What Counts as Legitimate Participation?

Embracing Students' Funds of Knowledge in Philosophical Inquiry

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Abstract

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While ample theoretical and empirical work has been done around the aims, methods, and outcomes of Philosophy for Children (P4C), few interpretive case studies currently give voice to students' lived experiences and ways of enacting their philosophical selves within a community of inquiry. This case study shows how three students in one fifth-grade community of philosophical inquiry drew on their funds of knowledge to gain entry into the inquiry and to make epistemic philosophical progress. Some students made epistemic progress using discourse moves that were not traditional to Western philosophy. Further, this community of inquiry utilized their epistemic authority to reject abstract lines of inquiry in favor of concrete ideas and experiences and made epistemic philosophical progress on their own terms. By heeding to students' diverse and multifaceted participation styles, the findings of this study challenge current notions about (1) what counts as legitimate participation in philosophical inquiry and (2) how a community of inquiry makes epistemic philosophical progress.

Philosophy for Children (P4C) is the theory and pedagogy of engaging in philosophical inquiry with pre-college students, first developed by Carlos Lipman in 1980. There has been ample theoretical work done about the purposes, aims, practices, and outcomes of P4C (Lipman et al., 1980; Goering et al., 2013; Mohr Lone & Burroughs, 2016) and many pedagogical materials have been developed (Fisher, 1996; Cleghorn, 2002; Cassidy, 2012). Empirical research has shown the positive academic and socioemotional outcomes of engaging in philosophical inquiry with young students across a variety of contexts (Trickey & Topping, 2004, 2006, 2007; Gorard et al., 2015, 2017; Heron & Cassidy, 2018; Cassidy et al., 2018). However, not enough interpretive case studies or ethnographies attempt to give voice to students' insider experiences of participating in Philosophy for Children (with some exceptions, i.e. Barrow, 2015; Leng, 2015). There is a lack of research around students' ways of participating in philosophical inquiry, the resources and funds of knowledge that students bring in, and their unique ways of being and knowing within the Community of Inquiry. This case study leads the way in these areas by combining discourse analysis and student interviews to paint holistic pictures of three students within a fifth-grade community of philosophical inquiry. It seeks to understand how students draw on their funds of knowledge and lived experience when enacting their philosophical selves and making progress as a community.

Theoretical Framework

This study seeks to understand how students participate in a community of philosophical inquiry. Specifically, I investigate how students draw on funds of knowledge and engage their philosophical selves as they participate in Philosophy for Children. Below I review three relevant bodies of literature: the philosophical self, funds of knowledge, and epistemic progress within a community of inquiry, all within the context of Philosophy for Children.

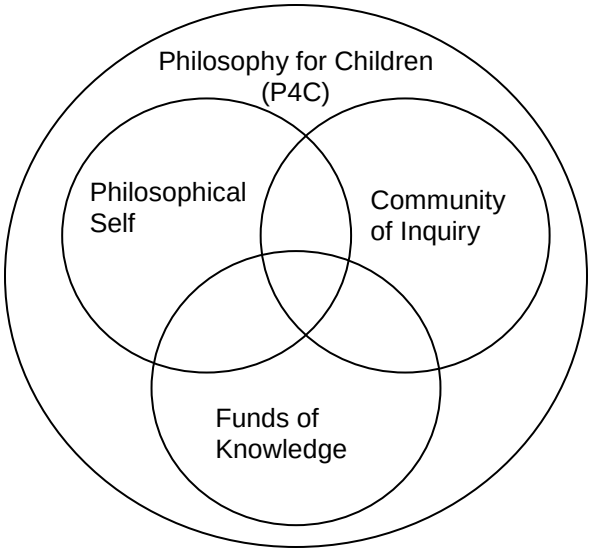

Figure 1. Visual representation of theoretical framework. The research questions for this study lie within the intersection of literature around the Philosophical Self (Mohr Lone, 2012), Epistemic Progress within the Community of Inquiry (Peirce, 1955; Pardales & Girod, 2006; Golding, 2012), and Funds of Knowledge (Moll et al., 2005), within the context of Philosophy for Children (Lipman et al., 1980).

Philosophy for Children

Philosophy for Children (P4C) is the theory and pedagogy of practical philosophical inquiry developed by Carlos Lipman and Ann Sharp (1980). In P4C, philosophical inquiry is both genuine and divergent: it does not have a predetermined point of arrival nor does it aim to reach consensus (Golding, 2013). Rather than teaching students about philosophers or philosophical theories, it engages students in inquiring about philosophical questions and ideas for themselves. There are three main reasons to prioritize philosophical inquiry with pre-college students: (1) cultivating childhood amazement and curiosity can give our children's lives greater depth and meaning, (2) engaging in philosophical inquiry allows children to recognize that there are many perspectives and ways of understanding and encourages them to critically examine their own lives and reasoning, and (3) reflective discussion about large, complex questions develops analytic and critical thinking skills (Mohr Lone, 2012, p. 11). Several studies have shown positive outcomes of P4C programs in the following areas: logical reasoning, reading

comprehension, mathematics skills, self-esteem, listening skills, expressive language, creative thinking, cognitive ability, self-regulation, socio-emotional skills, citizenship, and emotional intelligence (Trickey & Topping, 2004, 2006, 2007; Gorard et al., 2015, 2017; Heron & Cassidy, 2018; Cassidy et al., 2018). While these studies play a central role in making a case for philosophical inquiry in pre-college classrooms, sufficient voice has not yet been given to students' lived experiences of and ways of participating in philosophical inquiry by way of empirical research.

The Philosophical Self.

To describe an aspect of students' lived experiences of participating in philosophical inquiry, Mohr Lone (2012) has coined the term the philosophical self. This construct is useful for understanding how students participate in philosophical inquiry. The philosophical self is "the part of us that understands that many aspects of our existence are profoundly mysterious," that is "sensitive to the strangeness of the human experience, and [that] is manifested by a propensity to ask reflective questions about our experiences and the thoughts we have about them" (Mohr Lone, 2012, p. 5). It is one aspect of a person's identity and is characterized by a willingness to engage in philosophical thinking, whether existential, moral, political, aesthetic, logical, or metaphysical. Abstract thinking is its foundation, as it involves reflection and synthesis of a variety of evidences. This part of the self is sensitive to the complexities that exist within our experiences of ourselves and the world. It seeks comprehensive and sophisticated explanations that account for multiple experiences and evidences, attempts to uncover otherwise unexamined assumptions, and considers implications and consequences of various possibilities. The *philosophical self* is at play when one experiences wonder, awe, excitement, nervousness, or contemplation about the meaning of things or how things really are. Ultimately, the philosophical self leads one to "question the meaning of the world in which we live and to look for the questions inside the questions with which we begin" (Mohr Lone, 2012, p. 5). For this reason, engaging the philosophical self can be a particularly meaningful and emotional experience. It is this aspect of student experience that I aim to give voice to and to better understand in this study.

While there is plenty of research about pre-college philosophical inquiry in general, Mohr Lone's conception of the philosophical self has yet to be further explored theoretically or empirically. There is still empirical work to be done to understand how and when students' philosophical selves are engaged in communities of inquiry, how they interact within a community of inquirers, or what other aspects of student experience are involved therein. Nor have students' own experiences of participating in philosophical inquiry been given sufficient voice in empirical research. To explore this theme further, it will be useful to consider the educational construct of funds of knowledge.

Funds of Knowledge and Lived Experience.

To better understand how students participate in philosophical inquiry, it will be useful to consider the educational construct of funds of knowledge. While the Philosophy for Children literature has long emphasized students' diverse ways of being and thinking, these two bodies of literature have not yet been brought together. The funds of knowledge approach recognizes students as competent knowers with life experiences (Moll et al., 2005). Students do not enter the classroom as a *tabula rasa*; they bring in their own knowledge, lived experiences, interests, inclinations, etc. Moll conceptualizes knowledge as distributed among many rather than localized in one mind. Therefore, funds of knowledge refer to the large bodies of knowledge, artifacts, and tools accumulated by the lived experiences of groups of people over time within certain sociohistorical conditions (Moll, 2005, p. 41). These funds of knowledge are drawn on and negotiated within and across their communities (Moll, 2005, p. 44). For students crossing the borders of school and home, across languages and practices, they adapt and transform their knowledge and ways of knowing (Phelan, 1998).

These are the funds of knowledge that students bring into the classroom and that shape students' philosophical selves during inquiry. Students' ways of being are not only adapted and negotiated across settings, they also interact with others' ways of being within a setting. In the Community of Inquiry, students actively use their ways of knowing, developed across various social worlds, to make epistemic philosophical progress. Their funds of knowledge and lived experiences interact with one another as they

make progress toward understanding philosophical problems. Thus, funds of knowledge are both the medium through which philosophical selves are expressed and play a role in constructing the Community of Inquiry and the knowledge it produces.

Epistemic Progress in a Community of Inquiry.

In Philosophy for Children, philosophical selves are not engaged in isolation; students enact their philosophical selves and draw on their funds of knowledge within a Community of Inquiry (Peirce, 1955; Lipman et al., 1980; Pardales & Girod, 2006). Their funds of knowledge both emerge within the community and work to construct it. A community of inquiry consists of inquirers who co-construct distributed knowledge and who act as the arbiters of the standards against which constructed knowledge is tested (Pardales & Girod, 2006, p. 302). The inquirers, using their own experiences, interests, and reasoning, determine the standards of what counts as reliable knowledge for the community and allow the community to correct and revise their knowledge over time. Through inductive and synthetic reasoning, distributed knowledge is attainable and questions are answerable, as long as three preconditions are met: (1) readiness to reason, (2) mutual respect, and (3) an absence of indoctrination (Lipman, 1980, p. 45). This last point is not to claim that the community is neutral or void of ideology, but that the inquirers must not aim for consensus around one, exhaustive explanation. Instead, divergence of opinions and openness to others are necessary for the community of inquiry to be authentic. Yet the inquirers must believe that an explanation exists as motivation for their inquiry. This is the kind of community in which philosophical inquiry takes place.

In genuine and divergent philosophical inquiry – inquiry that does not have a predetermined point of arrival and does not aim to reach consensus – what does it mean to make progress? Progress can be characterized as a change that is an improvement. Progress is either epistemic, i.e. works toward aims related to knowledge and ideas, or procedural, i.e. works toward aims related to process (Golding, 2012). While epistemic and procedural progress are deeply intertwined and are both affected by students' funds of knowledge, this study focuses on progress toward epistemic aims. The epistemic aim of Philosophy for

Children has been up for debate but can be generalized as: “for students to make sense of the world, themselves, and the relations between them” (Golding, 2012, p. 685). Since this aim is sufficiently broad to include a range of disciplines and methods, Golding provides a framework for “epistemic philosophical progress” that is based on the following inquiry stages: (1) identify and articulate a philosophical problem, (2) hypothesize possible resolutions, (3) elaborate each possible resolution by pushing for depth and analysis, (4) critically evaluate possible resolutions, and (5) resolve the philosophical problem (Golding, 2016, p. 71). Inquiry need not follow all of these stages nor in any particular order; instead, these inquiry stages can be seen as milestones in the distributed line of inquiry. When one and any inquiry milestone is reached, epistemic progress has been made. Other signs of epistemic philosophical progress are: when the community reaches mutual understanding (not consensus), when the inquiry moves from one stage to another, when any inquiry milestone has been reached, and when the community agrees on what is needed to make further progress (Golding, 2013). This conceptualization of epistemic progress will be useful for understanding the philosophical inquiry undertaken by students in this study.

Taking these three bodies of literature together, and based on my experience of facilitating philosophical discussions with young students, I believe that each student’s philosophical self is shaped by their unique funds of knowledge and, as such, students’ philosophical selves emerge in diverse and multifaceted ways within the community of inquiry. As such, the way each community of inquiry makes progress is dependent upon the collective funds of knowledge of the inquirers. The progress and trajectory of their inquiry depends not only on the inquirers’ ways of reasoning, but on their existent resources, present and past experiences, and interests. Students’ prior experiences and funds of knowledge are not barriers but windows and reference points that make knowledge construction and the enactment of the philosophical self possible. However, these three bodies of literature have not yet been brought together theoretically, nor has the role of students’ funds of knowledge in philosophical inquiry been explored empirically. To do so, this study asks the following questions:

1. How do students draw on funds of knowledge as they enact their philosophical selves in a community of inquiry?
2. (How) Do students' funds of knowledge contribute to the epistemic philosophical progress of the community?

Methods

Structure of P4C sessions.

For this study, one class of fifth-grade students participated in weekly P4C sessions that I participated in as a facilitator, following Lipman's pedagogy. I usually began the sessions with a short warm-up that provoked students to think and share about a specific topic. After the warm-up, I shared the stimulus for the session, which was either a children's book, a game, or a thought experiment (see Appendix A). The stimuli were intentionally ambiguous or perplexing in order to provoke thought and never contained a predetermined lesson or moral. After the stimulus was presented, students thought of questions it provoked in them and volunteered their questions to be represented publicly. Once all questions were represented, students decided which would initiate the inquiry by a majority vote. The inquiry then began, in which students thought aloud, listened attentively, built on one another's ideas, asked one another clarifying questions, and provide examples and non-examples to make progress in their thinking. They respectfully explored the assumptions, biases, implications, consequences, and evidences of one another's thinking and carefully considered alternative viewpoints in order to reach both individual and shared meaning. It was my role as the facilitator to encourage and model this kind of participation (Lipman, et al., 1980, p. 105). Students sometimes had opportunities for silent thinking, individual writing or drawing, partner talk, and/or group talk, depending on the topic and the flow of the session. Sessions often concluded with a final question for students to reflect on, either through silent thinking or writing in their philosophy journal.

School and Classroom Setting.

This study took place in Ambrosia Elementary, a diverse elementary school in the outskirts of a major U.S. city. The large majority of the students were of Asian/Pacific Islander or Hispanic descent and received free or reduced lunch, and 40% of students at Ambrosia were ELLs. Students at Ambrosia scored on par or slightly above the district average on standardized tests and there were high rates of parent satisfaction and school-family engagement. Ambrosia had an open-concept layout, allowing students to move seamlessly between rooms and specialists as needed. The school's social justice orientation regarding multiculturalism, racial justice, and gender identity was made evident by the posters and student work hanging in the hallways and classrooms. There was a general sense of mutual respect and student autonomy across classrooms at Ambrosia Elementary.

The class involved in this study consisted of 27 fifth-graders representative of the school demographics mentioned above. The students had not been exposed to philosophy or philosophical inquiry prior to the start of this study. Their classes largely consisted of hands-on activities and projects, productive talk in partners or small groups, and read alouds. They regularly held class meetings in which students shared their feelings and experiences in the whole-group setting. While students experienced productive small-group talk during classes and more feelings-based whole-group talk during class meetings, they were not accustomed to the kind of productive whole-group talk engendered by P4C in the Community of Inquiry before this study began.

Data collection.

I acted as a participant observer in this study, serving as both a researcher and a facilitator of philosophical discussions. I facilitated hour-long philosophy sessions on a weekly basis for eight weeks. The sessions were video recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. Starting at week six, I interviewed students about their experience of participating in philosophical discussions. Students were identified for interviews based on emerging participation styles from discourse analysis (see next section). Interview questions were designed to give voice to students' lived experiences of philosophy and to identify and

describe students' philosophical selves (see Appendix B). Interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and analyzed.

Data analysis.

In this study, I used a case study approach to paint a full picture of students' inside experience of and participation within a community of philosophical inquiry. I began with a discourse analysis of philosophy sessions. I looked for indicators of students' philosophical selves (wondering, amazement, curiosity, confusion, personal meaning-making), students' use of kinds of reasoning (inductive, deductive, comparative, conditional, causal, experiential), and student and teacher discourse moves (hypothesizing, questioning, connecting to experience, building on previous ideas, building on prior knowledge, complicating previous ideas, providing new evidence) during philosophical discussions. The data was analyzed by looking at students' individual and collective patterns over time as well as interactional patterns among students and teacher, both within and across sessions. In addition to words and phrases, I paid attention to a variety of discourse features, such as facial expressions, body language, seating arrangements, silence, and wait time (Cazden, 1988). Discourse analysis was triangulated with data from student interviews to gain deeper insights into student experiences of participating in inquiry. Interview questions were adapted to include observations from discourse analysis in an attempt to understand students' motivations and thinking processes during inquiry. Thus, the patterns from discourse analysis informed the interviews and data from the interviews informed subsequent discourse analysis. These two data sets worked together to paint a more holistic picture of students' experiences and participation in philosophical inquiry.

Positionality Statement.

During inquiry, my role as the facilitator was to assist students in clarifying their thinking, providing evidence, uncovering assumptions, and considering implications (Lipman, et al., 1980, p. 105; Ben-Avi, p. 183). My role was not to introduce my own ideas but to facilitate the emergence of students'

ideas and to press them, using certain talk moves, to think critically about the ideas that were shared (Lipman, et al., 1980, p. 103). In that sense, I was both a model and a participant in the inquiry process. During interviews, my role shifted to a researcher-facilitator hybrid as I asked students, whom I already knew well, questions about their experience of participating in discussions, of which I was the facilitator. This hybrid role of facilitator and researcher asking questions about sessions that I facilitated may have affected students' responses during interviews (Metz, 1983; Lampert, 2000). While some students may have been more trusting and open because of our pre-existing rapport, other students may have felt inhibited or reluctant because of the nature of our facilitator-student relationship.

As a participant, a facilitator, a researcher, an adult, and a white woman, it was important to recognize my own positionality and privilege within a community of children of diverse and marginalized backgrounds who had not participated in philosophy previously. As it is impossible to escape my own historicity, nor to detach from my own sociocultural identities or beliefs about teaching and learning, my positionality and biases affected and were effected by my participation in the inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Eisenhart, 2001). I did my best to take on a stance of curiosity, welcome, and respect for all students' ideas, to treat all students as equally legitimate knowers within the community, and to follow the students' line of inquiry wherever it led without forbidding any topics, questions, or ways of participating from the discussion. I attempted to encourage epistemic philosophical progress while valuing each individual and their ideas. I was transformed by my experience of participating in the inquiry and learning about students' lives, interests, wonderings, and experiences of the world.

My positionality as an experienced teacher and facilitator directly involved in the inquiry allowed me to see more of the students' ideas, experiences, and ways of being than I perhaps would have as an observer alone. Yet my direct participation, which involved building relationships with the students and teacher, may have introduced new biases or led me to emphasize some phenomena over others. Thus my position as participant observer may have acted as both an avenue and a limitation during my research (Lampert, 2000).

Findings

Based on discourse analysis and interviews, I identified three major themes in students' participation in and experience of philosophical inquiry. First, students used their unique funds of knowledge as entry points into philosophical inquiry. They called upon their diverse lived experiences, knowledge, and ways of reasoning when engaging in philosophical conversation. I provide cases of three students, Carlos, Armando, and Oliver, to demonstrate how funds of knowledge shaped participation in philosophical inquiry. Next, students' funds of knowledge not only allowed entry into the conversation, but made significant contributions to the epistemic philosophical progress of the community. I return to the same three students to demonstrate how their ideas contributed to the progress of the community. Finally, the community rejected some of the more abstract ideas and questions that arose during inquiry out of an effort to decrease their feeling of confusion about philosophical questions. To support this last point, I return to the cases of Oliver and Carlos and I add cases involving the classroom teacher, Lisa, Graciela, and Maisie.

1. Students used funds of knowledge as entry points into philosophical inquiry.

Based on classroom observations and interviews, I found that students used their funds of knowledge and lived experiences when participating in philosophical inquiry. Importantly, the experiences they shared and knowledge they drew on traversed the social worlds of home, school, and peer life. Some talked about specific relationships or events that took place at home. Some drew on their experience of what makes them curious about certain school subjects. Some attended to social dynamics, while others enjoyed intellectual play. The use of diverse funds of knowledge led students to exhibit distinct participation styles. The following three cases show how three students drew on diverse funds of knowledge to participate in philosophical inquiry in distinct ways. First, Carlos draws on his creative imagination in order to invent stories that account for the puzzling questions of the community. Second,

Armando draws on his experiences of social media to attend to the social dynamics of the community. Third, Oliver draws on prior knowledge and abstract thinking skills to engage in intellectual play.

Carlos: Imaginative storytelling to account for something puzzling. Carlos was one of the students who contributed the most during philosophical discussions. His participation was unique: while other student contributions were usually based on evidence from the stimulus, their own experience, or others' ideas, Carlos's contributions were based in stories of his own creation. He would invent these stories as he told them, usually in order to make sense of something puzzling. During an interview, Carlos shared his experience of using his imagination during philosophy. He gave insights into why and how often he does this:

> Researcher: In philosophy I noticed that – and you can tell me what you think – that you use your imagination a lot. Like, you try to think of all different kinds of explanations for the questions.
>
> Carlos: mhm [nods]
>
> Researcher: What is that like for you?
>
> Carlos: I used to do it. I always do it. Because when I read a book, I ask stuff that comes to my mind when I think of stuff that I read. Like, that I don't, like, understand, like, when they say, like, a question and, like, I use my imagination to mix, like, the stuff of the book. And to use it in my own words.
>
> Researcher: Is that something you do all the time or just in philosophy?
>
> Carlos: I do that all the time

Carlos experiences using his imagination as a way of "mixing" the contents of the discussion or stimulus and of speaking "in his own words." He does this in response to a question he "doesn't understand". Perhaps most striking is that he "always" does it, "all the time" – Carlos's imagination is his trusty resource for understanding something puzzling. It is a familiar tool for him to use when encountering something unfamiliar, like abstract philosophical inquiry.

Carlos's stories were sometimes concise and in direct response to another's question. For example, when his peer, Liu, asked a question about the stimulus, Carlos immediately responded by

inventing a concise explanatory scenario. In this example, the stimulus for discussion was *The Last Tree* by Ingrid Chabbert.

> Liu: Can't they plant other trees?
>
> Carlos: (immediately calls out answer) They don't have seeds probably.
>
> Carlos: (is called on) I think because it's the setting doesn't have enough seeds so I guess they thought they didn't need seeds because they needed money for other things, so the setting doesn't have that type of seeds.

The details Carlos refers to about the amounts and types of seeds and the budgeting concerns of the city were not a part of the stimulus, nor were they topics brought up by other classmates for discussion. Instead, Carlos used his imagination to invent these details in order to account for Liu's question.

There were also instances in which Carlos's stories were lengthy and creative, which made the role of his imagination even more clear. In the following example, students were discussing *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein. The question that preceded this discussion was, "Why was the tree so happy when she lost everything?"

> Carlos: The tree was happy because she cares so much about the child, she loves him. The tree wants him to have certain things so he can have a better life. She wants him to have a better life and be safe.
>
> Armando: You said he needed a better life, but in the story his life was getting worse because he wanted a boat to get out of here because he didn't like what happened to him.
>
> Facilitator: What do you guys think about that? I didn't notice that, but that's a really interesting point. He wanted to leave. What do you guys think?
>
> Carlos: I think his wife got a divorce and he is still mad at her, he wanted to get out of town and this place because he wants to be in a different world and wants to forget all the moments that happened to him.
>
> Facilitator: Maybe.
>
> Carlos: and probably he forgot about it, but the only thing he didn't forget about was the tree. When he saw the tree he just wants to sit with her. Because he wants to be there for the last days of his life.

There were no indicators in the stimulus that the boy had a bad life or was unsafe. However, the kinds of things the boy asked for, such as money and a house, may have led Carlos to this interpretation. Still,

Armando noticed that Carlos's ideas were only loosely based in the story and he questioned this, using details from the story to introduce his own idea. Carlos's response was to invent a second, even more creative, scenario, which this time was not rooted in any details from the story: there were no indicators that the man had a wife, got divorced, was angry, wanted to forget everything except the tree, or was at the end of his life. These were all details Carlos invented and wove into a story to respond to Armando's question. As Carlos creatively added more details to the narrative, he built understanding for himself in relation to the question. His story even felt romantic: the details seamlessly built on one another and progressively drew on his "reader's" emotions. In this example, Carlos's storytelling clearly stood out as a distinct way of participating in philosophical inquiry. He used his imagination as a familiar way of reasoning through the puzzling questions that his peers in the Community of Inquiry presented.

Armando: Attending to social dynamics through social media references. While Armando did not participate in philosophical discussions as frequently as Carlos, he similarly had a distinct way of participating. Rather than using his imagination to tell stories, Armando used his experiences of social media platforms to connect socially with his peers. Many of his contributions simultaneously referred to social media, made his classmates laugh, connected him with a specific peer, and contributed an idea to the philosophical inquiry.

Unsurprisingly, the topic of social media spontaneously arose during an interview with Armando and his classmate, Fernando. During the interview, Armando revealed that social media is a large part of his experience and he talked about it in relation to his peers.

> Researcher: What else do you guys talk about?
>
> Armando: Fortnite.
>
> Researcher: Fortnite? Yeah I noticed you guys mentioned Fortnite a few times in our conversations. Why is that what you bring up?
>
> [...]

Armando: I don't know, like we experienced it. And yeah [inaudible] and like, what, so I bring it up in philosophy.

[...]

Researcher: Sometimes you bring it up when I call on you in philosophy, right? [both nod] But that's not something you do in other classes? [both nod] So what's the difference, what do you think?

Armando: It's like when you say you can talk about like anything that you want, we mostly talk about Fortnite. So like if another teacher says talk about something else, we talk about, like, not Fortnite. [laughs] anyway. Oh the only thing I do is when me and Fernando are together we mostly talk about Fortnite. But when we're separate, I don't talk about Fortnite.

Researcher: Oh yeah? So it's just something about you guys?

Fernando: Well, not for me.

Researcher: Oh no?

Fernando: I talk about it with my other friends.

Armando: She's asking about teachers. Like if another teacher asks you like, say anything you want, do you say fortnite?

[Fernando laughs]

Armando: See? No.

According to Armando, he talked about social platforms because they were a large part of his life experience. Yet he also used them as a way of relating personally to Fernando and saving face when Fernando didn't agree. Armando's experience of social media was not just personal but social – a familiar way of establishing connection with others during an unfamiliar task, such as philosophical inquiry or an interview with a researcher.

Armando followed this pattern during philosophical discussions. In the following example, as part of a philosophy game, Armando shared a false claim and explained why it was false:

Armando: I am better than Tyler at Fortnite.

[many laugh]

Facilitator: How do you know [that's false]?

Armando: He kills me a lot.

Facilitator: So we can go on Fortnite and measure that?

Armando uses an experience from a social media platform to engage in the philosophical task of making a false claim. Simultaneously, he creates an opportunity to relate to his classmates – both by making others laugh and by connecting personally with Tyler.

Another indicator that Armando prioritizes social dynamics during philosophical inquiry is his comparison between philosophy, class meeting, and meeting with the guidance counselor. During the same interview, he talks about the three settings as spaces to talk about social dynamics and life experiences.

Researcher: What do you like about it [philosophy]?

Armando: I don't know I just like, like specific questions like based on what's happening in the world, so.

Researcher: Is that something that you get to do in other places?

[Armando shakes head]

Armando: well, a little bit. In class meeting I like talking about like how I, what happens. Like how they [his classmates] act, and life, and how we experience it [inaudible]

Armando sees philosophy and class meeting as similar because in both settings he and his classmates get to talk about what's happening in the world and their own experiences of going through life. Later, he compares philosophy to meeting with the guidance counselor.

Researcher: And you said it [philosophy] really makes you think. Can you tell me more about that?

Fernando: Well when you ask like a question or the book, when you say like what we saw, then it makes us think.

Armando: Or like a hard question it makes you think

Researcher: Is that different from what happens in other classes?

Armando: A little bit. Kind of

Fernando: A little bit

Researcher: How so?

[A+B laughing]

Armando: It's like [pause]

Researcher: There's no right or wrong answer, I just want to know what you guys experience.

Armando: It's like what we talk about with Ms. Kwan [guidance counselor]. Or like if there's a problem and you can't solve, or if there's a problem like outside or like somewhere else and we talk about it in philosophy or something like that.

Armando sees philosophy and meeting with the guidance counselor as similar because in both spaces he is able to talk about "outside" problems that are difficult to solve. What is interesting about his comparison is that he only spoke about his own experiences twice throughout our philosophy sessions and on no occasions did he explicitly talk about difficult social problems. Instead, he most often made his classmates laugh and talked about social media platforms. Yet, we have seen that doing so is Armando's way of using his funds of knowledge to attend to social dynamics, so it is possible that he sees them as one in the same.

Oliver: Using abstract reasoning to engage in intellectual play. Unlike Carlos and Armando, Oliver's participation in philosophical inquiry was more traditional to Western philosophy. Oliver participated frequently and, due to the previous prompting of his classroom teacher, tried to monitor his air time. He used deductive and causal reasoning, appealed to contextual factors, questioned and hypothesized, synthesized others' ideas, used examples and counter-examples, juggled contrasting ideas, and leveraged his own prior knowledge. He tested his prior knowledge with new ideas and his wonderings were often epistemological. From the very first philosophy session, Oliver engaged in abstract thinking almost exclusively, instead of speaking from concrete experiences like many of his peers. Oliver seemed to have fun as he played with ideas abstractly, introducing new examples and responding to others' inputs. During an interview, he talked about philosophy as if it were an exciting adventure or a fun game:

Researcher: So how would you describe your participation in philosophy? The way [you participate] or how often?

Oliver: Well, for voting on what questions, a lot of times it's hard for me to decide so I just kind of do it kind of randomly because, no matter what, I know it's still gonna be fun, and in the conversations sometimes I like just listening in the beginning to see like where it's going, and then like giving my opinion about it, about a certain thing.

Researcher: That's really interesting. Yeah, I think I noticed that. [pause] So when you're listening to others in the beginning, are there ever moments when it makes you change the way you're thinking about something?

Oliver: Yeah, sometimes, because what some people say changes the conversation so it's like you're talking about a certain part of it and then suddenly you're talking about something related to that but different. So that changes like how I think about it because if I wanted to say something then if it gets changed I won't say it because it's not related to that anymore.

[...]

Researcher: What would you tell a friend who hasn't done philosophy before?

Oliver: Even if you want to talk about a certain thing, the conversation will still be interesting. Like even if you want to talk about a specific thing that's not that, it might even be related to that eventually because the conversations can change a lot.

Regardless of which direction the inquiry took, Oliver believed philosophy was "still gonna be fun" and "will still be interesting." He described the dynamic of the inquiry in a way that felt exciting and unpredictable: "and then suddenly you're talking about something related, but different." Oliver's sense that talking about ideas is like a fun and exciting game was palpable during both the interview and each philosophy session. He understood that many things were related in unexpected ways, which made the trajectory of the inquiry unpredictable and the possibilities for discussion endless. This could be seen in the discussions, as he often raised his hand for a while, waiting to be called on, but then put it back down as the trajectory of the inquiry shifted. By using the terms "interesting" and "fun", Oliver expressed his enjoyment of talking about ideas with others.

One move that Oliver often made during philosophical inquiry was deductive reasoning. He would define a term and reach a conclusion based on his definition. In the following example, students

were discussing what kind of creature was on Mars in the story *Life on Mars* by Jon Agee. Oliver defined the term 'alien' and used his definition to determine whether or not the creature in the story was an alien.

> Facilitator: So what do you guys think about this idea that it might be an alien? It's tall and wide, does that make it an alien, why or why not?
>
> Oliver: Alien means foreign thing and if it's on Mars and we don't live on Mars then for us it's an alien, but for it we're the aliens, because it's never seen us, and we aren't native there, and [trails off]

Oliver developed his definition of 'alien' based on his prior knowledge from reading a book in school. He shared this later in the discussion, when students were thinking about how to name and classify the creature:

> Oliver: When we were reading [inaudible] it said something about 'people can't be inalienable'. So I think that because it lives somewhere else from us it's an alien. So it could be a type of one of those types of things but you would probably give it a different name because it's not exactly like any of them and it's not related to any of them.

Here Oliver used his prior knowledge to develop the definition from which to draw his conclusions. He re-established his position on whether or not the creature is an alien before contributing his ideas about how to classify it. This is a common, recognizable move in Philosophy for Children and in the field of philosophy at large, yet it is one that his classmates often did not make. Building on prior knowledge and using deductive reasoning were Oliver's most frequent ways of participating in philosophical inquiry. Thus, Oliver's way of participating stood out as distinct from his peers' and as traditional to Western conceptions of philosophy.

Another move Oliver often made during philosophical inquiry was to appeal to context in order to complicate a working idea. In the following example, the Community of Inquiry played a game in which they collectively formulated the question, "How do teachers make the day so long and fun?" They then discussed whether or not the question was philosophical:

> Carlos: I think it is philosophical because in philosophy we learn to ask questions and this is a question. It's still a question.
>
> Facilitator: So as long as it's a question it's philosophical?

Carlos: Yeah

Hiromi: What we do [in philosophy] is with a book right? But the definition of philosophy is not just in a book. It's like everywhere.

Oliver: I disagree with Carlos because people have questions really often. 'How is your day going?' is not a philosophical question. But I'm not sure if that question is philosophical. I think it matters what we're talking about. If you're having a conversation and talking about teachers, it could be. But with a friend randomly it wouldn't be.

Oliver complicated Carlos's idea by suggesting that only certain questions are philosophical. His admittance that he wasn't sure whether or not the question was philosophical implies that he was playing with ideas as he talked about them and was comfortable with uncertainty. He did not need to reach an ultimate conclusion in order to consider the different contextual factors at play. The discourse moves of resisting a final conclusion, appealing to contextual factors, and complicating an idea are more traditional forms of participating in philosophy than those employed by Oliver's classmates. We can also sense Oliver's perception of philosophy as fun and interesting in this example, as he suspended the need for a direct answer in order to play with some aspects of the idea that others had not yet considered. Thus Oliver used his funds of knowledge, which we may summarize as abstract thinking skills, to participate in philosophy in a more traditional way.

2. Students' unique uses of funds of knowledge contributed to the epistemic progress of the Community of Inquiry.

As we have seen, students used their diverse funds of knowledge to participate in philosophical inquiry in distinct ways. Their funds of knowledge acted as entry points into philosophical inquiry, allowing them to participate in an unfamiliar space in a familiar way. Not only did such funds of knowledge act as entry points for individual students, but they were also taken up by the community and utilized as the community's inquiry progressed. The experiences and contributions of the students shaped the trajectory and progress of the line of inquiry: they utilized their funds of knowledge and ways of

reasoning to achieve inquiry milestones. Below I give three examples of such instances. First, I provide an example in which Carlos's imaginative storytelling serves to elaborate and complicate an idea in a way that his peers had not foreseen. Next, Armando uses his social media references to make a useful comparison that introduces a new resolution for the community to take up in their inquiry. Finally, Oliver's way of participating serves as a counter-example to this finding. While Oliver make epistemic philosophical progress on his own, his abstract levels of reasoning are often not taken up by his classmates, who favored more concrete, experience-based ideas.

Carlos's imaginative storytelling complicates an idea taken up by the community. Carlos's imaginative storytelling not only acted as an entry point into the inquiry for him, but sometimes acted as a means for making epistemic philosophical progress by achieving inquiry milestones. In these cases, his contributions contributed to the progress of the community as a whole. His creative imagination allowed him to think of scenarios and possibilities that other students did not think of. In the following example, his story served to complicate a concept that the community had otherwise accepted. The class was playing a game called *Keep the Question Going*, in which they collectively formulated the question, "Why does past cereal makes people throw up?" The discussion that followed was about whether or not the question was historical.

> Many: It's expired!
>
> Jonathan: I think it's not historical because the cereal was new at the time.
>
> **Carlos:** I think it is historical because it says <u>past</u> cereal. There are a lot of extinct cereals like Mr. T cereal. It tastes like garbage probably maybe because it's too old and doesn't work anymore so it makes sense for it to be historical.
>
> Oliver: I don't think it's historical. I also don't think it makes sense [makes grammatical corrections]. Yeah and I don't think it's historical because it's past cereal but it's not a historical question. It isn't really about the cereal it's about people throwing up.

Carlos initially introduced the phrase "extinct cereal" and hypothesized that such cereal must "taste like garbage" and "not work anymore." This phrase was taken up by the community and led the facilitator to press for a clear definition of it:

> Graciela: [Suggests editing the question] If you take away 'past' and make it 'extinct'.
>
> Facilitator: Let's talk about that word 'extinct'. What does it mean?
>
> **Carlos:** It's not living anymore!
>
> Graciela: Why would cereal live?
>
> Jonathan: It's gone.
>
> Adrian: Like how dinosaurs were extinct?
>
> Maisie: People don't care about it anymore.
>
> Naomi: It's been gone.
>
> Oliver: I just have to say something. Extinct means like gone, or if it was alive, dead. So if it's extinct, then nobody would be throwing up because of it because it's gone.
>
> Facilitator: That brings up an interesting question: Is this question about people throwing up in the present because of old cereal, or about people from the past throwing up?
>
> Many: From the past!
>
> **Carlos:** New people throwing up because of old cereal, because the old cereal was from a long time ago and they bought it on ebay. The product, the brand of the cereal is already gone. The company, like Mr. Ts, is gone now.

In response, Carlos invented another story as usual ("the old cereal was from a long time ago and they bought it on ebay"). This time, he used his storytelling as a tool to complicate the idea of "extinction": when a cereal is "extinct," there may still be some boxes of it in existence, but it is the brand and production of the cereal that no longer exists. Many of Carlos's classmates initially disagreed with him and were only thinking about "extinct" cereal as cereal that only existed in the past ("It's gone", "It's been gone", "From the past!"). Carlos, however, used his capacity to think creatively and to imagine alternate scenarios in order to complicate this idea. It was precisely Carlos's imaginative funds of knowledge that allowed him to understand the word "extinct" in an alternate way from his classmates. In

using these funds, Carlos elevated the abstraction of the conversation and introduced a new, more nuanced, way of understanding the concept. Thus, in this case, his capacity to think creatively was an asset that allowed him to elevate the abstraction of inquiry and contribute to the epistemic progress of the community.

Armando: Social media references to contribute a valuable idea. Armando's social media-related contributions sometimes acted as entry points to philosophical thinking. His reference to social media and attendance to social dynamics allowed him to contribute a new idea that would be taken up by the Community of Inquiry. An example follows, in which Armando compared the boy in *The Giving Tree* to someone on Instagram:

Armando: That boy sounds like these kids on Instagram

[Many laugh]

These boys on Instagram that like show off their cars and all that

Fernando: That's snapchat!

Teacher: So they're showing stuff off?

Armando: Yeah and they get so much stuff from it, they're getting more stuff from it, and they don't even care about the tree.

Facilitator: So he is showing off all this stuff without really thinking about where the stuff came from?

Armando: Yeah mhm [emphatic gesture]

Fernando: I wonder if they have friends and if they come over he would make them meet his mom and his mom would be a tree.

[lots of laughter]

Facilitator: That would be kind of funny. [silence] So ok I'm thinking about this idea that he shouldn't have just taken all this stuff, that he was wrong for taking from the tree, or that the tree was wrong to keep giving everything.

Teacher: But those are two different things!

Facilitator: They are two different things.

Teacher: So the tree was offering it, but it didn't mean that he had to take it.

[silence]

Facilitator: What do you guys think?

Oliver: I don't think it's ever bad to give something to someone, but I do think the boy wasn't being rude by taking it when the tree offered, but he was being rude by saying "I need money, can you give me money?"

Many: yeah, yeah! [side talk, mumbling]

In this example, Armando's comparison between the boy in the story and "those kids on Instagram" introduced the idea that the boy might be ungrateful or greedy. It is clear that the purpose of his contribution was not *only* to relate to others and make them laugh. Instead, his reference to social media allowed him to make a connection to his own experience and to introduce a valuable idea to the line of inquiry. Armando's experience of social media allowed him to interact with the Community of Inquiry in a meaningful way. Furthermore, this idea about the boy's potential greediness was taken up and explored by his teacher and his classmates, leading to a debate about whether it was the boy who was greedy or the tree who gave away too much. We see Oliver take up Armando's idea at the end of the above example: "[the boy] was being rude by [asking]." It served as a pivotal moment in the Community's epistemic progress that day. Thus, Armando's funds of knowledge both served as an entry point for him into this line of inquiry and contributed to the epistemic progress of the community by introducing a new idea to be elaborated.

Oliver: Abstract reasoning that is not fully taken up by the community. While Carlos and Armando used their funds of knowledge and unique participation styles to contribute ideas that were taken up by community, Oliver's participation affected the community differently. Theoretically, the community should have benefited as Oliver introduced complex ideas, considered contextual factors, built on prior knowledge, and used deductive reasoning. Such discourse moves are seen as ideal within a Philosophy for Children setting (Lipman, 1980). However, in this case, the community did not often

respond by taking up these abstract ideas and building on them further. Instead, they often talked around Oliver's ideas by either agreeing without building on them or by continuing their own line of inquiry without considering his ideas in a significant way.

As an example, we can return to the discussion about *Life on Mars*. The community discussed what kind of creature this might be by considering that it might be an alien, by comparing it to other knowns, like hot dogs or sausage, and by looking at the illustrations. Oliver then introduced his definition of the word 'alien' as we saw above. His classmates responded by either agreeing and repeating what he said or by returning to their previous line of inquiry.

> Facilitator: [After returning to illustrations] So what do you guys think about this idea that it might be an alien? It's tall and wide, does that make it an alien, why or why not?
>
> **Oliver**: Alien means foreign thing and if it's on Mars and we don't live on Mars then for us it's an alien, but for it we're the aliens, because it's never seen us, and we aren't native there, and [trails off, silence]
>
> Facilitator: Would anyone like to build on what he said? [pause] or add other ideas? [silence] So do we all agree it's an alien then?
>
> [some shakes, some nods]
>
> Hiromi: I think it's not an alien because Mars is where he's from and alien means like [inaudible]
>
> Dylan: I disagree with Hiromi because it's like Oliver said, we're aliens to the thing but Mars isn't near earth, so it's very far away. So it's kind of an alien to us because it's very far away.
>
> Ashton: I think it's kind of an alien and kind of a kangaroo [some giggles, but he remains serious] because of the tail and the ears. The only difference is it doesn't have a nose.
>
> Graciela: And it doesn't hop around.
>
> [silence]
>
> Facilitator: What do you guys think?
>
> Jonathan: I think it's a Martian. Because it lives on Mars.
>
> Graciela: Maybe it doesn't live there
>
> Hiromi: I think it's a potato [some laugh] because its round and the color.
>
> Teacher: Whatever it is, it's so big and the guy in the spaceship didn't see it.

Graciela: Maybe it's a carrot

Teacher: So I don't know why the traveler didn't see this huge whatever-it-is.

Carlos: I think it looks like it might look like a squash, like a living squash probably because the shape of the body, it might be a squash.

Oliver introduced a definition and deductively reached an abstract conclusion: that the term 'alien' depends on perspective. This contribution poses an opportunity for the community to consider the complex factors at play, such as perspective and place, when labeling something as foreign. In many Philosophy for Children settings, this would be prime bait for other students to build in abstraction. However, in this case, after just two responses – one that agrees and one that disagrees, neither adding new ideas to the conversation – the community returns to their previous agenda: comparing the appearance of the creature to other knowns, like a carrot or a kangaroo. The community does not take up Oliver's prompting to elevate the abstraction of the conversation. The classroom teacher follows Oliver's lead and attempts to raise the complexity, too; yet, the next response is that this creature may be a squash.

Although Oliver quickly and efficiently reached an abstract level of reasoning, his classmates resisted it and continued the more concrete line of inquiry that persisted throughout the discussion. While his ideas may have had a momentary impact on the line of inquiry, they did not ultimately change the trajectory of the discussion. Oliver's ideas may have allowed him to make his own progress, but this progress is not reflected by the community as a whole.

3. When students' funds of knowledge became the arbiters of what counts as knowledge, they rejected opportunities to increase the abstraction of the inquiry.

We have seen that Oliver's more abstract reasoning was not taken up by the rest of the community as frequently as others' was. Instead of joining Oliver on an abstract plane, students spoke around his contributions and utilized more concrete, experience-based ideas and reasoning. Since most of the students had not before participated in inquiry that was divergent and genuine – inquiry that does not have a predetermined answer or end in consensus – abstract reasoning skills may have been an area of

growth for them. They were sometimes left feeling confused and frustrated without one correct or agreed upon answer. As such, students used their authority as arbiters of knowledge in the community of inquiry to resist venturing onto a plane of inquiry that might be too confusing or difficult. This resulted in the rejection of Oliver's and the classroom teacher's attempts to increase the abstraction of the conversation. Below, I demonstrate the confusion that some students felt by returning to student interviews. I then present two cases in which the community rejects abstract thinking, once prompted by Oliver and once by the classroom teacher.

Philosophical inquiry as confusing. The idea that philosophy was confusing or difficult recurred throughout several student interviews. Students found philosophy confusing because they were not accustomed to genuine, divergent inquiry, that is, to discussing big questions among peers without attempting to reach consensus or a predetermined answer. As they described in interviews, talking about important questions without reaching a final conclusion was problematic for these students. Since philosophy had not been in their school curriculum before, this kind of open-ended inquiry was not part of their lived experience of school and may have contributed to their sense of confusion. To explore this further, we can return to the case of Carlos. In the following interview, he was asked to choose a feeling he usually has during philosophy. He chose "confused."

> Researcher: Out of all these feelings, how do you feel in philosophy usually?
>
> Carlos: [pointing] Confused
>
> Researcher: Can you tell me why?
>
> Carlos: Because sometimes I don't understand what they are asking, like I don't know what it means, like I don't know, I just feel confused sometimes when you say them because I just, I don't know I just feel confused sometimes.
>
> Researcher: Could you think of a time when you felt confused?
>
> Carlos: About The Giving Tree thing.
>
> Researcher: What confused you about that?

Carlos: Like why did the boy want more stuff then like, then wanted to use the stuff that the tree wanted? Why was he greedy? [Frustrated tone]

Researcher: Yeah, we talked about that question for a while, right?

Carlos: mhm

Researcher: Do you feel like you got closer to an answer to that question? Or is it something that you still aren't sure about?

Carlos: It's something I'm still not sure about.

Although Carlos contributed a lot during the discussion about *The Giving Tree*, he still felt genuinely perplexed by the question. That no final conclusion was reached was problematic for him. Not knowing the answer and not gaining significantly more clarity about it over time left Carlos feeling confused and perhaps frustrated, indicated by his tone. We have seen previously that Carlos's way of coping with this unfamiliar experience was to invent explanatory scenarios to make sense of puzzling questions. Still, weeks later, he was left feeling perplexed.

In a joint interview with Lisa, Maisie, and Graciela, we see a similar experience of confusion. When asked to point to an emotion that she usually felt during philosophy, Lisa pointed to both "calm" and "confused." Graciela agreed with Lisa and gave reasons for her confusion as well.

Researcher: Lisa, can you tell me why you feel calm?

Lisa: Um well there's nothing like pressuring, but sometimes there might be confusing questions.

Researcher: Confusing questions. What might be confusing about them?

Lisa: Hmm. [pause] Maybe sometimes you can't find the answer to those questions.

Researcher: What do you guys think about that?

Maisie: What?

Lisa: I said sometimes the questions are confusing because you can't always find the answer to the questions.

Graciela: Yeah I think so too because it sometimes <u>will</u> be confusing.

Researcher: And what's confusing about it to you? [To Graciela]

> Graciela: Um like the question parts, like I don't really understand it when we get deeper and deeper into the questions, then we just start talking about something else, it doesn't even, I think it doesn't even involve the question. I think it's like different.

Like Carlos, Lisa found philosophical questions confusing because they could not be definitively answered. Graciela, who had also stated that philosophy was confusing in a separate one-on-one interview, agreed with Lisa. Graciela added that philosophical inquiry became more confusing as students contributed new ideas, shifting the trajectory of the conversation. Instead of gaining clarity, Graciela became more perplexed as the inquiry progressed and as more students contributed. Carlos, Lisa, and Graciela are just three students of the nine interviewed, out of a total of 27 students. Thus it can be inferred that many of the students in this community of inquiry were confused and possibly uncomfortable with divergent, genuine inquiry. This may help explain their resistance to Oliver's and the classroom teacher's attempts to increase the abstraction and complexity of the conversation.

Students resisted attempts to increase the abstraction of the inquiry. We can return to another case in which Oliver consistently utilized abstract ideas and reasoning skills that were not taken up or reciprocated by his peers. We return to the discussion in which students consider whether or not the question, "How do teachers make the day so long and fun?" is philosophical. Below, Oliver consistently used more abstract reasoning than the rest of the community. While the community's response was not complete silence or direct rejection, the majority of the other inquirers either did not contribute, contributed with a more concrete idea, or expressed confusion.

> **Oliver:** I disagree with Carlos because people have questions really often. 'How is your day going?' is not a philosophical question. But I'm not sure if <u>that</u> question is philosophical. I think it matters what we're talking about. If you're having a conversation and talking about teachers, it could be. But with a friend randomly it wouldn't be.
>
> Facilitator: So it depends on who you're talking to and what you're talking about? What might make a question philosophical as opposed to scientific, for example?

Liu: I think what makes a question philosophical is if it's a normal question like, 'How is your day going?' it's not philosophical, but a question that makes you think more or share ideas more, it would be.

Facilitator: Can we think more and share ideas about this question? [points to question]

Some: [nods, no hands raised]

Facilitator: So is it philosophical?

Many: [mixed, confused faces, no hands raised]

Facilitator: Can we make it more philosophical? How about that? How could we change it to make it more philosophical? [silence]

Graciela: How do philosophers make philosophy interesting and fun?

Facilitator: [makes changes] Now it's more about philosophy, does that make it more philosophical?

Many: Yes, no [mixed responses, hesitance]

Lisa: No

Facilitator: Would you like to share why?

Lisa: No

Naomi: I think it is because it's talking about philosophers and how they make philosophy interesting and fun.

Oliver: I disagree because I don't think talking about philosophy makes it philosophical. Because in philosophy when we're talking, we don't talk about philosophy. We talk about things and philosophy is pretty much just a name for it. So that's just a title. So it's not really philosophical.

Hiromi: I don't think so because philosophers and philosophy, that's like more obvious of an answer.

In his first contribution, Oliver appealed to context to propose a more abstract idea than Carlos's. Liu repeated Oliver's contribution almost exactly and added on his own ideas, based in his concrete experience of doing philosophy ("think more or share ideas more"). Graciela made a suggestion that was very concrete and obvious: change the words of the question to make them more directly related to philosophy. Lisa resisted participating in this level of inquiry by refusing to explain her thinking. Naomi stayed on Graciela's concrete level of reasoning: if the question was more obviously about philosophy, it was more philosophical. Oliver, however, remained with his original idea, disagreeing with the concrete

ideas of his peers, and making an even more abstract contribution by distinguishing between the *action* of doing philosophy and the *name* that is given to philosophy. Hiromi called out the obviousness of his peers' reasoning but did not elaborate with more abstract thinking. Throughout this exchange, the students maintained confused facial expressions and resisted raising their hands to contribute. Thus, while Oliver remained on his own plane and even increased in abstraction after listening to his peers, the rest of the community resisted joining him there and remained on their concrete, more experience-based planes of reasoning. They either remained in silence (many), explicitly refused to contribute (Lisa), made concrete contributions (Liu, Graciela, Naomi, Hiromi), or expressed confusion. Thus, while not outright rejecting Oliver's ideas and reasoning, the community demonstrated resistance by not taking them up.

This example is illuminating because it connects the students' resistance with their own experience of confusion and uncertainty. Based on the inquirers' facial expressions, tone, and contributions, they seemed puzzled and perplexed by the conversation. Perhaps the community rejected these more abstract ideas because they did not yet know how to engage with them without venturing into a more confusing and possibly disorienting space.

A more obvious case in which students rejected an attempt to "increase in abstraction" was prompted by the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher sometimes participated in philosophical inquiry with the community. Often, the teacher's participation involved an attempt to redirect the inquiry, either by asking a new question or introducing a new idea that was more nuanced or abstract. Across all of these cases, there was a common pattern that occurred: first the teacher shared a topic or question, then students either rejected or ignored her contribution, and finally, students continued with the line of inquiry they were previously following. The following discussion was prompted by the question "How does a star explode?" based on the book, *You Are Stardust* by Elin Kelsey. Students were talking about why they find star explosions interesting when the teacher introduced a new idea:

> Student: It would be interesting to know <u>how</u> it happened.
>
> Facilitator: Like to know how it works? [pause] Why is it interesting to know how it works?
>
> Student: Maybe because it's not common to see like stars exploding.

Teacher: So I just want to take a step back and say that when I was listening to the book it sounded to me like it was talking about how it is we all got here.

Tyler: Yeah! (agreement gesture)

Teacher: So like when I think about that I think about stories that I heard in other parts of my life that aren't school, and so if that's something that you want to talk about you should feel free to talk about other times in your life, on the weekends or whatever, when you think about how it is we all got here. Sunday school, Church, Synagogue, what have you. And what does that have to do with this?

[Silence for 20 seconds]

Facilitator: Does anyone want to share about that?

[Silence for 10 seconds]

Facilitator: Does anyone want to share more about why it might be interesting to know how these things work?

[Silence for 5 seconds]

Liu: Maybe because we've never seen what's inside of a star.

While students were discussing what makes star explosions interesting, the teacher introduced an idea ("how it is we all got here") that had not been previously mentioned. She suggested students talk about other spheres of their lives in order to follow this new line of inquiry. Although one student initially showed interest in her question, her prompt was met with silence. After some more prompting, also met with silence, students returned to their previous line of inquiry about star explosions. By maintaining silence in response to the teacher's new line of inquiry, the students effectively ignored and indirectly rejected the new line of inquiry that she proposed. This pattern occurred multiple times during philosophical inquiry: when the classroom teacher asked a question or suggested taking up an idea, students responded with silence and/or continued talking about the previous topic.

The community's rejection of the teacher's suggested line of inquiry is reminiscent of their response to Oliver. Although the long periods of silence in response to the teacher were a more obvious rejection, the way students talked around Oliver's contributions were also a kind of rejection. The similarity between these cases is that both the classroom teacher and Oliver were attempting to increase

the level of abstraction and nuance in the line of inquiry. Oliver and the teacher wanted to address more abstract concepts (doing philosophy versus the word philosophy; "how it is we all got here") and to consider more nuanced contextual factors and perspectives ("it matters what we're talking about"; "feel free to talk about other times in your life"). Since students were already experiencing confusion when addressed with a question that does not have one definitive answer, considering even more nuance and abstract ideas could have made them more confused. Thus, the community may have rejected these opportunities in order to protect themselves from more confusion.

Discussion

The findings from this study build on current notions about the philosophical self, legitimate participation, and epistemic philosophical progress. Currently, the philosophical self is conceptualized as that "part of us that understands that many aspects of our existence are profoundly mysterious" and that "questions the meaning of the world in which we live" (Mohr Lone, 2012, p. 5). It is characterized by a willingness to ask reflective questions about one's experiences and thoughts, it contains an awareness of complexities and multiplicity of perspectives, and it is rooted in abstract thinking. The findings demonstrate that this philosophical self emerges in diverse and multifaceted ways within a community of inquiry; it is shaped by each student's unique funds of knowledge and lived experiences and thus is takes on a broad range of distinct and multifaceted forms. By looking at students' insider experiences of philosophy, this study demonstrates in a unique way how the philosophical self is intertwined with students' ways of being, with who they are, and with who they are becoming. This has implications for the legitimacy of participation styles and of epistemic philosophical progress: both must be broadened to account for students' diverse funds of knowledge and ways of reasoning in order to ensure equitable opportunities for students' philosophical selves to be engaged and recognized during philosophical inquiry. The findings also illuminate the central role played by the community's epistemic authority in making epistemic philosophical progress.

1. Broadening what counts as legitimate participation in philosophical inquiry.

The findings showed that students drew on their funds of knowledge during inquiry and enacted their philosophical selves in diverse ways. Oliver enacted his philosophical self in a way that is more traditional to Western philosophy, using abstract reasoning as his primary tool. Carlos and Armando enacted their philosophical selves in non-traditional ways, using imaginative storytelling and social networking, respectively. Both the traditional and non-traditional ways of participating acted as entry points into philosophical inquiry and as avenues for making epistemic philosophical progress. Thus, both traditional and non-traditional ways of participating are legitimate within a community of philosophical inquiry.

Legitimate traditional participation in philosophical inquiry. Oliver engaged in intellectual play through abstract reasoning during philosophical inquiry. Oliver's abstract reasoning consisted of defining terms, reasoning deductively, giving examples and non-examples, appealing to contextual factors, and more. This participation style is centered on justification and mirrors more traditionally Western ways of participating in the discipline of philosophy, both in a community of young inquirers and in the field at large (Gregory, 2011; Dotson, 2012). His way of participating is what a philosophy facilitator might traditionally expect to see in a community of inquiry, especially if the facilitator has a strong background in Western philosophy.

Yet, Oliver's participation was not legitimate because it was traditional or expected; it was legitimate because it acted as an entry point into the inquiry and allowed him to make epistemic progress. Oliver's abstract reasoning gave him access to the inquiry almost immediately, as he demonstrated a capacity and willingness to think about puzzling questions from the very first session. He participated extensively in every session for which he was present. Oliver also made significant epistemic philosophical progress, even if on his own terms: his ideas were not always taken up by the community, yet he achieved inquiry milestones for himself and built upon his own knowledge throughout the course of the inquiry. As we have seen in his interview, he perceived himself as making progress on his ideas

and enjoyed the unpredictability of the inquiry, even if he was rarely joined by others on his abstract plane of thinking. Thus, Oliver's way of participating was legitimate, but not because it was conventional to the discipline. His way of participating was legitimate because it allowed him entry into the inquiry and to make epistemic philosophical progress. This being said, Oliver's way of participating was just one legitimate way among many.

Legitimate non-traditional participation in philosophical inquiry. We have seen that Carlos and Armando participated in ways that are not traditional to Western philosophy. Rather than utilizing the abstract reasoning skills that Oliver employed, such as deductive reasoning, they utilized skills that one might not expect to see in philosophy: Carlos used imaginative storytelling to make sense of puzzling ideas, while Armando used social media references and attended to social dynamics within the community. These ways of participating are not often explicitly named as legitimate or expected in Philosophy for Children literature; yet, these are the ways real students, with real funds of knowledge and rich lived experiences, actually participated. Carlos and Armando built on the skills and knowledges that they brought with them into the classroom, preferring these over the more traditional ways of engaging in philosophical discourse that they may or may not have been familiar with.

These non-traditional ways of participating were legitimate because they gave students access to the inquiry and allowed them to make epistemic philosophical progress. Carlos participated in every session he attended. Armando participated less frequently, but enough to construct a distinct voice for himself within the community. Both students were significant contributors to the trajectory and progress of the inquiry. Their ways of participating also allowed them to make epistemic philosophical progress. They achieved the inquiry milestones of articulating new resolutions to a philosophical problem and elaborating those resolutions. We have seen one case in which Carlos's imaginative storytelling allowed him to reach a level of nuance and abstraction that surpassed that of his peers, as well as a case in which Armando's social awareness allowed him to contribute a pivotal idea. These students' ideas were taken up by the community and made significant contributions to both the trajectory and progress of the inquiry. As such, their non-traditional ways of participating were just as legitimate as Oliver's more traditional

ways because they allowed students to both gain access to the inquiry and to make epistemic progress. In fact, the non-traditional ways of participating that Carlos and Armando demonstrated were employed and taken up by this community *significantly more often* than the traditional ways that Oliver utilized.

The importance of recognizing diverse ways of participating in philosophy. Taking entry to the inquiry and epistemic philosophical progress as two criteria for legitimate forms of participation, we see that there are many diverse and legitimate ways of participating in philosophical inquiry. This study suggests that we must expand our conceptualization of what counts as legitimate participation in Philosophy for Children to include the diverse funds of knowledge and lived experiences that students bring into the philosophy classroom, which has not been given enough voice in the literature until now. One of the long-standing goals of P4C has been to embrace multiple ways of participating in philosophy. Yet, some have noted that the P4C literature tends to implicitly favor traditional Western ways of participating in philosophy and often fails to acknowledge non-traditional ways at all (Rainville, 2000; Chetty, 2014). This privileging of certain ways of philosophizing mirrors the same phenomenon in the field of philosophy at large (Dotson, 2012). Intentionally recognizing, embracing, and centering non-traditional ways of participating in philosophy is becoming increasingly crucial, especially as U.S. schools become rapidly more diverse and representative of multiple cultures and ways of knowing. When only the more traditionally Western ways of participating are recognized as legitimate, students who prefer other ways of reasoning are excluded from the inquiry and deprived of an opportunity to see themselves as capable thinkers and to make meaning of puzzling questions. They may be less likely to enact their philosophical selves and may miss out on opportunities for philosophical recognition, which has been theorized to be important for young students' identity development (Mohr Lone & Burroughs, 2015). Instead, in this case study we have seen students' non-traditional ways of participating acting as entry points into the inquiry: they were able to enact their philosophical selves and to experience philosophical recognition.

Furthermore, when such ways of participating are privileged over others, the community of inquiry as a whole is deprived of the valuable insights and ways of thinking of those who would have

participated in non-traditionally. Thus, the community itself would be deprived of an opportunity to make epistemic philosophical progress that begins from a rich diversity of perspectives and ways of knowing (Harding, 1998). If participation styles like Carlos's and Armando's were not recognized as legitimate in this community, fewer students would have participated and contributed their unique ideas to the inquiry, and the epistemic philosophical progress of the community would have been affected.

2. On epistemic philosophical progress: "An inquiry that is making progress is self-propelling." (Golding, 2016).

In addition to diverse ways of participating, this study showed the community of inquiry resisting lines of inquiry that were too abstract. They were able to do this because of the nature of the community of inquiry: they became the arbiters of knowledge (Peirce, 1955; Pardales & Girod, 2006). The findings suggest that, when using their authority to resist abstraction, the community still made epistemic philosophical progress and did so organically. Thus, it is important to emphasize the role of the community's epistemic authority in making progress: they chose to make progress at their own pace, on their own terms, and in ways that worked for them.

We have seen that when Oliver or the classroom teacher attempted to appeal to contextual factors, to include more perspectives, or to shift from concrete ideas to abstract concepts, the community often rejected these attempts, either by responding with silence or by continuing with their previous line of inquiry. This rejection was possible because of the nature of the community of inquiry: students were equal co-inquirers collaborating to construct knowledge (Peirce, 1955; Pardales & Girod, 2006). The students themselves became the arbiters of what counts as knowledge, determining which lines of inquiry were worth following and what kind of knowledge was useful in making progress. As the facilitator, I assisted students in clarifying their thinking and in considering one another's views, but I did not act as a keeper of knowledge, nor as the arbiter of what counts as an interesting idea or as good reasoning; the students played this role. We have seen that the students sometimes used their authority to prevent the inquiry from becoming too abstract. In so doing, the community used their epistemic authority as a self-

protective barrier against abstraction and confusion, and thus played a key role in the trajectory of the inquiry.

What is imperative here is that students did not need to jump to a higher or more abstract level of reasoning *before* they were able to make epistemic philosophical progress. They largely remained on a concrete plane of reasoning, utilizing their funds of knowledge and ways of participating, *and made progress*. Their progress occurred organically at a pace that was preferable to them. In fact, the progress they made may have been more meaningful and authentic than it would have been if the community preemptively jumped to Oliver's abstract level of reasoning. Mohr Lone (2012) observes, "Although philosophical sensitivity entails reflection about general and often abstract questions, typically it is in the particular features of our lives that these questions are raised" (p. 176). This community needed to remain within the particular features of their lives in order for philosophical questions to be accessible and for epistemic philosophical progress to be meaningful. Since this community is new to philosophical inquiry, they may develop more willingness to elevate in abstraction as they become more accustomed to its open-endedness (Lipman, 1980, p. 103); but at the time of this study, rejecting abstraction is what allowed this community to make sense of puzzling questions without becoming more confused.

Thus, the findings suggest that *progress is self-propelling*: it is led by the curiosity, drive, and particular life features of the community itself and it takes on the shape and pace chosen by the inquirers therein. Even if progress appears to be less philosophical because less abstract, it is necessary that the community progresses organically on its own terms. Kennedy (2004) recognizes this when reflecting on the role of the facilitator in philosophical inquiry:

> In order to feel the system [of inquiry], the facilitator must allow the system. In order to allow the system, her or she must purposely avoid attempting to control it – although any intervention by anyone within the system is in fact an attempt at control. Furthermore, the system develops as much through resistances and conflicts within it as through symmetrical or harmonic patterns. (p.757)

If every inquirer's contribution is an attempt at controlling the inquiry, then the community's resistance to abstraction and insistence on concrete ideas can be seen as an exercise of their authority as arbiters of knowledge. Although it may be counterintuitive, attempts at controlling the inquiry through resistance allows the community to make epistemic progress on their own terms. The epistemic authority of the community – that is, the inquirers' positionality as arbiters of knowledge and their ability to control the inquiry – is pivotal in determining *how* epistemic progress is made.

In short, the trajectory of the inquiry and the progress made by the community are an exercise of their epistemic authority and, as such, are enmeshed with the inquirers' unique and multifaceted funds of knowledge, lived experiences, and participation styles. The literature around epistemic philosophical progress in Philosophy for Children must center more on the role of the community's epistemic authority in how progress is made. Furthermore, another kind of epistemic philosophical progress may be conceptualized: one that is large-scale and long-term that occurs over the lifetime of a specific community of inquiry. If the community of inquiry is an interactive system (Kennedy, 2004), the system may develop both within philosophy sessions and *across* philosophy sessions according to the evolving experiences, resources, and ways of being of the specific inquirers within the community over time. This kind of long-term progress may consist of achieving inquiry milestones more frequently, in a certain order, or with increasing abstraction, over time. It may be worthwhile to explore this idea further and the role that funds of knowledge play therein.

Conclusion & Implications

In this study, I found that students' funds of knowledge and lived experience acted as entry points into philosophical inquiry and as avenues for making epistemic philosophical progress. Thus, our conceptualization of what counts as legitimate participation in Philosophy for Children must focus more on students' diverse and multifaceted ways of participating. While P4C literature often talks about embracing multiple participation styles in philosophy, more emphasis needs to be placed on what those

participation styles look like in action and how they affect the inquiry. This study demonstrates two criteria for the legitimacy of student participation: whether participation allows students (1) to access the inquiry and (2) to make epistemic progress. I also found that students used their epistemic authority as arbiters of knowledge to reject lines of inquiry that did not serve them and to make progress on their own terms. Thus, our notion of epistemic philosophical progress must be expanded to include and highlight the central role that the epistemic authority of the community, which is deeply tied to their funds of knowledge and participation styles, plays in shaping *how* the community makes progress.

These findings have implications for practice, theory, and future research. Philosophy for Children practitioners must be ready to engage with students' diverse funds of knowledge and lived experiences. Non-traditional and non-Western ways of participating in philosophy must not be overlooked but embraced as equally legitimate avenues for making epistemic progress. While this has long been a goal of P4C, more intentional efforts should be made to cultivate a capacity for noticing, accepting, and building on all students' legitimate ways of knowing and more research should be done to understand how students' multifaceted participation styles benefit the community of philosophical inquiry. Furthermore, this study illuminates a new area for theory and research, that is, how the community of inquiry utilizes its epistemic authority to make progress. To this end, the literature around epistemic philosophical progress must reflect the rich non-traditional resources and capabilities of students, the central role that the community's authority plays in shaping how epistemic progress is made, and the ways in which students' funds of knowledge interact to make collective progress within the community. Further research is needed to understand if and how communities make epistemic philosophical progress over time.

Perhaps most importantly, there is a great need for rigorous interpretive case studies and ethnographies that focus on students' lived experiences of participating in philosophical inquiry. While many P4C researchers and practitioners have given voice to students through description and anecdote, there are few qualitative studies that triangulate multiple forms of evidence, such as discourse analysis and interview data, to paint a full, holistic picture of the ways in which students experience philosophy.

Such studies will be invaluable for giving students a more robust voice, for better understanding how Philosophy for Children can serve our students, for testing and building on the extensive work that has already been done on P4C, and for revealing new possibilities for research.

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Appendix A

Interview template.

I chose from the following questions during student interviews. I did not always ask all the questions, nor in any particular order. Follow-up questions varied based on student responses.

1. How do you usually feel during philosophy? Choose from the feelings below.

    a. What usually makes you feel that way?

    b. Can you tell me about a time when you felt that way in philosophy?

Calm	Nervous	Surprised	Sleepy
Happy	Annoyed	Hungry	Sick
Silly	Sad	Angry	Hurt
Relaxed	Shy	Confused	Hot

Figure 2. Feelings chart.

2. Do you like doing philosophy? What do you like/dislike about it?

    a. What other classes or activities do you like? How is philosophy different from or similar to that class/activity?

3. How would you describe the way you participate in philosophy?

    a. Is that how you participate in other classes or activities? Why or why not?

    b. I have noticed that you [participated in this way]. What was that like for you? Do you always [participate in that way]?

4. Can you tell me about a time in philosophy that stuck out to you? What was special about that time?

5. Can you tell me about a time when you changed your mind during philosophy? What made you change your mind?

6. How would you describe philosophy to someone who has never done it before?

7. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about philosophy?

Appendix B

Warm-up prompts and session stimuli.

Session 1:

Warm-up: Write down something you are certain of. Why are you certain?

Stimulus: Life on Mars by Jon Agee (2017)

Session 2:

Warm-up: What is the smallest thought you could think?

Stimulus: On the Day You Were Born by Debra Fraisier (2001)

Session 3:

Warm-up: What is the biggest thought you could think?

Stimulus: You Are Stardust by Elin Kelsey (2011)

Session 4:

Warm-up: If you could be any living thing, what would you be?

Stimulus: The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein (1992)

Session 5:

Warm-up: What is one thing people should do?

Stimulus: 'What's Your Reason?' Game by David Shapiro (Mohr Lone & Burroughs, 2015, p. 80)

Session 6:

Stimulus: The Last Tree by Ingrid Chabbert

Session 7:

Warm-up: Think of a question that is important to you.

Stimulus: 'Keep the Question Going' Game by David Shapiro (Mohr Lone & Burroughs, 2015, p. 79)

Session 8:

Stimulus: 'Big Questions and How We Answer Them' Game by Matthew Lipman & Ann Sharp, adapted by Jana Mohr Lone (Mohr Lone & Burroughs, 2015, p. 76)