far I go, I can never reach it. What, then, is the purpose of utopia? It is to cause us to advance.”
The Power of Failure: An Odyssey into the Meaning of Success

Jean Marcus

Class of 2011

Introduction

What is success anyway? My mom dreams of me becoming a diplomat, due to her fantasy that my social skills are über-humane. My success in life, for her, would come in the form of a red Brazilian passport (given to government personnel who do national important business around the world, while the majority of the country has a green battered one). When I revealed to her that I would become a writer, a deep disappointment made her look older; I had failed her.

Had I succeed under my mom’s sigil I would have, by now, studied the same amount of sweat and hours as an aspiring officer serving Emperor Tang. I would join a career where all knowledge accumulates to pass an exam, and I would be deployed to officially stamp confidential documents or be identified as a gossip on Wikileaks diplomatic cables. The money I would earn and the social status of a diplomat are qualities praised by many as desirable, but that would not please me. Only writing would make me happy.

My personal story reveals that success is obscure and resides in the realm of fantasy. Subjectivity disables our comprehension on what makes our lives worth living and success becomes a device of control,
available to anyone with enough resources and the will to shape social behavior by using media to establish the parameters of success.

The opposite, failure, is the ultimate nightmare of becoming the dust of society and eventually dying anonymously near a diseased gutter. But it also frees us from those social constraints that success tolls on our ability to choose for ourselves what we consider success.

So in fewer and less confusing words success and failure are actually matters of control and freedom, and, as in any dichotomy, present challenges within their encounter rather than in their direct differences. What is in the gray area between these two forces? Do we want to succeed and constrain our choices, and fail to live free? Furthermore, within the scope of this essay, we will indulge in how our current socio-economic model feeds from these two definitions to maintain the status quo. In the end, if all goes well, we will establish Soka education in terms of success and failure.

Real expectations

A simple conjecture about success defines it as the fulfillment of an expectation, whatever that expectation might be. If I crave to eat a filet of a camel's hump drenched in alcohol distilled from rocks and I achieve it with the resources available, I succeed in fulfilling my desire. From this standpoint, success or failure relies exclusively on our expectations and would not draft any other consequence besides the angst of personal defeat.

The ingenuity of this system, though, resides in the apparatus that set expectations for us: our parents, the government, friends, significant others, etc. Our expectations are rarely (and I ask you to bear with this assumption) decided by ourselves and therefore the belief in our ability to fulfill those desires are seriously compromised because those external agents might set expectations we could never reach.

When we set our own expectations we can fantasize about the assorted challenges that might come with our attempts to fulfill them and also became aware of the possibility for the given task to be completed with our current skills. We are more careful in order to complete our quest.

Expectations assigned to us lack direct awareness of possible outcomes and also lack in the care to assess if it is possible to be successful. A CEO of a high-end computer assembly company will not care if it is not possible to increase 15% in sales; he will expect that his team will achieve that mark no matter what. Constant increment of production is an alien concept because we cannot increase ad infinitum.

A side note: in Rio de Janeiro there is a “home made” cassava snack factory that has been producing the same amount of output for almost ten years now. The factory owner sells a pack of the snacks at an almost constant price, adding a little inflation correction, and says he has enough money to live comfortably and would never increase his production. His main objective is to guarantee possible revenue for the poorer so he only sells his snacks to people who go to the factory, and does not distribute to supermarkets. He controls his own expectations.

We lack, in this system, control over our own expectations and therefore it imposes a hindrance for possible success at all. The chances of those assigned expectations to succeed are limited and I will show further in this essay that this system limits the possible chances of success even more because it limits who has the chance of becoming successful within its threads of competitions, job markets and cultural interactions. But before we can dwell on this system let us divulge about an undeniable principal that puts forward modernity:

Progress

I will skip the appropriate steps of a traditional paper, which would explain what progress is within the canon at this point, and assume that there is such thing as progress and I will loosely call it a constant progression from one stage of production to the next one. In more practical terms, progress refers to a
constant increase of production and has little to say about efficiency or sustainability. The aim of progress is to always expand production, no matter what.

More often than appears on the news, companies fire uncountable numbers of employees due to production reasons.¹ A competitive dispute for jobs is created from this environment and is adjusted according to the volume of production. Success, when put in the context of progress, is established considering the volume of production and all expectations are set to increase regarding previous marks.

Not just in terms of volume, but production as progress also creates a cult for originality, as new products will generate much more money than old ones. Companies need new technologies to continue in the race of selling more because new means that nobody has that commodity; which opens a vast range of markets while the old ones only have a limited market of few new costumers and repairing services.² My indicator for this fetish is acquired through observing the amount of lawsuits in the area of patents and copyrights which increase more than 50% every year.³ I will reserve further thoughts about originality for the section entitled originality (quite original).

In the industry of academic papers the same trend also happens when ground breaking concepts become rare commodities. Till that rare item is produced academics just keep repeating the same old ideas over and over to maintain their names’ popularity among other scholars. Breakthrough ideas are reduced to a push on the scholar’s reputation in the academic community so his name can be repeated more often within other papers. These articles, more than I wish to see, have nothing to do with actual critical thinking, just “progress.”

You may say that such elements of progress are part of a competitive environment and do not relate to control or freedom on the matter of success and failure. So to be clear, I will go ahead and say that this is a far more interesting correlation to draw and to keep the game afoot. We will now venture to understand competition as the precarious relationship between success and failure.

**The cheese stands alone**

The essential problem with contemporary competition is that there is only one desired place for everyone. There is only one first place, not two. Different careers exist but in all of those we desire to achieve a certain place and anything below it will be considered mediocre, which assumes mediocrity as an undesirable way of living.⁴

Let us indulge, first, in some mental exercises to investigate the meaning of expectations. Let us consider first hand that there is no such thing as personal expectation and all our desires are artificially assigned to us. In a person’s life, jobs become significant, not only as we reach adult age, but in some parts of America this concern is passed to our children right in the beginning of their lives. It is indeed a noble concern to have. We need to survive and carry on a fulfilling life, and that is only possible with the resources that come with work. So in order to achieve the appropriate job that will guarantee survival we need to acquire proper training of some sort to be able to perform specific tasks of the designed job.

Whether this decision to acquire skills is a conscious choice or not, it is where we lose track of our expectations and get entangled with the market, which has a limited number of positions to fulfill the expectations we accepted in the beginning. There is only one place to be considered the first. “The cheese [always] stands alone.” ⁵

Observing statistics on the job market, it is not farfetched to assume there is a first place for jobs that will guarantee comfortable survival. In classrooms they curve grades. A’s became a commodity for a small percentage of the students. There is a constant drive for competition where only a few will reach the end of that chain. For excellence to exist there must be infinite mediocrity.

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¹ (Bureau of Labor Statistics - Databases n.d.)
² (Lise Buranen 1999)
³ (Whittaker 2011)
⁴ (2010-2011 College salary Report 2011)
⁵ (The Farmer in the Dell 2011)”
So if I tell people I am a writer most of the thoughts that will occur (but not all) will be: “You are just saying it to sound more interesting,” or “I don’t believe it. You were never published.” In fact, when you hear or read the word writer you probably imagine a certain group of successful writers such as J.K. Rowling or Stephen King or a figure of a possibly famous secluded hermit, Rousseau’s nightmare as the image of a proper writer. 

Another side note: a “famous” writer who did not want to be famous was the Swiss Robert Walser. He just wanted to write and be published with small companies in order to have a nicer copy of his manuscripts. Thankfully those copies exist and we are able to be refreshed with his almost bucolical writing. He died impoverished in an asylum. You should look for his books right now. 

The same sort of images of successful people in their respective fields would accompany your mind if I said “I am a doctor” or “I am a journalist.” All those images would be of successful people in that area.

If we allow a further paragraph to analyze the kind of small talk we practice daily and the sort of answers we produce for those small inquiries we will pattern this “I did [insert something exotic here] in/at/on [insert a exotic location here] with [insert a famous person here]” on different levels of ellipse. I am not exactly bashing on small talk because I do spend some of my time participating in this favorite British pastime. For me, though, this is interesting evidence on the originality we expect from life. We need to be the first from our group of friends/family to have been there, done that and thought about it. We want to be number one.

Originality

The fetish—as I teased before—for original thought is a modern affliction. The ancient Greeks considered themselves late comers and that all there was to be discovered and thought up was already done by the Egyptians and Mesopotamians. Contemporary societies contest that behavior and assume it is possible to create original products, ideas, names and brands. Our structural success, based on progress, feeds from this fetish to increase of production as new products are always more attractive, or we believe they are more attractive because it has been hard-coded in us.

Herman Melville, famous for the metaphysical whale chase Moby Dick, wrote several short stories that were usually neglected beneath the shadow of his white mammal and one of these stories is about originality and failure. “Happy Failure” sets the stage for an old man to test out, on the secrecy of a river island to avoid prying competitors, a new original device that will revolutionize the life of everyone and also bring him millions of dollar. The machine would be capable of transforming a swamp to cultivatable land by draining it of all water. The experiment obviously failed (as expected from the title) but the old man looked happier and freer than ever because he was no longer consumed by paranoia and obsession.

“Aye, long ears enough,” sighed my uncle; “Aesopian ears. But it’s all over now. Boy, I’m glad I’ve failed. I say, boy, failure has made a good old man of me. It was horrible at first, but I’m glad I’ve failed. Praise be to God for the failure!”

The old man found freedom after dispossessing all expectations assigned to him and he was able to be the good person he was.

A reading suggestion: I encourage you to read this story and feel for yourself the despair and relief through the relationship with the obsession for success the old man had. Literature provides us with this bright humanity otherwise unavailable though dry academic discourse.

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6 (Rousseau 1992)
7 Look for Masquerade and other short stories.
8 (Plato 2000)
9 (Melville 2009)
Hardcore pops are fun

“No political problems. No artistic elites”

The same parameters of success, and therefore control, are perpetrated in pop culture with movies, songs and stories that indicate only one possible first place for us. Cinema presents us with stories of boys falling in love with the most popular—and much more attractive—girls in their high school. This is quite the same idea of having only one first place but it is presented in the form of a light romantic comedy. To give up and stay with the less attractive girl, within the given reality of those movies, is unacceptable. The movie is only over if the weak nerdy kid really, but truly (not renting her or being stuck with her in a giant supermarket) ends up with the most popular girl, and marries her if possible.

Popular songs go in a similar direction making explicit the misery of missing/not having the love of the perfect girl you had/want. John Cusack’s character in the movie High Fidelity, based on the homonymous novel by Nick Hornby, conjures about it, while he endures the pain of rejection:

What came first, the music or the misery? People worry about kids playing with guns, or watching violent videos, that some sort of culture of violence will take them over. Nobody worries about kids listening to thousands, literally thousands of songs about heartbreak, rejection, pain, misery and loss. Did I listen to pop music because I was miserable? Or was I miserable because I listened to pop music?

A personal note: At least High Fidelity leaves space for us to decide if Rob was successful or not, in his personal and public life. Most contemporary movies, such as The Social Network, disable all of this power of choice in what the movie means.

It is through the observation of those movies and songs and stories in relation to the conjectures about success that I came to understand the fascination people have with the hero’s journey. The hero is a character we can associate with, who performs his best and ends up in the place of utmost success.

We are perpetuating the expectations that are not ours every time we get enchanted by a goofy, but charming, romantic comedy hero or relate to the feelings of sad songs about unfulfilled love (those expectations we cannot fulfill). Or we might fulfill these expectations (one in a million) and live extremely happy lives at the expense of the misery of others.

So does failure free us?

So far, failing to fulfill expectations has led us to think of pain, rejection and other not-so-good feelings. This seems to be quite different from what I promised in the beginning of the essay. I revealed that failure would free us from the constraints of success. The original thought about failure that I had before writing this essay was that failure would be freedom because we would not be bound to the controlling elements of success within given expectations. But most of us would not feel free and would gain to succeed within a given expectation or give up entirely all foolishness and live mediocre lives.

How does failure free then? When does failure become the energy to create expectations of our own?

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10 (Graffiti 2006)
11 (Hornby 1995)
12 The Hero’s Journey, or the monomyth, is a term created by Joseph Campbell to describe a common directive of all mythology. “A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.” A famous movie on the Hero’s Journey is Star Wars and famous books that undergo the same path are Lord of the Rings and Da Vinci Code.
Soka education “failure”

I believe Makiguchi offers us a solution, or rather a conjecture, to what failing as energy, or our own expectation, means. What will follow will be an adaptation of Makiguchi’s theories on education, which are explained in many different ways by other scholars and papers, to our descriptions of expectation, success and failure to take a different turn on this essay.

If happiness is the objective of education and this happiness is attainable by self-discovery, there is not any space for external expectation within Makiguchi’s scope on how to teach! He would consider success in terms of external expectations away from self-discovery and it would not give us happiness, only vague searches for palliative solutions to our pains. So when we fail a global expectation we are providing ourselves with an opportunity to seek our own expectation of life.\(^\text{13}\)

The purpose of education then, within Makiguchi’s ideas in reference to success and failure, is to guarantee that we have enough to attain our expectation and there is nothing preventing our survival. And because external expectations are usually synonymous with survival, we easily get caught in the net of external systems. Survival should be independent of our desires.

Social programs such as “Fome Zero” of the Brazilian government, which strives to guarantee three meals a day for every Brazilian, is an example of how survival should be independent from our dreams.\(^\text{14}\) The Brazilian educator Paulo Freire would be quite content to see people being able to dream without the worry to survive because he believes the perpetuation of the system of oppressor-oppressed was exactly the problem of mixing survival with desire.\(^\text{15}\)

Makiguchi’s ideal teaching environment was that in which the children were free to discover who they were without worrying about their survival. He would often bring food to his students so they could be well fed to do their best in class.

I am assuming for now that my interpretation of success and failure, and the critique on success itself, draws from the fact that those expectations are external. When it comes to personal expectations, there is no success of failure because those expectation are simply who we are. Even a case in which we fail to meet personal expectations, is not failure because it transforms our lives in the same way meeting those expectations would, and therefore, is part of the process of life. The outcomes are mere results.

\(^{13}\) (Makiguchi 1989)
\(^{14}\) (Fome Zero n.d.)
\(^{15}\) (Freire 2008)
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Education for Social Consciousness: Hip-Hop Pedagogy and Soka Education

Simone Barclay and Ryan Hayshi

Class of 2012

Value-creation is not something distant and removed from our lives. Any revolution or reform begins with the things closest or of most immediate concern to us. We must not run away from the problems that confront us in our daily lives, but rather take them on with courage.

-Tsunesaburo Makiguchi

Hip hop culture is a worldwide youth movement of revolutionary resistance and radical consciousness. Since its origin in the United States, it has sprung up in cities across the globe as a tool of localized resistance to challenge the harsh realities that define the lives of youth in a world that increasingly disempowers them. The rhythmic impulses combine with lyrical ferocity and technically creative dancing to become a unique urban art form that reflects the disruption and inconsistencies in the lives of marginalized youth. Hip hop has become a dynamic culture and a powerful movement because it comments on and critiques the dominant discourse of our globalized society. By inspiring youth, hip hop has helped them transcend their oppressive political, social,
and economic situations by giving voice and identity to the individual as well as the group, and helping youth speak out against injustices within their society. It has encouraged critical thinking while simultaneously shaping youth into empowered, democratic, and socially conscious citizens. Tsunesaburo Makiguchi writes in his book, Education for Creative Living, that “it is precisely the development of this heightened social consciousness that is a primary responsibility of true education.”(p. 26) Hip hop has the potential to be a powerfully transformative force when translated into educational settings by channeling the energy of students’ experience and creative embrace of culture into a life that creates value based on a social consciousness.

The educational philosophies and purposes of hip hop pedagogy and Soka Education complement each other in a unique way that cultivates a radical approach to learning that we can use to address the current predicaments of our postmodern, fragmented, and multicultural society. Their common characteristics lay a definitive foundation for the beginning of a truly humanistic education for transformation towards the happiness of the individual and manifestation of holistic social well-being. By both emphasizing the profound importance of the role of the educator in helping students to bring forth their personal experience as the backdrop for educational practice, they create an environment that fosters mutual recognition, creativity, and empowerment which can ultimately lead to social consciousness for concrete action. Hip hop has become such a unique art form because its roots in resistance seek to empower those who are oppressed, rather than only allow their art to express lamentation or passive anger. By developing hip hop into a pedagogical practice based on its integrated foundations in popular and resistive cultural movements, it can help students understand their multicultural context and provide an empowering avenue through which to incite social change and work for this development of a truly democratic and participatory environment.

The History of Hip Hop

Hip hop first appeared in the mid-1970s in New York City as a creative representation of African-American, Afro-Caribbean, and Latino cultures. (Scherpf; Forell; Prier and Beachum) The unique urban culture contained a variety of artistic expressions, primarily DJing (breaking up beats), breakdance, Graffiti (visual street art) and Emceeing (lyrical and vocal expression), that told stories and reflected the hectic and unstable conditions of life that were oppressing African American and Latino youth in the post-Reagan era of urban America. While these artistic components are considered the four pillars of hip hop culture, the development of hip hop as pedagogy primarily focuses on Emceeing, or rapping as the primary source of empowerment for change. As Stephanie Scherpf, who wrote an article on the power of hip hop as a transformative education tool, more clearly delineates for us, “hip hop is generally a term used to denote a specific culture from which rap- a vocal form of cultural expression that consists of rhymed storytelling accompanied by highly rhythmic, electronically based music- emerged.” (p. 79). The use of language and the power of voice allowed previously hushed cultures to claim a space for themselves in which they could demand attention and fully express the details of their lives. Using this empowering narration through culturally-claimed language, rappers could indict and critique dominant hegemonic discourses that were the major sources of political, social, and economic oppression. (Paul, Scherpf, Forell, Prier and Beachum).

However, the historical development of hip hop in America is long and complicated, and the host of internal contradictions further reinforces that one of the defining aspects of hip hop culture is the struggle to overcome notions of a single, unified identity. The movement began with a very specific purpose of describing the harsh realities of urban life and then split off into branches serving many different stylistic identities, eventually even that of corporate America. This development was unfortunate because the narratives of this branch re-enforce the hegemonic discourse of oppression that hip hop aimed to combat during the years of its birth.

The beginning of hip hop in America during the late 1970s began with artists such as Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, DJ Kool Herc, and Afrika Bambaataa who “unleashed incredible democratic energies. Their truth telling about black suffering and resistance in America was powerful.” (West, p. 180) “The
Message” by Grandmaster Flash, one of the first rap recordings ever made, demanded attention for the art form as it described and critiqued inner-city life and became the launching point for the beginning of what would become the most dominant form of urban expression in America. (Osherwitz) Grandmaster Flash was setting the stage for artists to be able to critically express the reality of their daily lives with lyrics such as:

- Broken glass everywhere
- People pissin’ on the stairs, you know they just don’t care
- I can’t take the smell, can’t take the noise
- Got no money to move out, I guess I got no choice
- Rats in the front room, roaches in the back
- Junkies in the alley with a baseball bat
- I tried to get away but I couldn't get far
- 'cuz a man with a tow truck repossessed my car
- Don't push me 'cuz I'm close to the edge
- I'm trying not to lose my head

As the music became more popular over the next few decades, artists such as Snoop Dogg, Tupac, Notorious BIG, and Ice Cube arose in the beginning of the 1990s to combine what Cornel West, a Harvard professor and rapper, calls, “linguistic genius and gangster sentiments” to create an “artistic honesty [that] revealed subversive energy in their street prowess in their work and life” (p. 181). The artists were still able to speak about the heavy problems of their lives and the ways for society to overcome yet still maintain poetic finesse and creativity. It was during and after this phase of hip hop that much of the music was co-opted by commercial interests and mainstream indulgences in materialism, creating controversy in the validation of hip hop as a revolutionary lyrical tool.

Despite being assimilated, hip hop has still managed to persist as a cultural space that counters the discourses of alienation and poverty youth encounter on a daily basis (West, Scherpf). Even with the varying historical trends, the dominant message of transgressing oppression and raising awareness have remained persistent themes. Today, hip hop is still an indictment of our overindulgent society and expresses this more strongly and clearly than any other cultural form in the last generation. (West, p. 179). Rappers and rapping have been the primary source of this creative resistance. Using words, people were able to act as oral historians, narrators, critics, and observers of their community in an effort to raise the level of social consciousness among their people. (Scherpf, Paul). While some of the subversive and socially conscious hip hop music today has been forced to go underground, artists such as Talib Kweli, Dead Prez, Aesop Rock, and Immortal Technique still provide the same powerful critique of contemporary marginalization and oppression. With lyrics, such as those below, from Talib Kweli’s song featuring Mary J. Blige “I Try,” we can see how even today, rappers can speak with awareness about external and internal problems that permeate their daily lives, critically assess the cultural systems of dominance in America, and affirm their sense of self and community:

[Verse 3: Talib Kweli]

Yo, the things I’m seein’ on the news is insane
A stock broker shoot his kid and throw himself in front of a train
A mother leave her baby home for two weeks all by himself
Three years old, eatin’ ketchup and mustard, cryin for help
Tryin’ to bring your struggle to life
The label want a song about a bubbly life
I have trouble tryin’ to write some shit
To BANG in the club through the night
When people suffer tonight
Lord knows I try
A Hip Hop Pedagogy for Transformation

Soka education and hip hop are both movements that emerged in response to oppression, with the goal of empowering young people for the purpose of social contribution. Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the founder of Soka Education, was outraged that Japan was indoctrinating students with national, militaristic goals and using them as a means for the misguided perpetuation of a single narrative about the way life should be lived. In response, he claimed that education should not exist for the purpose of the state or the perceived needs of society, but rather, that the purpose of education should be the growth, empowerment, and life-long happiness of the learner. (Makiguchi, ECL p. 5) With this belief as his foundation, Makiguchi founded the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai as an educational reform organization dedicated to addressing the problems of an authoritative schooling regime that was squandering students’ valuable potential and taking away their individual identities. Rather than furthering and entrenching a status quo of repression, Makiguchi decided that the goal of education should give students the tools needed to transform their world, their communities, and their own lives. In a similar way, hip hop culture and rap music do not treat students as empty receptacles to deposit single-sided information, but rather allows an outlet for youth to creatively speak out and transcend the injustices imposed on them.

Hip hop pedagogy in education seeks to follow the example set by hip hop artists in order to “privilege student voices while simultaneously teaching them to interrogate them.” (Paul, p. 247) While the potential for hip hop to be used as a subject to teach history, English, and political science, among others, is apparent and constructive, the greatest way that we can utilize hip hop would be as a critical cultural pedagogy that questions historical constructions of knowledge and places the actual reality of students’ lives at the center of dialogue and participatory classroom engagement. In the same way, Makiguchi’s ideas aimed to close the gap between living and learning and create a system of education that addressed life as the learner lived it (ECL p. 22). However, he warned against glamorizing possessive individualism at the expense of democratic individuality and pushed for youth to be self-critical instead of self-indulgent. Hip hop pedagogy is built on the foundation of bringing forth the holistic cultural context of students’ lives to subvert traditional models of education and knowledge in order to create a space in which students can resist domination so that the voices of pluralistic democracy and citizenship can be cultivated (Scherpf). Through deepening the connection students feel between the reality of their lives and culture with the classroom, hip hop pedagogy hopes to inspire students to change the negativity of their surroundings into a constructive practice for the betterment of society.

Studying the content of hip hop lyrics provides a useful foundation for utilizing hip hop in the classroom in order to connect with students. In attempting to teach traditional subjects, hip hop could prove to be what Paul refers to as a “pedagogical lure” or an attempt to use popular culture to teach canonical works (p. 246). Because students spend much of their personal free time occupied with products of culture, including hip hop culture, which permeates the lives of our current generation of youth, it can be an engaging way to begin connecting with students in the classroom. In addition to this initial hook, hip hop lyrics contain rhythm, typography, grammar, and syntax, which classify them legitimately as poetry and therefore can be constructive in relating traditional topics and works in English to popular culture that connects with students’ lives.

In addition, the content of hip hop lyrics can be used to teach a variety of other subjects including history and politics in a way that is relevant to the everyday struggle of the students who belong to the working class and urban poor. For example, the song by Public Enemy entitled “Hitler Day” discusses the reality of the history of Christopher Columbus Day, stating that Columbus actually landed in America where hundreds of politically and economically diverse societies existed and then proceeded to destroy them. Therefore, celebrating Columbus Day in America would be equivalent to Jewish people celebrating Hitler Day (Scherpf, p. 82). This profound insight, while useful in teaching subjects, actually reveals a lot more about the potential for hip hop to be a critical tool in transforming the traditional mindset of students and education. The creative resistance that is contained within hip hop music is essential when honed in developing compositional skills.
and critical thought, similar to that of “Hitler Day”. Through hip hop, students can continue to deepen their connection to the classroom by exploring symbolism and semantics, discussing creative and stylistic choices in writing, and enhancing written expression in a way that connects them to their learning (Forell). By beginning with hip hop as a subject, students can become literate beyond simply learning reading skills. Paul states that, “literacy development practices that advance critical thought necessitates great creativity, visionary thinking, and comprehension of cultural dynamics” (p. 247) This precedent for critical thought and resistance based in hip hop can move beyond the examination of lyrical content into a pedagogical practice that embodies this great creativity and visionary thinking to empower students to learn, and help them apply their education by making it relevant to their lives. Simply stated, students should not only be able to read texts, but also contexts. In order to create this pedagogical practice, we must relate the message and purpose of hip hop towards a concrete development of classroom practices that can empower those who have been marginalized while simultaneously contributing to a multicultural classroom.

Much of the academic curriculum in public schools systems is based on a white, European cultural identity and recognizes the foundation of knowledge as such. In addition to feeling that much of their education has been distorted, Cornel West states that youth, “have hardly a sense of their history, little grasp of what shapes them, and no vital vision of their human potential” (p. 176). Because of this, many culturally diverse youth have been learning the foundations of a history that is not really their own; instead blacks, Latinos, and other ethnic minorities learn their place in history as the place of the Other. If utilized as a pedagogical practice, hip hop could destabilize the potential of a unified notion of history and affirm the voices and experiences of those whose histories have previously been negated (Forell). This pedagogy suggests that we can build on these aspects of diverse realities to allow students to deconstruct their traditional notions of identity and rebuild a sense of self that is based on an inclusion of all histories which can, in turn, allow each individual to place their life, experience, and history, at the center of their learning. As Scherpf states, “Rappers are constantly taking hegemonic discourses and destabilizing and deconstructing them, thus providing their listeners with counter-hegemonic interpretations.” (83). Knowledge and power in the classroom should emanate from the margins in order to accurately locate the complex realities of many of the students lives, instead of just affirming one perspective. The precedent of hip hop is the example we can follow in order to do this (Scherpf, West, Forell, Paul, hooks). This inclusion of hip hop pedagogy in the classroom would allow students to deconstruct a stale historical continuum and cross borders by de-identifying with traditional subject positions and gaining empathy for the difficult realities of the variety of histories that are always present in the classroom.

Because of this emphasis on counter-narratives that reflect the realities of life, students will begin to feel a true connection with their education as participatory, democratic, and which values the lives of every individual. Bell Hooks says that we should promote this kind of educational setting because of the benefits of creating “the possibility of a learning community, a place where difference could be acknowledged, where we would finally all understand, accept, and affirm that our ways of knowing are forged in history and relations of power.” (p. 30) This community could encourage students to critically evaluate their positions and their cultural contexts and allow them to ask questions such as “Who am I when I am participating in this society? What is it about myself that I no longer want to be? What can I do to change the social conditions in my community that have produced my privilege or my marginality?” (Scherpf, p. 91) By allowing students to feel truly and deeply engaged within the classroom, we can empower them to become stakeholders in their society. Soka Education and hip hop pedagogy both seek social justice and the positive transformation of communities by giving voice to and celebrating the differences that exist in our daily lives. The critical pedagogy of hip hop is committed to recognizing marginalized others, and as Scherpf states, “It is learning the politics of alliance and encountering the possibilities of difference within sameness that makes organizing, democracy, and the practice of citizenship possible” (p. 94) Soka Education is founded on these principles of celebrating and embracing the diversity of life to transform the fundamental roots of societal ills and the ignorance of humanity. Ikeda states that we must have “the courage not to fear or deny difference, but to respect and strives to understand people of different
cultures and to grow from encounters with them”. The growth that occurs in multicultural classrooms validates student’s lives as the centerpiece of their educational knowledge. This type of classroom is where we can begin to translate education in praxis for the well-being of society.

The reason that new pedagogical theories are so important is because of the failures of the current system of education. Our schools have traditionally perpetuated inequality, which hip hop pedagogy and Soka Education both seek to eliminate. In America, this disturbing reality is clearly shown by the fact that, in the United States, there are more black men in prison than in university, revealing that education has not been made a priority for marginalized people. (Viola, p. 8) Our schools have failed to empower marginalized people. From another perspective, we can say that the traditional approach of urban schools is doing its job, according to educators Duncan-Andrade and Morrell, because their structure and pedagogy ensure that they function as a social sorting system that perpetuates inequality. They write:

“It just so happens that the overwhelming majority of those who benefit most from this sorting process are those who look, talk, think, and act most like those who already have power. And it just so happens that the overwhelming majority of those who benefit least from this sorting process are those who come from different backgrounds and communities than those who already have power. This is not by chance, and it is not democratic. It is inequality by design, it is well documented, and schools play a central role in the perpetuation of this rigged social lottery” (p. 4)

Youth from marginalized groups are continually placed in the lowest socio-economic roles such as minimum wage jobs, the military, and the criminal justice system. Paulo Freire asserted that educational institutions maintain the existing social structure by using the “banking method of education” (Akom, p. 56) Under this model, students act as passive receptacles in which teachers can deposit information that is biased in favor the oppressor. Makiguchi reached the same conclusion. Because students are simply required to regurgitate knowledge and facts, Makiguchi compared this method to the “image of fishing peoples who have always fished with poles and know nothing of nets; farmers who continue to work the soil with a spade and hoe passed down from previous generations, never thinking to improve the tools” (ECL p. 6) If students are only taught to be good imitators, then social transformation and liberation from oppression are impossible.

Pedagogical Points of Comparison: The Means to Achieve Success

Hip Hop Pedagogy and Soka Education exist to empower students to create a better society for themselves and for others. Their pedagogical foundations provided truly revolutionary approaches to education at a time when they were both needed drastically. Bell hooks states in her book Teaching to Transgress that “we need new theories rooted in an attempt to understand both the nature of our contemporary predicament and the means by which we might collectively engage in resistance that would transform our current reality” (p. 66) Both pedagogies seek to transform the negatives of our current realities in a way that reinforces and encourages the inclusion and blending of their theoretical and practical characteristics. While they were born out of different cultural and historical contexts, many of the ideas within them are timeless pedagogical tools that serve a humanistic purpose. Through valuing the role of the educator, emphasizing the necessity of students’ experience in the classroom, and encouraging creativity, both hip hop pedagogy and Soka Education empower the individual to better themselves for the happiness of themselves and society. These characteristics have shaped the type of learning community that values the voice of every individual, no matter their background, and have proved to be great tools in an educational setting to create positive change in the hearts of youth.

The role of the teacher, or educator, is the fundamental foundation for success in the classroom. Ikeda states that, “Only a human being can foster another human being. It takes a truly humanistic person to
raise a truly humanistic person.” (Soka Education p. 213). Educators must be first willing to go through a process of self-actualization to be able to contribute to the environment of the classroom in a positive and constructive manner. Sometimes, this is not an easy process because it may be hard for teachers to question their traditional perspectives on authority, but in doing so the teacher can revolutionize their role and develop a more compassionate and inclusive setting for honest learning. Ikeda states that “We learn from people and it is for this reason that the humanity of the teacher represents the core of the educational experience.” (Soka Education p. 117) Because of this, teachers must be pushed to deepen their own humanity so they can create an environment where students feel empowered to share their perspective. This can be done through practices such as educators sharing their own experiences, and also through recognizing and validating students’ voices to sometimes lessen the presence of their authoritative position (hooks, p. 21).

Educators can grow alongside their students by including hip hop as a way to deepen the connection students feel with their education. In doing so, teachers can empathize more fully with the variety of diverse backgrounds present in the classroom. As hooks states, “Multiculturalism compels educators to recognize the narrow boundaries that have shaped the way knowledge is shared in the classroom.” (p. 44) When educators recognize the boundaries to knowledge in place, they can seek to overcome them and give students the education they deserve and desire. Then, teachers can truly begin to transform consciousness. However, in current education a lack of cultural synchronization between educators and students has caused a lot of misunderstandings about what it means to produce knowledge include culture and in the classroom (Paul, p. 247). As Scherpf emphatically states, “If rap music and student experience became an origin of classroom knowledge, teachers would be forced to look critically at the narratives they produce in the classroom, and interrogate their own practice, knowledge- or lack of knowledge- and curriculum” (p. 92). In utilizing hip hop as pedagogy, teachers can reorganize the role they play in the classroom in the same way they ask their students to, so they can understand and even empathize with the processes of deconstructing identities and self-empowerment. This cultural understanding could allow for greater comfort and ease in processes, such as redefining power, which may sometimes be painful for students and teachers alike. This exchange of personalities between the student and teacher along with the educator becoming a partner, not a master, in the learning process is the essence of Soka Education and hip hop pedagogy (Ikeda, p. 118). As Ikeda states, “To cultivate others, an educator must have a glowing, appealing personality” (p. 171), but this process must take diligent work on the part of the educator to develop and sustain this for the sake of the educational environment.

An educator must make diligent efforts to create an open community so that students can feel comfortable putting personal experiences from their life into the classroom. While the educator begins the process, students are expected to take the next step and bring forth experience in this multicultural classroom that hip hop pedagogy creates. Utilizing personal experience can create an environment of inclusion and recognize the voice of the students, essentially empowering them to grow and develop their sense of self within the classroom. In an essay comparing the educational philosophy of Dewey and Makiguchi, Daisaku Ikeda writes, “Contrary to the long-held view of experience as uncertain and anecdotal, Dewey reconceived experience as a fundamental, holistic function of life activity. Both Dewey and Makiguchi lamented the banishment of experience from the site of learning... Makiguchi felt that the prevailing educational theories were ‘almost entirely unrelated to the realities of life’” (p. 18). For this reason, Makiguchi advocated “self-determined learning goals” and claimed that the purpose of education should include the “recognition of what people themselves see as the purpose of human life.” (ECL, p. 18) Students should be able to make learning relevant to their needs. While the traditional educational system has forced students to reject their cultural values, educators such as bell hooks have continually emphasized the importance of affirming, rather than muting, the voices of marginalized students and allowing their ideas to be moved from the margins to the center. In a dialogue with hooks, Professor Ron Scapp explains, “When one speaks from the perspective of one’s immediate experiences, something’s created in the classroom for students, sometimes for the very first
time. Focusing on experience allows students to claim a knowledge base from which they can speak” hooks, 148).

One way that hip hop pedagogy connects with student experience is by introducing culturally-relevant texts into the classroom. Many educators and students have argued that teaching books from the traditional “literary canon” of old, dead, white, male authors fails to provide narratives that are relevant to students’ life experiences. (Forell, p. 30) Oftentimes, schools teach history from a Eurocentric perspective. Many rap artists and educators have argued that our current system restricts African American students’ ability to develop a strong sense of identity because it fails to teach black history. (Akon, p. 53) Because of this, students would benefit by studying texts that are more easily relatable to their lives and they would still be able to learn the same skills and knowledge. When teachers allow hip hop texts to be studied in the classroom, students are able to provide much of the material themselves and therefore find pleasure and relevance in the learning process. NYU Professor David Kirkland has argued that “you can learn the same practices/approaches/knowledge in language and literature from reading Tupac as you can from Shakespeare. The themes and conflicts present in Shakespeare are all present in Hip Hop.” (Hall, p. 9) In an interview, Tupac himself expressed his admiration for Shakespeare and compared the gang conflicts between the Bloods and Crips to the conflict of the warring families in Romeo and Juliet. Using these comparisons, the educator could then draw parallels that would allow students to make connections with their lives and experiences more removed in space and time. Makiguchi utilized this very same technique in the classroom, stating “People cannot be expected to appreciate abstractions that do not draw upon their own store of experience” (ECL, p. 40). When teaching geography, he would begin by discussing the rivers and mountains in the students’ immediate environment. From there, he would build connections to the geography of the larger community, nation, and globe (Geopgraphy, p. 20). In this way, Makiguchi helped students develop a social consciousness and understanding of the world by beginning from the starting point of the students’ everyday experience. Hip hop could do the same by helping students gain an understanding and appreciation of the relationship between the narratives of their own lives and the experiences of other peoples around the world.

In the hope that bringing forth experience will connect students to their classroom and education in order to explore their lives, the next function of hip hop pedagogy would be to embrace this inclusive and empowering environment to promote and nurture creativity. Hip hop pedagogy focuses and relies on the creative use of language and ways that it can be subverted and manipulated to give power to the voice of the individual. According to bell hooks, an engaged pedagogy values student expression. This expression, through language, refuses to be contained within boundaries (hooks, p. 20). While knowledge can be passed down, creativity and imagination must come forth from the activated spirit within, which can allow the personality of the student to shine forth and bloom to its fullest potential (Ikeda, p. 169). Much of this creativity in hip hop has derived from co-opting language and creating new slang and definitions of words that fully encompass the emotions of youth. This form of expression has broadened the minds and imaginations of youth in environments where the daily realities may have attempted to oppress this ability.

In line with this, Ikeda teaches that “The essence of a creative life, however, is to persevere in the face of defeat and to follow the rainbow within your heart.” (p. 209). In these urban, harsh settings that have tried to stifle creativity, the youth have fought back and become even more innovative in ways that can contribute to the happiness of themselves and society. If students can find an empowered sense of self, they may be able to bring forth creativity that has remained dormant for much of their life in the classroom and in society. Hip hop pedagogy seeks to embrace this creative use of language and art to encourage students to keep questioning and contributing to their lives and the lives of others. Makiguchi states that, “artistic activities elevate the ideals and the spiritual and intellectual quality of a society.” (ECL, p. 191) Hip hop and hip hop pedagogy seek to create a space where these ideals can be promoted and encouraged, in a society that previously did not recognize the value of multiculturalism and diversity. It allows to students to creatively imagine the possibility of an ideal world for those of different origins to create a place where happiness can be realized.
Imagination is important because that which is never imagined can never become a reality. How can we work to create a better society if we can’t envision it? If imagination and creativity are crucial in creating change, then the next step is to actualize these innovative thoughts. Hip hop pedagogy and Soka Education emphasize the importance of action in creating change for social consciousness and a democratic society. The compounding support of educators in an inclusive environment where experience and creativity matter can lead to revolutionary social consciousness that can be translated into actions for a better society. Makiguchi believed that it took a revolution in the mind of one individual to speak about a collective social will to cause a ripple of change in the rest of society. If an empowered individual can speak, then others will sympathize and their ideas will be accepted (Makiguchi, Geography p. 184). Hip hop may provide the means through which an individual can connect with this potential. West states that, “hip-hop is precious soil in which the seeds of democratic individuality, community, and society can sprout.” If people can be inspired by the currents of resistance originating in hip hop music, then a pedagogy based off of this revolution could inspire the development of a concrete means through which people can work to create a social consciousness for the happiness of everyone.

According to Makiguchi the development of educational and artistic endeavors are essential to be able to provide a good life for the members of society, and he stressed that this must translate into action (Makiguchi, ECL p. 20) Scherpf eloquently states that, “If rap enables students to ‘cross borders’ and expand their capacity to make subjective identifications and alliances, the possibility of coalition-building and political participation arises” (p. 105) Currently, there is a lot of political organizing activities surrounding hip-hop, including organizations such as Hip Hop Congress, which are working to create a society of genuine justice for a democratic society through the multicultural lens of hip hop. Ikeda also states that “Education should provide in this way the momentum to win over one’s own weaknesses, to thrive in the midst of society’s sometimes stringent realities, and to generate new victories for the human future.” (p. 116) Hip hop has proven to be an unprecedented source for empowering youth to change. If this dynamic energy can be harnessed into educational settings, as hip hop pedagogy, students may find a new source of encouragement to translate into social change. Ultimately, the social consciousness that emerges from this hip hop based classroom setting could provide the democratic revolution needed around the world- one that compliments the noble mission of Soka Education.

Conclusion: Hip Hop and Soka Education as International Phenomena

Even though hip hop claims its origins in America, the cultural movement has become a worldwide phenomenon. Within the first decade of its birth in America, Los Angeles, Oakland, Detroit, Atlanta, Miami, and many other cities developed local hip hop scenes that linked regionally specific problems to a variety of hip hop language, styles, and attitudes (Scherpf, p. 81). Four decades later, the urban art has become and international phenomenon and spread to many diverse countries such as Ireland, France, Germany, Denmark, Italy, South Africa, Brazil, Japan, Canada, Germany, France, the UK, and others. As Scherpf states, “‘Hip hop [cultures]… in the form of numerous localized cultural expressions… have crossed national borders as counternarratives, encompassing a critique of institutionalized oppression which transcends national boundaries” (p. 99). For example, the work of African hip hop groups such as Kalmashaka or the Palestinian female rapper Sabreena Da Witch have effectively exposed government corruption in their respective regions. (Asante, p. 2) In France, the hip hop movement, called banlieue, emerged in response to Front National political party which is often criticized for perpetuating racist discourse. The artists of the banlieue created music that embraced cultural diversity and condemned the idea of a fixed French identity. (Oschewritz, p. 45) The flourishing differences we see in styles is due to the migrations and transformation in different geographical spaces (Oschewritz, p. 47)

These narratives of resistance have spoken to youth across the world who have commandeered the art form to cry out for political, economic, and social transformation and construct an empowered self-identity for the sake of humanity. This art form, like the practice of Soka Education, transcends the context of specific
geography and space to open new doors for lasting ways to empower individuals around the world to contribute to social change. Soka education has proven to be culturally adaptable as demonstrated by the founding of Soka schools in Japan, America, Hong Kong, and Brazil. These two pedagogies allow any student to create something of importance based on their own unique skills, cultural values, and individuality and reject the practice of teaching from a single, fixed perspective. These life philosophies have been translated across many cultural and national boundaries to serve as effective and inspirational tools because they emphasize action for society, democracy, and personal empowerment. The adaptive nature is important because any educational system must be able to adjust to specific cultural context of the community. Indeed, the beauty of these movements comes from their ability to take root in various different cultural contexts in any place in the world.

While the oppression that permeates our international society continues to exist, it is important that outlets to resist domination are celebrated and proliferated throughout societies. There must continue to be sources of resistance that value the lives of individuals and the well-being of humanity. We can begin a mass transformation of the hearts and minds of people through education, but more importantly, education that is rooted in the realities of our daily lives. Education must seek to empower people to expand their lives and the lives of those around them. Daisaku Ikeda states that,

“Those who may be considered truly well-educated people possess their own clear system of values, their own clear beliefs and opinions, not borrowed from someone else. They base their lives on their own firm convictions, and they do not simply follow convention. They refuse to be led astray by others, and they are armed with broad knowledge and a sharp intelligence with which to penetrate the essence of life and society.”

Hip hop pedagogy and Soka Education share the noble mission of empowering young people to become critical thinkers for the purpose of social transformation towards a truly democratic society. To actualize this goal, they utilize many ideas and tools that they share common. Some examples include the validation of student experience, the use of culturally relevant texts, the inclusion of counter-hegemonic narratives, the transformation of the teacher, an emphasis on creativity and imagination – all of which contribute to the creation of a multi-cultural and democratic classroom environment. In addition, the international outlooks and culturally-adaptive abilities of these two pedagogies provide them with the potential to unite young people across the world and inspire them to transform global power structures that perpetuate oppression. For these reasons, in the future, Hip hop pedagogy and Soka Education will play increasingly important roles in the pursuit of universal self-empowerment and the development of a democratic society that respects the ideas, opinions, and very existence of every single individual.
Works Cited


Over the years, we have been engaging in an ongoing conversation about a few important topics related to the theory and practice of Soka education. One of them is the question of appreciation, the subject of this presentation. Our shared exploration is taking us through paths of unsuspected meaning, revealing connections and, at least for us personally, uncharted philosophical terrains. This paper is a still frame, a record of a recent moment in this journey. But the inquiry continues, and we hope the exchanges we will have here this weekend will help determine its future direction.

The origins, however, are with the question of the nature of educative relationships. By most accounts, when Soka students attempt to articulate the meaning of their personal experience of Soka education, educative relationships figure high in their hierarchy of importance. Discussing what we observed and, as Soka graduates, what we experienced, we identified two qualities characteristic of the most significant educative relationships that shaped our experiences on this campus. These relationships include, of course, the relationships with teachers, but also our relationships with friends, supporting staff, our families and friends and supporters of the university, as well as with people in distant places, like Founder Ikeda, and distant times,
like the authors from our core curriculum reading lists. One quality of those relationships is that within them we felt we could be ourselves and embark in paths of questioning and self-discovery with a relative sense of support and freedom. The other quality is that we felt challenged to cultivate our character, to grow morally and intellectually. Interestingly, both qualities can be described with the single word appreciation.

These qualities represent perhaps two senses of appreciation. More interesting, however, is the possibility that these two senses are in fact two halves of a double-sided concept. On the one hand, there is the sense of being appreciated as a unique individual, not reduced to a title, a race, a gender, a persona, a function, but being appreciated as a whole person. On the other hand, there is the sense of being appreciated not just for what I am, but for what I can be as well; not just for my actualized self, but for my potential. Both senses are captured beautifully by SUA Founder, Daisaku Ikeda in a passage from the message to the first graduation ceremony of SUA:

“Just as a diamond can only be polished by another diamond, it is only through intense human interaction engaging the entire personality that people can forge themselves, raising themselves up to ever greater heights. It is the relationship between teacher and learner, between mentor and disciple that makes this possible.”

The reference to “engaging with the entire personality,” we believe, alludes to the first sense of appreciation. The reference to “raising themselves up ever greater heights” corresponds to the second sense of appreciation. The truly interesting question for us is whether these two senses are in fact two aspects of a single disposition.

Reciprocal Love in Plato’s Symposium

One of the starting points for our thinking on appreciation comes from a reading of Plato’s Symposium. Although love is a central theme of Symposium, our goal is not to consider the dialogue as a framework for a theory of love, but rather to address the question of appreciation in relation to reciprocal Eros. In the Athens of Plato’s time the type of romantic relationship that was assumed when speaking about Eros was one between a lover, an older, more experienced and accomplished man, and a beloved, a young, attractive boy. Eros corresponded to the disposition of the lover, who desires the beloved for his beauty. The proper response of the beloved was not to reciprocate love, but a kind of friendship, philia. In fact, the beloved’s attitude was expectedly more moderate in terms of desire. The beloved’s motivation was primarily not sexual desire, but opportunities for initiation into Athenian adult male society with guidance and protection by a more experienced man. The phenomenon of reciprocal love or anteris was accepted as a female response to a lover, but it was not appropriate for a young male. In Symposium, Alcibiades, who by age and position was in the role of the beloved, embodies reciprocal love, when he towards the end delivers a speech of praise for Socrates, who was the older male in the role of the lover. In this section, we introduce an argument to support a reciprocal interpretation of Eros in Symposium, and to think through the predicaments that might accompany the educative practice of love. Our contention is that the Platonic Eros expounded in Socrates’ speech and the reciprocal love represented by Alcibiades’ incursion mirror the two senses of appreciation mentioned in the introduction.

It is relevant for the reader to remember that every word attributed to Socrates was written by others, primarily Plato and Xenophon. Thus, when reading Plato’s writings, we should distinguish between the Socratic and Platonic elements in the dialogues. This is a complex undertaking because Plato’s Socrates of the late period dialogues is a literary figure, or character, which portrays an ethical system. Almost all ancient Greek writers supposed that the representation of ethics by literary characters helped the audience understand and practice the ethics advocated by the writers. Probably for this reason, Plato made Socrates the protagonist in almost all of his dialogues: to help his audience internalize the character’s behavior as worthy of emulation.  

considering the oft-neglected educational aspect of Eros, we find that one of Socrates’ practices embodies an important teaching principle: he inspires teachers to instruct from their own behavior and by example.

With this as our line of inquiry, we explore Socrates’ practice as a teacher’s practice, aimed at inspiring the cultivation of ethical qualities. Socrates himself exemplifies the possibility of a teacher molding ethical qualities in his students by modeling those same qualities. Such practice requires the teacher to be as committed to the student’s growth as he is to his own. A life-to-life interaction fosters a desire for good within the student, which allows an improvement of his own ethical capacities. In Ikeda’s words: “it is only through intense human interaction engaging the entire personality that people can forge themselves, raising themselves up to ever greater heights. It is the relationship between teacher and learner, between mentor and disciple that makes this possible."

*Plato’s Symposium*

Sympoium, as the title makes explicit, concerns a specific event, a drinking party that is also a communion even more than a communal dinner: “the milieu where arete [virtue] is celebrated in poetry and song.” More precisely, for Plato, symposia played a significant role in the education of young men, when they were socialized into the values of upper-class male Athenian citizens. In fact, education in Plato’s school was related to a code of behavior at symposia, so much so that at the beginning of The Laws, Plato dedicates two books to the educational value of drinking at the symposia. He points out that one failure in Spartan education is the absence of drinking parties, thus eliminating an opportunity to practice personal control.

Plato’s *Symposium* tells the story of a drinking party hosted by the great poet Agathon in commemoration of his recent victory at a dramatic competition. In celebratory spirit, the participants take turns to deliver speeches in honor of Eros (Love). Phaedrus begins with a speech in praise of Eros as the oldest of the gods, who confers blessings on the lover by inspiring him to courage and honor. Pausanias, a legal expert, comes next, expounding on certain distinctions amongst types of lover/beloved relationships, concluding that the appropriate relationship is when a young beloved gives in to the advances of the lover because he wants to learn virtue from the older man. Eryximachus, the physician, praises love as that which regulates health and causes happiness. Aristophanes, the famous comic poet, explains that originally humans were double beings, with eight limbs and two heads, but Zeus decided to chop them in half, leaving each individual roaming the world looking for their “other half.” Then, Agathon, the host and the only youth present, praises Love as the youngest of gods who likes to accompany and bless the young. Eventually it comes to Socrates, who first engages Agathon in a cross-examination and then goes on to tell the story of what he learned from Diotima, a kind of diviner or oracle. Diotima’s lesson to Socrates involves a genealogy of Love evolving from base yearnings to the highest form of love: love of wisdom, or philosophy. Finally, Alcibiades irrupts into the scene drunk, creating a scene of jealousy when he sees Socrates seating next to the young and attractive Agathon. Alcibiades was famously handsome and apparently had been Socrates’ beloved. He offers to deliver a speech of praises to Socrates. He compares Socrates to a statue that is outwardly ugly and hollow, but it is filled with treasures, and when one discovers Socrates’ hidden treasures, their godlike magnificence acts like a spell. Alcibiades describes how he tried to seduce Socrates hoping he could learn from his knowledge, but Socrates did not make any advances. Alcibiades tried to pursue him as if he was the lover and Socrates the beloved, but Socrates remained unwavering.

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6 It is arguable to consider Socrates as a teacher, although through his practices, he actualizes elements of teaching in an unusual form. For an argument on Socrates and teaching, see the first chapter of Scott, G. (2000) *Plato’s Socrates as Educator* (Albany, State University of New York Press), pp.13-49.


The Symposium is a dialogue, where participants praise Eros in order to substantiate their own understanding of Eros to an audience. The speeches preceding Socrates' deal with Love and the proper relationship of lover and beloved. In typical Platonic fashion, they set the stage for Socrates's recount of the teachings of Diotima, changing the subject from desire of human beauty to desire of the Form of the Good. This is the distinction between the object of desire and the aim of that desire. Plato in the Symposium implies that the desire to possess the Form of the Good and the desire to secure possession of the Form of the Good ultimately entail the desire for immortality. Then, Eros points only in one direction: that of the Forms. This means that the role of the individual is merely as an object of love, a means to access the Forms. However, following Socrates' speech, Alcibiades enters into the scene and delivers a speech in honor of Socrates, a man, and not Eros, a god, arguing that Socrates will become resentful if he praises anyone "but him." With his speech, he places Eros back from the realm of the Forms back in a framework of everyday human relations.

Let us keep in mind the eulogies of love that precede Alcibiades' speech in Symposium give us a comprehensive perspective of how Eros was interpreted in Plato's time. That is, Eros, a daemon, facilitates human contact with a higher realm, and thus, facilitates an ethical way of life. Can we say this is the case for Alcibiades speech? In Alcibiades' eulogy, differently, Eros facilitates human contact with another human, and thus, raises the question of whether a personal involvement may perhaps as well facilitate an ethical way of life. Alcibiades suggests a reference to a higher realm when states, "If you open up [Socrates'] arguments, and really get into the skin of them, you'll find that they are the only arguments in the world that have any sense at all, and that nobody else's are so godlike." However, he is unable to make a higher realm distinction and mistakes the desire for an ethical life itself for the desire to possess a practitioner of an ethical life, Socrates.

Alcibiades' conflation of the object of desire with the aim of desire, the distinction Socrates had just expounded in recounting the teachings of Diotima, is significant. In his confusion, Alcibiades desires to possess Socrates, but Socrates resists Alcibiades' physical advances in order to maintain his philosophical practice. Socrates makes clear that the philosopher's role is to encourage Alcibiades' better qualities by rejecting his favors. Plato uses Alcibiades' example to invite his audience to consider the complexities of Eros as part of a reciprocal relation. In particular, Socrates' silence, his refusal to speak about the "most important things," as acknowledged in the Seventh Letter, gives the opportunity for Alcibiades to rethink and understand the essence of Socrates' practice. Is it possible that Plato wants the reader to take Alcibiades case as a simple warning? What is the significance of the case of Alcibiades' as a step in the process of moral education? The relationship between the education of Socrates and the case of Alcibiades is complex; the two interweave throughout the speech, shedding light on one another in a quest for the ideal practice of education.

In other words, a moral education aimed at the good, in pursuit of “raising [oneself] up to ever greater heights,” is not merely a matter of transcending and leaving behind the desires that take place the level of human relationships, the "intense human interaction engaging the entire personality," but both aspects of the educational function of Eros go together. What bonds teacher and student is love of the good, the virtuous and the true (rather than love of the body), and in this bond the student enacts reciprocal love towards an inspiring individual (who inspires him towards the good, the virtuous and the true). This sense of erotic reciprocity has the power to be a model of relationships in which the members emulate each other’s best characteristics, ennobling themselves in all aspects of their lives.

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9 Symposium, 211a
11 Symposium, 214c-d
12 Symposium, 221e-222a
13 Symposium, 208c
14 Socrates exemplifies the sentiment of the correct lover. As observed by Bury, R. (1932) The Symposium of Plato (Cambridge, Cambridge), pp. IX.
16 Ibid.

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In the previous section we intended to show the complex interdependence between appreciation for the uniqueness of the individual for what he or she is and appreciation for the ideal of virtue, for the potential of what the unique individual can become. We explore this interdependency through the complex relationship between reciprocal Eros, love of the human being who embodies virtue, and Eros as pointing to the ideal, love of wisdom itself. While we tried to stay within the framework and language of Plato’s Symposium, our discussion points back to the original question of appreciation as both “engaging with the entire personality” and “raising themselves up ever greater heights.” In this section and the next, we address each of these senses of appreciation from a different angle, resorting to the language of “respecting the other’s uniqueness” and “intensity,” respectively. At the same time, we use the following sections to bring our inquiry closer to the language and conceptual framework of Soka education.

As a philosophical orientation, an insistence on respecting uniqueness of the other resonates with what is known as the ethics of alterity, most famously championed by Jacques Derrida and Emanuel Levinas.17 In Violence and Metaphysics, a tribute to Levinas, Derrida writes about “respect for the other as what it is, other. Without this acknowledgement, which is not a knowledge, or let us say without this ‘letting be’ of an existent (Other) as something existing outside me in the essence of what is (first in its alterity), no ethics would be possible.” Commenting on this passage, Nel Noddings notes similarities with the ethics of care, for which she has been the most recognized spokesperson. She writes, “a newborn child is not just flesh of my flesh but a genuine other whose appearance may or may not mirror mine, whose interests may be different, and whose fate is tied up with yet somehow separate from mine.”18 This recognition of another person as “a genuine other,” unique and, as such, endowed with dignity, is an essential aspect of the conception of appreciation that we propose here.

There is a deep truth of great moral import at the heart of the conceptions of dignity, respect and morality embodied by the ethics of alterity and the ethics of care. However, as close as Ikeda gets to these ideas when he speaks of “engaging the entire personality,” his emphasis is slightly different. What we have in mind is the tone of expressions like “intense engagement” and “raising themselves up to ever greater heights.” These expressions carry a tone qualitatively different, if not in tension with the idea of “letting be.” We are not claiming that Derrida, Levinas and the care ethicists proscribed an ethics of no engagement. Noddings, for example, explicitly addresses the common misconception that “letting be” implies abstaining from intervention and limiting moral conduct to mere coexistence. She points out that we do intervene in other people’s lives and do attempt to persuade them to change their conduct, but “as we intervene, as we attempt to persuade, we help the other to do better as other, not as a mere shadow of ourselves. Similarly when we see evil in the other, we withhold judgment long enough to be sure that the evil is in the other and not a projection of evil in ourselves.”19 In this sense, the ethics of alterity and the ethics of care capture a profound sense of respect for the uniqueness of the individual while allowing for transformative engagement. The confluences with the aspect of Soka education that we refer to as appreciation are clearly significant, but there is a difference in emphasis that makes a difference.

The conditions for intensity

The tone that characterizes most of Ikeda’s descriptions of the mentor and disciple, or teacher and student, relationship is what we could describe as a language of human revolution and its particular emphasis on what we call intensity. We argue that, in Ikeda, the emphasis on a language of human revolution stems from his experience as a young person studying under Toda’s tutelage. It is clear from Ikeda’s works that Toda’s mentorship plays as important and foundational a role in his educational philosophy as does the legacy of Makiguchi’s value-creating pedagogy. The relationship they shared was based on respect for unique individuality, but it was also characterized by a particular kind of intensity, to which we now turn the focus of

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our discussion. In this section, we attempt a rough development of this concept, but to do it justice would demand much more space than is available for us here.

Josei Toda's character was marked by a particular kind of intensity he naturally brought into his encounters with people. Ikeda quotes a student of Toda's from the times when Toda was an elementary school teacher: "Mr. Toda burned with passion, an earnest and serious passion whose intense heat I could almost feel." Reflecting about his own first encounter with Mr. Toda, Ikeda writes, "His remarks seemed to glow with the light of profound conviction. I remember being deeply impressed by the fact that, though imprisoned during the war by government authorities because of his religious beliefs, he had adamantly refused to give in to the pressure brought to bear on him." We notice the tone of the language of human revolution in references to "earnest and serious passion," "intense heat," "conviction" and "adamantly refused to give in." For Ikeda, Toda is an exemplar of personal struggle against adversity as means to develop and maintain integrity of character. At the same time, according to Ikeda, Toda displayed a kind of unassuming frankness reminiscent of an Aristotelian virtuous person. In his Human Revolution, Ikeda describes Toda's impression on other people as "truly unforgettable," but natural, devoid of artifice: "Toda utilized no special technique to impress others. On the contrary, he was frank and impartial, the type who would treat all people equally." Ikeda tells us that Toda's character was defined by an acceptance of "each individual for the respectable person he or she was," and that he "ignored shortcomings in others… and never censured a person who confessed to criminal convictions, but when people responded to his sincere guidance with vanity, flattery or arrogance, he would rebuke their attitude and suddenly rage at them." Even though there was a deep coherence to Toda's moral conduct, because it was not based on socially accepted norms of behavior, "[o]ften people would appear to be perplexed at such a sudden change in him; they couldn't understand his facility to quickly discover deceit and shallowness in others." But, Ikeda reminds us, Toda's sincere intentions, and the logic behind his conduct, would eventually become apparent: "Many times, it would become obvious in the course of events why he'd flown into such a rage; more often than not, people were surprised to discover that Toda's anger sprang from his mercy." Toda's personality was paradoxical and intense, "He was sometimes difficult to approach, at other times the most generous person they'd ever met." In the final analysis, the paradoxical nature of Toda's character was inseparable from the educative power of the encounters he had with people.

The reason Ikeda finds educational value in the interactions he had with Toda is that he sees them as instrumental for the development of his own character. Ikeda takes for granted a direct connection between the moral character of the teacher and the moral development of the student. This is a widely assumed position, but is by no means uncontroversial. Empirically, the question is virtually impossible to determine because of the great number of factors influencing moral development. Some scholars have provided sophisticated pictures of this relationship showing the complexities and subtleties of the moral dimensions of learning.

23 In the Nichomachean Ethics, Aristotle describes the virtuous person as having formed the necessary habits to maintain virtuous action with perseverance and tenacity but without agonizing effort. He makes the point, however, that the education of desire, the process by which habits are formed, normally involves extended period of time in which agonizing effort must be exercised. The calls the person who can control his desires according to what is virtuous continent.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid, pp. 312-313.
28 Ibid. p. 313.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 Ikeda’s love for this man is evident, we believe, in the fact that he reserves his most beautiful prose to passages like these, descriptions of the personality of his mentor. The aesthetically worst, the most didactic, we must say, are reserved for descriptions of himself. That is the literary appeal that The New Human Revolution lacks compared to The Human Revolution.
32 Osguthorpe, R. (2009) “On the Possible Forms a Relationship Might Take between the Moral Character of a Teacher and the Moral Development of a Student” in Teachers College Record Volume 111, Number 1, January 2009, pp. 1–26 offers a discussion on the question of whether the moral character of the teacher has an impact on moral development in the students and concludes that according to current scholarship, the question is not settled empirically and there are reasons to believe the relationship might not obtain.
In contrast, the causal connection between moral character and moral development in parents and children relationships are much more solidly established. Part of the difference is that the influence of parents is much clearer because of the relatively purified and controlled conditions of private life in the household. In the school and society at large, by contrast, the young person partakes in a much more complex environment in which the factors that exert moral influence are so many and so powerful that the capacity of an individual’s moral character to exercise moral influence is comparatively diminished. The difference that makes the difference is intensity. In the household, relationships are decidedly intense. We believe that part of what Ikeda envisions as the conditions for a value creating education is the establishment of an environment in which intensity can take place, in other words, an environment in which individuals can engage “the entire personality” and “forge themselves, raising themselves up to ever greater heights.”

Intensity, in a technical sense, is the “warping” of the normative environment. The world is value-laden; it has a normative directedness; it is made up of normative environments. If I work in a fashion magazine in midtown Manhattan, for example, I not only partake in a particular physical environment defined by stylish furniture, designers’ clothes, photo equipment and vistas of New York’s skyscrapers. I am part of a world of values, a normative landscape with its hills and valleys. The normative landscape of my hypothetical fashion magazine is marked by slopes that, if not resisted, let people slide down to the value valleys of celebrity worship, judging by appearances, greed, but also collaboration towards shared goals, a refined sense of style, respect for aesthetic integrity, etc. Intensity, in the moral sense a value-creating learning environment should embody, entails the capacity to warp that normative space and transform the normative landscape. To be a value creator is to be capable of doing this.

However, individuals endowed with the powerful personality of a Josei Toda are rare. Moreover, it would be undesirable to have to rely on an individuals’ charisma for establishing conditions of intensity in educational environments. The key lies in coordinated action amongst members of communities of learning. That is, we believe, the purpose of the Soka education tradition of student direct participation in the creation of the school environment. The intensity that shapes the normative directedness of the learning environment is created, in the very literal sense of value creation, by what Ikeda calls the human revolution of those involved in the educative process. The special role of the teacher is to be a leader, to take the initiative. In the ways that Ikeda describes Toda, the important virtues are sincerity and seriousness in personal growth and in creating conditions of intensity to engage with others “with the entire personality.”

As we mention the role of the learning community in creating conditions of intensity, it is important to stress that in Ikeda’s thought, the relationship of mentor and disciple functions both as ideal and as metaphor for educative relationships. One can establish a relationship of full engagement and intensity with great books, with the natural environment, with a cultural tradition, etc. Consider the way Ikeda relates his mentor’s instructions on reading: “[H]e encouraged us to be active, never passive readers; to strive to absorb but not be overwhelmed by books.” He then goes on to quote Toda’s own words: “The way we relate to books is the way we relate to people, and encountering a good book is the same as encountering a good mentor or a good friend.” We believe many aspects of the education here at Soka University of America work according to the logic of relationships of intensity. We are thinking especially of the very many opportunities students are given to immerse themselves in learning environments: the residential campus and the residential life program, Core I, study abroad, the efforts to reduce distractions (like technology, food and accommodation provided with tuition), the capstone project, etc.

A very important final consideration on the conditions for intensity is to stress that these conditions, precisely by virtue of their demanding nature, cannot be forced on students. To the students the teacher must only extend an invitation. This is a developmental matter. It might be different in the case of small children, but for young adults, educative conditions of intensity must be established on a basis of mutual respect, in which

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37 Ibid.
case manipulation becomes highly problematic. Much more could be said about this, but we must leave it at that for now.

**A value-creating conception of appreciation**

In the previous sections, we discussed two components of the conception of appreciation we intend to develop. First, we explore the question of respect for the other’s uniqueness. One important component of appreciation is to relate to the other as whole person, and not as a reflection of ourselves, or reduced to a single aspect or function. We compared this attitude to what the ethics of alterity describes as “letting be.” As the expression suggests, this move implies a kind of retreat. The teacher takes some distance from the student, makes room for the student “to be” herself or himself. In the second section, we explored the concept of intensity. Mainly through descriptions of Toda’s character, we described the educational significance of the concept as a kind of warping of the normative space of learning, by means of which two or more individuals can exercise creative normative demands on one another towards shared growth. This move implies a kind of thrusting forward, a kind of intervention into the other’s normative life. Appreciation, in the specific philosophical sense we want to give the word here, combines these two seemingly contradictory moves. It involves recognizing the other as what they are in their own nature, while at the same time recognizing their potential for growth. This double recognition it experienced as being valued, but also as a normative demand to create value, an expectation for growth.

**Conclusion**

As promised, we have traversed through eclectic philosophical landscapes in search for a value-creating conception of appreciation. We found it at the intersection of reciprocal love and Platonic Eros, where respect for the uniqueness of the student meets in intense engagements towards shared growth as teacher and students.

The appreciative teacher seeks to draw the attention of those preoccupied with illusion (self-destructive desires) and warps the normative space of learning to redirect the desires embedded in the student’s illusion towards the student’s growth, towards the realization of her or his potential. It is this appreciative practice of orienting the student towards “raising themselves up to ever greater heights” itself that distinguishes the appreciative teacher from those who talk about appreciation but in fact encourage their students to appreciate only the subject matter or themselves. Another way to state this is to say that the teacher must neither impose his desires upon the student, nor simply allow the student to indulge in unreflective pursuit of self-destructive desires. Instead, the appreciative teacher meets the student’s own, freely expressed needs while helping them recognize their potential beyond the limitations of their own perspective. In her love, in her desire, the teacher mediates between the actual individual student and the student’s potential, helping to bring about the realization of that potential. Conversely, the student’s desire for his or her envisioned ideal self is mediated by the good teacher, whom the student perceives as being farther along the path towards the ideal. “Intense human interaction engaging the entire personality…forg[ing] themselves, raising themselves up to ever greater heights” involves this kind of erotic relationship in which the student is appreciated both as an actual, unique individual and as a person with unfathomable potential for growth.

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38 There is an element of manipulation in any teaching situation, by virtue of the asymmetry inherent to the teacher-student relationship. A rich tradition of explicitly manipulative means for the sake of education spans from figures like Socrates, Rousseau and Nietzsche in the West to most of the Taoist and Buddhist traditions in the East.
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The **purpose** of the Soka Education Student Research Project (SESRP) is:

- To inspire individuals to embody and perpetuate the spirit of Soka education
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### The mission of Soka University of America is to foster a steady stream of global citizens committed to living a contributive life.

**Mottos**

Be philosophers of a renaissance of life  
Be world citizens in solidarity for peace  
Be pioneers of a global civilization  

Foster leaders of culture in the community  
Foster leaders of humanism in society  
Foster leaders of pacifism in the world  
Foster leaders for the creative coexistence of nature and humanity