Spring 6-2020

The "Being" and "Doing" of a "Good Teacher" from a Soka Perspective

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THE “BEING” AND “DOING” OF A “GOOD TEACHER” FROM A SOKA PERSPECTIVE

A Dissertation in Education

with a Concentration in Curriculum Studies

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

June 2020

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Certification of Authorship

I certify that I am the sole author of this dissertation. Any assistance received in the preparation of this dissertation has been acknowledged and disclosed within it. Any sources utilized, including the use of data, ideas and words, those quoted directly or paraphrased, have been cited. I certify that I have prepared this dissertation according program guidelines as directed.

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ABSTRACT

Under the current neoliberal educational reform movement in the U.S., qualified or "good" teachers are increasingly considered in narrow terms of efficiently delivering content to raise students' test scores. The primary and secondary literature in the field of Ikeda/Soka Studies in Education, however, considers the notion of a "good teacher" much more holistically, addressing both the "being" (e.g., attitude, disposition, etc.) and the "doing" (e.g., instructional methods, assessment practices, etc.). The purpose of this dissertation was to examine the perspectives among faculty at Soka University of America (SUA) about what constitutes a "good teacher" and "good teaching."

This qualitative, single-site instrumental case study was guided by the following research questions: 1) How do SUA faculty perceive the aim of education and what constitutes a "good teacher," specifically in relation to their role as teachers, their relationship to students, the purpose of their subject matter, and the influence of institutional culture, policies, and curriculum?, 2) How has their experience at SUA changed/shaped their perspectives?, 3) In what ways do their perspectives converge with or diverge from the primary and secondary, theoretical and empirical explanations of Soka approaches to education?, and 4) What are the implications for teacher education? Data include classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of ten faculty (including one administrator) at SUA.

Based on data analysis, three main themes emerged: 1) educating human beings and building character, 2) guiding students to co-create knowledge and meaning, and 3) critical self-reflection and continuous improvement. The institutional factors, such as small class size, low teaching load relative to other institutions, and faculty resources, were important in enabling participants to practice what they believed to be "good teaching" from a Soka perspective. This

research has both theoretical significance to derive a more articulate and comprehensive explanation of Soka approaches to education and practical significance to rethink how we educate pre-service teachers in teacher education programs. Specifically, the results of this study suggest that it is important for teachers to critically reflect on their attitude toward their students and their role in guiding students' learning. The results also indicate the importance of the relational aspect of education, which is often underemphasized in pre- and in-service teacher assessments. We should also reconsider the current overemphasis on teaching instructional strategies to transmit knowledge and adopt methods to help students apply their learning in personally and socially meaningful ways.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the tremendous support of many individuals over the years, so I would like to take this opportunity to share my deepest appreciation to them.

First, I would like to thank my committee members, Jason Goulah, Amira Proweller, and Gonzalo Obelleiro. To my advisor Jason Goulah, thank you for being an inspiration and a role model as a great human being, a teacher, and a scholar. Thank you for your continuous encouragement, support, and guidance throughout my dissertation process. If I had not met you during my undergraduate years, I would not have even pursued an academic path, and it has been my greatest honor and pleasure to have worked with you at DePaul. To Amira Proweller, thank you for teaching me the basics of qualitative research methods and helping me start to formulate my dissertation research early in the program. To Gonzalo Obelleiro, thank you for your encouragement over more than 10 years. As the first graduating class of Soka University of America, you opened the path for all the alumni after you, including myself, to pursue research in the field of Ikeda/Soka Studies in Education.

I would also like to share my appreciation for the Ikeda Center for Peace, Learning, and Dialogue for the Educational Fellowship. To its advisory council members, Larry Hickman, Virginia Benson, Ann Diller, Jim Garrison, Jason Goulah, Ming Fang He, Isabel Nuñez, and William Schubert, your wisdom and insights were vital in shaping and refining my dissertation.

I am also grateful to all the professors, staff, and friends at DePaul University who supported me throughout the doctoral journey. Thank you Edward Evins and Ramona Avramov from DePaul University Center for Writing-Based Learning for your feedback, for keeping me accountable, and for providing a space to talk out ideas. Thank you to my friends in the doctoral

program, Melissa Bradford, Michio Okamura, and Emily Kraus, for not only providing emotional support, but also engaging in dialogue about my dissertation. I would also like to thank Nobuko Kuroda and Ritsuko Rita for being there during both good and bad times as roommates. You literally became my family in Chicago.

Of course, this dissertation would not have been possible without the ten professors (who will remain anonymous) who agreed to volunteer their time to participate in this study. I am grateful to have known many of you as my teacher. What is shared in this dissertation is your story, your perspective, and your experience that I have the privilege to share on your behalf. I hope to give back even a little by sharing the results of this study with you.

Finally, I would like acknowledge my parents, Yoshio and Yuko Inukai, who have encouraged and supported me from Japan. Even though I am your only child, you let me venture into the world and pursue my dreams. I would not be here if you had not encouraged me to go to Kansai Soka High School and Soka University of America.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mentor Daisaku Ikeda.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

My first professor in DePaul's doctoral program strongly advised students, "Research what you're *entangled* in, not just what you're 'interested' in." What it means to be a "good teacher" and the implications of a Soka perspective in preparing good teachers are topics in which I am, and have long been, deeply entangled. As a graduate of both Kansai Soka High School (Japan) and Soka University of America, I have experienced versions of "Soka education" in practice. The term *sōka* is a Japanese neologism meaning the creation (*sōzō*) of value (*kachi*). As Goulah and Gebert (2009) and Goulah (2018, in press) explain, there is a difference between "Soka" and "*sōka*" education. According to Goulah (2018, in press), whereas "Soka" education refers to the culture and ethos passed down by Makiguchi and Toda and embodied in the Soka institutions founded by Ikeda, "*sōka*" education refers to the theoretical framework of "value-creating" education that can be practiced in and outside the official Soka institutions. I will further explain the different key terms later, but this dissertation draws on the primary and latest secondary literature, seeking to write into these nuanced convergences and divergences.

After graduating from a Soka high school and Soka University of America, I went through my own teacher education program when Common Core State Standards were considered, and I had to pass the CalTPA, the forerunner of edTPA, to be licensed. I then taught two years in a Japanese/English dual language program at a public elementary school, experiencing first-hand the pressures of standardization and accountability whereby my effectiveness as a teacher was measured by my students' test scores. Now as an adjunct faculty member in DePaul's programs in Bilingual-Bicultural Education, World Language Education, and Value-Creating Education for Global Citizenship, I teach pre-service teachers, preparing

them to take the edTPA and, at the same time, attempting to address the question of what it means to be a "good teacher" beyond just how it is defined under the neoliberal ideology of individualization and accountability.

In addition to endeavoring to enact the principles and practices of value-creating education in my own instruction, I am also formally researching and translating the theories of the Soka progenitors, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871-1944), Josei Toda (1900-1958), and Daisaku Ikeda (1928-) in my capacities as a doctoral student, research fellow in DePaul's Institute for Daisaku Ikeda Studies in Education, and as an instructor in the Value-Creating Education for Global Citizenship program. In all of these roles, I am constantly thinking about what it means to be a "good teacher" and how the educational philosophies and practices of Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda inform how we can view and enact teacher education differently from the current limiting neoliberal approaches.

The Need to Rethink Teacher Education

Since *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, and through the No Child Left Behind Act, the Race to the Top initiative, and the Every Student Succeeds Act, the aim of education has been defined as raising students' test scores (Null, 2015) and preparing students for the workforce (Ravitch, 2013). Under current circumstances, "highly qualified," or "good," teachers are those who can deliver content and raise students' test scores (Schlein & Schwarz, 2015), and teacher effectiveness is assessed through "value-added measurements" based on these scores (Au, 2015). This, in turn, drives how we prepare "good teachers" (Milam, 2015), and measures such as edTPA have been introduced to standardize pre-service teacher assessment in a similar manner to in-service teacher evaluations. Teacher education programs are thus increasingly being standardized and held accountable, which narrows the curriculum (Carter & Lochte, 2017),

deskills and deprofessionalizes teachers (Nuñez, 2015; Saltman, 2017), and limits pre-service teachers' engagement with the important curricular question of "what is worth knowing, needing, experiencing, doing, being, becoming, overcoming, sharing, contributing, and wondering" (Schubert, 2009, p. 23). Under such circumstances, the discussion of a "good teacher" is limited to what I call the "doing" of a teacher (e.g., instructional methods and assessment practices), and further confined to the "best practices" for efficiently transmitting knowledge (Saltman, 2009).

The primary and secondary literature in the field of Ikeda/Soka Studies in Education considers the notion of a "good teacher" much more holistically, addressing what I call the "being" of a good teacher (e.g., attitude, beliefs, and dispositions) in addition to the "doing" of a teacher. As I explain in more detail in Chapter 2, Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda all place emphasis on the attitude of the teacher to interact with and care for students as valuable individuals. Among the three, Ikeda most articulates the "being" of a teacher, discussing the teacher's role in cultivating students' inner qualities of wisdom, courage, and compassion (Ikeda, 2010b). All three also discuss the "doing" of a teacher, but the instruction and assessment methods they advocate for are different from what is currently referred to as "best practices." Among the three, Makiguchi focuses the most on this aspect. Central to his value-creating pedagogy is the teacher's role of guiding students as they apply acquired knowledge to create positive outcomes in their lives (Makiguchi, 1981-1988; see also Okamura, 2017). Thus, the educational philosophies and practices of Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda can help us rethink what it means to be a "good teacher" more comprehensively by addressing both the "being" and "doing" aspects.

However, when we look at the existing empirical studies conducted at both Soka (e.g., Ikegami & Agbenyega, 2014; Ikegami & Rivalland, 2016; Nagashima, 2012, 2016) and non-Soka schools (e.g., Hrdina, 2018; Takazawa, 2016), they reveal that self-identified "Soka

educators" are forming what Goulah (2018) calls a "Soka Discourse" based on Ikeda's broader philosophies and practices in Soka Gakkai Nichiren Buddhism, rather than on his explicit educational approaches in particular. This is understandable given that most, if not all, participants in these studies belong to the Soka Gakkai International (SGI), a lay Buddhist organization for which Ikeda is the current president, and thus regularly consume Ikeda's faith-based writings. As a result, the findings from these studies only address some of Ikeda's larger philosophy, with little to no connection to Makiguchi's or Toda's theories. Furthermore, as these studies center mainly on the "being" of the teacher, the "doing" aspect of "good teaching" remains largely unaddressed.

This dissertation in Curriculum Studies therefore examines what constitutes a "good teacher" from the perspective of Soka approaches to education and considers the implications of such a perspective for revisiting the aim of education and teacher preparation. It does so by using a qualitative case study design to examine the perspectives and practices of faculty at Soka University of America (SUA) and the implication of these relative to the primary and secondary literature in Ikeda/Soka Studies in Education. Before explaining the complex context of SUA and various key terms, I first trace some important phases of my life to show how they contributed in interrelated ways to re-conceptualize a "good teacher" and eventually led to this dissertation. This personal narrative also serves to explain my positionality as a researcher.

Personal Journey and Researcher Positionality

I spent my early childhood years in Italy and the U.K. Although learning a new language and culture was challenging, I have many fond memories from my elementary school days. Every time a new unit was introduced at school—ancient civilization, plants, the solar system, etc.—I was intrigued and wanted to learn more. I remember asking my parents for books on

those topics for Christmas. Bookstores were always my favorite place to go with my parents. I moved (back) to Japan where my parents were from when I was about nine years old, just when I was about to start 3rd grade. It was again difficult to culturally adjust to a new environment, but my love for learning continued. I could not wait to come home and tell my mother what I had learned that day, from a moving story in Japanese Language Arts to an exciting experiment in science or a new skill in math. However, during the three years in junior high school, I gradually lost the joy of learning, studying only to get high test scores and good grades so that I was well prepared to take the high school entrance exam. On top of that, I was deeply struggling with human relationships with the increasing feeling that I did not understand the Japanese social norms and that I did not belong there. This led me to apply to Kansai Soka High School, a school founded by Daisaku Ikeda. To date, Ikeda has founded 15 Soka institutions—kindergartens, elementary and secondary schools, universities, and a women's college—in seven countries across Asia and the Americas. My foremost reason for choosing Kansai Soka was that students looked so happy and joyful when I visited during open campus.

On my first day at Kansai Soka, when I attended spring break orientation before the start of the school year, I had an experience that I later realized exemplified the culture, or ethos, of the school. This orientation was for new students who were entering Kansai Soka from high school. The students who were coming up from Kansai Soka Junior High School did not have to be there. Yet, a group of such students waited for the orientation to end and came to say hi to us. Then, they said, "If you are free, why don't we have dialogue?" I was so surprised, but a group of us went to an empty classroom to have dialogue. We shared why we came to the school, and they shared what it was like to be at a Soka school. Although I do not know how it happened, I was able to openly share my struggles with them like I never had with anyone else before, and so

did others. This was such a bonding experience. The following three years of high school was likewise a great experience surrounded by warm and embracing friends and teachers. There was one teacher in particular who had been a teacher at Kansai Soka since its opening and was called "Mom" by students. She went out of her way to help me when I had a difficult time with my father. She also taught me the heart of leadership, saying it is more important for 100 people to advance one step together rather than one person advancing 100 steps alone. I also remember her encouraging female students to take leadership in student government, clubs, and other student organizations with "the appearance of a queen, the heart of a warrior," which signifies possessing both a confident, elegant, and fresh appearance and an unwavering fighting spirit. There were many other teachers who took good care of me outside of class. However, despite this wonderfully warm environment, I still did not enjoy learning as most classes followed traditional Japanese lecture-based methods of instruction and having students memorize facts and regurgitate them on tests.

It was when I attended Soka University of America (SUA) that I regained the joy of learning. Not only did SUA have the same culture, or ethos, of care where students looked out for each other, it also had professors who made our learning meaningful and applicable to our lives through discussion and various assignments where we had to apply what we had learned. One particularly significant and memorable course was the Learning Cluster—a 3.5-week block in January that is designed for students to propose and engage in research and fieldwork—that I helped to create in my freshman year. A group of students wanted a course to formally study the writings of Makiguchi, so we approached a professor who had been supporting students' efforts in this area. He happened to be on the board of a charter school that was opening based on Paulo Freire's philosophy and pedagogy. We merged our ideas and decided to study the process of

opening a charter school and proposed curricula based on Freire's and Makiguchi's pedagogies. The group of students that chose to base their curriculum on Freire's ideas had an opportunity to directly present their work to the board, whereas the group that chose Makiguchi created a hypothetical curriculum. However, this class gave me an opportunity to deeply and critically read Makiguchi's extensive work for the first time. Based on the nature of the course, as well as on the philosophies of Makiguchi and Freire, we decided as a class to opt out from letter grades and instead receive narrative evaluations. To this day, this was the most meaningful evaluation I have ever received in a course. In regular semester courses, too, there were many opportunities to engage in research and pursue my own interests. I even found some exams meaningful in that they did not simply require the regurgitation of facts; they made me think. One question that I still remember is from a midterm in Personality Psychology class where the professor asked, or rather challenged, us to come up with a study to evaluate the mission of SUA to foster global citizenship from the standpoint of the field of psychology. We had to come up with an operational definition of global citizenship, create a measurement tool, and design a study. At SUA, for the first time in my schooling, I was constantly being asked what *I* thought and felt based on taught subject matter, not what the textbook said was correct.

Professors at SUA also demonstrated the kind of care I received at Kansai Soka. One Chinese professor exemplified such care. I spent numerous hours in her office, not only asking questions about course content, but also engaging in conversations about education in general, the university's mission statement, and Ikeda's philosophy. She also invited a group of students to her house, and together with her husband, we all made and ate dumplings. Every semester, she had us fill out a mid-semester survey about the course. Then, during the following class, she would come in with our surveys highlighted and annotated, and she would share what she found

from us. She implemented many of our suggestions during the latter half of the course, but what I really remember is her sharing appreciation for the positive comments saying, “Teachers are also humans, so we also need encouragement just like students. So, I really appreciate it when you shared that you liked this and that.” Her sincere and genuine attitude made her more human and made me feel closer to her as a result. I stayed in touch with her after graduation, and remembering that I was looking for a job that sponsored a work visa from a conversation more than a year before, she called me out of blue to tell me that she had heard of a teaching job that would sponsor a visa. Even after I moved to Chicago, when she found out that I was back at SUA to present at the Soka Education Conference, which is an annual conference organized and run by undergraduate students at SUA, she changed her schedule so that she could come see me. In my many years as a student, to this day, the four years at SUA represent my best educational experience, and I see many of the professors there as exemplars of what it means to be a “good teacher,” both in terms of their character as human beings and in their teaching methods.

This ethos of mutual care also existed among students, staff, and administrators. There were many times when I received heart-warming notes and chocolate in front of my dormitory room door, especially when my friends knew that I was going through a difficult time or was busy with extra-curricular activities or assignments. There was one time I had a really bad stomach ache and could not move, so one of the staff drove me to an emergency hospital. The president of the university also took time to meet with each incoming freshman during their first semester and kept a note card for each student with their background, interests, and dreams. He meets with every student individually in their senior year as well to hear about their experiences at SUA and post-graduation plans. I think it is rare that all students fondly call their university president by his first name and casually visit his office or talk with him over meals in the

cafeteria. This is the norm at SUA. On the day of the graduation rehearsal, instead of the diplomas, he came with a box of cards and handed us each one with hand-written messages. The one I received said that he was counting on me "for the future of Soka education 30 years from now." That was in 2011. I still keep this card and look at it from time to time to remind myself of the determination I made then to work in the field of education and to strive to help others in this country experience the same kind of life-affirming philosophy that I experienced at SUA.

Because of these experiences at Soka institutions, and in particular SUA, I decided to pursue a career as a teacher. However, I soon realized that the reality was so different from the ideal that I had envisioned. As a fourth and fifth-grade teacher at a public school in California right when the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and new computer-based standardized tests were implemented, I experienced first-hand the pressure of the standardization and accountability movement. As a new teacher without tenure, I also understood that my job security greatly depended on my students' test scores, which brought me much anxiety and internal conflict about what it means to be a "good teacher." I taught at a Japanese/English dual language program in which students learn all subjects in both languages. I had to make sure that every lesson, regardless of the language of instruction, addressed at least one CCSS for English Language Arts and Math and the California State Standards for other subjects. Although this was difficult, it was certainly not as difficult as other aspects of teaching. I was so frustrated when I was handed a testing schedule that took no account of the dual language schedule, and often replaced Japanese instruction with English testing. This not only interrupted the flow of teaching, but it also violated the most fundamental aspect of a dual language program. Along with managing the disruptive testing schedule, I was nervous talking to parents who demanded that the test content be taught only in English out of concern for their child's test scores. Moreover,

the standardized tests affected other areas of my teaching life. I remember sitting through professional development sessions staring at bar graphs and percentages, and then devising plans for intervention for students with "red marks." I also had to write and submit a report to my principal once a year with just numerical data on my students' scores on district benchmark tests, analyzing how many of them went up, stayed, or went down a band (i.e. advanced, proficient, basic, below basic) and breaking it down into categories such as English Language Learners and students with Individualized Education Program (IEP). Even during a year when I taught only in Japanese, my evaluation was based on this report that was based on a test conducted in English. Going through pages of graphs and percentages, I often felt that this was not why I became a teacher, and I had the conviction that test scores could not be a true indicator, or at least not *the* indicator, of whether or not I was a "good teacher."

While feeling pressured and forced to comply with the demands of the accountability measures to keep my job, I also knew that I had to find creative spaces to teach differently. What guided me was the education I received as a student at SUA. These experiences compelled me to challenge the individualistic, competitive, and knowledge-transmission type of teaching that was so easy to fall back on given the pressure of high-stakes standardized testing. I wanted to engage in teaching and learning that was meaningful for both students and myself as a teacher. When I was thinking about the thematic units and designing projects, I drew from themes in Ikeda's and Makiguchi's writings. I created projects and activities that asked questions such as what is a good friend or what is a good life, while having students engage in arts and theatre or work collaboratively in groups using the Japanese they learned. I addressed math, language arts, social studies, and science standards through thematic units, such as unequal distribution of resources and war and peace.

I also tried to re-conceptualize the traditional teacher-student relationship based on Ikeda's idea that education should be based on the mutual growth of teacher and student. One way was to start each academic year by brainstorming with my students what it means to be a "good teacher" and a "good student." More than the actual content generated, what was important was the process of collaboratively generating agreed-upon definitions. Whenever we had an issue in class, we would revisit our co-created chart, and there were many times I had to admit that I was not being a good teacher. It was a reminder for me that if any student "misbehaved," it was very likely that I had failed to create a learning environment that was engaging and meaningful for that student. Therefore, instead of resorting to disciplinary solutions, I tried to create a community where we were mutually responsible for our growth as teacher and students. My experiences at SUA continue to be foundational to who I am and how I think and plan my instruction now as an adjunct faculty teaching pre-service teachers.

It is no eggageration to say that I consider SUA my second home, and this closeness to the research site makes my positionality as a researcher complex. As an alumna, I have maintained connections not only with many fellow alumni, but also with many staff and faculty at SUA. The moment I entered the campus for data collection, the security guard at the gate noticed that I am an alumna and greeted me, "Welcome back! Enjoy your stay!" As I picked up my keys to the Alumni Center where I stayed, the receptionist at Founders Hall also recognized me and greeted me with a big smile. Furthermore, because I am a former student of many of the professors who participated in this study, many of them took time to introduce me to their students, sharing stories from when I was their student or how I was active in the Soka Education Student Research Project, sometimes even encouraging some students who are interested in Soka approaches to education to talk with me after their classes. This led me to help some of their

students write proposals for the following year's annual conference sponsored by the Soka Education Student Research Project. Even those whose class I did not take, I knew them from being involved in the Soka Education Conference over the years as a student leader, an alumni advisor, and a presenter. There were also those I did not know but who agreed to participate in this study because they knew I was an alumna and they saw me as part of their community. One of my participants was also teaching a career class with the career counselor, and when he found out that I had graduated from Claremont Graduate University's Teacher Education program, with which SUA was then planning and has since established a partnership, he asked me if I would speak to students who were interested in the program. Thus, we created an impromptu alumni career event. I also attended one of the campus events to which alumni could get free tickets. In these ways, although not part of formal data collection, I was immediately immersed in my research site as part of the campus community. Even during data collection (class observations), many participants invited me to participate in class activities and discussions. When students were facilitating class discussions, they also sometimes invited me to share my opinions on the topic. Although I kept taking notes as an observer and bracketing my responses within those notes, I ended up becoming more of a participant-observer in many cases. At the same time, now that it has been close to ten years since I graduated, many things have changed, such as student demographics becoming more diverse and the curriculum continuously evolving with the addition of a new foreign language and a new concentration. When I see these and other substantive changes, I can immediately recognize that I am also very much an outsider who is conducting research. Therefore, I tried to bracket my own opinions and experiences as much as possible when collecting and analyzing data.

Why SUA and Understanding Its Complexity

SUA may seem an odd choice for exploring implications for teacher education as it has no teacher education program and given that university professors' ethos and ways of teaching may at first glance have little implication for K-12 teacher preparation. However, I chose SUA over other Soka schools because it is the only Soka institution in the U.S. and, more important, as an alumna of both SUA and Kansai Soka High School, I experientially believe that SUA best exemplifies Soka approaches to education as they are articulated in the primary literature by Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda and in the secondary literature in this field. As illustrated in my personal journey, SUA is where I felt that faculty—i.e., teachers—consciously considered their pedagogy and subject matter unconstrained by tradition or a national curriculum. As demonstrated consistently in the literature in Ikeda/Soka Studies in Education, they enacted dialogic teacher-student relationships, cared for students, and fostered in them a sense of full becoming and global citizenship, which is central to Ikeda's philosophy of *ningen kyōiku*, what Goulah and Ito (2012) call "human education." More significantly, and underrepresented in the literature, they also helped students acquire knowledge and create meaning and value from it, which is the heart of Makiguchi's (1981-1988) *sōka kyōikugaku*, or "value-creating pedagogy." Furthermore, SUA is the most racially, ethnically, culturally, linguistically, and religiously diverse Soka institution worldwide, which has significant implications for teaching practice and the application of Soka approaches to education in diverse contexts. Although SUA's higher education context differs from K-12 teaching in important ways, its faculty can provide insights into what it means to be a "good teacher" from a Soka perspective and how we can prepare K-12 teachers to embody and practice Soka approaches to education.

However, it is important to note the complexity of SUA's context. It might make it easier to understand by comparing it to my own institution of DePaul University. Although DePaul is the largest Catholic university in the U.S., there is no requirement for students to take courses on Catholicism, nor are all faculty and students Catholic. Like St. John's University in Queens, NY and Niagara University in Niagara Falls, NY, it is a Catholic institution in the Vincentian heritage of Saint Vincent de Paul (1581–1660). When I was hired to teach at DePaul, though, I was never explicitly taught "Vincentian personalism" or a "Vincentian approach" to education, but by being in the community, I often hear about and have generally learned the Vincentian mission of serving the underprivileged and marginalized, as well as the Vincentian commitment to social justice. While the mission and values resonate with my personal beliefs, they are not front and center when I create and teach my courses. The degree to which faculty at DePaul study and practice the Vincentian mission seems to vary.

Similarly, none of the faculty at SUA has formally been "trained" in Soka approaches to education. Other than DePaul's new master's program in *Value-Creating Education for Global Citizenship*, there is no place in the world with an explicit curriculum to prepare teachers in how to implement Soka, or "value-creating," approaches. Moreover, in the case of SUA, hardly any faculty member has a degree in education or experience teaching in K-12 schools. Interestingly and importantly, though, many of the participants of this study identified and called themselves "teachers," not faculty or professor. In regards to Soka approaches to education, while some participants indicated that they consciously try to learn about and practice the educational principles of Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda, others may merely have a vague understanding that something called "Soka education" exists; some just happen to teach at SUA with no interest in learning or practicing Soka approaches to education. Among the participants of this study,

although there were three who are members of the SGI and knew about SUA prior to working there, others came without knowing anything about its origins and principles outlined by Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda. Some of them stated that they read the mission statement, "to foster a steady stream of global citizens committed to living a contributive life" (Soka University of America, n.d.-g), during their job application and that it resonated with them. However, that was the extent they knew about the university and its principles, and they already held beliefs about good teaching. After coming to SUA, through reading books by or on Makiguchi and Ikeda, participating in and supporting students in their organization of an annual conference on the principles of Soka Education, interacting with students and other faculty, and in some cases just being immersed in the culture that exists on the SUA campus, they developed their own understandings about what a Soka approach means or might mean. Although I selected a purposive sample of those who I knew were consciously striving to learn about Soka approaches to education, the degree to which they explicitly tried to implement what they believed to be a Soka approach varied.

Definition of Key Terms

Although most of the key terms will be articulated in the literature review, here I would like to define how the word "Soka" and related terms are used throughout this dissertation. The term *sōka* is a Japanese neologism derived from two Japanese words, *sōzo* (creation) and *kachi* (value), and originates with Makiguchi and Toda. The word *sōka* is used in Makiguchi's seminal work, *Soka kyoikugaku taikei* (*The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy*) and it is a central concept of his value-creating pedagogy. Makiguchi's educational philosophy has been carried on, interpreted, and expanded after his death mainly by Toda and Ikeda. The 15 Soka institutions that Ikeda founded in Asia and the Americas actualize the educational vision of Makiguchi and

Toda. However, the practices and the ethos at these Soka schools are not pure and direct applications of Makiguchi's pedagogy, but rather are a result of administrators and teachers at each school striving to enact Ikeda's broader philosophy of education beyond schooling that is grounded in Buddhist humanism. Although many people use the word "Soka education" as an umbrella term to include Makiguchi's value-creating pedagogy, Ikeda's broader conception of education to become fully human, and educational practices at Soka schools, Goulah and Gebert (2009) and Goulah (2018) distinguish *sōka* and Soka education. Whereas *sōka* refers to the theoretical framework of "value-creating" education that can be practiced in and outside the official Soka institutions, Soka education refers to educational discourses and practices at Soka schools founded by Ikeda. Within these distinctions, this dissertation focuses on articulating Soka education as it is understood and practiced at SUA.

It is important to note, however, the way in which "Soka education" is understood and practiced differs from one school to another. In a message to the first international conference on Ikeda/Soka Studies in Education hosted by DePaul's Institute for Daisaku Ikeda Studies in Education, Ikeda (2018b) cited the Institute Director, Jason Goulah, stating that "if you say this is 'Soka education,' then you've limited its possibility" and asserted that "each site of learning brings into being its own practice, its own new forms of wisdom and innovation." As if to capture this understanding that Soka education varies according to the specific location and context, SUA's President Daniel Habuki has on many occasions talked of "Soka's" education, meaning the practices specifically at SUA rather than a defined and universal set of practices. To avoid defining what "Soka education" is based just on findings at SUA and to encompass the theoretical explanations beyond the ethos at SUA, I use what the DePaul Institute for Daisaku Ikeda Studies in Education has termed "Soka approaches to education" throughout this

dissertation instead of "Soka education." This choice of using Soka approaches to education over value-creating education is because the perspectives and practices at SUA are not entirely based on the educational theories and practices of Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda. It is also different from what Goulah (2018) calls a "Soka Discourse" explained earlier in the introduction. Whereas "Soka Discourse" refers to the ways in which self-identified Soka educators who are SGI members intuitively articulate and enact Ikeda's broader philosophies and practices of Soka Gakkai Nichiren Buddhism, Soka approaches to education refers to the educational philosophies and instructional practices advocated by Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda.

However, when I refer to the scholarly field, I use Ikeda/Soka Studies in Education. This is because, as Goulah (personal communication) explains, the emerging field that engages with the ideas of Ikeda, Toda, and Makiguchi not only includes consideration of these Soka/*sōka* approaches, but also distinguishes Ikeda's broader and more expansive educational contributions beyond Soka education, including in fields such as peace education, human rights education, and environmental education. The term Ikeda/Soka Studies in Education is used at events at DePaul University (Institute for Daisaku Ikeda Studies in Education, 2018), the Ikeda Center for Peace, Learning and Dialogue (Ikeda Center for Peace, Learning, and Dialogue, 2017), and is increasingly appearing in the related scholarship (e.g., Garrison, 2019; Inukai, 2018).

Theoretical Framework

The foundational theoretical framework that runs throughout this dissertation is the Soka approaches to education based on Ikeda, Toda, and Makiguchi's philosophies and practices. This not only is the topic of investigaton as is shown in the title of the dissertation, but is used to analyze data and present the findings. However, in order to address various aspects of Soka approaches to education particular to SUA and to provide a comprehensive understanding of the

multi-dimensionality of "good teaching," I use Joseph Schwab's (1973) four commonplaces of curriculum: subject matter, teacher, student, and the milieu. Schubert (1986) categorizes Schwab's theory as the "practical paradigm" from Schwab's own use of the term "practical." He explains that the practical paradigm is concerned with the actual state of affairs in a particular context and uses the method of interacting with the state of affairs to be studied. Although curriculum is often (mis)understood as merely the subject matter represented in textbooks and instructional materials, based on Schwab's framework, curriculum is in fact a cyclical, co-dependent, and mutually influencing relationship among these four elements (He et al., 2015). This means that the idea of a "good teacher" must be discussed in relation to how one teaches the subject matter (i.e., pedagogy), how one interacts with the students, and how one is affected by the milieu (e.g., history, culture, institutional policy, etc.).

Although all four commonplaces are equally important in Schwab's framework, my study focuses mainly on the teacher *as* curriculum (Schlein & Schwarz, 2015). While we cannot place sole responsibility on teachers to save education or bash them for its failure (Nuñez, 2015), teachers do have a crucial role in shaping the curriculum (Schlein & Schwarz, 2015). Ikeda (2010b, 2013d) echoes this by stating that teachers are the most important elements in students' educational environment. However, it is critical to examine the teacher in relation to the other three aspects of curriculum by asking: How do teachers affect students, subject matter, and the milieu? (He et al., 2015).

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the perspectives among faculty at SUA about what constitutes a "good teacher" and the ways these perspectives converge with Makiguchi's, Toda's, and Ikeda's educational writings (in Japanese) and the extant theoretical

and empirical understandings of Soka approaches to education as represented in the secondary literature in the field of Ikeda/Soka Studies in Education. Moreover, it considers the implications of this for teacher education. Specifically, I asked the following research questions:

1) How do SUA faculty perceive the aim of education and what constitutes a "good teacher," specifically in relation to their role as teachers, their relationship to students, the purpose of their subject matter, and the influence of institutional culture, policies, and curriculum?
2) How has their experience at SUA changed/shaped their perspectives?
3) In what ways do their perspectives converge with or diverge from the primary and secondary, theoretical and empirical explanations of Soka approaches to education?
4) What are the implications for teacher education?

The first question addresses the interrelationship of the teacher with the other three commonplaces. On the other hand, the second research question points to the opposite direction of how students and the milieu influence teachers. These questions were directly explored through interviews with faculty (see Appendix for the interview protocol). The third research question is partly answered by asking participants to explain what Soka approaches to education means in their own words. However, because many faculty were not fully aware of the literature on Ikeda/Soka Studies in Education, I, as the researcher, inferred the convergences and divergences from the literature based on discursive analyses/readings of how they articulated the role of a teacher and their pedagogical practices relative to the literature.

The final question on the implications for teacher education is also what I, as the researcher, draw based on the findings. I recognize that it is a jump to draw implications for teacher education preparing teachers for K-12 setting based on a research study at a university.

However, as presented above, SUA is the only Soka institution in the U.S. where faculty attempt to enact aspects of Soka approaches to education. Further, eight out of ten partipant faculty consistently referred to themselves as "teachers" in the interview. Therefore, despite the contextual differences that must be taken into consideration, SUA nevertheless presents a unique case that can inform teacher education practices based on Soka approaches.

Significance

There is both theoretical and practical significance to this research. One of the theoretical significances is to derive a more articulate and comprehensive explanation of Soka approaches to education through a well-read understanding of the primary literature in Japanese relative to the secondary literature in both Japanese and English. Another is to articulate the nuances and complexity of how Soka approaches to education are practiced at SUA. Besides Goulah's (2012d) study on SUA students, few scholars have conducted research at SUA. There are ostensibly multiple reasons for this. Founded in 2001, the university is still relatively young. Moreover, with just approximately 100 students in each class, researchers on campus are likely to cause an obvious disruption to the culture and learning of the small liberal arts community previously mentioned. Thus, this is the first comprehensive study to explore what has been practiced at SUA from the faculty's perspective. It can contribute to enriching the existing empirical studies (Ikegami & Agbenyega, 2014; Ikegami & Grieshaber, 2017; Nagashima, 2012, 2016) that focus almost exclusively on "Soka" considerations of what I call the "being" of a teacher. Third, among the growing number of publications in the field of Ikeda/Soka Studies in Education, this is one of the few (e.g., Kuo & Aniezue, 2018) that addresses the field of teacher education, and possibly the first to explore Soka approaches to education from the curricular framework developed and articulated by Schwab and Schubert. Practically, the research findings

may have implications for how we educate pre-service teachers in teacher education programs. Specifically, this research addresses the "being" of a teacher that is underemphasized in the current neoliberal reform movement. It further reconceptualizes the "doing" of a teacher beyond the neoliberal conception of "best practices" of efficiently transmitting knowledge.

Outline of the Dissertation

This dissertation is presented in seven chapters. After this introductory chapter, in Chapter 2, I review the relevant literature in teacher education, the primary literature by Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda to provide the theoretical foundations of value-creating education, the extant literature in the field of Ikeda/Soka Studies in Education. In Chapter 3, I present the methodology of this study, including the research site, participants, data collection and analysis methods, issues of trustworthiness, and limitations. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 present the findings of the study. Specifically, Chapter 4 describes aspects of the research site that are relevant to understanding the context from the perspectives of the four curricular commonplaces of the milieu, subject matter, teacher, and student. Chapter 5 presents SUA faculty's perspectives and practices of a "good teacher" in three major themes: educating human beings and building character, guiding students to co-create knowledge and meaning, and critical self-reflection and continuous improvement. Chapter 6 addresses how these three themes were manifest in one observed Learning Cluster course as a "subsection" (Stake, 2006) of this larger case study. In Chapter 7, I return to and address each of the four research questions relative to the findings presented in Chapters 4 through 6. I conclude by considering the overall implications for the field of Ikeda/Soka Studies in Education and for teacher education.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This literature review is organized into three sections. First, I briefly review current issues in teacher education, focusing specifically on the neoliberal transformation of teacher education through alternative certification and high-stakes pre-service teacher assessment. Specifically, I examine Teach For America and the introduction of edTPA.

In the second part, I examine what it means to be a "good teacher" from a so-called Soka perspective, drawing from both primary and related secondary literature. By primary literature, I mean the extensive original works in Japanese by Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda on education and teaching, which I review both chronologically and in relation to each other. Specifically, first I review Makiguchi's founding perspectives on value-creating pedagogy and teacher attitudes. For Toda, I review his deductive guides to teaching and consider these in relation to Makiguchi's pedagogy. Here, I also review Toda's concept of "human revolution" and his practice of raising youth in the Soka Gakkai organization. For these sections on Makiguchi and Toda, the first sub-section for each writer corresponds to the "doing" of a teacher, and the latter sub-section to the "being" of a teacher. Third, I review Ikeda's philosophy and practice. As Ikeda's work is much more extensive compared to Makiguchi and Toda, there are four sub-sections. In the first sub-section, I review his educational theory that goes beyond schooling, such as "human education," global citizenship, and human revolution, which are key concepts to understand Ikeda's educational philosophy. This is the "being" of a teacher for Ikeda. Although Ikeda does not discuss specific instruction methods, he advocates for dialogue and mentor-disciple, or teacher-student, relationships as two ways that education fosters a more fully human becoming. Therefore, although these also include the teacher's attitudes and dispositions, it is closest to the "doing" aspect for Ikeda. This section on Ikeda concludes with his messages to SUA, which is

the site of this dissertation research. In these ways, I address both the "being" and "doing" aspects of a "good teacher," also explicating both the similarities and important distinctions between Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda. These, taken as a whole, constitute the theoretical underpinnings of Soka approaches to education relative to the concept of a "good teacher."

Third, I provide an overview of English-language secondary literature on Ikeda/Soka Studies in Education. The extensive and growing corpus of literature in languages other than English, such as papers published in the Japanese journals or the vast amount of Chinese-language literature (see Inukai, 2012) will not be reviewed here. Likewise, I will not review the extant body of papers presented at the annual SUA undergraduate student conference on Soka education, held at SUA. Finally, I review the relevant empirical studies at both Soka and non-Soka schools and universities. Though still limited in number, these empirical studies reveal both a trend in how people understand and articulate "Soka education," as well as the gaps in the current literature.

Current Issues in Teacher Education

The fields of teacher education and education policy are dominated today by neoliberal ideologies of reform (Means, 2013; Rodriguez & Magill, 2016; Saltman, 2017; Webb et al., 2009). While there are many effects of a neoliberal transformation of public education, the core ideology is that the purpose of schooling is to develop students' specific skills that enhance their economic productivity and market value (Attick, 2017). In this model, both teachers and students are seen as a form of human capital, and teachers' value is determined by how well they develop students' economic value. It warrants noting here—and I explain in detail below—that "value" in *sōka*/Soka, or "value-creating," approaches is different from this notion of "value." Saltman (2009) argues that, under the name of "best practices," "teachers are treated as deskilled

deliverers of prepackaged curricula prohibiting their potential as critical intellectuals" (p. 56). Thus, teaching becomes "a hyper-individualized, yet strictly administered activity that compels teachers to focus on the production of quantifiable outputs" (Attick, 2017, p. 38). Within the realm of the neoliberal impact on teacher education, two main areas of concern extensively addressed are alternative teacher certification programs such as Teach For America (TFA) and, more recently, the use of edTPA as a high-stakes assessment for pre-service teachers and an accountability measure for teacher education programs (Price & McConney, 2013; Saltman, 2017; Scott et al., 2016; White, 2016).

Although many alternative teacher certification programs have existed, especially during times of teacher shortages, TFA is the most well-known program today. Founded in 1989, TFA aims to eradicate the achievement gap that exists in poor inner-city schools by recruiting elite college graduates to serve two years teaching in schools that have the most severe shortage of quality teachers after receiving only five weeks of training (White, 2016). Although there are probably many individual TFA teachers who are doing great work for their students, the problem lies in its many assumptions around teaching and teacher preparation. Darling-Hammond (1994) noted four assumptions of TFA: 1) traditional teacher preparation does not work, 2) teacher education students are among the least academically talented, 3) no preparation beyond minimal subject matter knowledge and general intelligence is needed to teach effectively, and 4) school districts have the capacity to train and mentor the new teachers on their own. Based on these assumptions, TFA recruits the "best and brightest" (Blumenrich & Rogers, 2016), who are predominantly white and middle-upper class, into inner-city schools where most are poor students of color. The minimal training of TFA's model promotes an image of teaching as deskilled labor that does not require specialized training and ignores the importance of having

knowledge of the school's community and families in order to teach effectively. Furthermore, the organization's drive toward scientific measures of "good teaching" has led to the exclusive focus on easily quantifiable and measurable outcomes (i.e., test scores) as a determinant of success for students and teachers (Scott et al., 2016).

Another important aspect of TFA is its emphasis on encouraging its alumni to assume leadership positions aimed at reshaping public schooling (Price & McConney, 2013). According to Scott et al. (2016), many TFA participants viewed their teaching period as interim to moving up to more "high prestige" careers (p. 15). Through its vast network of alumni in various leadership positions, TFA advocates for market-based, corporate-funded privatization policies to reform public schooling, such as school choice, charters, and merit pay for teachers (Scott et al., 2016). These practices in and outside of classrooms further promote the neoliberal ideology of education as an individualistic, competitive, economic enterprise.

Besides reshaping the teacher preparation landscape through alternative certifications such as TFA, the introduction of edTPA has re-conceptualized the evaluation of pre-service teacher effectiveness. Since fall 2013, edTPA has been used to assess teacher candidates and is now used by teacher preparation programs in 40 states (edTPA, 2017). Furthermore, 22 states have policies in place to use edTPA as part of program completion or for state licensure and/or state program accreditation/review (edTPA, n.d.). In Illinois, for example, edTPA has been used as a licensure requirement for all subject areas and grade-levels since 2015. edTPA consists of three tasks: 1) context for learning and planning, 2) instruction, and 3) assessment. Teacher candidates must submit an extensive commentary for each section, as well as a video recording of their classroom-based student teaching. For each task, there is great emphasis on supporting students with special needs (students on IEP, 504 plan, ELL, etc.) to meet the learning

objectives, on planning instruction and assessment based on current research (and explicitly cites this research), and on reflecting on one's own instructional practice. Once teacher candidates complete each task, they submit it (and a fee) to Pearson, and scorers hired by Pearson who have no knowledge of the teacher candidate or the context in which he or she teaches will evaluate the submitted work against a standardized rubric (Carter & Lochte, 2017; Saltman, 2017). Although edTPA has been introduced on a national scale only recently, there are already critiques that point to its lack of reliability and validity (Lalley, 2017; Russel & Devall, 2016) and its contribution to further deprofessionalizing teachers (Carter & Lochte, 2017; Saltman, 2017). Furthermore, in order to meet the expectations of this high-stakes assessment, teacher education programs are changing their instruction around lesson/unit planning and assignments, as well as devoting more time both before and during student teaching to address the edTPA-specific vocabulary and content (Ressler et al., 2017).

The edTPA tasks and rubrics center on content learning that emphasizes disciplinary knowledge. Saltman (2017) argued, "The very framing of knowledge as 'content' presumes a delivery of transmission model of pedagogy that denies the educative process in knowledge making" (p. 90). Although edTPA does not specify the pedagogy to be used, the core of competent teaching is defined in edTPA as content learning, and other aims such as transformative learning or human becoming are absent; nor does it question whose knowledge, values, and ideologies are represented as legitimate knowledge (Saltman, 2017). Each of the edTPA tasks enforces differentiation for students with special needs such as English language learners and students with Individual Education Program, but it is silent on the communal and relational aspect of teaching and learning. Thus, edTPA's underlying message is consistent with the neoliberal conception of "good teaching" as hyper-individualized and focused on quantifiable

outputs. In these ways, the neoliberal paradigm confines the notion of "good teachers" within the language of efficiently delivering content knowledge that is tested.

Furthermore, under the guise of objectivity, the edTPA policy can be critiqued to be colorblind, assuming that everybody enjoys equal treatment under white middle-class norms (Zamudio et al., 2011). One result of edTPA's demand on academic writing in standard American English is discouraging teacher education programs to admit students from diverse backgrounds (e.g., students from other countries) from the fear that they will not pass the edTPA (Luna, 2016). Moreover, Russel and Devall (2016) found that world language teacher candidates who were heritage or native speakers of the target language scored low on edTPA despite having high evaluations from their mentor-teachers and university supervisors. This shows that edTPA can prevent heritage- and native-speaker teacher candidates from entering the classroom even when they can conduct effective lessons completely in the target language and possibly with higher proficiency as scored by the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages' Oral Proficiency Interview, which is required for teacher licensure. In fact, edTPA is more of a test of English writing about teaching than a test of effective teaching (Edmundson, 2017). Therefore, not only does edTPA's content implicitly standardize "good teaching," but these studies suggest that it also functions to prevent diversifying the teaching force.

There is a growing body of literature that problematizes and counters the hegemonic ideology of neoliberalism in teacher education. It argues for teacher education programs to embody democratic processes and cultivate democratic dispositions (Schroeder, 2017), critically examine undemocratic forces in neoliberalism and neoconservatism (Atkinson, 2017), engage with the community to foster teachers for social justice (Zygmunt & Clark, 2016), address teacher dispositions, positionality, and prejudices (Bialka, 2016; Young, 2017), and offer a

liberal-arts approach to teacher education that also cultivates culturally relevant, anti-oppressive, and critical practices (Casey, 2017). The focus of my dissertation is not to restate the proposals made by the authors of this literature, but to contribute to this body of literature by examining what constitutes a "good teacher" from a Soka perspective and to consider its implications for teacher education. Toward that end, next I explicate Soka approaches to education relative to being a "good teacher" by reviewing primary texts by its progenitors, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, Josei Toda, and Daisaku Ikeda.

A "Good Teacher" from a Soka Perspective

This section is organized into eight sub-sections, two each for Makiguchi and Toda, and four for Ikeda. As explained in the introduction to this literature review section, it will follow a chronological order starting with Makiguchi, then moving to Toda, and finally Ikeda. As Toda built on Makiguchi's ideas, and Ikeda built on both Makiguchi and Toda's ideas, I will draw some connections to their respective predecessor(s) in the sections on Toda and Ikeda. For Makiguchi and Toda, the first section focuses on their perspectives of pedagogical aspects of teaching ("doing"), and the latter section focuses on the attitude of the teacher ("being") as they more explicitly articulated on pedagogy than attitude. On the other hand, central to Ikeda's educational philosophy is the idea of becoming fully human. Therefore, the section on Ikeda starts from this aspect and moves on to dialogue and teacher-student relationships as a means to achieve this aim. Despite the differences in focus, for all of them, both the "being" and "doing" are crucial aspects of a "good teacher."

Makiguchi: Value-Creating Pedagogy

Among the three, Makiguchi wrote most explicitly on the topic of teacher education. In an essay titled *Shihan kyōiku naiyō hihan* ("Critique of the Content of Teacher Education";

Makiguchi, [1936] 1981-1988, Vol. 9, pp. 207-233), Makiguchi argues that "the essential subject in teacher education should be pedagogy, not a mishmash of factual knowledge that is [only] material for instruction"[1] (p. 219). In other words, the core curriculum of teacher education programs should not just provide subject matter knowledge, but help teachers consider and learn effective pedagogy. He further clarifies that the pedagogy he envisions these pre-service teachers to learn is *sōka kyoikugaku*, or "value-creating pedagogy," on which he had published a few years earlier in his four-volume work, *Sōka kyōikugaku taikei* (*The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy*; Makiguchi, [1930-1934] 1981-1988, Vols. 5-6). Thus, the aim of teacher education should be to foster teachers who can effectively teach their students to "create value" (ibid, pp. 225-226). Putting both of these works together, we can conclude that, for Makiguchi, a "good teacher" is someone who can help his or her students learn to create personally meaningful value.

Central to understanding Makiguchi's value-creating pedagogy is his theory of value. Makiguchi (1981-1988, Vol. 5) reevaluated the neo-Kantian notion of value (truth, beauty, and good), replacing truth with gain because truth, in Makiguchi's view, can only be discovered and recognized, but not created (Goulah & Gebert, 2009). Truth can be understood here as the objective recognition of a fact or an object, which we now more commonly call knowledge. On the other hand, value is the subjective relationship (either positive or negative) between oneself and a fact or an object. For Makiguchi (1981-1988), knowledge in itself does not have inherent value, but those who acquire it (i.e. students) recognize and determine its value. Furthermore, Makiguchi asserts we cannot lead a happy and contributive life just by acquiring knowledge, but only by applying that knowledge to make meaning, or, in Makiguchi's terms, to create the value in terms of sensory *beauty*, personal *gain*, and social *good* (Goulah & Gebert, 2009; Goulah &

[1] Translations are the author's own unless otherwise noted here or in reference.

Ito, 2012). Makiguchi asserts that having the agency to create such value, that is to create something new where it did not exist, rather than merely consuming existing value, is what engenders authentic happiness (Goulah, 2013c; see also Saito, 2010).

Thus, Makiguchi opposed knowledge-transmission-based instruction on the basis that it will not lead students to happy lives (Okamura, 2017). Instead, drawing from Herbartian pedagogy, Makiguchi (1981-1988) developed a 5-step knowledge cultivation model, whose fifth step is value creation, or the application of knowledge (Vol. 9, p. 310; see also Okamura, 2017). In this model, in order to help students reach the final step of value creation, teachers must 1) first *evaluate* children's already known conceptual worlds, 2) help students *directly observe* how knowledge is used to cause valuable outcomes, 3) *apperceive*, or synthesize and make sense of what they have observed, 4) *evaluate* the potential effect or value of their acquired knowledge to their own lives, and finally 5) apply the acquired knowledge to create valuable outcomes in their own lives (Okamura, 2017). This framework defines "good teachers" as those who can lead students all the way to the fifth step of value creation. Goulah and Gebert (2009) call this the "epistemological empowerment" of students to develop the ability to recognize, evaluate, generate, and finally apply knowledge to the problems they face in their lives (p. 120). Therefore, classrooms should be a place for students to practice creating the value in terms of beauty, gain, and good based on the knowledge they have gained.

Furthermore, in Makiguchi's framework, the value of good denotes an existence of community and individuals living a "contributive life." Makiguchi (1981-1988, Vols. 5-6) writes that the value of good must be determined by a community, not by an individual. While one has the right to pursue their own happiness, one cannot be incognizant of others' happiness. Makiguchi (1981-1988) states that "genuine happiness requires sharing the sufferings and joys of

the larger public as a member of society" (Vol. 5, p. 131). Therefore, authentic happiness lies in a "harmonious community life," a phrase, Goulah (2010e) clarifies, that Makiguchi took from a Japanese translation of Francis W. Parker's *My Pedagogic Creed* (see Makiguchi, [1897] 2010). Makiguchi believed that individuals are the essential components upon which the prospect of a nation or a society depends. Based on one's realization that they are an indispensable element of the society that is interconnected with all the other members of that society, Makiguchi (1981-1988, Vols. 5-6) endeavored to educate students to move from a dependent life to an independent life, and then to a contributive life. Further, because what individuals think is good for the community might differ—and often does differ—and because value is a subjective relationship between a person and an object or between people, Hatano (2009) argues that value creation is inherently a dialogic, or relational, process. It is quite evident that, in order to create the value of good, people not only need to have academic ability to apply their knowledge, but they also need to develop the ability to live together with people that are different from themselves. Thus, from Makiguchi's perspective, educating students to this end is a key element of being a "good teacher."

Makiguchi: Attitude of a Teacher

Although Makiguchi (e.g., [1898] 2013) wrote extensively on pedagogy from his earliest writings on the instructional methods of reading and composition (Gebert, 2013; Goulah, 2013b; Ito, 2017) to his most well-known work on value-creating pedagogy as outlined in the previous section, he did not explicitly write as much on the attitude of a teacher. One noteworthy essay he wrote on this topic, serialized across six issues of the journal *Shinkyō* (New Teachings), is "On Attitudes toward Education: The Attitude toward Guiding Learning and the Attitude toward Learning" (Goulah, 2015a; Makiguchi, [1936] 2015). In it, Makiguchi declares that the attitude

of a teacher must first be considered before any method. The following statement illustrates this point:

> The core mission of education is not simply making knowledge, in the form of study materials, available. Rather it is guiding the process by which learners themselves understand, appreciate, and evaluate—and in this way assimilate—the study materials that already exist in their surroundings. The idea that researching the means of guiding this process is the teacher's most important task is something I have repeatedly and energetically asserted. This is at the heart of the question of educational methods, but before we can conduct research into the methods for guiding learning, we must first consider the attitude or stance on which this is based. (Makiguchi, [1936] 2015, pp. 250-251)

What is "the mental preparedness, or attitude, necessary for education" (ibid, p. 244) that Makiguchi considers? In the same essay, Makiguchi uses the following two analogies to describe the ideal attitude of a teacher: 1) chrysanthemum growing and 2) singers and dancers on stage.

He first describes the attitude that befits a teacher as similar to that of a chrysanthemum grower who carefully observes the nature and needs of the chrysanthemums and serves them until beautiful flowers bloom (Goulah, 2015a; Makiguchi, [1936] 2015). Just like cultivating chrysanthemums, educating children requires teachers to understand the potential growth of each student and carefully tend to them until they bear full blossoms (Goulah, 2015a; Makiguchi, [1936] 2015). For Makiguchi, "such an attitude is at the heart of both effective schooling and the broader effort at reconstructing education" (Goulah, 2015a, p. 257). The difference and the difficulty of educating children lies in the fact that the result of the children's growth can only be

observed years later (Goulah, 2015a; Makiguchi, [1936] 2015). Therefore, it seems that a "good teacher" must have the patience and faith for the children to reach full bloom in later years.

In the same essay, Makiguchi ([1936] 2015) further argues that the teacher's attitude toward teaching affects their students' attitude toward learning. In other words, the teacher's attitude to serve the needs of the students also determines how the teacher considers his or her role in teaching and learning. Makiguchi ([1936] 2015) uses the term *shidō*, here translated into English as "guiding learning," as the ideal attitude toward teaching. This attitude is described through the analogy of singers and dancers. Makiguchi ([1936] 2015) explains as follows:

> Under no circumstances should teachers be the main performers dancing to the accompaniment of students' singing. Should a teacher end up both singing and dancing on stage while the children watch the performance as audience, this would represent an utter failure. Teachers may play the role of singers at the outset, but gradually they should yield to the children the roles of both singers and dancers, becoming a background chorus and enabling learners to manifest their full dynamism "stage center." (p. 248)

In this scenario, although the teacher initially provides a model, students eventually take over the responsibility for their own learning and meaning-making, while the teacher becomes a guide or a facilitator in this endeavor. This is shown in stark contrast to the scene that is all too common, that of teachers being the main dancer and the students merely an audience, passively absorbing knowledge. Goulah (2015a) summarizes this point by stating, "Teachers must demonstrate an attitude totally focused on the students before them, set entirely on fostering, or guiding, these students' growth and development into creative and critically engaged individuals" (pp. 256-257). In the booklet written a year later, *Sōka kyōikuhō no kagakuteki chōshūkyōteki jikken shōmei* (The Scientific and Supra-Religious Empirical Verification of the Methods of Value-

Creating Education; Makiguchi, [1937] 1981-1988, Vol. 8, pp. 3-91; see also Gebert & Goulah, 2017, pp. 109-110), Makiguchi seems to reinforce this idea by using the metaphor of fruit and its seed. Gebert and Goulah (2017) explained,

> For Makiguchi, approaches that focus on result—holding up the teacher as a paragon of achievement, for example—were ultimately less meaningful than those that provide students with "seeds"—the causal means and methods by which to pursue and direct their own processes of learning. (p. 109)

Thus, a "good teacher" is someone who can plant the seed of curiosity in students so that they can learn and discover on their own, rather than transmitting the fruit of discovered knowledge predetermined as valuable to them.

Whereas the first analogy of chrysanthemum growers describes the attitude teachers should have toward their students, the second analogy of singers and dancers describes the attitude teachers should have toward teaching, which is guiding learning. Therefore, along with the ability to practice value-creating pedagogy, both of these—having the attitude to serve the students and assuming the role of a guide—are important elements of a "good teacher" from a Makiguchian perspective.

Toda: Perspectives on Assessment and Instruction

Toda's writings on education are, compared with Makiguchi's, more limited. Therefore, I explicate his perspectives on assessment and instruction based primarily on two sources: 1) Toda's first published essay, *Katei kyōikugaku sōron chūtō gakkō nyūgaku shiken no hanashi to aiji no yūtōka* (Overview of Pedagogy for the Home and Family: On Secondary School Entrance Examinations and Enhancing Performance of [Your] Children; (Toda, 1929; see also Toda [1929] 2018; Inukai & Goulah, 2018), to understand his perspectives on assessment, and 2) his

available published study guides (Toda, 1981-1990, Vol. 9; see also Kawashima, 2003a, 2003b) to understand his perspectives on instruction, drawing connections to Makiguchi's pedagogy. Although "instruction and assessment" is a more common usage, I intentionally order these here as "assessment and instruction" because assessment, which is the end goal, often dictates or at least guides instruction, particularly for Toda. Therefore, I start by looking at Toda's perspective on assessment.

Toda's educational career was mostly in the early 20th century when Japan was expanding its secondary education system, which led to severe exam-based competition for entrance into secondary schools—what was publicly called "examination hell"—especially in large cities and for schools with good reputations (Ishioka, 2014; Yamamoto, 1982). Toda averred that the root of the problem was the exclusive focus on the use of tests that measure only students' memory of facts (Inukai & Goulah, 2018). Because such a test was the end goal, the elementary school curriculum also became a drilling of facts, a one-size-fits-all curriculum that ignored individual student's needs, abilities, aptitude, and interests. Through such cutthroat competition, many low performing students were labeled as "*rettōji"* (literally "inferior child") who were incapable of learning. Once students were labeled as "inferior," most teachers gave up on helping them. While Toda recognized that some students were struggling and would continue to take additional steps to learn, they were still capable of growing as learners. For Toda, helping these low performing students was his utmost priority so that they could also grow and enjoy the process of learning.

One solution Toda proposed to this problem was to change the evaluation system from a one-time high-stakes test of students' acquired knowledge to a longitudinal assessment of students' aptitudes in the following seven areas critical to their development as learners: 1)

demonstration of comprehension, 2) observation, 3) strength of will to engage and complete tasks, 4) speed and accuracy of understanding, 5) short- and long-term memory, 6) deductive reasoning, and 7) manual skills such as handicrafts and sewing (Toda, [1929] 2018; Inukai & Goulah, 2018). To measure these aptitudes, instead of using traditional tests in subject areas, he asserted that new assessments should be created. For example, he proposed a two-step process to assess students' comprehension of texts: "first, students are taught strategies to analyze and comprehend material in textbooks (e.g., sentences, equations, word problems); second, they apply these strategies to analyze and comprehend new, unfamiliar, and more complex but related material" (Inukai & Goulah, 2018, p. 309). Kaplan (2018) described Toda's approach to assessment as follows: "Instead of the ruthless anti-intellectualism of a testing regimen that rewards only rote memory skills, Toda offers a much different and pedagogically sound model of testing comprehension" (p. 200). In this alternative model, because the focus shifts from the outcome to growth, these measurements are not used to compare students against each other but to compare a student's own growth over time. By including not only the cognitive abilities, but also the psychological domain of the strength of will to engage and complete tasks, Toda focused on the multi-dimensional growth of a child as a learner and as a human being.

In understanding Toda's instructional method, his use of the word *suiri* ("deductive reasoning") is key. It is one of the seven abilities he proposed to be assessed but is the only one that appears in the title of his study guides in arithmetic, reading, and other subjects (Inukai & Goulah, 2018). According to Masuda (2006), Japanese dictionaries in 1940 and 2000 defined *suiri* similarly, meaning roughly to guess the unknown based on the known. However, Toda defines this term more specifically as discerning similarities and differences (Toda, [1930] 1981-1990, Vol. 9). Therefore, although *suiri* is typically translated as "deductive" in the English titles

of his study guides, it might be easier to understand his approach by thinking of this term as reasoning skills. The common presence of this key work in the titles of his various study guides further signifies Toda's instructional method. Among all the math study guides published around this time, Toda alone paired *suiri* (deduction) with *shidō* (guide), making it "deductive guide" (Komano, 2006). This title indicates that the study guide is organized in a way that teachers can guide students to acquire deductive reasoning skills. It also indicates Toda's educational philosophy of "guiding" learning as the ideal instructional method (Masuda, 2006).

Analysis of the content of Toda's *Suirishiki shidō sanjutsu* (*A Deductive Guide to Arithmetic*; [1930] 1981-1990, Vol. 9) reveals what he meant by guiding the process of deductive reasoning. *A Deductive Guide to Arithmetic* is an organized compilation of math word problems based on various textbooks and secondary schools' entrance exams. Toda reorganized word problems in a way that made most sense to him based on his many years of teaching at Jishu Gakkan, his private tutoring school. It was one of the best-selling math exam preparation books in the 1930s (Komano, 2006). Each chapter starts with a problem (or problems) with a "basic form" and proceeds to "variations" of the "basic form." These "variations" are followed by "reasoning practice" with comments such as "compare with variation one" (see Inukai & Goulah, 2018). In Section II Chapter 1, Toda provides an example to illustrate what he means by discerning similarities and differences.

1. Taro is 8 cm taller than Jiro. Jiro is 7 cm taller than Saburo. If Saburo is 1.1 m, how tall is Taro and Jiro respectively?
2. 1 kg of rice is 0.12 yen more expensive than 1 kg of wheat. 1 kg of wheat is 0.03 yen more expensive than 1 kg of beans. If 1 kg of beans is 0.8 yen, how much is 1 kg of rice and 1 kg of wheat respectively?

Toda defines Taro, 8 cm, rice, 0.12 yen, etc. as the "ingredients" of the problem. "Taller than," "more expensive," "how tall," and "how much" all signify the "relationship" between the ingredients, which can be symbolized with marks such as + and ÷. The arrangement of these relationships, or the order of thought to solve the problem, can be found through the analysis of the sentence structure. This means that if the sentence structure is the same, the equation to solve the problem will also be the same. In the above two problems, although the ingredients are different, the sentence structure is exactly the same, which means that the relationship between the individual ingredients are the same. Thus, both problems can be solved with the same type of equation. He states that "to compare with the previous problem or with the example problem does not mean to vaguely compare. It means to scrutinize the same points and the different points" (Toda, [1930] 1981-1990, Vol. 9, p. 58). This is what Toda means by deductive reasoning, or discerning similarities and differences (Inukai & Goulah, 2018).

When defining "good teaching" from a pedagogical standpoint, Makiguchi and Toda share similar perspectives, and quite naturally so because they worked closely together. In "The Scientific and Supra-Religious Empirical Verification of the Methods of Value-Creating Education" (Makiguchi, [1937] 1981-1988, Vol. 8), Makiguchi wrote about Toda and *A Deductive Guide to Arithmetic* in the following way:

> [Toda is] a passionate researcher of value-creating education, and since the opening of the private school Jishu Gakkan 14 years ago, he has managed the school based on this principle [of value creation], and thus, received extraordinary praise and became well known today. In particular, the fact that *A Deductive Guide to Arithmetic*, a publication based on the results of his experiments [in applying the value-creating pedagogy], has been selling more copies every year and is contributing to the improvement of arithmetic

> instruction in Japanese elementary schools, is the only and the greatest proof of the value of this research. (pp. 14-15; see also Inukai & Goulah, 2018)

Because Makiguchi considered Toda's practice and the book as an example of his own value-creating pedagogy, it is important to analyze the connection between what the two wrote on pedagogy.

As Goulah and I indicated, one similarity between Makiguchi's and Toda's approaches is their emphasis on "guiding" learning (Inukai & Goulah, 2018). Makiguchi wrote about "guiding" learning in his essay "On Attitude toward Education" as explained in the previous section, and Toda's emphasis on the "guiding" aspect is also evident in the title and content of his study guides. More important, Toda's understanding of deductive reasoning can be traced back to Makiguchi's sentence model application approach for teaching composition, which he later called value-creating pedagogy (Goulah, 2013b, 2013c). Makiguchi ([1898] 2013) explains how systematic practice of dictation and modifying passages, such as writing the same ideas using different language and using the same style to express different meaning, can lead students to be able to create their own composition. A similar approach can also be seen in one of Makiguchi's earliest essays on composition instruction (1981-1988, Vol. 7, pp. 409-413). In this essay, Makiguchi provides an example lesson for which he first wrote an example composition about a river right outside the school. Then, using this example as a model, the class together wrote a composition on another river farther away. Finally, using these models, students independently wrote a composition on a yet farther river. In this example, the similarity lies in the sentence and paragraph structure, whereas the difference lies in the topic (different river) (Goulah, 2013b; Ito, 2017). Makiguchi's approach to composition instruction and Toda's approach to math instruction share many similarities. First, both provide a teacher-created model to be used as an example and

as a point of reference. Second, both gradually release the responsibility to the students, thereby encouraging students to think on their own. Third, both move from more familiar to the unfamiliar, from simpler to more complex ideas, which can cultivate students' ability to think and provide opportunity to apply what they have learned. Thus, for both Makiguchi and Toda, a "good teacher" is someone who can guide all students to develop their abilities to reason and apply what they have learned to new contexts and situations in personally meaningful ways.

Toda: Trust in the Youth and Human Revolution

When it comes to the relational aspect of teaching or the attitude of the teacher, Toda did not write anything about it explicitly. However, the following quote from Toda ([1929] 2018) shows his immense concern and compassion for struggling students.

> For my part, I have spent the past more than ten years seriously concerned about and engaged with how to help the low-performing students. How to help low-performing students is an issue that many conscientious teachers have agonized over and has brought anguish to many parents. Further, people turn a blind eye to this issue as a fateful and incurable disease for which nothing can be done. However, it is in this stillness of resignation that I hear a silent cry even more painful than the tumultuous screams of the examination hell. Is it impossible to help low-performing students? No. I must declare "No!" because I believe that the root of many problems lies in the onesize-fits-all elementary and secondary education system that ignores—that is incapable of meeting the needs of—the low-performing students. (p. 272)

With this commitment, he proposed an alternative assessment model and created his instructional method of "guiding deduction." Recognizing that there were limits to what he could do within the public school system, he created his own private exam preparation school called Jishu

Gakkan to fully implement his method. Some anecdotal accounts from former students at Jishu Gakkan reveal the human aspect of Toda the educator. According to Yamashita (2006), Toda was a strict but warm and embracing teacher who created an atmosphere where students could freely play. On one snowy day, students at Jishu Gakkan had a snowball fight and made a snow man. They even brought the wooden desks from the classrooms outside and used them as sledges. Yamashita (2006) recounted that Toda and other teachers smiled and let students do these things. Toda also conducted summer camps at a beach in Chiba. There, Toda played with the children in the ocean, allowing them to playfully dunk him under water. Tsurumi contends that such a free and entertaining personality in Toda relieved students from the stress of exam preparation and invoked their natural interest ("Soka Kyoiku no Genryu" Hensan Iinkai, 2019).

Such a compassionate gaze from Toda toward children is also evident in the children's magazines he edited and published in the midst of World War II. The first volume of his children's magazine, *Shogakusei nihon* (Primary Student Japan) was published in 1940. The special higher police scrutinized all publications, and if anything was identified as being against the national polity, the publication would be stopped and the editor would be arrested (Takasaki, 2002). Although Toda thus had to make compromises to include some literature related to the war in order to ensure that the magazine was published, he included an essay that introduced Western countries and culture, as well as the customs of people who live there despite the government's stance to reject all non-Japanese culture (Takasaki, 2002). Furthermore, the forth issue started with a poem by a British poet, Robert Browning, and included a biography of young James Watt, as well as a Japanese translation of children's literature in British textbooks (Takasaki, 2002). Toda thus made clear efforts to introduce foreign literature and foreign perspectives to Japanese children. This was done at a time when elementary textbooks were

revised to exclude all references to foreign countries, especially the U.K. and the U.S. (Takasaki, 2002). In 1941, as elementary schools (*shōgakkō*) were renamed "national schools" (*kokumin gakkō*), and children (*jidō*) of this age were called "young citizens" (*shōkokumin*), Toda also renamed his magazine from *Primary Student Japan* to *Shokokumin nihon* (Young Citizens Japan). However, significantly, Toda used a different character for *sho*. Whereas the character used in the Ministry of Education's terminology is 少, meaning young, Toda used 小, meaning small. Takasaki (2002) asserts that Toda must have thought that there is no reason that he had to follow the Ministry of Education's dictates. He states, "Toda's resistance was an expression of his unwavering conviction that the kind of children he wanted to raise was completely different from those that the Ministry of Education wanted to raise" (pp. 132-133). Further, as Inukai and Goulah (2018) assert, "Such rejection of officially decreed language usage related to the fostering of imperial subjects was no insignificant act of defiance" (p. 319). The magazine was discontinued in May 1942, but Toda's efforts in publishing these magazines illustrate his attitude as a teacher to continuously resist Japan's nationalistic ideology.

Arrested and imprisoned with Makiguchi in 1943 under the Peace Preservation Law for sedition and refusing to capitulate to State Shinto, Toda never returned to the classroom after World War II. Instead, he exerted himself in expanding the Soka Gakkai, the lay Buddhist organization, as its second president after Makiguchi who died in prison. However, he continued his educational efforts within the Soka Gakkai. In order to gain a full picture of Toda the educator, therefore, it is imperative to look at his writings and practices within the Soka Gakkai. Drawing on Isomae's work, Goulah (2018) argues, "Buddhism (仏教) and education (教育) have historically coexisted in Japan as twin realms of a single underlying process of developing human beings, combined under the rubric 'kyo' (teaching, 教)." Goulah (2018) further asserts

that by labeling both the value-creating pedagogy and the Buddhist organization with the same term "*sōka*/Soka," Makiguchi and Toda captured this historical intersection of Buddhism and education. This intersection of Buddhism and education is most apparent and explicit in Toda's later work as the second president of the Soka Gakkai, and is thus important for understanding his concept of a "good teacher."

First in this regard is consideration of Toda's attitude, or trust, toward the youth. Toda wrote multiple essays addressing the youth in the Soka Gakkai, such as *Seinen-kun* ("Precepts for Youth"; [1951] 1981-1990, Vol. 1, pp. 58-61) and *Seinen yo kokushi tare* ("Youth, Be Patriotic"; [1954] 1981-1990, Vol. 1, pp. 126-129). "Precepts for Youth" starts with the sentence, "A new century will be created by the passion and the power of youth" (cited in Ikeda, 2004, p. 613). In "Youth, Be Patriotic," Toda ([1954] 1981-1990, Vol. 1) states,

> Youth are the pillar of the country. If the pillar is rotten, the country will collapse. [Youth] must realize this awesome responsibility. Because of their ability to think critically, youth are the eye of Japan. If the youth are blind, the country will lose its direction. Because youth are the great ship of Japan, people can rely on them. [Youth], you must realize your great mission and never forget the people's profound expectation. (pp. 128-129)

These words exemplify Toda's trust in and expectations for the youth, and, herein, it was Toda who created the ethos in the Soka Gakkai organization to focus on raising youth. By creating training groups for both young men and young women within the Soka Gakkai, Toda wholeheartedly educated young men and women not only in Buddhist study, but also in other subject matters and comportment. Specifically, he often used world literature as study material to discuss various aspects of life ranging from politics and economics to marriage and family life

(see Ikeda, 2004). Furthermore, Toda (1957a) made a declaration calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons in front of 50,000 Soka Gakkai youth, stating that it is "the foremost of my instructions [to you, the youth,] for the future." Toda's trust in and expectation of the youth further illustrates his overall approach and attitude as an educator.

Another key component of Toda's work is his appropriation of the phrase *ningen kakumei*, or "human revolution." The term human revolution was popularly used by many scholars in the 1940s, and Toda adopted the term from Shigeru Nambara, then president of Tokyo University, who used human revolution in his speech shortly after World War II (Goulah, 2010d; Ito, 2014; Urbain, 2010). Nambara (1949) stated, "What is most urgently needed in our country is to recover the lost humanity…This means a revolution of the human being himself, or 'human revolution,' and it requires a revolution in the essence of inner quality" (pp. 1-2). Ikeda (2007) recounts that when Toda heard Nambara calling for human revolution, he rejoiced because it was his and Makiguchi's conviction that individual happiness, prosperity of society, and world peace all start from a revolution of human beings, or an inner transformation of people's hearts and minds. Although the term lost its popularity in the 1950s as people moved to social revolution under the Cold War paradigms, Toda kept using the term and appropriated it into his Buddhist perspective (e.g., Toda, [1949] 1961, [1957b] 1961). In 1957, Toda wrote his autobiographical novel, *Ningen kakumei* (*The Human Revolution*; 1981-1990, Vol. 8) under the penname Myogoku. The final chapter of the novel is titled "Human Revolution," and it concludes with the realization of the main character, Gan—who is Toda—that he is a Buddha and was born as a Bodhisattva of the Earth to spread the Lotus Sutra (Toda, [1957] 1981-1990, Vol. 8). Although Toda does not explicitly define in the novel what he means by "human revolution," it suggests that such a human revolution is an inner transformation, the change in the

way we see our own life and the awakening to one's mission (see also Inukai & Goulah, 2018; Urbain, 2010). Although Toda does not make a connection between human revolution and education, human revolution is arguably a key concept in understanding Toda's Buddhist perspective toward human life and social change. For Toda, Buddhism is the means by which all people (not just children) become "educated" to the true purpose of life and, thereby, lead authentically happy lives. Thus, human revolution can be said to be at the center of his educational philosophy writ large. Furthermore, the concept of human revolution becomes explicitly incorporated into Ikeda's educational philosophy and his concept of a "good teacher," to which I will now turn.

Ikeda: The Holistic Growth of Students as Human Beings

Unlike Makiguchi and Toda, Ikeda does not specify any teaching methods or pedagogy. His extensive work on education addresses broader conceptual frameworks of education beyond schooling and focuses on the holistic growth of human beings. In fact, when he writes about Makiguchi or Toda as educators, Ikeda almost exclusively writes about their actions as human beings rather than the specific pedagogy or methodology they used (Goulah, 2015a). Although Ikeda founded the network of Soka schools and universities inspired by Makiguchi's and Toda's philosophies, he does not write curriculum or teach in them (Goulah, 2012d). When he chronicled the opening of these schools in his serialized autobiographical novel, the focus is on his encounters with students and teachers outside the classroom and on the Soka school teachers' efforts to create trusting and caring relationships with their students (Ikeda, 2006, 2008b, 2009a, 2012). These show Ikeda's emphasis on education as a relational process of holistic growth as human beings through human to human interactions. Here, I present key concepts in

understanding Ikeda's educational philosophy, such as human education, global citizenship, and human revolution.

Human Education

Although Makiguchi used the term *soka kyoikugaku* (value-creating pedagogy), Ikeda most often uses the term *ningen kyoiku* (human education) to describe his educational philosophy and practice developed in part based on Makiguchi's pedagogy but encompasses a broader vision of education of becoming "fully human" (Goulah, 2020; Goulah & Gebert, 2009; Goulah & Ito, 2012). Ikeda's use of the term *ningen kyoiku* can be traced to his reading of Pestalozzi in Japanese translation during his youth in the 1940s (Goulah, 2010d; Ito, 2005, 2008). Since then, Ikeda has consistently and deliberately used *ningen kyoiku* in his autobiographical novel, *Shin ningen kakumei* (*The New Human Revolution*) and in his published dialogues (e.g., Garrison et al., 2014; Ikeda & Gu, 2012); however, in most of these, *ningen kyoiku* is translated into English as "humanistic education." Goulah and Ito (2012) argue that, considering Ikeda's deliberate use of the term *ningen kyoiku* (human education) as opposed to the more common term *ningenshugi kyoiku* (humanistic education), "human education" is the more apt translation because it captures Ikeda's belief in the unlimited potential of human beings and his philosophy of education as a process of becoming fully human. Goulah (2018, 2019) further argues that using "humanistic education" for Ikeda's perspective risks it being lumped with other approaches that are troubled in the West, and thereby loses its uniqueness.

For Ikeda (2013b), the purpose of education is "to build character, to create human beings, not machines" (p. 192), and he defines human education as educating the whole person through the well-balanced cultivation of the "three aspects of the human spirit," namely, intellect, emotions, and will (p. 229; see also Goulah, in press). Intellect includes not only

reasoning and comprehension, but also higher cognitive abilities to analyze information and to think logically and critically. Emotions are not merely "primal sensations [such] as pleasure and discomfort," but encompass all "the affective aspects of our inner lives" (ibid, p. 229). Will is the "personal initiative and inner motivation, a springboard that spurs us to actively pursue our chosen goals" (ibid, p. 229).

This kind of well-rounded education is, however, not enough for Ikeda. Ikeda (2010b) identifies that the root cause of various problems we face today is "our collective failure to make the human being, human happiness, the consistent focus and goal in all fields of endeavor" (p. 111). This, in turn, is a declaration that human beings and their happiness must be the focus and goal in all fields of endeavor, including education. In Ikeda's view, education is the most important field. He states, "Society is an organic body created by human beings. As such, the future of society and the world rests on how its young people are raised, making education the most important of all human enterprise, demanding our utmost efforts" (Ikeda, 2013b, p. 191). Education that places human beings and human happiness at the center is, according to Ikeda, human education.

This happiness, however, is not mere pleasure or temporary satisfaction. Referring to Makiguchi's notion of value creation, which is to create positive value for self and others, Ikeda (2010b) asserts that we must educate students who have "the capacity to find meaning, to enhance one's own existence and contribute to the well-being of others, under any circumstance" (p. 112). He concludes that human education is a process of "teaching people how to polish and elevate themselves, live in a genuinely humane way and work for the good of society" (Ikeda, 2013b, p. 186).

Human education, that is education to become fully human, must be grounded in the dignity of life. Ikeda (2013b) states that "the value of life should be the top priority in all aspects of the educational process, and people should never be devalued or reduced to a means to an end" (p. 212). In an educational setting, this belief in the dignity of all life translates into having faith in the value and potential of each and every child as shown in Ikeda's following words: "No child lacks a mission. The foundation of true [human education] is the unshakable conviction that each person has a noble mission in life" (ibid, p. 240). Echoing Toda's compassionate conviction to help all children, especially the lowest performing students, Ikeda (2013d) expresses the following as his utmost wish for educators:

> [Y]ou have to respect each student as an individual and believe in his or her potential. When you adopt this attitude toward each student, bonds of trust will be forged one by one…No matter how callous and indifferent the eyes of the public may be, the gaze of educators must always shine with an unwavering belief in the worth and potential of all students. No matter how fiercely society's winds may blow, educators must have the compassion to staunchly protect their students and open the path to a bright future for them. (p. 5)

A teacher's belief in the value and potential of every student is the foundation and basis of human education.

Global Citizenship

Global citizenship is another concept that is central to Ikeda's educational philosophy. What Goulah (2020) calls the "ethic of global citizenship" has existed within the Soka heritage since the earliest of Makiguchi's writings. According to Goulah (2020), Makiguchi used the term *sekaimin* (world people) and Toda used the term *chikyū minzoku shugi* (global race-ism/global

people-ism) to refer to a similar global identity beyond ones' nation state. Goulah (2020) adds that on Ikeda's first overseas trip in 1960, he visited Lincoln Park in Chicago and witnessed an act of racism against an African American boy. At this moment, Ikeda invoked the ethic of global citizenship and vowed to create a society without racial discrimination, unjust treatment, and prejudice (Goulah, 2020). Since then, Goulah (2020) illustrates that Ikeda has called for education for global citizenship on numerous occasions (e.g., Ikeda, 2010b, 2013a, 2014). One of the most extensive treatments of this topic is Ikeda's 1996 speech at Teachers College, Columbia University, wherein he defines the essential elements of global citizenship not as the number of languages one speaks or the number of countries one has visited, but as the following three inner qualities:

- The wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life and living.
- The courage not to fear or deny difference, but to respect and strive to understand people of different cultures and to grow from encounters with them.
- The compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy that reaches beyond one's immediate surroundings and extends to those suffering in distant places. (Ikeda, 2010b, pp. 112-113)

These three elements of global citizenship—wisdom, courage, and compassion—are not separate qualities but are interrelated. Wisdom, unlike mere knowledge, orients towards action, which also requires courage (Obelleiro, 2012). Furthermore, perceiving the interconnectedness will give rise to compassion. Courageously striving to understand different people helps cultivate both wisdom and compassion despite differences. Compassionate desire to contribute to the well-being of others, in turn, requires courageous effort to seek the good in people and gives rise to limitless wisdom (Ikeda, 2010b).

These three inner qualities of global citizens—wisdom, courage, and compassion—correspond to the three aspects of the human spirit of intellect, emotion, and will introduced under human education. For Ikeda, enacting the wisdom, courage, and compassion, which are the same virtues of the Buddha, is synonymous with becoming fully human (Goulah, 2020). As such, human education and education for global citizenship are not two separate concepts; rather, Ikeda's definition of global citizenship gives a concrete picture of what it means to become "fully human."

Regarding education for global citizenship, Ikeda provides more concrete proposals in connection to the United Nation's efforts. In the abovementioned speech at Teachers College, he proposes the following four areas he hopes to be incorporated as integral elements of education at all levels:

- Peace education, in which young people learn the cruelty and folly of war, to root the practice of nonviolence in human society.
- Environmental education, to study current ecological realities and means of protecting the environment.
- Developmental education, to focus attention on issues of poverty and global justice.
- Human rights education, to awaken an awareness of human equality and dignity. (Ikeda, 2010b, p. 120)

Although SUA's curriculum is not explicitly drawn from Ikeda's writings, it is often inspired by his ideas and ideals. The above four proposed areas of education is one such example, and I will make those connections in Chapter 4 when I present SUA's curriculum. As Goulah (2020) indicates, Ikeda adds to his conceptualization of education for global citizenship in his 2014 Peace Proposal by offering the following three elements as a focus:

- Deepen understanding of the challenges facing humankind, enable people to explore their causes and instill the shared hope and confidence that such problems, being of human origin, are amenable to human solutions;
- Identify the early signs of impending global problems in local phenomena, develop sensitivity to such signs and empower people to take concerted action; and
- Foster empathetic imagination and a keen awareness that actions that profit one's own country might have a negative impact on or be perceived as a threat by other countries, elevating this to a shared pledge not to seek one's happiness and prosperity at the expense of others. (Ikeda, 2014, p. 12)

In these concrete proposals, Ikeda addresses current global issues facing humanity and encourages us to view them with the wisdom and compassion to perceive the interconnectedness and take action with courage.

Education for global citizenship is a frequent topic in Ikeda's published dialogues (e.g., Garrison et al., 2014; Harding & Ikeda, 2013; see Bradford, 2018). In his dialogue with Vincent Harding, for example, Ikeda expands the idea of global citizens as those actively engaged in the pursuit of justice and who take responsibility for a better world (Harding & Ikeda, 2013). SUA's mission statement, "To foster a steady stream of global citizens committed to living a contributive life" (Soka University of America, n.d.-g), echoes this idea of global citizens as those contributing to the creation of a better world. This emphasis on contributive living can be traced back to Makiguchi's notion of happiness and value creation.

Human Revolution

Another concept central to Ikeda's philosophy is human revolution, which he inherited from his mentor, Josei Toda. Again, this concept of human revolution is not separate from

human education and education for global citizenship. Goulah (2020) argues that "being human is an action, a continual process of *becoming*; and both Buddhism and human education for Ikeda are about *becoming* more 'fully human'" (p. 41). This continuous process of becoming fully human—people embodying the qualities of wisdom, courage, and compassion—is what Ikeda calls "human revolution," a ceaseless struggle to transform one's entire being by seeking the fundamental, inherent humanity (Goulah, 2010d). Drawing from Buddhist concepts of "self," Ikeda (2010a) calls for such an "inwardly directed change" (p. 167) from the "lesser self" (*shōga*) "caught up in the snares of egoism" to an open and expansive character of a "greater self" (*taiga*) that "seeks ways of alleviating pain and augmenting the happiness of others, here, amid the realities of everyday life" (p. 175). This description of the "greater self" corresponds to the earlier discussion of global citizens as those commited to living a contributive life.

Ikeda (2013b) further defines human revolution as "the process of becoming a person who is strong at heart and takes on life's hardships in a positive way" (p. 182) and as building "an invincible, strong, expansive, rich state of life that doesn't succumb to such suffering as sickness and aging" (p. 184). In other words, human revolution is a process of developing in our inner world the great life force to create positive meaning and outcome regardless of the circumstances in our outer world (Ikeda et al., 2003). Human revolution is therefore a process of conscious and volitional inner transformation of one's own mindset as well as recognition and manifestation of one's own enormous potential (Goulah, 2012d).

As evident in his statement, "A great human revolution in just a single individual will help achieve a change in the destiny of a nation and, further, can even enable a change in the destiny of all humankind" (Ikeda, 2004, p. viii), Ikeda argues that we have the ability to transform any issue we face however complex and challenging it may be. Therefore, "an inner

revolution is the most fundamental and, at the same time, the ultimate revolution for engendering change in all things" (Ikeda, 2008b, p. 253). Because human revolution is firmly rooted in reality and based on each individual striving to cultivate the vast inner realm of life, Ikeda (2018c) calls it a "revolution of hope" (p. 40). Specifically, in education, Ikeda (2013b) argues that ultimately "educational revolution depends on [the teacher's] human revolution" (p. 196) and that educators striving to grow as human beings—engaging in their own human revolution—is at the core of "human education."

Ikeda: Dialogue

Dialogue is a key philosophy and practice for Ikeda. He has engaged in over 7,000 dialogues with thinkers and leaders around the world, and more than 50 of them have been published as books (Goulah, 2013a). Not only does Ikeda engage in dialogue, but he also talks about the importance of dialogue. Dialogue has been a vital theme in his annual peace proposals (Goulah, 2013a) and in his more recent dialogues (e.g., Ikeda & Tehranian, 2004; Tu & Ikeda, 2011; see also Bradford, 2018). Ikeda's dialogic engagement with world thinkers and leaders, invoking Makiguchi and Toda's philosophy in his dialogue and engaging millions of SGI members in conversation through the publication of the dialogues, creates the value in terms of of beauty, individual gain, and social good, which Goulah (2012b) calls "value-creative dialogue."

Furthermore, dialogue is a practice that connects Ikeda's key concepts discussed thus far. Dialogue is an important aspect in Buddhism (Goulah, 2012b; Obelleiro, 2013) and in education (Goulah, 2013a, 2018). For Ikeda, as a Buddhist and an educator, dialogic engagement is a way of becoming fully human and of living the most value-creative life (Garrison et al., 2014; Goulah, 2012b). Among the many occasions when Ikeda discussed the topic of dialogue, his

foreword to the book *Peacebuilding through Dialogue* is one of his most explicit and comprehensive articulations on the topic (Inukai, 2019). In particular, Ikeda (2018a) lays out the key elements of dialogue as follows: 1) respect for human dignity, 2) spirit of mutuality, and 3) creativity that emerges from dialogue. Among these three elements, respect for human dignity rooted in the view of interconnectedness of all life is foundational to both dialogue and human education. The opposite of respecting human dignity is what Ikeda calls the "spirit of abstraction." Drawing from the work of Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973), Ikeda argued that the "spirit of abstraction," the act of reducing the other's humanity and identity into abstract categories, is the root cause of any form of oppression and dehumanization, whether through war or global economic crisis (Goulah, 2010a, 2011b). Whatever the categories, the spirit of abstraction leads us to separate the other from the self and to ignore the humanity in others. In order for us to become fully human, we must fundamentally resist this perspective to view the self and the other as separate. Based on the Buddhist concept of "dependent origination" (*engi*), Ikeda (2010a) argues that all living beings are interconnected. Dependent origination is the concept that "[n]othing and nobody exist in isolation" and that "[a]ll things are mutually supporting and interrelated, forming a living cosmos" (p. 173). This is grounded in the belief that each living being can manifest enlightenment, or its highest potential, and thereby contribute to the harmony of all other living beings. For Ikeda, the self and the other are interconnected, and both are seen as a part of the larger universe, or cosmic life. Therefore, overcoming the spirit of abstraction within our own hearts and perceiving the interconnectedness of all life is the first step toward and the foundation of dialogue and human education.

Further describing the connection between dialogue and becoming fully human, Ikeda (2010a) states that we are born human only in a biological sense and that we must be "'trained'

in the ways of being human," which he asserts can be done only through dialogue (p. 203). He further claims that this dialogue can take place not only with other human beings, but also with "history, nature, or the cosmos" (ibid, p. 203; see also Goulah & Ito, 2012). Whoever or whatever the interlocutor may be, it is important to engage in dialogue across differences. Ikeda (2010b) declares,

> It is only in the burning furnace of intense, soul-baring exchanges—the ceaseless and mutually supporting processes of inner and outer dialogue between one's 'self' and a profoundly internalized 'other'—that our beings are tempered and refined. Only then can we begin to grasp and fully affirm the reality of being alive. (p. 57)

He warns that exchanges between individuals who lack a sense of "other" are only trading one-sided statements and not truly engaged in dialogue (ibid, p. 56). Though difficult, only by recognizing and embracing different perspectives can we move closer to seeing the whole, whether it is an object, an event, or even oneself. For Ikeda, through continuous dialogic engagement in an effort to contribute to the larger society, we can continuously engage in the act of becoming fully human, which Garrison (2019) calls "social self-creation" (p. 23). Similarly, Goulah (2020) argues that self-actualization of human education occurs in the socio-dialogic space of the other.

In this sense, Ikeda's human education is a conscious and volitional process of "dialogic becoming" (Goulah, 2013a), a process of developing one's full humanity by manifesting wisdom, courage, and compassion (Goulah & Ito, 2012). Therefore, not only is it important to have dialogue *on* and *in* education, but it is also crucial to see dialogue *as* education (Goulah, 2013a). From Ikeda's perspective and practice, then, we can conclude that a "good teacher"

would be someone who can help students engage in dialogic becoming and manifest their full humanity.

Ikeda: Mentor-Disciple Relationship

For Ikeda, along with dialogue, the mentor-disciple, or teacher-student, relationship is the key to actualizing human education (Goulah & Ito, 2012). As Ikeda (2010b) states, "Students' lives are not changed by lectures but by people. For this reason, interactions between students and teachers are of the greatest importance" (p. 118), teacher-student relationship is central to Ikeda's educational philosophy. This emphasis on teacher-student relationship can be traced to his own experience of learning from his mentor, Josei Toda, and according to Goulah and Ito (2012), Ikeda's notion of human education is also characterized by the education he received from Toda. Ikeda (2010b) recounts the days when he studied under Toda:

> For some 10 years, every day before work, he would teach me a curriculum of history, literature, philosophy, economics, science and organization theory…Most of all, however, I learned from his example. The burning commitment to peace that remained unshaken throughout his imprisonment was something he carried with him his entire life. It was from this, and from the profound compassion that characterized each of his interactions, that I most learned. Ninety-eight per cent of what I am today I learned from him. (pp. 118-119)

Ikeda (2010b) continues that he founded the Soka schools out of his desire that future generations will have the opportunity to experience the same kind of life-to-life human education.

The mentor-disciple relationship that Ikeda describes based on his own experience with Toda is fundamentally different from the traditional teacher-student relationship in which only

the teacher teaches and students passively receive. In a dialogue with Ikeda and Larry Hickman, Jim Garrison refers to this traditional teacher-student relationship as a *master*-disciple relationship (Garrison et al., 2014). In contrast, the *mentor*-disciple relationship is based on "fundamental moral equality" and the "unity of mentor and disciple," in which both the mentor and disciple "have the potential for growth and development" (ibid, p. 36). Ikeda echoes this, stating that the "essence of education lies in shared value creation" between the mentor and disciple (ibid, p. 120). Thus, from Ikeda's perspective, the teacher-student relationship should be modeled on the mentor-disciple relationship, not master-disciple relationship.

Based on this conceptualization of mentor-disciple relationship, Ikeda (2013b) calls on educators to "move beyond the traditional teacher-student relationship to one that enables the mutual growth of both teachers and students" (p. 194). Ikeda (2013c) has elsewhere emphasized the importance of teachers and students growing together. He explains such teacher-student relationships as follows:

> Teachers are…in no essential way superior to students. Mentor and student must learn and grow together. This kind of fresh, open interaction, engaging both in the fullness of their personhood, is the ideal of education. (Ikeda, 2005a, p. 31)

According to Goulah's (2018) bilingual analysis, Ikeda argues that "education" (*kyoiku* 教育) should be conceptualized and enacted more as the homophone "*kyoiku"* (共育), or mutual growth or fostering, of both teachers and students, because such an ethos captures the teacher's volitional attitude that he or she can and should grow thanks to their students. It reminds teachers that their students are integral to their own growth, and vice versa. The latter notion of *kyoiku* (mutual fostering) emphasizes "fostering" (*iku* 育) over "teaching" (*kyo* 教) and denotes a "two-way vector of influence between teacher and student" (Goulah, 2018, p. 67). In other words, it

signifies the attitude that the teacher can grow as a teacher and as a human being thanks to his or her students.

Furthermore, in a mentor-disciple relationship, the mentor's goal is for the disciple to surpass him or her. Ikeda uses the ancient Chinese saying "from the indigo, an even deeper blue" (Garrison et al., 2014, p. 56) to explain this. In ancient times, people used indigo leaves to dye fabric blue. The repeated steeping of the fabric created a color deeper than the dye itself. This signifies that what is produced (disciples) surpasses the quality of the originator (mentor). Ikeda (2005b) affirms the importance of the mentor having the attitude to raise their students to surpass him- or herself in the following statement:

> Just as a diamond can only be polished by another diamond, it is only through intense human interaction engaging the entire personality that people can forge themselves, raising themselves up to ever greater heights. It is the relationship between teacher and learner, between mentor and disciple, that makes this possible… The mentor creatively and imaginatively uses various means and methods to inspire and awaken in the learner the wisdom and power that has been realized by the teacher. The true teacher, the mentor, desires nothing so much as to be equaled—no, to be exceeded and surpassed—by the students and disciples.

The mentor aiming to help the disciple to surpass him- or herself is another determining factor of the mentor-disciple relationship expounded by Ikeda. Such a mentor-disciple relationship signifies a fundamental shift in how we see the role of the teacher and the relationship between teachers and students. Therefore, from Ikeda's perspective, having the attitude to grow together with and from students and helping them surpass oneself is an essential quality of being a "good teacher."

Ikeda: Messages to Soka University of America

In this final section on Ikeda, I review his messages to Soka University of America (SUA), where the research presented herein occurred. Ikeda provides his recollections of establishing the Soka Junior and Senior High School (Tokyo, Japan), Soka University (Tokyo, Japan), Kansai Soka Junior and Senior High School (Osaka, Japan), and Sapporo Soka Kindergarten (Sapporo, Japan) in his autobiographical novel, *The New Human Revolution*, and has sent a vast amount of messages to the students and teachers at these schools over the many years since their establishment. However, they are beyond the scope of this research. Nevertheless, it is important to review Ikeda's messages to SUA not only because SUA is the site of this research, but more important, many of these messages are shared at events such as the commencement ceremony and the welcome reception for the incoming freshman class and their families, which are attended by many faculty. Unless faculty actively read literature on or by Ikeda on their own, these might be the only opportunities for many faculty to hear Ikeda's messages, and thus could be their only understanding of his perspective of a "Soka" approach to education. The literature reviewed here includes Ikeda's speeches, essays, and messages in the two books published by SUA's Soka Student Union in 2005 and 2009 respectively, as well as Ikeda's commencement messages that are available on SUA's website (Soka University of America, n.d.-f).

In these messages, Ikeda always appreciates students for choosing the school he founded, working hard to develop the university as "young founders," and congratulates them for their accomplishments. In these messages, Ikeda also encourages students in their personal lives, to forge strong bonds of friendship with classmates who have gathered at SUA from around the world and to engage in dialogue across cultural differences. Developing friendships that

continues after graduating from SUA to support them in times of difficulty is also a consistent theme in Ikeda's messages from SUA's opening to the present. Ikeda also encourages students to pursue their mission, that is their chosen paths, with courage and determination.

Another consistent theme that is central to his messages is his hope that students of SUA will contribute to peace and happiness of humanity. He often equates such person to a global citizen. To become such global citizens, Ikeda emphasizes the importance of both developing wisdom and building character. Referring to the words of John Montgomery, Professor Emeritus at Harvard University who also served as the first director of SUA's Pacific Basin Research Center, Ikeda (2013d) states that a university must develop the following two capabilities: "The first is the cognitive capacity to perceive matters as they truly are; and second, the ability to move the hearts and minds of people." Related to living a contributive life is the capacity to fight against injustice and overcome adversity. This is also a theme consistent throughout Ikeda's messages. He often addresses this theme through telling stories of great people across time, culture, and disciplines. This list includes figures such as Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Marie Curie, Linus Pauling, Albert Einstein, Mikhail Gorbachev, Leo Tolstoy, Victor Hugo, Rosa Parks, Eleanor Roosevelt, Inazo Nitobe, Nelson Mandela, and Wangari Maathai, to name a few. Rather than focusing on the great achievements of these people, Ikeda often discusses the challenges they faced and how they overcame them with an indomitable spirit and commitment to peace and justice with the hope that SUA students will follow their example.

Related to this theme, Ikeda also regularly includes how Makiguchi and Toda fought against the Japanese military government for the sake of peace and happiness of humanity. In addition, often referring to Makiguchi as "the father" or "the founder" of Soka education, Ikeda introduces his concepts of three-tiered level of identity (local, national, and global) and

humanitarian competition from *The Geography of Human Life*. In the seventh undergraduate commencement ceremony, for example, Ikeda (2011) explains the concept of humanitarian competition as follows:

> The concept of competition defined here obviously does not mean for one party to overwhelm and conquer the other. It should be thought instead as a friendly rivalry in a broadly based attempt to resolve a common problem; those who take part in this effort vie with one another to develop, strengthen and amplify the capacity for peace and humanity within as many young people as possible. No one loses in this contest; there are only winners.

Ikeda asserts that humanitarian competition is the only form of competition that can solve the myriad challenges that humanity faces today, and he encourages SUA students to engage in humanitarian competition in their respective fields to contribute to creating peace. For those who are not actively reading Makiguchi or Toda's work, what Ikeda introduces in his messages might be the only source of information about their lives and philosophies.

More recently, Ikeda encourages students to always have hope when faced with difficult circumstances. To describe such hope, Ikeda uses terms such as "indomitable optimism" (Ikeda, 2013d, 2017b) and "unwavering optimism" (Ikeda, 2016b). In the ninth undergraduate commencement message, for example, Ikeda (2013d) states,

> Despite the veritable mountain of difficulties that humankind confronts, I believe that the key to unlocking a better future is indomitable optimism, an outlook founded on unwavering faith not only in our potential for good but in the dignity of life for others as well as ourselves.

Along with SUA students having such indomitable optimism themselves, Ikeda emphasizes the importance of becoming people who can spread hope to others around them. Therefore, another more recent theme in his messages is the importance of uniting and working with people around the world through dialogue and friendship. Although dialogue and friendship across different cultures was addressed more as a theme within SUA at the beginning, more recent messages place emphasis on expanding such networks beyond SUA and creating a global network of people united to work for peace and justice.

Although not as prominent as the abovementioned theme of contributing to world peace, Ikeda also discusses the importance of mentor and disciple relationships. Although he sometimes talks about his own relationship with his mentor, Josei Toda, most often he tells stories of the abovementioned people's time as a university student and how their relationship with their own teacher was vital in becoming who they are. In many of these stories, there are caring and inspiring professors that serve as a model of an ideal teacher. In an essay commemorating SUA's first commencement ceremony, Ikeda (2005b) writes,

> Needless to say, Soka education does not purport to teach any religious doctrine. Yet it is based on a solid and, I believe, universal worldview. If I were to express this in a single phrase, it would be the spirit of shared commitment between teacher and learner, mentor and disciple.

Furthermore, in several messages, Ikeda reiterates that the relationship of a teacher and student should be one of mutual growth and that the true teacher desires to be surpassed by their students. Ikeda (2005b) also asserts that teacher and student engaging in dialogue is the ideal form of teaching and learning:

> Teachers and students mutually inspiring and stimulating each other in a vibrant process of learning through unfettered dialogue and debate, together scaling the summits of knowledge—herein lies an ideal vision of university education.

Ikeda often uses the example of Socrates and Plato to convey this point. These ideals of mentor and disciple, or teacher and student, relationships are consistent with Ikeda's educational philosophy presented in the previous section. Also, this is the one theme that directly involves the faculty in thinking about their role and relationship with students.

This section outlined a theoretical framework of understanding both the "being" and the "doing" of a "good teacher" from the respective and interrelated perspectives and approaches of Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda evident in the primary and relevant secondary literature. Now I turn to an overview of the English-language scholarship in the field of Ikeda/Soka Studies in Education.

Overview of the Scholarship in Ikeda/Soka Studies in Education

The philosophies and practices of Ikeda, Toda, and Makiguchi undergird the 15 K-graduate Soka schools in seven countries, inform non-Soka public and private schools and universities in various countries, and shape the practices and perspectives of thousands of educators, often self-identified as "Soka educators" (Goulah, 2018). However, it is important to note that Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda do not define "Soka education" or provide specific "Soka methods" (Goulah, 2018). Moreover, programs in teacher education and educational leadership at Soka University (Tokyo) and SUA, respectively, do not explicitly teach theory and practice in "Soka education." There is, however, a growing body of scholarly literature in the field of Ikeda/Soka Studies in Education, documenting the history, explicating key concepts, and comparing the philosophies and practices of Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda with other philosophies

and theories. Topics include value-creating pedagogy, human(istic) education, global citizenship education, communities studies, human geography, human rights and peace education, dialogue, intersections of religion/Buddhism and education, and teacher-student relationships, to name a few (Institute for Daisaku Ikeda Studies in Education, 2018). This section provides an overview of the existing English-language secondary literature in the field of Ikeda/Soka Studies in Education.

The earliest body of literature focuses on Makiguchi's life and themes in his major publications (Bethel, 1973, 1989; Saito, 1989; Shiohara, 2001). More recently, Gebert and Jofee (2007) and Goulah and Gebert (2009) provide a comprehensive introduction to Makiguchi's life and theory. As Goulah (2018) points out, Makiguchi's *sōka*, or "value-creating," pedagogy has inspired what today, under Ikeda, is known as "Soka education" (see also Goulah & Ito, 2012). Therefore, articles on Ikeda also often provide a brief account of Makiguchi's life and theory (Goulah, 2010d, 2012b; Goulah & Ito, 2012; Goulah & Urbain, 2013). Compared to Makiguchi, biographical studies on Ikeda are limited as Ikeda's biography has been well documented by Ikeda himself (e.g., Ikeda, 1980, 2000). Secondary sources therefore often focus on Ikeda's biography relative to a specific field of study, such as peace (Goulah & Urbain, 2013; Urbain, 2010), education (Goulah & Ito, 2012), and language (Goulah, 2012a). Although Toda is mentioned in many of the historical/biographical studies on Makiguchi and Ikeda, there are only a few that specifically focus on Toda and his educational perspectives and practices (Inukai & Goulah, 2018; Shiohara, 2008; Urbain, 2010).

There are some studies that compare Makiguchi's ideas with other philosophies and theories. For example, Goulah (2010e) examines Francis Parker's influence on the development of Makiguchi's thought and the confluences of thought between the two, particularly relative to

Makiguchi's use of the phrase "harmonious community life." There are also studies in which Makiguchi's ideas and practices are compared to those of Mahatma Gandhi (Sharma, 2002, 2008, 2015, 2018), Confucius (He, 2013, 2016), John Dewey (Garrison, 2019; He, 2013, 2016; Sharma, 2002), Mikhail Bakhtin (Goulah, 2009c, 2013a), Lev Vygotsky (Goulah, 2009a), and Lucy Sprague Mitchel (Goulah, 2010c). Heffron (2016) brings Makiguchi, Karl Marx, John Dewey, and Jane Addams together in the context of Educational Leaders Without Borders, Sherman (2016) compares Makiguchi's theory of value creation to Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen's capability approach, and Hatano (2009) draws on the language theories of Bakhtin and Vygotsky in order to discuss Makiguchi's value-creating theory in language learning.

Theoretical studies, especially in the field of language education, constitute the largest category within the Soka studies literature. Makiguchi himself wrote extensively on language education (reading and writing) throughout his educational career (e.g., Makiguchi [1898] 2013), developing what he called the sentence model application approach for composition instruction (Goulah, 2013c; Ito, 2017). Gebert (2013) further explored Makiguchi's literacy instruction in comparison to the most popular approach to literacy education of his time. Although Makiguchi did not write about second/foreign language education, his theory of value creation has been applied to studies on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education (Hatano, 2013), language policy and planning in contemporary Japan (Hatano, 2009), and second/foreign language education in the contemporary U.S. (Goulah, 2010b, 2013c; Okamura, 2017). Ikeda's ideas on human education, dialogue, global citizenship, and "society for education" are also applied to English education policy in Japan (Hatano, 2012), English as a Second Language (ESL) education in the U.S. (Goulah, 2012c, 2017), foreign language education and study abroad

programs in the U.S. (Goulah, 2010f, 2011b, 2011a), and language education in general (Goulah, 2019; Obelleiro, 2012).

Although not in the field of language *education*, there are also theoretical studies that pertain to language. One example is Gebert and Goulah's (2017) analysis of the issues and challenges of translating Makiguchi's work from Japanese into English. Related to the issue of translation, Inukai (2013) compared Makiguchi's original writing of *The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy* with Bethel's translation published as *Education for Creative Living*. Gebert (2012) also examined Ikeda's attitude toward translation. He argues that as a reader of translation and producer of texts that are translated into various languages, Ikeda views translation as a vehicle for cross-cultural communication. Similarly, Goulah (2012b) explored Ikeda's philosophy and practice of intercultural dialogue, which, as stated above, he calls "value-creative dialogue." There are also other studies that focus on Ikeda's philosophy of dialogue in relation to global citizenship (Goulah, 2013a; Goulah & Ito, 2012; Obelleiro, 2013; Sharma, 2011), where language is not the central focus but implicit in the practice of dialogue.

Though small in number, there are also theoretical and conceptual studies outside of language education and language/dialogue. The ones on Makiguchi include analyses of his perspective of geography education (Takeuchi, 1999, 2000), community studies (Gebert, 2009), the state (Miyata, 2000), educational leadership and principalship (English, 2015; Heffron, 2016, 2018), value-creating pedagogy relative to education in Japan's modern era (Kumagai, 2000), and the interrogation record of Makiguchi during World War II (Ito, 2009). The ones on Ikeda include his notion of human education relative to curriculum theorizing (Cornell, 2020), philosophy of peace (Goulah & Urbain, 2013; Urbain, 2010, 2018), human rights (Matsuoka, 2010), environmental ethics (Goulah, 2010a), poverty eradication (Goulah, 2015b), leadership

theory (Chilson, 2014; Whitney, 2015), learning for creative, joyful, and worthwhile living (Goulah & He, 2015), and teacher education standards (Kuo & Aniezue, 2018).

Empirical studies in the field of Soka studies are extremely limited. Outside Soka schools, for example, Goulah (Goulah, 2009b) examined whether students in a high school Japanese foreign language class created value in terms of beauty, gain, and good as a result of a curriculum based on Edmund O'Sullivan's transformative learning theory and Makiguchi's concept of community studies. Others have explored how self-identified Soka educators in Japan and the U.S. characterize so-called "Soka education" in practice (Hrdina, 2018; Nagashima, 2012, 2016; Takazawa, 2016). Bradford and Shields (2017) interviewed two EcoJustice educators and two self-identified "Soka educators," comparing their perspectives and practices centered on relational ontology and epistemology. de Melo Silva (2000) conducted a large-scale study to examine the effects of the Makiguchi Project in Action and Literacy Poles, two educational projects enacted by the Brazil SGI Educators Division and inspired by Makiguchi's philosophy of value-creating pedagogy.

Within Soka schools, studies have been conducted at Soka kindergartens in Japan, Hong Kong, and Singapore (Ikegami & Rivalland, 2016; Ikegami & Agbenyega, 2014; Ikegami & Grieshaber, 2017), wherein Ikegami and colleagues examined teachers' and administrators' perspectives on quality early childhood education and quality teacher-child interaction through a Soka framework. A case study conducted by Guajardo and Reiser (2016) at Soka University in Tokyo found that the philosophy of humanism, evident through faculty and staff's care for the students, the world, and for each other, informed their global citizenship program. Sherman (2019) also conducted a case study at Soka University, revealing that the students' identification as global citizens increased as they spent more time at the university. Sherman (2019) attributed

this to the university's normative environment of endorsing global citizenship ideals and promoting global awareness. At SUA, Goulah (2012d) examined current and former students' perspectives of their compulsory study abroad and its implications for their development of value creation and human becoming. Storch (2015) examined the history and the academic curriculum of SUA, along with other institutions she calls "Buddhist-based universities." The findings relevant to my proposed research and the gaps in these empirical studies will be further discussed below.

Although not empirical studies, there are also anecdotal scholarly articles that recount personal applications or implementations of Soka approaches to education. For example, Heffron (2009), based on his personal experience as a professor at SUA, discusses SUA's curriculum and teaching practices relative to Ikeda and Makiguchi philosophy. Heffron (2009) clarifies that "Soka education" is not exclusive to SUA; rather, it exists wherever students, faculty, and administrators are united and committed to creating an environment conducive to "learning geared toward human betterment" (p. 144). He then offers two essential parts of SUA's curriculum: Core and Learning Cluster. Citing Ikeda's question he asked Toda during their first encounter, "What is the correct way of life?," Heffron (2009) explains that "Core I: Enduring Questions of Humanity" examines what makes a meaningful and successful life through texts from both the East and West. Learning Clusters are field-based research courses that allow students to explore a topic through direct engagement with the surrounding community, both social and natural. Heffron (2009) argues that this approach resonates with Makiguchi's emphasis on the interaction with one's geographical space in his *The Geography of Human Life*.

Another example is Monte Joffee, a cofounder of The Renaissance Charter School in New York City, who discusses in an interview with Goulah and Gebert the ways in which

Makiguchi's value-creating education informed The Renaissance Charter School in its conception, development, and practice (Joffee et al., 2009). Jofee shares that "although not all directly drawn from Makiguchi," they identified the following "core values" that they felt were consonant with Makiguchi's vision and philosophy: "(1) pragmatism; (2) incorporating the voices of parents; (3) a more complex understanding of collaboration and democracy; (4) the importance of human engagement and kindness; and (5) respect for diversity" (Joffee et al., 2009, p. 185). Okamura (2017) also shares examples from his Japanese foreign language class as a way to explicate Makiguchi's five-step knowledge cultivation model. One such example was a sushi making unit, through which students became value-creators of beauty, gain, and good by using the Japanese language they learned.

Findings and Gaps in the Studies at Soka Institutions and in Teacher Education

In this section, I examine some of the empirical studies introduced in the overview to understand which aspects of the theoretical framework have already been considered empirically within the context of Soka institutions and relative to teacher education. Studies conducted by Ikegami and Agbenyega (2014) and Ikegami and Rivalland (2016) at Soka kindergartens reveal that the participants, both principals and teachers, repeatedly articulated the following aspects as important qualities of Soka kindergarten: fostering students' happiness, displaying compassion and a belief in students' unlimited potential, cultivating both respect for others and self-respect in children, enacting dialogic student-child relationships, and helping students to never give up during challenges. The participants in Sapporo Soka kindergarten from Ikegami and Agbenyega's (2014) study also repeatedly referred to Ikeda as *Sensei*, which is a Japanese term for "teacher." In Japanese society, doctors, lawyers, university instructors, K-12 teachers, accomplished artisans, and others with recognized achievements in their fields are commonly

referred to as *sensei*. The term literally means one whose life has preceded others and represents a model for others. SGI members often use the term *Sensei* to refer to Ikeda—Ikeda *Sensei*—as a designation that they view him as their mentor in faith and, thereby, as a sign of gratitude for the positive influence he has had on their lives.

Through narrative inquiry of four K-12 teachers who graduated from Soka schools in Japan, Nagashima (2012, 2016) examined their experiences at Soka schools and the influence these had both on their understanding of Soka education and their current teaching practice at non-Soka schools. All four participants articulated their relationships with teachers, peers, and Ikeda as being most influential in undergoing their human revolution, developing their character, and believing in themselves; thus, their teaching practice also centers on replicating such caring and trusting teacher-student relationships through dialogue with their current students. Nagashima (2016) analyzes these findings relative to Ikeda's notions of human revolution, mentor and disciple relationship, and the dignity of life. However, according to Nagashima (2016), the participants repeatedly discussed the importance of developing their students' character over teaching subject matter knowledge, which leaves Makiguchi's (1981-1988, Vols. 5-6) pedagogy of applying what they learned to create value completely unaddressed. Nagashima (2016) also pointed out that although global citizenship is a key concept for Ikeda, the participants in her study did not discuss the concept as something they strove to cultivate in their students.

These empirical studies reveal that teachers at Soka institutions or those who graduated from Soka institutions are forming what Goulah (2018) calls a "Soka Discourse" based on Ikeda's speeches primarily on Buddhism and education in general, rather than on specific methods or anything particularly defined as "Soka education" in the primary literature reviewed

above. This is understandable, Goulah (2018) suggests, given that most, if not all, of the participants in these studies belong to the SGI organization and thus regularly consume Ikeda's faith-based writings. As a result, the findings from these studies only address some of Ikeda's larger educational philosophy with little to no connection to Makiguchi's and Toda's theories. Furthermore, as these studies center mainly on teacher-student relationships, the pedagogical aspect of "good teaching" remains largely unaddressed. Also, although Nagashima's dissertation discusses the importance of the culture present at Soka high school in Japan, the milieu of the curriculum (Schwab, 1973), such as classroom environment and institutional policies relative to good teaching, remains largely unexamined.

Consideration of studies at SUA is important for addressing gaps relative to milieu in the extant literature. Storch's (2015) study provides a thick description of the classroom set-up and the average class size to illustrate how these factors are conducive to forming the kind of teacher-student relationships detailed in the other above-mentioned studies. Furthermore, through interviews with two alumni, Storch highlights the importance of all students from diverse backgrounds living together for cultivating global awareness and cultural understandings (all undergraduate students at SUA live on campus). However, her study does not include any of the faculty's perspectives. I address below why this is significant, and why this significance is meaningful for the study outlined herein and its implications for the field of K-12 teacher education. Moreover, drawing from Richard Payne's work, she defines "Buddhist pedagogical principles" as mindfulness, the interconnectedness of all life, and the right motivation for giving and receiving education, but she does not make any connection to Makiguchi's, Toda's or Ikeda's work. Further, when explaining value-creating pedagogy, she makes a broad sweep by stating that Makiguchi affirmed that education "must be delivered through dialogue and personal

empowerment" (Storch, 2015, p. 68). Though arguably inherent in his value-creating pedagogy, education through dialogue and personal empowerment are not, upon careful analysis, terms or concepts that Makiguchi himself uses (see e.g., Goulah, 2018; Goulah & Gebert, 2009); nor do they capture the complexity of his theory.

One study that does get to the complexity in understanding the nuanced differences and interrelations of value-creating education, "Soka education," and human education is Goulah's (2012d) study with SUA students. The results indicated that the participants articulated human education as Ikeda's vision of educating the whole person, Soka education as the Ikeda-inspired ethos at SUA, and value-creating education as a practice to develop students' ability to create value for their own and others' happiness, an element of Soka education that is possible in and outside official Soka schools. These ideas are consonant with both the primary literature, such as Ikeda's speeches on human education, and the secondary literature that explicates these concepts (e.g., Goulah & Gebert, 2009). Another important finding of Goulah's (2012d) study is that although the four participants included in the article are all members of the SGI organization and thus familiar with what Goulah (2018) later calls the "Soka Discourse," Goulah here discovered that, in his larger study, critical discourse analysis of interviews with non-SGI participants revealed consistency in their understandings of these concepts though expressed in different terminology. This leads to an important question concerning the relevancy of Soka approaches manifest at SUA beyond those who understand and sympathize with Ikeda's Buddhist-based "Soka Discourse." Because Goulah's (2012d) study is focused on students' perspectives, faculty's perspectives remain unexamined. Furthermore, because the focus of this study was students' experiences of language learning and study abroad, their interactions with teachers are

not included, thus making instructors' roles in the students' experiences of SUA's education largely unknown.

Finally, there is one conceptual study that examines Ikeda's philosophy in relation to teacher education. This article has particular relevance to the study outlined herein as I make the case that SUA faculty's perspectives on what it means to be a "good teacher" has implications for teacher education practices. Kuo and Aniezue (2018) examined the InTASC standards, a set of standards used as a progress-based assessment for both pre- and in-service teachers, in relation to value-creating education, which they define solely based on the five principles Ikeda gave to Soka Junior and Senior High School. These are: 1) uphold the dignity of life, 2) respect individuality, 3) build bonds of lasting friendship, 4) oppose violence, and 5) lead a life based on both knowledge and wisdom (Soka Gakuen, n.d.). Specifically, they analyzed how these principles can enrich the way each of the following InTASC standards are considered: 1) the learner and learning, 2) content knowledge, 3) instructional practice, and 4) professional responsibility. Although this study is important because it directly addresses the question of "good teaching" through an analysis of standards for teachers, it also has some shortcomings. Similar to Storch's (2015) study, the way Kuo and Aniezue (2018) use the term "value-creating education" is not couched in the primary and secondary texts. They also do not explicate Ikeda's key terms such as global citizenship and dialogue based on the extant litearture.

A review of the empirical studies with teachers at Soka institutions and those graduated from Soka institutions reveals that most of the participants articulated their understanding of Soka approaches to education almost exclusively based on Ikeda's speeches primarily on Buddhism and education in general. Furthermore, the pedagogical aspect of teaching through Makiguchi's perspective is underrepresented, and none includes any reference to Toda's theory

or practice. This could be due to the fact that many of Makiguchi's and Toda's works are not available in English (see e.g., Gebert & Goulah, 2017; Goulah, 2013c, 2015a; Goulah & Gebert, 2009; Inukai & Goulah, 2018). As Goulah (2013c) and Inukai (2013) argue, some of the available English translations of Makiguchi's texts are incomplete or even flawed in some cases. Moreover, with the exception of studies by Goulah (2012d) and Nagashima (2016), the majority of the authors examining the perspectives and practices at Soka institutions and self-identified "Soka educators" fail to sufficiently explicate Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda's concepts based on the primary and secondary literature. Due to these circustances, it is still difficult to fully understand the ways in which the perspectives of Ikeda, Toda, and Makiguchi—individually and collectively—can contribute to our understanding and practice of what constitutes a "good teacher."

Conclusion

In this chapter, I reviewed the relevant literature in teacher education, the educational philosophies and practices of Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda, and the extant English literature in the field of Ikeda/Soka Studies in Education. Although the entirety of literature in the field of teacher education is much larger, here I provided the impact of the neoliberal educational reform movement in narrowing and standardizing the teacher education programs to focus on the effective transmission of knowledge. The section on the educational philosophies and practices of Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda in turn shows that they all address both the being and doing of a teacher despite the unique focus of each. Within the field of Ikeda/Soka Studies in Education, most of the exisiting literature is theoretical/conceptual, with a plurality contextualized particularly in the field of language education. Empirical studies are still limited, and, with the exception of works by Goulah (2009b, 2012d) and Nagashima (2016), many of them fail to

sufficiently explicate Makiguchi's, Toda's, or Ikeda's concepts or pay little attention to the pedagogical aspect of teaching.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This study explores what it means to be a "good teacher" from a Soka perspective by interviewing SUA faculty to articulate their teaching practices and experiences at SUA and by observing their teaching practices. In seeking to answer the question of good teaching and to draw implications for teacher education, I conducted a qualitative, single-site instrumental case study. In this section, I address the following aspects of research design: rationale for research approach, research setting, research sample, data collection methods, data analysis methods, issues of trustworthiness, and limitations and delimitations.

Rationale for Research Approach

In his message to the first conference on Ikeda/Soka Studies in Education regarding Soka or value-creating educaiton, Ikeda (2018b) stated that "each site of learning brings into being its own practice, its own new forms of wisdom and innovation." Aligned with his perspective, this study assumes that there is no one prescriptive definition of "Soka education" and aims to understand participants' lived experiences at SUA and their articulation of their own teaching. Therefore, I will use qualitative research that values complexity and subjectivity of "human *being* and meaning making" (emphasis in the original, Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 5). Furthermore, in the 1930s Makiguchi already advocated for using qualitative and subjective experiences of teachers in the classroom as a basis for scientific inquiry (Gebert & Goulah, 2017). In *The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy*, Makiguchi (1981-1988, Vol. 5) repeatedly called on classroom teachers to document instances of successes and failures and then synthesize and analyze them to form a scientific pedagogy to guide students to create value. Makiguchi would come to empirically "verify" his value-creating pedagogy using a case study of six teachers (Makiguchi, 1981-1988, Vol. 8; Gebert & Goulah, 2017).

In line with Makiguchi's approach to scientific inquiry, I also used case study. Case study is a research methodology in which "the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in depth data collection involving multiple sources of information" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 96). Specifically, this study will be a single instrumental case study with an exploratory goal (Yin, 2003) because it investigates a single case—a single institution, which is SUA—and explore how faculty at SUA articulate their teaching and experiences. Among the many ways to select a case, Merriam (1998) explains the reason for selecting a unique, or atypical, case as it can reveal a phenomenon or knowledge that is not otherwise accessible. SUA serves as a unique case in that it is the only Soka institution in the U.S. and probably has the greatest number of non-SGI faculty among all the Soka schools.

Research Site

Soka University of America (SUA) is a small, private, suburban college located in Orange County, CA. In 2005, when SUA graduated its first entering class, it received accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). WASC renewed SUA's accreditation in June 2010 (WASC, n.d.). Since then, SUA has been acknowledged as an outstanding school. For example, according to *U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges 2020 Rankings*, SUA tied for #27 among liberal arts college in the country. In addition, among the liberal arts colleges, SUA ranked #1 in financial resources, #2 in faculty resources, #1 in most international students, #2 in campus ethnic diversity, and #7 in best value school (U.S. News & World Report, 2019). SUA has approximately 450 students, and all students are required to live in the residential halls on campus. The average class size is 12 and the student/faculty ratio is 8:1 (Soka University of America, n.d.-c). Approximately half of the students are from outside of the

U.S. and more than 90% of students receive some form of financial aid. Since 2008, SUA has offered full tuition to all students whose annual family income is $60,000 or less. A more detailed description of the reseach site relevant to this study will be provided in Chapter 4.

Research Sample / Participants

I selected a purposive sample (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016) of ten faculty, one of whom was an administrator. Specifically, I used "criterion-based sampling" (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 130), selecting participants who are full-time faculty in the undergraduate program and have at least read Makiguchi and/or Ikeda's writings, and have participated in "Soka education"-related events at SUA, such as the Soka Education Conference. Such criteria suggest that their responses are grounded in both experience and some theory. Among the ones who met the criteria, I strove for maximum variation by selecting participants from different disciplines and varying backgrounds (see Table 1). Because SUA is a small institution, in order to protect participants' anonymity (Wiles et al., 2008), I used Western pseudonyms and refrained from disclosing identifying details about race, ethnicity, or nationality.

Table 1

Participant's Name and Discipline

Name (Pseudonym)	Discipline
Tom	Social Behavioral Sciences
Scott	Humanities
Lucy	Language and Culture
Gregory	Creative Arts
Victoria	Math
Paul	Science
Brandon	Social Behavioral Sciences
Raymond	International Studies
Wendy	Writing and Communication
Oliver	International Studies

Most of these participants were identified through my personal connections with them. As their former student, I knew five who were actively engaged with Soka approaches to education. I also knew about another three indirectly through my involvement with the Soka Education Conference as a student leader, alumni advisor, and presenter. I did not have personal connections with two of them, but I was informally recommended by other faculty, staff, and alumni to include them because, from their perspective, they practiced "Soka education." Once the participants were identified, I contacted them through an email that contained the purpose of the study and the overview of their time commitment. Once they showed initial interest and willingness to participate, I sent the informed consent with more details of the research to confirm their participation. Thereafter, I scheduled the times for interviews and observations with each participant. I went over the informed consent form once more when I met them in person and collected the signed form.

Data Collection Methods

I conducted data collection in two phases between October 2018 and January 2019. During the first phase, the primary method of data collection for this study was semi-structured interviews in order to facilitate a focused exploration of the research questions while leaving space for the participants to share their unique perspectives (Bailey, 2006). For each participant, I conducted an initial interview that lasted approximately 45-60 minutes. All interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim. In order to triangulate data, I also conducted observations of classes the participants taught. If the participant taught two courses during this semester, I observed both classes, if permitted. In many cases, I remained a nonparticipant observer, taking notes from outside of the group (Creswell & Poth, 2018), though I occasionally became a participant when I was invited by the professor or the students to join the discussion or

activity. I also conducted document analysis (Bowen, 2009) of institutional learning outcomes, the university website, and syllabi created by participants. The first two were accessible online through the SUA webpage, and I asked the participants to provide the syllabus of the course(s) I observed. I then conducted a follow-up interview with participants after observing classes and reviewing their syllabi. Due to scheduling conflicts, questions otherwise posed in the initial and follow-up interviews were combined into one post-observation interview for four of the participants. For one participant, I was unable to observe a class or obtain a syllabus, and two participants I observed did not share their syllabi. Table 2 below shows the full list of the collected data sources by participant. The themes identified through this phase of data collection will be presented in Chapters 4 and 5.

Table 2

Data Sources by Participant

Name	Initial Interview	Observation	Follow-Up Interview	Syllabus
Tom	Yes	2 sessions of a content course; 1 session of a research course	Yes	Yes (both courses)
Scott	Yes	2 sessions of the same course	Yes	Yes
Lucy	Yes	1 session each of 2 different levels	Yes	Yes (both courses)
Gregory	Combined with Follow-Up	1 session of a course	Combined with Initial Interview	Yes
Victoria	Combined with Follow-Up	1 session of a course	Combined with Initial Interview	No
Paul	Yes	1 session of a course	No	Yes
Brandon	Combined with Follow-Up	1 session of a course	Combined with Initial Interview	Yes
Raymond	Yes	2 sessions of the same course	Yes	Yes
Wendy	Combined with Follow-Up	1 session each of 2 different levels	Combined with Initial Interview	No

Oliver	Yes	No	No	No

I conducted a second round of data collection in January 2019 during SUA's Learning Cluster period, which is a 3.5-week block when students have the freedom to create their own courses and/or engage in field research (Soka University of America, n.d.-e). During this time, I selected one participant from the first round (Raymond), who identified the Learning Cluster as a course where he best practiced "Soka education." Among all participants he provided the most explicit reference to Makiguchi's and Ikeda's philosophies and the one who most explicitly and directly engaged with these ideas with students in class. During this phase of data collection, I observed a 4-hour class everyday for a week, having a short reflective discussion with the participant professor after each class. Although typical Learning Cluster courses meet only three hours per day, this class decided to frontload hours in their first week, so even though I was there for just a week, it amounted to more than a third of the entire course. Roughly a week after the end of observations, I conducted a 60-minute follow-up interview with the participant to discuss developments and changes after I left the site. The findings from this second phase of data collection will be presented separately in Chapter 6 as a "subsection" (Stake, 2006) within the study of a single case.

Data Analysis Methods

This study used thematic analysis, which is "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), "Thematic analysis differs from other analytic methods that seek to describe patterns across qualitative data" (p. 80). For my data analysis, I generally followed the six phases of thematic analysis presented by Braun and Clarke (2006): 1) familiarizing yourself with your data, 2) generating initial codes, 3) searching for themes, 4) reviewing themes, 5) defining and

naming themes, and 6) producing the report. However, it is important to understand that data analysis in qualitative research is an iterative and recursive process that starts even during data collection and continues during the writing phase (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Creswell and Poth (2018) equate the data analysis process with a spiral in which "the researcher engages in the process of moving in analytic circles rather than using a fixed linear approach" (p. 185). Therefore, when presented as six phases of thematic analysis, it seems as though each phase is a concrete and linear step that moves from one to the next, but in reality, the researcher must constantly move back and forth among the data, codes, and themes. For me, the boundaries between phases, especially the third, fourth, and fifth phases, became extremely blurry, and I went back and forth in generating and defining themes. Below, I attempt to capture this iterative process in as much detail as possible.

1) Familiarizing Yourself with Your Data

This phase began during data collection. After the initial interviews and observations, I reviewed the data so that I could use them for the follow-up interviews. I also wrote memos during the data collection phase to document my thoughts and impressions of the collected data. This phase also included transcribing the interviews and organizing the field notes. In order to familiarize myself with the data, I transcribed all the interviews myself. Once the interviews were transcribed, I read the transcripts in their entirety multiple times to initimately know the data.

2) Generating Initial Codes

Once I familiarized myself with the data, I started the initial coding. For coding, I printed all the interview transcripts, memos, field notes, and other documents, and jotted down the codes on the margins. During this phase, I conducted what Ravitch and Carl (2016) call open coding,

which is the first level of coding when the researcher simply highlights or labels sections of text in some fashion (p. 250). This is a form of inductive coding, as it remains open to new and emerging codes (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). After the initial round of open coding, I conducted focused coding, clustering some of the initial codes together (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

3-5) Searching for, Reviewing, and Defining Themes

After all the data were coded, the next step was to search for themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) indicate that a theme "captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of *patterned* response or meaning within the data set" (emphasis in the original, p. 82). Therefore, I looked for patterns, or repeated codes, in the data. Because I was searching for themes from the data, I was taking an inductive approach to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

However, during this phase, I noticed that many themes could be categorized under one of the four curriculum commonplaces of subject matter, teacher, student, and milieu. Therefore, I went back to the data and recoded deductively, highlighting each commonplace with a different color. For the teacher category, I also divided it into the "being" and "doing" aspects, underlining each aspect with a different color. I also took a deductive approach to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), generating themes according to key concepts in the literature in Ikeda/Soka Studies in Education, such as global citizenship, value creation, and dialogue, as well as, where appropriate, relative to the primary literature by or on Ikeda, Makiguchi, or Toda. As Ravitch and Carl (2016) explain that qualitative data analysis is a dialogic process, during this phase, I continuously shared the generated themes with my advisor and the writing tutor with whom I worked every week for 10 months. As a 2017-2019 Education Fellow at the Ikeda Center for Peace, Learning, and Dialogue, I also had an opportunity to present the preliminary findings

before the Center's Education Fellows advisory board, as well as at multiple conferences. I received substantive feedback and suggestions in all instances.

Based on feedback, I went back and reimmersed myself in the data. It soon became apparent that the themes related to SUA's curriculum (subject matter), campus environment (milieu), student demographics and organizations, and faculty community and programs were important in understanding the context but did not directly answer the question of what it means to be a "good teacher." Because the setting is particularly important for case study analysis and representation (Creswell & Poth, 2018), I decided to present these themes separately. It also became apparent that the "being" and "doing" aspects are inherently interconnected and cannot be completely separated. The key concepts, such as global citizenship, value creation, and dialogue, also cut through both the "being" and "doing" of a teacher. Therefore, I inductively coded again and regrouped the codes to generate new themes that included both the "being" and "doing" aspects. To finalize the themes, I drew a concept map to clarify the connections between each sub-theme and to group them together under a larger theme. Once I generated themes from the interview transcripts, I triangulated the results from observations and document analysis. After I defined the themes and sub-themes, I organized all the data on an excel spreadsheet with each participant's name in the rows and each sub-theme in the columns.

6) Producing the Report

After I defined all the themes, I decided to create a separate chapter to describe the setting of this case study with the themes from each of the four curriculum commonplaces. This is presented in Chapter 4: Understanding the Context. For the question of what it means to be a "good teacher" from a Soka perspective, the triangulated data suggested three major themes: 1) educating human beings and building character, 2) guiding students to co-create knowledge and

meaning, and 3) critical self-reflection and continuous improvement. These findings are presented in Chapter 5. The iterative and recursive process of data analysis continued throughout the writing phase. As I wrote the themes in Chapter 5, I decided to create another separate chapter (Chapter 6) to present the data from the Learning Cluster. This richer set of data from one course is presented as a subsection of the larger case study. This was because data analyses revealed that all the major themes presented in Chapter 5 were identified in this one Learning Cluster course. The analysis of the findings relative to the research questions are presented in the final chapter (Chapter 7).

Issues of Trustworthiness

The ways in which the issues of trustworthiness are addressed in qualitative research are different from those in quantitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), validity in qualitative research refers to "the quality and rigor of the study," which is derived from "the ways that researchers can affirm that their findings are faithful to participants' experiences" (p. 186). Because this notion of validity is different from the positivist origins of validity, some researchers use the term trustworthiness instead of validity (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). While some qualitative studies adopt the language of the quantitative paradigm such as internal validity, generalizability, reliability, and objectivity to address the trustworthiness of qualitative research, I use Guba's (1981) framework of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as standards to assess the trustworthiness of this study.

Credibility in qualitative research is concerned with "the researcher's ability to take into account all of the complexities that present themselves in a study and to deal with patterns that are not easily explained" (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 188) because this ability enhances how well the findings match reality, or more specifically, the participants' perception of reality.

Dependability refers to the stability of data, or "whether the results are consistent with the data collected" (Merriam, 2009, p. 221). In order to enhance the credibility and dependability of this study, I used several strategies. First is the triangulation of methods and data (Merriam, 2009). Interviews, observations, and document analyses were used as data collection methods. Furthermore, purposive sampling was used to achieve the triangulation of data sources (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Second, I employed member checking, which is a process to receive feedback from the participants on the accuracy of their representation (Merriam, 2009; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). For member checking, I sent each participant a document with the interview transcript and teaching practices from the observation notes, and I asked if those accurately represented their perspectives and practices. Finally, I presented above in the data analysis section an "audit trail," which describes the decisions making process during data analysis (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). Such a practice enables readers to "authenticate the findings of a study by following the trail of the researcher" (Merriam, 2009, p. 222).

Although the goal of qualitative research is not to generalize findings to a larger population or to claim objectivity, transferability and confirmability are important measures to enhance the trustworthiness of a qualitative study. Transferability refers to how applicable the study's findings are to the broader context (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In order for the reader to make this judgment, to the extent that it does not lead to re-identification of the participants, I will provide "thick description," a term used for a highly descriptive and detailed account of the setting, participants, and findings of the study (Merriam, 2009, p. 227). In qualitative studies, it is inevitable that these descriptions and interpretations are provided through the lens of the researcher because the researcher is the primary instrument (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Therefore, in order to enhance confirmability, meaning the degree to which the data and findings are

reasonably free from unacknowledged researcher biases, I engaged in ongoing and structured reflexivity processes, which included the use of bracketing my own thoughts and writing memos during the data collection and analyses phases (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). As presented in the data analysis section, I also engaged in an ongoing dialogue regarding the findings and themes, receiving feedback from my dissertation advisor, the Ikeda Center's Education Fellows advisory board, and my writing tutor, all of whom acted as "critical friends" (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 203).

Limitations

Any research project comes with limitations. One such limitation is not being able to provide a thick description of the participants in order to protect their anonymity and confidentiality (Grinyer, 2002; Kaiser, 2009; Tolich, 2004). As discussed in the previous section on issues of trustworthiness, providing a thick description is crucial for a rigorous and valid qualitative study. However, because SUA is a small community where most students, staff, and faculty know each other on a personal level, and because there are only one or two faculty per discipline, providing a thick description of the participants may reveal too much personal information for the participants to be re-identified.

There is another potential limitation of researcher bias. Although any qualitative study has a perceived limitation of researcher subjectivity (Kaiser, 2009), this study is further complicated by my positionality as a 2011 alumna of SUA. Being an insider—however removed from 2011—can provide easier access to the participants and familiarity with the topic. It is this familiarity that likely allowed me to receive permission to conduct research at SUA, and it also facilitated the process of building rapport with participants, which is a key element in conducting successful qualitative interviews (Seidman, 2013). However, it also has some potential

drawbacks such as imposing one's own beliefs and participants withholding information they assume to be obvious to the researcher (Berger, 2015). Thus, I as a researcher must be aware of the assumptions that stem from my experiences and beliefs, and how they may affect my research processes. In order to address this limitation, I incorporated structured and ongoing reflexivity processes and engaged in dialogue with peers and faculty advisors who could provide outsider perspectives and challenge my assumptions (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

While there is always more data that could be collected for any research project, I have limited the scope of this research to ten participants who are faculty in the undergraduate program. Limiting the participants to those who meet the criteria of having read Makiguchi and/or Ikeda and have participated in events relating to Soka approaches to education was important to ensure that participants had some knowledge of the educational philosophy and practice of the Soka progenitors, as well as a desire to put them into practice. Although SUA also offers a Master's program in Educational Leadership for Societal Change, there is a completely different group of faculty who teach in this program. Possibly because it is still a new program with only about ten students in total, many of its faculty do not seem to be as immersed or involved in the campus community as those who teach in the undergraduate program. Because the context of the site greatly matters in a case study, I limited my participants to the undergraduate faculty. Similarly, interviewing and observing teachers from other Soka schools would have broadened the scope of responses and practices, also allowing for analysis across multiple cases. However, by limiting the study to one site, I focused on the shared experiences and culture of SUA—again, the only Soka institution in the US—and delved deeper into how Soka approaches to education are conceived and practiced at SUA.

Conclusion

This chapter introduced the research methodology of this study. This was a qualitative, single-site instrumental case study that explored what it means to be a "good teacher" from a Soka perspective primarily by interviewing and observing ten SUA faculty, including one administrator, to articulate their teaching practices and experiences at SUA. Field notes from classroom observations and relevant documents, such as course syllabi, university website, and institutional learning outcomes were also collected to triangulate data. For data analysis, I started with an inductive open coding, and went through an iterative process of clustering codes, developing and assessing themes, and regrouping codes to develop new themes. In this chapter, I also addressed the issue of trustworthiness, as well as the limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 4: UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

This dissertation uses Schwab's (1973) four curricular commonplaces—subject matter, students, teacher, and milieu—as its theoretical framework. Among these four commonplaces, this dissertation focuses on the teacher as my research questions center on the faculty's perspectives on the "being" and "doing" of a "good teacher," but all four commonplaces are interrelated and mutually interact with each other (Schubert, 1986). This means that in order to fully understand the SUA faculty's perspectives and practices, it is important to understand the context in which they teach. Therefore, this first chapter on results presents various aspects of the university that the participants described as critical elements in shaping or enabling their current ways of teaching. The findings presented in this chapter help answer the latter half of the first research question: How do SUA faculty perceive the aim of education and what constitutes a "good teacher," specifically in relation to their role as teachers, their relationship to students, the purpose of their subject matter, and the influence of institutional culture, policies, and curriculum? It also provides insight into answering the second research question: How has their experience at SUA changed/shaped their perspectives? This chapter is organized into the campus environment (milieu), curriculum (subject matter), faculty resources (teacher) and students.

Campus Environment

SUA is located on 103 acres of land in Aliso Viejo, California. Driving up the Wood Canyon drive, one can see the SUA's campus standing on a hilltop, surrounded by canyons on all sides. Facing Wood Canyon Drive, there is a gate to mark the entrance to the university campus. Visitors are greeted by friendly security at the gate and can freely enter the campus during the day. Once entering the gate, visitors immediately notice the Peace Lake, a man-made three-part lake that sits at the foot of Founders Hall. On the right is a parking structure and the Recreation

Center, and further looking down on a soccer field and a track field. Behind the Peace and Lake and next to the Founders Hall is a wall with donors' names and a fountain made of travertine. When I was a student, I heard that travertine is used for many buildings on campus with Ikeda's wish that the SUA campus will stand strong for thousands of years. Founders Hall, the central building on campus, contains offices and an art gallery, as well as placards with donors' names on the walls. On the floor of the Founders Hall is a world map surrounded by flags of the current students' home countries. The building was named with the plural form of "founders" to honor all the individuals who contributed to founding this university. Ikeda (2005a) explains this as follows:

> I regard this use of the plural form, "founders" as a commemoration of all those who have to this day endeavored with me, in every possible way as I pursued the educational ideals of Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda. SUA is a university that has been founded by the people, for the people. Each and every person who has made an effort that contributed to its establishment is one of its heroic founders. (p. 119)

In a message commemorating SUA's first commencement ceremony, acknowledging that SUA was founded with the generous support from many ordinary people throughout the world who concurred with the university's ideals, Ikeda (2005b) called on students, "The university must be a place that fosters people of talent committed to serving the needs of all those who, much as they might have wished, have not been able to receive higher education."

Exiting the back entrance of the second floor of the Founders Hall takes me to the entrance of the Soka Performing Arts Center and Wangari Maathai Hall, which is one of the academic buildings. In accord with its fourth University Principle, "To foster leaders for the creative coexistence of nature and humanity" (Soka University of America, n.d.-g), SUA opened

these two buildings in 2011. They were constructed to meet energy-efficient and eco-friendly standards and received the Gold Certification from Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) (Soka University of America, n.d.-k). Also inspired by the same University Principle, in 2012, a group of students established an Eco-Wing-themed housing community in one of the residence halls, where residents experiment with conservation methods and spread awareness to other members of the community (Soka University of America, n.d.-h). Through these and other efforts for environmental sustainability, SUA earned the Silver Rating from the Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System (STARS) in 2018 (Soka University of America, n.d.-k). With a path in the middle, on the other side from the Soka Performing Arts Center and the Maathai Hall is the construction site of the new science building. When I first arrived on campus for data collection in October 2018, the building was still mostly covered and windows were just starting to get installed. By the end of data collection in January 2019, the construction on the outside was finished and the full building could be seen. The new science building, named Marie and Pierre Curie Hall, will open in Fall 2020.

Walking past these buildings, I arrive at the main part of the campus. With a grass area in the middle, on the right are Mohandas and Kasturba Gandhi Hall and Daisaku and Kaneko Ikeda Library, and on the left are Linus and Ava Helen Pauling Hall and the cafeteria. The five academic buildings on campus—Linus and Ava Helen Pauling Hall, Mohandas and Kasturba Gandhi Hall, Daisaku and Kaneko Ikeda Library, Wangari Maathai Hall, and Marie and Pierre Curie Hall—are named after people who fought for peace, human rights, and the sanctity of life. As one participant, Wendy, noted, this is different from many other institutions where buildings are named after those who donated a lot of money. Here, it warrants noting, as Goulah and Ito (2012) indicate, that while Ikeda founded the Soka schools and universities, he does not teach or

administrate in them. He has frequently visited the various Soka institutions around the world over the years but has not had the opportunity to visit SUA, in part because of his advanced age. Ikeda did not name the buildings at SUA, but he has discussed their namesakes in multiple speeches. Ikeda has had personal interactions and published dialogues with some of them. At the opening of Gandhi Hall, for example, Ikeda (2005a) encouraged the SUA students, "How much can a single person contribute to the cause of peace? I urge each of you to seek the answer to this quest, starting from Gandhi Hall" (p. 20). Although the building names are not an explicit part of the curriculum, as Goulah and Ito (2012) argue that the statues of great figures such as Leonardo da Vinci, Walt Whitman, and Rabindranath Tagore at Soka University in Japan encourage those on campus to engage in dialogue with these individuals, their accomplishments, and their struggles, the buildings at SUA play a similar role. When I was a student at SUA, we created panel exhibitions explaining the life and achievements of these individuals as a way to start dialogue on the mission and values of SUA during Student Festival, an event created for students to discuss the founding principles of the university.

Returning to the campus tour, there are several tables and chairs surrounding the grass area. As I walk toward the library, I see some students sitting at these tables, either talking in a group or alone reading or working on their laptop. However, overall, the campus is quiet with very few students walking around. Cafeteria is also quiet except during the designated meal times. Many faculty and students come to the cafeteria for lunch directly after class, so I saw some of them engaging in conversation while waiting in line together. Inside the cafeteria, I found one or two tables where all the staff members seemed to sit together. However, there were also some students sitting with the staff. At one of the tables outside the cafeteria was a group of faculty always sitting together. There were also some tables outside where some faculty and

students sat together. Even in January, the warm southern California weather allowed peopled to sit outside during lunch on many days.

Behind the cafeteria is a pathway leading to the residence halls. There are eight residence halls and one new hall under construction. Some residence halls have double rooms where two students share the bedroom and the bathroom, while some halls have suite rooms where two students each have their own bedroom and share a bathroom in the middle. The latter type of halls also have several single rooms. All residence halls have a mutipurpose room, pantry, laundry room, and a living room. Some halls also have a multifaith room and an exercise room.

Surrounding all of these parts of the campus described so far is a circular road, which is the only road on campus that cars can drive through. Along this road and around the campus are many Califronia native plants, such as woolly bluecurls and California brittlebush. As I was walking along this road especially in the morning, I saw people from the community jogging or walking on campus. As we passed each other, many of them greeted me with a friendly "Hi!" I also saw the facilities staff in blue shirts riding their carts, who also often waved at me and asked, "How are you?" Walking this road all the way to the back of the campus takes me to the Alumni Center where I stayed. In the same area as the Alumni Center are the antheneum and a guest house. There is also a Soka Instructional Garden, which is a facility that supports academic programs in the Environmenral Studies concentration through instruction in composting and gardening (Soka University of America, n.d.-i).

Curriculum

SUA is founded on "the Buddhist principles of peace, human rights and the sanctity of life" with a non-sectarian curriculum (Soka University of America, n.d.-g). It was first opened in 1994, in Calabasas, CA. At that time, the university offered only a graduate program in teaching

English as a second language. SUA opened again in 2001 as a four-year liberal arts college in Aliso Viejo, CA. Currently it offers a BA in Liberal Arts and MA in Educational Leadership for Societal Change. SUA's undergraduate program, the faculty of which are the focus of this study, was established with the mission of fostering "a steady stream of global citizens committed to living a contributive life" (Soka University of America, n.d.-g). Ikeda provided this mission as the university's founder.

One of the most notable aspects of SUA's academic environment is the small class size. The average class size is 12 and student/faculty ratio is 8:1 (Soka University of America, n.d.-c), but some participants reported having a class as small as five. Seven of the ten participants noted the importance of having small class sizes for developing personal connections with students, getting to know and adapt to students' interests, and creating a dialogic classroom. In addition to the small class size, four participants noted the small teaching load compared to institutions where they previously taught. Because there are summer and winter blocks, full-time faculty are required to teach only two courses per semester. This teaching load and the small class sizes allow faculty to spend more time planning quality classes and interacting with and providing quality feedback to each student individually.

SUA offers one undergraduate degree, a BA in Liberal Arts. On SUA's website, the curriculum is presented as three concentric circles: general education in the outer circle, a concentration in the middle, and capstone at the center (Soka University of America, n.d.-l). General education consists of Core: Enduring Questions, Modes of Inquiry, Pacific Basin, American Experience, Writing and Communication, Science and Mathematics, Creative Arts, Creativity Forum, Health and Wellness, Language and Culture, Study Abroad (required for all students), and Learning Clusters. Most if not all faculty are required to teach general education

courses, such as Core, Pacific Basin, and Learning Cluster, outside of their discipline. SUA currently offers concentrations in Humanities, International Studies, Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Environmental Studies, with the addition of Life Sciences starting in Fall 2020. The capstone is the culminating research project in the students' senior year in which students formulate and investigate research questions in their chosen topic. Although specific requirements vary by concentration, many students conduct original research by collecting data. Below I will explain some of the unique aspects of SUA's general education requirements.

Core is a two-course sequence designed to explore humanity's enduring questions, such as "what is a good and righteous life?," as a way "to accurately identify and comprehend the issues of our changing world, as well as to lead a consciously contributive life" (Soka University of America, n.d.-b). Heffron (2009) attributes Core's focus on examining humanity's enduring questions to the question Ikeda posed to Toda on their first encounter: "What is the correct way of life?" Furthermore, although faculty and students may not be aware of the connections, the language of "contributive life" is clearly an implicit reference to Makiguchi's (1981-1988, Vols. 5-6) notion that a genuinely happy life is that of contributive life. Core I is offered during the Fall Block in August, and it is the very first course all freshman students must take prior to the start of the Fall Semester. During the Fall Block, freshmen are the only students on campus. Core I is an intensive 3.5-week course with a 3-hour class every day, exploring ancient texts from both East and West. It is a seminar-style class and is capped at 12 students in order for students to engage in critical thinking and discussion. Core I is a class in which some faculty, including some of the participants of this study, use texts by Makiguchi, such as Vicotria assigning *Education for Creative Living*, which is Bethel's edition of Makiguchi's *The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy*.

Another unique aspect of SUA's curriculum is the mandatory study abroad (see Goulah, 2012d). SUA students must take a minimum of four courses in a chosen language—other than their own—from among Chinese, French, Japanese, and Spanish in their first and second years. They then spend one semester of their junior year studying in a country—again, not their own—where that language is spoken. This compulsory study abroad is included in their university tuition (Soka University of America, n.d.-j). Ikeda clearly states that international travel and language proficiency are not markers of global citizenship; however, as Goulah (2010f, 2012d) indicates, SUA's compulsory language curriculum and study abroad experience are *curricular means* of fostering Ikeda's ideal of cosmopolitanism and, more important, opportunities for dialogic engagement with difference as the means to human becoming (see also Soka University of America, n.d.-d).

The Learning Cluster is another unique aspect of SUA's curriculum. According to a participant who was one of the founding faculty of the university, the idea of Learning Cluster came up at the earliest stages of developing SUA's curriculum. Offered during the 3.5-week period of the Winter Block in January, it is "an immersive exploration of a problem of interest to faculty and students who co-design unique courses" (Soka University of America, n.d.-e). Learning Cluster offers an opportunity for students to propose and create unique courses on topics of their interest, and this has led to the creation of at least two courses that focused on reading, analyzing, and applying works by and on Makiguchi, Toda, and/or Ikeda. A travel grant by the Nieves Foundation is awarded for up to five courses each year, which has allowed students to study in Japan, Ghana, Argentina, South Korea, Brazil, Peru, among other countries, and in a number of cities in the United States (Soka University of America, n.d.-e). According to the explanation of Learning Clusters on SUA's website, many Learning Clusters tackle issues of

social justice and study marginalized communities, which provides "an opportunity to journey across cultures and to explore a wide swath of ideas, embodying the 'imaginative empathy' characteristic of global citizenship" (Soka University of America, n.d.-e). Although it does not cite Ikeda in this explanation, "imaginative empathy" is clearly a reference to the English translation of Ikeda's 1996 speech at Teacher's College, Columbia University (Ikeda, 2010b, 2014; see also Goulah, 2020). Because the Learning Cluster provides unique learning environments and experiences different from typical courses (even at SUA), it deserves a separate treatment, so a sub-case of one Learning Cluster is examined in the next chapter.

Faculty

There were many aspects of the university pertaining to faculty that came up in the interview that are not directly related to answering the question of good teaching, but nonetheless critical in enabling what they do. Many participants mentioned good faculty resources as one of the decisive factors in accepting the job offer at SUA. In particular, many felt supported by the administration, particularly around creating and developing new courses. Gregory noted that he had never heard of a course like Music and Ecology with the particular interdisciplinary focus of the one he was able to launch at SUA. He emphasized that it would have been much harder to begin such a course at any of the institutions he was familiar with.

There seems to be an increasingly stronger community formed among faculty in recent years. SUA hired a new Dean of Faculty in 2017, and since then he has initiated various professional development programs for faculty. One is a series focused on teaching development. With input from new and junior faculty, brown bag discussions on specific themes have been conducted. At the time of the data collection, the first one on student involvement in course creation had been conducted and the second one on mentoring among faculty was being planned.

Through such programs, as well as through tenure and promotion processes, many participants mentioned that there is an expectation for good teaching above anything else. Therefore, many of these professors called themselves "teachers."

Along with teaching development programs, there are also newly created research development programs. One such program is the Faculty Author series, which is an opportunity for faculty to share their recent research and for other faculty to hear about their colleagues' work. One of the talks happened to be on the evening I arrived on campus for data collection. It took place at the athenaeum, a building next to the alumni center where I stayed. These buildings are far from the main part of the campus and are usually very quiet, but I saw car after car coming, and the parking lot in front of the athenaeum was full. This is a great indication of the community formed among the faculty at SUA. Some of the participants of this study also shared that many senior faculty voluntarily come to support the new faculty orientation to greet and offer advice.

Besides these official faculty development programs, one of the factors that seem to have facilitated informal faculty interaction is the placement of faculty offices. The faculty offices are currently spread out in Pauling, Ikeda, and Maathai halls. However, the offices are not divided by disciplines or concentrations; rather, faculty offices are intermingled across concentrations. Raymond stated, "because we are all sort of spread and dispersed and intermixed with each other, that creates a very different environment and set of interactions." He also shared that he engages in informal discussions on teaching with faculty from various disciplines at the lunch table in the cafeteria. During my stay on campus, I also witnessed many faculty members sitting together in the cafeteria, sometimes also including students.

There are also two unique aspects of SUA that many participants brought up as facilitating faculty-student interactions beyond the classroom. One is the Faculty in Residence Program. Every year, one faculty lives in a residence hall "to support the students whether in their adjustment to campus life or assistance with their studies" (Soka University of America, n.d.-h). About half of the ten participants have been a faculty resident in the past. A recent faculty resident, Brandon, specifically mentioned that living in the residence hall and supporting the Scholars Peak program, a residence hall-based program for the freshman class to learn academic skills and receive academic support, was a great way to get to know students beyond those who took his courses and to offer students support with issues not related to course content such as time management. He shared that these students later recommended their friends to go see Brandon when they were struggling.

Another noteworthy aspect is that many faculty hire undergraduate students as their research assistants and take them to academic conferences. These are made possible through funding provided by the university and the respective concentrations. Three participants shared that the relationship they formed with their research assistants was much stronger than just having them in class, and that it became more like a mentorship. One participant recalled a time when he took two of his capstone students to a conference in Las Vegas and went out for a nice dinner at a French restaurant. He still remembers the way one student, who wrote a paper on food, "broke and savored the bread." He also said it is such a wonderful experience witnessing students gain confidence in presenting their research and engaging with scholars. Another participant also shared that he is working with two students to publish their research from data collected during the previous year's Learning Cluster course. Having taught at other institutions

prior to coming to SUA, many participants shared that it is quite unusual and remarkable to be able to do these things with undergraduate students.

Students

Demographically, SUA students are diverse. According to the 2020 *U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges Rankings*, SUA ranked #1 in most international students and #2 in campus ethnic diversity (U.S. News & World Report, 2019). Among the total student population of approximately 450 students, about 40% are international students from more than 45 countries (Soka University of America, n.d.-c). One of the unique aspects of student life at SUA is that all students live together on campus. Even those who come from the local communities are required to live on campus as part of SUA's education. According to SUA's website, residence halls are more than "dormitories." They are "a dynamic environment offering living and learning opportunities for residents to share intellectual and educational goals and grow through community engagement, interpersonal relationships and social interaction within a diverse community" (Soka University of America, n.d.-h). Residence halls offer programs such as Scholar's Peak (themed housing) and Faculty in Residence as mentioned in the previous section. There is also one cafeteria where all students and many faculty eat together. It is said on campus that this reflects Ikeda's belief that most of education happens outside the classroom by interacting and living together with people who are different from oneself.

Another unique aspect of student life at SUA is the degree of student involvement in shaping SUA's curriculum. Besides the Learning Clusters where students can create their own courses, in the early years of the university, there were other opportunities through the Soka Student Union's Academic Department for students to voice their opinions to influence the curriculum. Realizing that the course evaluation completed at the end of the semester does not

benefit the students who were enrolled that semester, the Academic Department created a mid-semester survey and encouraged all faculty to implement it so that there is an opportunity for students to provide feedback before the semester ends. One participant, Lucy, in particular, emphasized the importance and effectiveness of this mid-semester survey as opposed to the official semeseter-end course evaluations because it directly benefits the students who are taking the course at that time.

Another initiative taken by the Academic Department as recalled by Scott was creating an option for students to request a narrative evaluation in place of the traditional letter grade from their instructors. This proposal was created on the basis that narrative evaluations resonated better with Makiguchi and Ikeda's ideas of valuing the unique strengths of each student and helping them grow as learners and as human beings. Although this did not get approved in the end, it did make it to faculty council.

Tom, who was one of the faculty in charge of institutional research and assessment, recalled that when SUA was under initial review by WASC and had to create institutional learning outcomes, student representatives were involved along with faculty and administration. Besides such official student involvement, most participants noted that both formal and informal student feedback was crucial in shaping and improving various aspects of teaching, such as their course structure, instructional methods, and grading system.

Another notable aspect of SUA's students that many participants identified is their interest and passion to study the founding principles of the university and the educational theories of Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda. One student organization that has been studying and spreading these ideas most explicitly is the Soka Education Student Research Project (SESRP). SESRP is a student-initiated and student-run organization founded in 2004 with the goals "to

establish Soka Education as an acknowledged field of research, to develop a centralized source and venue for information and discussion on Soka Education, and to build and maintain relationships with other institutions to promote Soka Education" (Soka Education Student Research Project, n.d.). Since then, SESRP has organized an annual Soka Education Conference, created a number of exhibition panels and videos to be shown at events such as SUA's International Festival and the Student Festival, conducted study meetings for SUA students and faculty, and organized events at a neighborhood library. The Soka Education Conference initially started as a venue for students and faculty to investigate practices and policies on campus relative to the educational theories of Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda, but the conference has recently drawn local educators and emerging and established scholars in the field. A number of DePaul faculty and doctoral students, for example, have presented at this conference. Many of the participants in this study were actively involved in the conference in many capacities such as a presenter, workshop and panel organizer, reviewer, and opening and closing speaker over the years, and they attributed this conference as one of the important sources of learning about the ideas of Makiguchi and Ikeda. Some participants also mentioned that they learned about Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda through the exhibition panels and by attending the study meetings organized by the SESRP.

Besides the SESRP, a committee under the Academic Department of the Soka Student Union called Ikeda Speech Discussion was also created to explicitly discuss Ikeda's ideas on education. Whereas the SESRP has a more academic focus exploring the theories relative to practices in and outside SUA, Ikeda Speech Discussion primarily focuses on informally discussing Ikeda's speeches and essays as a way to explore and understand the founding spirit of the university. Except for a few Learning Clusters in the past, there is no course at SUA that

explicitly teaches the educational philosophies and practices of Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda. Because of such circumstances, students created the abovementioned extracurricular venues to study and explore these ideas on their own and, according to many participants, students who are involved in these projects are the ones often initiating a conversation with faculty on what it means to practice “Soka education.”

CHAPTER 5: THE "BEING" AND "DOING" OF A "GOOD TEACHER"

This chapter presents the findings to describe SUA faculty's perspectives on the "being" and "doing" of a "good teacher." Even though I have used the terms "being" and "doing" as separate categories thus far, I would like to make it clear here that these are not two separate categories but, as Ming Fang He (personal communication) put it during my in-progress dissertation presentation before the Ikeda Center Education Fellows advisory board, they are in a dialogic relation. Dialogic relation here means that who we are (our fundamental beliefs and attitudes) determines what kinds of actions we take, and in turn, our actions now determine who we become. If we are not acting or cannot act according to our beliefs due to some external factors, it is as if we are in what Jim Garrison (personal communication during the same Ikeda Center presentation) calls a "schizophrenic situation." The context of SUA presented in Chapter 4 makes it possible for faculty to avoid this "schizophrenic situation" and unify their "being" and "doing." Therefore, the themes presented in this chapter include both of these aspects.

Based on thematic analysis of interviews, class observations, and documents such as syllabi, institutional learning outcomes, and the university's website, three main themes emerged: 1) educating human beings and building character, 2) guiding students to co-create knowledge and meaning, and 3) critical self-reflection and continuous improvement. Within each of these themes, there are underlying beliefs and attitudes ("being"), as well as concrete actions taken both in and outside the classroom ("doing"). Below, I present the findings and reserve the discussion of the findings relative to the literature for Chapter 7.

Educating Human Beings and Building Character

The first theme is educating human beings and building character. This section starts with the sub-theme of respecting students as human beings. This is the "being," or the belief, of the

teacher that underlies this entire section. There are several concrete actions that emerged from the interviews and observations as a way to put this belief into practice. These include developing trusting relationships, encouraging students, and showing vulnerability. This section ends with the discussion on respect for difference, which is something that these participants strove both to practice themselves and cultivate in students. This includes designing assignments and discussions that deepen students' understanding of diverse perspectives and develop their capacity to engage with those who are different. When asked about the aim of education and what it means to be a "good teacher," eight out of ten participants described at least one of the abovementioned sub-themes or practices.

Respecting Students as Equal Human Beings

The attitude of fundamental respect for each and every student underlies the participants' effort to educate their students to grow as human beings. When asked about the aim of education and the quality of a "good teacher," Gregory answered, "The part of education that I hold critical is an attitude of fundamental respect for and treasuring each person, each student." Paul echoed this perspective that "humanity of students is central" to education. He further explained that "respecting and honoring the humanity of whoever they are interacting with, whether they are students or anyone else" should be the approach people take in their life in general. Scott stated that he strove to "interact with students at a 'human' level." He did not elaborate, but fieldnotes from observations of Scott's class, indicate that he was sharing stories of his daughter and how he interacted with her at home. Also, during class discussion, when a student made a comment, Scott responded, "I think I heard you said ___. Or am I just projecting what I wanted to hear?" As a way to "overcome [perceived hierarchical] barriers to relate to students," Scott explained

during the follow-up interview that "one of [his] favorite things to do is to try and repeat back to someone what they have been saying and asking them if [he has] got it right."

Among all the participants, Lucy discussed this aspect in most detail. When asked for her views on respecting students, she stated,

> I shouldn't have fixed ideas about certain students. This is a good student or this is a not-so-good student, depending on their scores or the efforts *I* feel they are making. I don't know how much effort they have made to reach this level, so I just try to treat every student the same in terms of the respect and the time I want to spend with them.

She further stated, "every student I see, I consider him or her a future global citizen." However, fostering global citizens starts from teachers believing in the students:

> As a teacher, I want to encourage students to learn and to improve themselves in terms of knowledge and commitment to the mission. First of all, [students] need to be treated like a valuable person, and then I think they will work very hard to learn better and to improve themselves so that they can contribute to society and other people.

Lucy concluded, "As a teacher, I'd like to make every student think that they are worthy."

Developing Trusting Relationships and Encouraging Students

The attitude of respecting students' humanity is manifested through developing trusting relationships. When asked about the characteristics of a "good teacher," eight participants—Tom, Scott, Lucy, Brandon, Paul, Gregory, Wendy, and Raymond—used adjectives such as "trustworthy," "supportive," "open-minded," "empathetic," and "honest" because these qualities are important in "building rapport" and "developing trusting relationships with students." Seven of them discussed that these relationships serve as the basis for them to encourage students when students face difficulties both in class and in their personal lives. Lucy, Paul, Gregory, and

Raymond also discussed their role in helping students gain confidence. Lucy, in particular, stated, "I think as a teacher, it's important to give students the kind of confidence so they would not waste their time doubting themselves." She said she "observe[s] students very closely, and then gave the following example of encouraging students who lacked confidence.

> [This student] is very very quiet in the classroom, and he always sits by me. I knew that he worked hard because the stories [in the textbook] are all marked, so he has read it, but he just didn't talk. But, I asked him to talk. When he started, he was very nervous, but he gradually loosened up. [Later,] when he came to my office, he said, "Actually, I wanted you to call on me." If I want to respect students, it doesn't mean that I just do whatever they *seem* to want. This student didn't want to stay quiet, but he needed some courage, needed encouragement to stand up and talk.

There were several ways in which participants were observed to have developed relationships with students. The most common practice occurred in brief and informal interactions before and after class. For example, I witnessed Tom talking with students on topics such as sports and family before each class I observed. Brandon greeted each student as they walked into class. Because Brandon was the organizer for the Critical Conversations with Amy Goodman held the previous night, students greeted him with comments such as, "It was a great event!" and "You did a great job last night!" He also stayed after class to talk to one student who appeared unwell in class. After Scott's class, students discussed plans to go see a movie together that was related to the course content, and they asked if Scott was interested in going.

Because SUA is a small and intimate campus, there are also opportunities outside of class for faculty and students to interact in informal ways. As discussed in the previous chapter, each year one faculty lives in the residence hall. Brandon shared how living on campus helped him

develop relationships with students outside of their class. He shared the following story during the interview.

> I met [with students in Scholar's Peak] during Core. I think this meeting was probably during the first week of Core I. They've been in two college class sessions. And I said to the students if you have any questions, if you ever want to just talk, if you want to talk about college, time management, how to succeed and all this…come and see me. I did not expect someone to come in the next day. [A student] was at the door. Sit down, we talked. Like a week later, he came back…I had a student who emailed me the other day and said, "I'm having a lot of problems. I'm having problems with time management. I know I've never taken you for a class, but I've heard that you can help with time management. Can I come and see you?" So, the student comes in. About half way through, she told me who told her to come and see me. It was [the first student].

Through this story, Brandon gave the following three points as ways to develop relationships with students.

> The first thing I think you have to do is you have to say come and see me. Come and see me, let's talk. Come and see me, I'd like to get to know you. The second thing is you have to be there when they come and see you. And the third thing is when they come and see you, you have to *be* there, like not just physically but like "I'm here."

As also discussed in the previous chapter, hiring students as their research assistants was another way in which Brandon, Oliver, and Tom developed deeper relationships with students.

Additionally, there are other opportunities such as gym classes on campus, which are open to faculty, staff, and students. For example, Lucy recalled a time when she attended yoga classes. While she struggled to do even the simplest pose, one of her struggling students easily

did all poses and was often asked by the yoga teacher to demonstrate for other students. She analyzed what was happening in the following way:

> I like it because our roles change. In the classroom, I was the authority and she was a struggling student, but in yoga class, I was the struggling student and she was an excellent student…I think it makes me closer to my students, and it actually encourages students from another perspective because we all have advantages and shortcomings. And we are all human.

With a big smile, Lucy said, "I remember after every class, she asked, 'Are you going to go to yoga?' and I said, 'Yeah!'"

Besides these informal and spontaneous interactions, three participants discussed how they made conscious plans to get to know students and develop trusting relationships in class. The most formalized and organized plan was what Gregory called "tutorials." Tutorials are 15-minnute one-on-one sessions with each student. He explains,

> The tutorials…gives the students a chance to speak about any challenges they are having with the course material, and often times when the students come with questions, my job is not to answer the questions but to give them the confidence that they can learn the answers to those questions themselves. I can't really do this in a classroom setting with a whole lot of people because saying something that might address one person might be the completely opposite of what someone else needs to hear. So that's where this kind of format is really valuable.

He converts three to four class sessions into tutorials throughout the semester. Even if it is 15 minutes per student and with the small class size of 18 students, it takes close to five hours to meet with every student. However, Gregory stated that these tutorials give him opportunities to

really get to know each student, especially those who are not very vocal in class. "You only really learn when you get to talk one-on-one," and he concluded, "I feel to be a good teacher…more important than any knowledge I can transmit is that I can inspire students to want to learn and to have the confidence that they can."

Although not as formalized as Gregory's tutorials, Lucy also asserted that it was crucial to talk with each student. As a language teacher, she said she plans pair work to practice speaking the target language. When I observed her class, the classroom was set up in a U-shape. During pair work, Lucy walked inside the "U," moving from one pair to another to check in with each student, not only on their understanding of the content but also on how they are doing in general. During a follow-up interview, she said, "If I find a student that looks different—for example, if the student is tired—I will just ask them."

Scott brought up a unique aspect of what he considered important in building rapport with students. One thing he does is to "invite students to use [his] first name." Although there is already a culture at SUA for students to address professors by their first name, for Scott, this is a conscious attempt to "make things a little less formal." However, this does not mean that he is not aware of the inherent hierarchy:

> That does not mean putting on an empty pretense that I'm not somehow the professor because they know that's just not true. They understand full well that no matter what I say in this room, I will still have the power and I will execute the power of submitting a grade…So I have to deconstruct that.

During the interview, Scott also stated that as a white male who teaches a course on African American Studies, he makes "students, especially the minority students, aware of [his] consciousness of [his] own racial position in the room," although he said, "I never know how

exactly effective it is." In one of the classes I observed, an African American student commented how he felt appreciative that they could freely talk about African American issues in this class and that the non-African American classmates offered their perspectives.

Showing Vulnerability

A third theme across the participants is a willingness to show vulnerability. Related to the theme of developing relationships with students and encouraging them not to give up is showing vulnerability. Two participants, Brandon and Scott, explicitly cited vulnerability as a quality of a "good teacher," by which they meant that they are "not perfect." Others, such as Lucy, Gregory, and Raymond, did not use the term vulnerability but nonetheless discussed similar beliefs about showing their imperfection, using words such as "teachers are first of all learners," "having humility," and "recognition of [my] limits." With regard to the former, Brandon discussed teacher vulnerability with the most articulation and thought. He recalled one of his favorite professors he had as a student, and the reason why he was so drawn to this professor was because he was vulnerable in front of his students. "[He wasn't] 'Mr. Professor.' He talked about his failures, about things that went wrong. It drew me in because [he] was like a regular person." Recognizing that most college students are under a lot of stress and pressure, he explained, "I think they need somebody who's not perfect. They need to know that we are not perfect." As an example, he showed me a manuscript he sent to a publisher for review, which is all marked up and has comments such as "tortuously formulated, clumsily analyzed." Whenever a student struggling with writing comes to his office, he shows them this manuscript as a way to encourage them to be resilient and keep trying. Brandon concluded, "Students love the vulnerability. They love my version of vulnerability."

Scott similarly explained the importance of showing vulnerability as a way to relate to students. During the interview he stated that he shows vulnerability by "admitting places where I just don't know" and "showing them that I am not a perfect speller." During one of the classes I observed, he wrote a word on the board but then had to look up the word and edit the spelling. During the follow-up interview, he explained,

> You have to let them see vulnerability… If I show them too much of that, then I'm delegitimizing myself in front of the room. But if you show people enough of that kind of vulnerability, enough of human frailty, you are not such an intimidating figure anymore, and I do not want to be intimidating.

Although Lucy did not use the term vulnerability, she acted in a similar manner to Scott. During one of the classes I observed, Lucy was explaining how to use the Chinese phrase "有的…有的…," which means "some are…and some are…" Lucy gave the sentence frame and demonstrated its usage by usings students' country of origin as an example (e.g., Some students come from the U.S. and some come from Japan). One student asked if they could add more information that the students come from many different countries. Lucy posed for a moment and said that she "hadn't thought through this." Then, Lucy wrote "我的同学从不同的国家来" (My classmates come from many different countries) on the board and explain that they can add this before "有的…有的…" After this, another student asked if this sentence can be stated as "我的同学有的从…有的从…" (Some of my classmates come from…some come from…). Upon hearing this, Lucy exclaimed, "This is actually a better sentence! Great job!" with a big smile. In the follow-up interview, Lucy stated, "Sometimes I make mistakes and students laugh, but I think it makes the atmosphere of the classroom more relaxed, so it's good."

Cultivating Respect for Difference

Another concrete way in which these participants strove to help students grow as human beings and develop character was by both modeling respect for differences themselves and helping students develop respect for differences through class assignments and discussions. Some of the examples of modeling respect for differences were shared earlier under the theme of respecting students as equal human beings regardless of their cultural and educational backgrounds or how well they do in class. There are also examples shared later under the theme of critical self-reflection and continuous improvement. These include Scott and Wendy changing their participation criteria and assessment and Raymond changing his course structure to include more interactive and creative pedagogy to adapt to student needs and preferences. Therefore, here I will share some examples of course assignments that these participants created in order to help students develop respect for differences that exist among each other and cultivate imaginative empathy for those who are different beyond the SUA community.

One assignment that was born out of SUA's uniquely diverse student population is Wendy's oral history assignment. In her Writing 101 course, she asks students to interview one of their relatives or close family friends, and then research an aspect of their experience that they discover in the interviewing process. This assignment not only helps students who have little previous experience writing formal research papers feel more comfortable, but she also explained the benefits in the following way:

> I think the fact that we have so many international students, it would be irresponsible of me as a faculty member if I didn't create a space and the types of activities that invite in all of these different perspectives because this is where students and myself can learn from other personal experiences, and those are some of my favorite times in the class.

She stated that this assignment is something she created specifically for SUA students "to really take advantage of the huge variety of perspectives in the classroom and different cultural backgrounds." She also added that she would not have been able to do it at other institutions at which she previously taught due to their class size, teaching load, and pace of the course.

Whereas Wendy's assignment was to expose students to and learn from the differences that exist among themselves, Lucy's course encourages students to understand common roots as human beings despite cultural and religious differences. In one of the classes I observed, students were making presentations on one aspect of Tibetan people. The presentations included topics such as food, dance, architecture, and religion. One that was especially interesting was burial rituals that revealed their perspectives on life and death. This presentation led to a discussion on burial rituals from various cultures. She later explained in the interview that one student had led a presentation and discussion on issues in Tibet the previous week, but she realized that students did not know enough about the Tibetan people; therefore, she asked each student to learn and present about one aspect of the people that day before moving onto the next topic. "When they know the people more, they become more real to them" and it is important "to understand the group, the people, that they are just like us," she asserted. According to an analysis of her syllabus, Lucy also often uses authentic literature and film from the target culture to help students understand the common human characteristic, such as love, tolerance, and sympathy. She expressed her belief that foreign language has the function to build students' character to contribute to the world because "it tries to connect students to another culture and open the whole world to them." Even in her Learning Cluster, which is different from her typical language course, she chose to explore the topic of death. As death is something that everyone faces and yet is often not discussed, Lucy explained her choice of the topic as follows: "I think it's a great idea

to explore death so that we can face it directly, and then to think about how are we going to live our lives." An analysis of her syllabus indicates that she invited a scholar of Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda to present their ideas of death. It seems that Lucy's consistent approach is to help students develop respect for difference through not only learning the differences, but also understanding human commonality.

Oliver also consciously and explicitly strove to help students cultivate their wisdom, courage, and compassion through his course. Although he does not always use the terms wisdom, courage, and compassion, he introduces the concept of global citizenship to students as human capacities "to acknowledge common ground despite differences (wisdom), to be able to confront differences without negating them (courage), and to embrace differences across time and space (compassion)." He explained that these are directly derived from Ikeda's (2010b) explanation of wisdom, courage, and compassion in his speech on global citizenship. Concretely, he said that he uses role-play to cultivate these capacities. Especially in upper division peace studies courses, Oliver stated that he tries to "provide [students] with as real a scenario as possible so that even though they are in a classroom, they can start imagining what it feels like to engage in [peace negotiation] with the other side, with the enemy that they haven't seen." "Cultivating the sense of 'empathetic imagination,'" he states, directly quoting Ikeda's (2010b, p. 112) focus on empathy, "is something I would like to achieve."

Although not a planned assignment as the three examples above, some seemingly spontaneous anecdotes Tom shared in class also seemed to have contributed to helping students cultivate respect and compassion for those who are different. In the midst of explaining the sociobiological theory in psychology, he paused and shared an anecdote from when he was a student learning about it. He shared how his professor asked what happens if something, such as

a sudden new epidemic that inflicts humans with certain genes, occurred and put humanity in danger of extinction. This professor shared that people with different genes, such as people with autism, might be the ones to save the human species. He shared how such a perspective made him think very differently of people with autism or other differences and developed a new sense of appreciation for them. Observation notes indicate that Tom was doing more than merely teaching theories; I noted his commitment in that moment to helping students grow as compassionate people. In another class I observed, using the language of goal orientation theory (another theory covered in his psychology class), Tom articulated the difference between confidence and arrogance. "Confidence comes from mastery orientation," he shared, "whereas arrogance comes from performance orientation and is always dependent on others." He encouraged students to develop confidence by seeking mastery orientation.

The examples introduced in this section were all tied to the specific subject matter the participants taught, but they aimed at a larger goal of helping students grow into people who can respect and appreciate differences. The next theme, however, is much more closely connected to the specific courses they teach because the goal is for students to make meaning of and use the knowledge and skills they learned in the particular course.

Guiding Students to Co-Create Knowledge and Meaning

The second theme across participants is their efforts to guide students to co-create knowledge and meaning. This section also starts with the "being" of the teacher that underlies this entire section, which is viewing the teacher as a guide and students as active agents. Such a belief manifested in several different ways, which is the "doing" of the teacher. One such practice is the application of learning and scaffolding. The other is creating dialogic spaces in the classroom. In addition to regular classroom discussions, I address the notion of giving "voice" to

students and providing immediate and detailed feedback under this sub-theme of dialogue. All ten participants described one of the abovementioned sub-themes when asked about what it means to be a "good teacher."

Teacher as a Guide and Students as Active Agents

The fundamental belief that enables students to co-create knowledge and meaning is that the teacher's role is a guide and facilitator in this joint journey, or, as Scott put it during our interview, "a sense of being in a project together." Brandon similarly shared that he tells students not to worry when they are confused or do not have the answers because "we'll get lost together, we'll get found." Raymond expressed a similar belief in his interview, first negating the idea of students being empty vessels and adding:

> It's more of a merging through the dialogic process…even if [students] were kind of vessels, they come in all shapes and sizes and so I think what I'm getting at is that to truly respect students as key active participants in more of a two-way or a multi-way process, rather than a one-way teacher to students in which [the teacher] knows the one path.

Gregory expressed a similar belief in the interviews:

> In our typical education system in the U.S., the teacher-student relationship is often very uneven in terms of power. That is, faculty members are supposed to be experts. They are supposed to transmit that expert knowledge to students, and then to evaluate students' ability to demonstrate absorption of that knowledge. For me, the teachers I learned the most from—the things I carry with me and use today—were those who conveyed their passion and interest in the subject and took the stance of a co-learner and co-explorer with me.

Raymond, as another example, in one of the interviews shared a metaphor of sailing a ship to describe such a relationship and process.

> I mean you got the sails up, but the wind is changing, and some sails need to go up and some sails need to go down, and you need to turn the wheel. To keep the sailing ship going in the right direction, you just have to be very attentive to all the little parts and…you might be a captain in it, but if you are by yourself, the ship would not go anywhere. It's over, right? I mean it depends on everybody playing the role and running the different parts of the ship. That's how I see [teacher-student relationship] as a metaphor.

Application of Learning

One element under the theme of guiding students to co-create knowledge and meaning focuses on "guiding" and "creating" aspects. Out of the ten participants, nine described assignments that require students to apply what they learned in class. Within the category of such application-based assignments, I found three distinct types. One type asks students to evaluate and form their own positions for a certain issue based on facts and theories they learned in class. This was most prevalent as it could be easily incorporated into various disciplines and even in introductory level courses. The second type is project-based assignments that ask students to directly apply the learned skills. The final type are open and creative projects in which students engage in empirical research and other inquiries based on their interests. This type of assignment was more common in upper level courses.

The first and most common type of application-based assignment is for students to formulate their own position on a certain issue. There are numerous examples of such an assignment, so I present just a few of them here. In the interview, Oliver described his use of

case studies of peace negotiations. After being introduced to the existing debates, or competing explanations, students are encouraged to have their own debate so that they can discover and form their own positions relative to the existing discourse. Brandon likewise said, "The most important thing to me is that the students make an argument and support it with evidence." Although he provides foundational knowledge to understand basics of American government and politics, his assignments ask students to evaluate others' claims and the existing research in order to formulate their own arguments. For example, one of the paper prompts in his syllabus asks the following:

> Describe how President Donald J. Trump interacts with the media. Then, explain why he interacts with the media in this fashion. According to scholarly research (academic books, refereed-journal articles, professional conference papers), how did previous presidents interact with the media? According to scholarly research, why did they interact in this way? How and why is Trump different from previous presidents? What do the answers to these questions tell us about the presidency and media in the United States, in general? What other broad lessons do the answers teach us about American government and politics?

In order to write this paper, students not only have to search and learn the scholarly research on this topic, but they also have to answer the how and why questions from their own perspective. Even on exams, Brandon asks students to present their opinions. In the interview, he said he gives a hypothetical scenario with similar previous cases. Students must make their own claim based on these previous cases, but there is no one "correct" answer. On a more personal level of application, Lucy shared that after studying contemporary issues in China, one Japanese student

decided to write a paper on what she can do to contribute to the improvement of Japan-China relations given the political context between the two countries.

The next type of application-based assignment is a direct application of learned skill to a certain project. While the previous type of forming positions is common in humanities and many disciplines in the social sciences, this skill-based application was more common in math and science-oriented disciplines. For example, in a computer science course (which is under the course title of MATH) in which students learned the basics of coding, Victoria designed assignments throughout the semester for students to create their own games using the coding skills they learned. The complexity of the game they created increased as the semester progressed. Similarly, Paul shared during the interview that in his astronomy class, he created assignments in which students had to "adopt" a star, planet, and a galaxy. As they learned the characteristics of each of these, they had to then research and present on the star, planet, and galaxy that they adopted. For example, when they adopted a galaxy, they had to use the telescope to observe, take a picture, and reduce data for this galaxy. To do this, they had to apply the skills both to use the devices and to use mathematic formulas they learned in class. In a similar but slightly different manner, Tom stated during the interview that he designed assignments for students to apply psychological theories to real-world issues. Accordign to his syllabus, for this assignment, students must find an article from a popular magazine or newspaper about a current issue, such as obesity, depression, and reactions to natural disasters, that involves psychological concepts learned in class. They then have to find research on the same topic published in a peer-reviewed psychology journal to present how psychological research can be applied to real world problems. Students are also responsible for creating an exam question based on this presentation.

The final type of application-based assignment is open and creative projects. One such example was from Gregory's music and environment studies class. During the interview, Gregory shared that one student created a film comparing the sounds in the Wood Canyon and downtown Aliso Viejo. In this project, the student brought together knowledge on ecology, music, and his interest in film-making. Gregory explained his reason for designing such flexible assignments:

> If I give that flexibility and freedom [for assignments], I have to be prepared to focus with flexibility on looking for evidence that they really thought hard and learned about the subject matter of this course. For me, that's more important than just the students' ability to produce publishable research papers because the experience of digging into something you gor excited about is what will stick with them.

He said that as long as the students can demonstrate they are addressing the learning outcomes of the course, they are free to do any project as the final assignment of this course. Another example of such a project-based assignment can be found in Tom's psychology class. He stated during one of the interviews that for his final assignment, he gave students the option either to conduct empirical research or create an exercise program where they can apply psychological theories. He said some students created a recovery program for athletes who got injured by applying the psychological theories and concepts learned in class. Although these open and extensive projects were not as prevalent than the other two types of assignments introduced here, all SUA students have the opportunity to engage in such projects through their capstone.

Nine participants discussed the importance of providing the foundation for application and guiding students toward application. Four of them specifically used the term "scaffolding" to explain this process. The various ways in which the participants discussed their approach can be

categorized into three levels: individual class sessions, semester-long course structure, and program-wide preparation.

The first level of individual class sessions includes teacher questioning, lecture, and peer support. Although most of these were pre-planned, occasionally these teachers had to spontaneously respond to students' needs. For example, Tom discussed scaffolding in terms of teacher questioning to guide students. According to my field notes, in one of his introductory level courses, the following exchange occurred as a way to introduce motivation theories in psychology.

"What kind of activities do you enjoy doing?" asks Tom.

"Reading," one student answers.

"Like psychology textbooks?" Tom responds and everyone laughs. "What kind of book do you read?" Tom continues.

"Novels." Another student responds.

"I also love reading. Every summer I have at least 3 to 5 new books I read." Tom responds and asks, "What else? Other activities you enjoy?"

"Sleeping and eating," responds another student, and yet another says, "watching films."

"What films do you watch? I am always looking for good ones." Tom asks. After many students give answers, Tom asks, "Anyone binge watch on Netflix?" Many students raise their hand and all laugh together. From here, Tom continued to ask questions that all students can easily relate and respond to, gradually leading them to key concepts in the theory. Among all the courses I observed, this class had the highest response/participation rate. In his upper division research methods class, he created a hypothetical research design to examine whether a study guide will help students raise their score on the final exam. Tom presented an example of using

just one group and asked students if this was a good research design. Students pointed out the flaws in the design. Tom then suggested a design that uses midterm scores as a comparison. Students again pointed out the flaws. Then, Tom provided another example of using the previous semester's scores and, with a smile, he said that he was addressing one of the student's criticisms. "How about this?" he asks and four students offer potential confounding variables, such as having smarter students, Tom becoming a better teacher, and environmental factors. The discussion continued in this way. During a follow-up interview, Tom explained the rationale as follows: "Posing questions, 'This is good, right? This is a great research design, right?' and then letting the students say, 'No! Tom, that's wrong!' Then, saying, 'OK, how about if I do this?'" is "what do you call it, scaffolding?"

Wendy discussed peer support as part of scaffolding. In an introductory writing class I observed, students had to read and evaluate various Op Eds. The topics were double majors in college, nuclear weapons, the #MeToo movement, and political debate between Democrats and Republicans. Before having a whole class discussion, Wendy grouped students to discuss one of the articles and present it to the class. Wendy later explained in the interview that "if some [students] are feeling lost, there's enough discussion in the room to clue them in a little bit." Although these were pre-planned activities, Lucy had to respond spontaneously. When a student asked if Chinese people are allowed to believe in their own religion, Lucy noticed that she had to explain the constitution in order to fully answer this question. Therefore, although it is not her normal style to lecture in class, she prepared a presentation for the following class in order to provide students with the foundational knowledge on the Chinese constitution.

Four participants also integrated scaffolding into their course structure. Among all the participants, Raymond discussed his course structure in most detail. According to his syllabus, he

divides all of his courses into stages of preparation and investigation. Explicitly using the language of scaffolding, he described that the preparation stage mostly consists of lectures (even though students "develop" these lectures, which will be explained in a later section) and serves as a scaffold for the investigation stage, when students create expositions, or activities, that require engagement from other students. In a similar way, in his introductory peace studies course, Oliver said that he covers some basic concepts such as peace, violence, and conflict at the beginning of the semester. Then, around week 5 or 6, he transitions to case-based discussion through real cases of conflict resolution. In an upper division course, although he spends more time on role-playing actual cases of peace negotiation, he still provides a good overview of the conflict and the theories they need to know, as well as debates and existing competing explanations of a particular case so that students can build on them.

While the scaffolding in the two abovementioned cases came in the form of lectures, Scott and Gregory discussed it in terms of feedback. Scott called his practice as "narrativising" the semester, which he explained as follows:

> This is to say, they are going to work progressively on a variety of projects…the final paper project begins with a proposal that I will review and give formative feedback on, and then rough draft…in the middle of the semester that I will give formative feedback on, and then the final paper. So again, it's organized in a narrative form. And I try to give quite extensive commentary now on each stage of it.

This focus on progress throughout the semester was also evident in his syllabus. According to his syllabus, Scott allocates 10% of the final grade to "progress on stated needs of improvement." Such individualized feedback as scaffolding could also be seen in Gregory's use of tutorials. As discussed under the very first major theme, this tutorial also helped him to learn about students

and build rapport. However, he said, as the semester progressed, tutorials "give me a handle on where students really are in the course, and then I get to prod them a little bit to get them thinking about [final projects]."

Finally, although these were minority responses, two participants discussed how their assignments served as scaffolding for the capstone project, which is beyond that particular course. For example, Brandon shared that in his courses he teaches students about the research paper format of research question, literature review, hypothesis, data and methods, findings, and implications: "In all of my classes, I'm preparing them to write the capstone." Tom also prepares students to write the capstone in his research methods course. According to his syllabus, in his research methods course, he asks students for their final assignment to create a research project proposal to include a literature review, theory, research question, hypothesis, and methods. He clearly states that this is in preparation for the capstone proposal.

Creating Dialogic Spaces in Class

Another element under the theme of guiding students to co-create knowledge and meaning focuses on the "co-" aspect. In other words, the focus is on the dialogic process both between the teacher and student and among students to create knowledge and meaning as demonstrated in Raymond's statement that "creativity is best [as a] collective process." Unlike the personal interactions between the teacher and student to build rapport introduced under the first theme, this dialogue is centered on the subject matter. Interestingly, when participants discussed the importance of discussion-oriented instruction, they placed more emphasis on students leading discussion and engaging with each other rather than the teacher facilitating the discussion. They explained that such practice gave students "voice" and also encourages them to pursue their own interests. However, many also described the importance of the teacher

providing immediate and extensive feedback, which they considered as a form of dialogue between themselves and their students.

Five participants described the importance of having student-led discussions as a way to encourage students to pursue their interests and give them "voice." Some of them had students lead discussions within the parameters of assigned readings, whereas some went as far as having students come up with the topics and assigned readings. Below, I provide examples of each of these cases.

One example of the first type of students leading discussions on assigned readings was in Wendy's course I observed. After taking care of a few housekeeping items, two students immediately took over the class and summarized the article they read for class. The student facilitators asked some questions to other students as they summarized the main points. Wendy said, "I am just writing what you said so that we can get the main ideas out," and wrote key ideas from the student presentation and discussion on the board. During this time, she rarely intervened unless students needed clarification on certain concepts. After the facilitators finished summarizing, the class divided into pairs or trios to discuss a specific part of the article. At this point, Wendy also got more involved and became a co-facilitator with the two student facilitators. During the interview, Wendy explained, "students have to take ownership of the readings and they are the ones who present them to the class, and in those situations, I'm just another participant in the discussion." In this class, students are also responsible for leading the writing workshops where the whole class reads one student's paper and provides feedback for 30 minutes.

In a similar way, Scott had one student per class session assigned to present a short summary of the reading(s) and pose discussion questions. When it came time for student-led

discussion, Scott said, “I am going to turn the floor to you” and he reminded them that he was going to “sit tight and take notes.” From this point on, the students freely and actively engaged in discussion. During one of the class sessions I observed, the students stayed on the discussion questions provided by the facilitator. However, during another session, the discussion took a very different direction, and they hardly discussed the questions prepared by the facilitator. In both cases, though, most students actively participated, and they looked at and talked with each other, not the teacher, as in the case of many teacher-led discussions. While students discussed, Scott remained silent and diligently took notes, occasionally looking up something on his iPad. After about 20 minutes of this student-led discussion, Scott entered the discussion and directed them to discuss important aspects that he felt did not get fully discussed in the first portion. He also probed certain students to elaborate on earlier comments. During the interview, Scott explained his reasons behind this pedagogy. For the summary and discussion questions, he explained,

> The summary and the questions are intended to give a particular student the responsibility to make a student-styled summation of the argument rather than mine, and to frame questions in their own voice. So, I’m sort of ceding certain voice to that student.

Scott also characterized his pedagogy as “highly responsive” and explained as follows:

> I want them to respond to each other more, and I want for myself to be in that off-balance place where I don’t know what they are about to say because I haven’t told them what to say. I didn’t give them a prompt. I didn’t say here’s the question, here’s what matters, now answer, I’m testing you. It’s much more like tell me what matters, and I’ll listen for a while, which is another way of leveling the position of an “instructor.”

Whereas the two examples above are examples of students leading discussion based on pre-assigned readings within a given structure, Raymond took it to another level by having

students determine the homework and design activities and discussions for class. During the interview, Raymond explained that after the first period of each unit when he provides foundational knowledge through lectures, the course moves into the investigation stage. During this stage, the roles between the teacher and student reverse. Each student is now responsible for determining the reading (homework). Four days prior to the day they are assigned to lead, the students must choose the reading and tell the class which part of the guiding question they will explore. Raymond said he encourages them to provide discussion questions beforehand so that other students can also get more involved with the reading. Then, during the class session, the students in charge are to lead what Raymond calls "expositions." According to his syllabus, "Unlike presentations, expositions should both inform and directly interact with classmates." He said he pushes students to be creative in eliciting a two-way interaction through the expositions, and in the past, students have created pedagogical games, board games, role play, and simulations. In the interview, Raymond explained his pedagogy:

> In this process, I'm not the only one up in front. There's a real role reversal because during the preparation stage, I'm up front and have the presentations, and then during the investigation stage, I'm in the back and they are up front. I very much try to be among the students.

These expositions can be thought of as examples of application-based assignments because students are required to examine the guiding questions by applying and further investigating what was learned during the preparation stage. Going back to his explanation of creativity not as magically creating something entirely different, but as bringing things in unique ways, Raymond further explained his pedagogy:

> I not only should I recognize the limits of my imagination of what is meaningful or fascinating or interesting to this collective [of the class], but it's also a recognition of the limits of my own creativity even with much more expertise than the students, and that creativity is best collective process.

The expositions students create are unique based on each student's interest, skills, and perspectives, but they collectively try to answer the same guiding questions through interactive activities.

Proceeding in a progressive manner from more structured to more freedom and responsibility on the students, Lucy even had students decide all topics in her upper division language class. Specifically designed for students who came back from study abroad, the first session of the class was spent by all students sharing topics and issues they became interested in or had questions for during their study abroad. From there, they created the syllabus together, and the student who raised each topic/issue would then take responsibility in finding articles for class reading and sending them to other students, coming up with discussion questions, and facilitating discussion in class. Of course, Lucy provides support when needed, but the discussion is usually completely student-driven with her being another participant. She explained how she came to conduct this course in such a manner:

> When students go on study abroad, their study mostly focuses on language. Of course, there are other aspects of society, but their focus is to improve their language. So, when I talked with students who came back, I realized that they brought back a lot of questions. I wanted to give them a chance to explore these questions in a way their textbooks couldn't provide. So, for every semester, the content is different depending on the students' interests.

Lucy continues to conduct her upper division courses in this way because she sees the benefit of students bringing their own interest to form the course. She concluded, "Students bring their perspectives, their experiences, and their observations, and critiques. And, I learned a lot from them."

While the abovementioned examples focused on student-led discussions in which the teacher remained a mere participant or assumed a supporting role, examples below are on teacher-initiated dialogue, which often came in the form of individualized feedback. This took both written form for submitted assignments and oral form during office hours. For example, Tom discussed how he places importance on providing immediate feedback to all of the students' assignments. Along with dialogue and small-group discussion in class, he identified feedback as a critical element for enhancing student learning in addition to contributing to building teacher-student relationships. Although he did not explicitly define how "immediate," nor did I have an opportunity to survey his students, I remember as his former student that I always received substantial feedback within a few days, sometimes as fast as a few hours. Other participants, Brandon, Lucy, and Raymond, discussed the importance of office hours as an opportunity to discuss and provide feedback to students' papers and projects. Raymond stated how SUA is different from a large state school at which he previously taught, where it was normal to have more than 150 students for one class and yet hardly anyone came to office hours.

In many ways, the examples under this theme are similar to those shared under the theme of scaffolding. Gregory's tutorials and Scott's idea of "narrativising" the semester are such examples that belong to both themes. While feedback is definitely aimed at scaffolding to help students complete later projects and papers, these were not one-way interactions from the

teacher. Rather, they considered their feedback to be a dialogic engagement with students through the assignments, through which they learned students' interests and perspectives.

There was one unique pedagogy called "lecture development," which was a teacher-initiated written dialogue on a certain topic where all students in class participated and received the teacher's feedback. This is what Raymond does during the preparation stage preceding the investigation stage where students created and engaged in expositions. During the preparation stage, Raymond provides a lecture outline in a word document prior to class. During the class, he lectures in order to provide students with foundational knowledge for answering that unit's guiding questions while two students are assigned to take notes. These note takers then add their summary to the lecture outline document. Then, the rest of the class reads the textbook and primary documents related to a certain topic from the lecture and adds their summary of those readings into the lecture outline document. Thus, it is a "lecture development." By each student contributing in a different color, this document becomes a shared document collectively addressing the unit's guiding questions. Raymond responds to students' contributions and creates unit exam questions based on what students wrote in this document. He said that, in addition to questions shared by the whole class, he also creates one question different for each student based on what that student wrote in the document. Similar to his explaination for having students do expositions, he chose to make this "lecture development" assignment a collaborative process rather than an individual one. He stated as follows:

> I can only suspect that what I find to be the most interesting answers to these [guiding] questions will probably be interesting to students, but there are many other aspects about answering these questions that will be interesting that I can't imagine. So…giving a venue and tools for students to explore their own interests, all of which teaches lessons of

> collaboration and teamwork, demonstrates the importance that they are responsible for answering these questions in part and brings us back to what we were talking about creativity…I think that doing it this way is more creative.

There are a few things unique about this approach. First is the idea that the lecture is something to be collectively developed as a class. Although lecture can be thought of as being the furthest from dialogic instruction, this lecture development encourages students to actively develop the lecture rather than passively receive information. Another unique aspect is the use of technology. Among the ten participants, Raymond was the only one who utilized technology to involve students in this type of online written discussion. He tried various formats and venues in the past, but the simplicity of Google Document seemed to work the best. Raymond noted this type of engagement was made possible thanks to the small class size of approximately 12 students; otherwise, it would become too extensive to keep track.

Critical Self-Reflection and Continuous Improvement

The third and last theme is critical self-reflection and continuous improvement. Although this was not something any participant explicitly identified as a quality of a "good teacher," eight participants shared something that could be categorized under this theme. One idea that many participants shared was their belief, or their way of "being," that they are always learning and improving. Six of them shared specific instances of receiving feedback and/or of moments of failure that served as an impetus to reflect on and improve their teaching. It is worth noting that my positionality as an SUA alumna and the relationship I developed with the participants prior to this study as their student might have contributed to them being vulnerable and open to sharing their failures and struggles.

"Teachers are Learners"

The fundamental attitude that participants expressed was that they are always striving to learn and improve their teaching. Lucy summarized this attitude when she stated that the "teacher first of all is a learner." Under the second theme, I discussed the notion of teachers and students co-creating knowledge and meaning. There, the emphasis was on the subject matter content and how teachers learned from student presentations and the unique perspectives they brought to the topic. Also, under the first theme on educating human beings, I introduced some teachers learning from the students' diverse cultural background and perspectives. Here, however, the emphasis is on teachers improving pedagogy based on student feedback and their own critical self-reflections. Raymond stated, "I don't know if you have ever talked with a teacher who just says 'I'm perfect. I don't need to change anything.' I think we are always trying to figure out how to do it better." Paul echoed,

> If you talk to anyone who teaches and who really cares about teaching, they all tell you that they haven't arrived yet. They are still learning, and I feel the same way…I am always learning and I am always trying new things, and it's an exciting process.

Tom also repeated the same message by saying, "no faculty member would ever dare to say that I have nothing to improve." All of these statements confirm their attitude of constant reflection and improvement.

While the comments above remain at the individual level, there are also institutional initiatives that promote such self-reflection and improvement. Brandon stressed that "we all need mentoring" and that it is important to keep asking the question, "How do we become better teachers?" As the chair of the faculty enhancement committee, he proposed the next teaching development workshop's topic to be mentoring. Tom also shared that, originally initiated for the

sake of institutional research and assessment for accreditation, each program and concentration conducts self-studies conducted by faculty. Such self-studies, according to Tom, have created a "culture of improvement" among SUA faculty.

Student Feedback

One of the most important factors many participants raised as contributing to their improvement in teaching was student feedback. Some feedback appeared as informal questions and comments in and outside of class, whereas some came in the form of formal evaluations. Lucy, for example, stated that she learned a lot from students' questions in class. As a native speaker of Chinese, she often did not know how to answer grammatical questions from a language learner's perspective. She said, "Even though now I've been teaching for so many years, I still encounter questions that I can't answer. I have to say, 'Oh, wait, I will answer next time.' I have to come back and continue to study. It is a wonderful experience." Raymond also shared how he developed his current structure of dividing the course into preparation (lecture) and investigation (exposition) stages when, in his first year at SUA, students demanded a more creative and interactive pedagogical approach. Scott also recalled a time during his early years at SUA when several students suddenly cried in class because they felt pressure from his heavy emphasis on class participation. He stated,

> I was mortified, I felt horrible, like I was torturing them. Here I was trying to create this open classroom, and like these students were crying in front of me about my syllabus. It was not the scenario I was looking for…That was the first time when I really realized a major change would need to happen, so we actually worked out an entirely different way for them to engage in "participation."

Although, in this case, the feedback did not come in the most ideal form, it was nevertheless an important moment for Scott to reflect on his teaching style. More than ten years later in his current class, he still has students who struggle to participate by speaking up on the spot, so he devised different ways of participation, such as creating time for silent writing in class prior to starting discussion.

Besides these informal and sometimes completely unexpected ways in which they received feedback, some pointed to formal ways in which they receive feedback. For example, Tom places a very heavy emphasis on the course evaluation at the end of the semester. Although a course evaluation is nothing unique, he tells students every semester how his course has evolved based on past students' feedback with concrete examples from the current course, such as changing the exam format or course materials. By doing this, he encouraged students to provide constructive criticisms. He stated,

> I always tell my students that the IDEA survey, the faculty evaluation survey, that students fill out at the end of every semester influence the way I change my syllabus. That, to me, is student engagement at work…I always tell them to just write everything down because you are contributing to future students who take my class.

He concluded that he takes student comments very seriously and that "this dialogue, this discussion, is so so so important." Lucy made similar comments regarding the student-initiated mid-semester surveys. In response to the question of whether she improved her teaching after coming to SUA, Lucy stated,

> One of the reasons why I improved is because the students came up with this idea of mid-semester evaluation. It takes a little bit more time [to do it in class], but I appreciate that

students take it very seriously. I think they sincerely want to help the teacher to improve the course.

She appreciates the mid-semester survey as opposed to the final course evaluation because she can immediately implement the feedback she received for her current students.

Reflecting on Past Failures and Current Struggles

In addition to how student feedback shaped their current teaching, six participants shared how their past failures, both as students and teachers, provided them opportunities to reflect on and improve their pedagogy. Brandon, for example, shared his failure to ask the "so what" question when he was a graduate student. As a student in a constitutional law class, he received the highest grades because he memorized all facts of certain court cases, but he could not tell what it meant. He also shared his first experience presenting his dissertation at an academic conference. At that time, although he could eloquently describe all the findings, when one professor in the audience asked, "So what does all of this mean?" he could not answer. "I don't want the students to fall into that trap," says Brandon. Therefore, as a professor, he always encourages his students to ask the "so what" question.

Five participants shared their past failures as teachers, especially after coming to SUA. "I've learned hard lessons," is how Tom started his experience. "In the past, I've used some materials that I thought was really effective and funny, but one student was very offended by it, so she became really quiet after that." He shared how he was able to talk with her and resolve the issue, but this led him to make extra effort to get to know the students and lay the groundwork of creating a comfortable environment for students to freely and openly share their perspectives. Wendy's experience was with her grading system. Initially, she had three major writing assignments in one semester, and she found many students put effort into those three

assignments but not much into class discussions. As a professor of writing and communication, she searched for a more effective grading system and switched to what she calls a "labor-based grading contract." She explains,

> It's a holistic grade at the end of the semester, but I offer a lot of feedback as we move through the semester, and the contract is sort of an agreement between me and them in terms of their ongoing participation in the class, so it rewards their effort…over perfection of sentences.

This type of grading values effort and the process of thought development through many informal writings. She concluded, "Ever since I've switched to that type of grading, I have seen a lot more investment in the class, livelier discussions, and happier students." Scott's previous example of changing his criteria for class participation could be another example under this category.

Some also shared their current and ongoing struggles. Raymond, for example, shared that although his previous students had many creative ideas for the exposition, such as pedagogical games, role-playing, and board games, most of the students in his current class fulfilled the interaction requirement simply by having discussion questions following a presentation. Although some of the discussions were very good, he stated that he was going to push them in the next unit to be more creative than discussion questions in their exposition. Raymond also shared that he was always looking for ways to make the lecture stage more engaging and asked if I had any ideas. Wendy and Scott also shared their ongoing struggle to encourage students to come to class prepared to actively engage in discussion as they both noticed a dip in the energy level of students at the middle of the semester.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings from the interviews and observations with ten faculty in SUA's undergraduate program. The findings include their articulation of Soka approaches to education and their perspective on what it means to be a "good teacher." The three themes that emerged from data were 1) educating human beings and building character, 2) guiding students to co-create knowledge and meaning, and 3) critical self-reflection and continuous improvement. Each of the three themes includes both the "being" and "doing" aspects. In the next chapter, I present a detailed description of one Learning Cluster class as a way of analyzing how these three themes were manifested concretely in a class by one participant.

CHAPTER 6: A CASE OF ONE LEARNING CLUSTER CLASS

In the previous chapter, I presented the themes that emerged from the first round of data collection of interviews and observations with ten participants. In this chapter, I present the findings from the second round of data collection, which was a focused observation of one Learning Cluster course. As presented in Chapter 4, Learning Cluster is a 3.5-week block during which students have the freedom to create their own courses and/or engage in field research. From my personal experience as a former student at SUA, but more importantly from the participants' comments about Learning Cluster, I felt compelled to include Learning Cluster as part of my research as it offers unique opportunities for faculty and students to engage in mutual inquiry. I selected Raymond for this more focused study for the following two reasons. One reason is because he explicitly stated during the first interview that Learning Cluster is where his "teaching philosophy really comes into play the most," which is not exclusively but certainly grounded in Soka approaches to education. In addition, among the ten participants, Raymond was one of the most articulate people when it came to explaining his understanding of "Soka education," and the only person to include such explanations in his syllabus.

Therefore, in this chapter, I present the results from closely following his Learning Cluster course for one week. This was more than a third of the entire course because they decided to front-load the hours and meet for four hours during this first week. They made this decision because they had to create the syllabus in addition to building the foundational knowledge on the topic during the first week. This also allowed them to spend more time outside of class during the second and third weeks to work independently and in groups on their projects. I first provide a thick description of how the class operated during this time. I then analyze how

the three themes identified in the previous chapter—though in varying degree—all came together in this one course. I begin with a brief background of Raymond and his course.

Background

Raymond came to SUA without knowing anything about its philosophy besides what he learned when preparing for his interview. Although he was used to lecturing in a large auditorium where he previously taught, the small class size and the culture at SUA encouraged him to explore different teaching styles. He stated that he appreciated the students he had in his very first semester who pushed him to use more creative and interactive pedagogical styles. Because he did not have a background in education, he said this prompted him to read broadly in education, and also specifically books by and on Makiguchi and Ikeda. He sees a strong connection between Makiguchi's value-creating pedagogy and constructivist pedagogy, and in his teaching philosophy, he discusses the term "scaffold." Acknowledging that this is a term often used by constructivists, he writes, "A teacher constructs the scaffolding, while the learner builds his or her own edifice within. As the scaffold rises, the foundation stands on its own." As one of the requirements for effective scaffolding, he discusses how it must be a process that is dialogic and reciprocal, which is more than mere communication, because the content and form of support must be continuously adapted to individual student's needs. He also describes his teaching philosophy through an analogy of navigating a cave:

> A teacher is not the single lantern bearer, guiding a stumbling group along a solitary dark path from the entrance to exit of a complex cave. A teacher may hold a much better map and have already traversed many of its cavernous spaces, but students bring their own lanterns, have an inherent capacity to want to explore in unexpected ways, and are capable—gradually—of leading themselves or their peers through a darkness that is

> better illuminated by the collective. Of course, guidance is needed, especially at the beginning; a group let loose within such a cave without instruction or maps will be lost. Similarly, a group that is not encouraged is unlikely to leave the entrance or their small familiar spaces. Thus, students need frequent reminders, usually better expressed in action than words, that they play a crucial and collective role in formulating goals and attaining those goals.

Both the scaffolding and the cave analogies are consistent with how he described teaching as a "dialogic process" and "students as key active participants in more of a two-way or a multi-way process," both of which were introduced in the previous chapter.

Based on this belief, Raymond spends the first week of Learning Cluster having students create the entire syllabus, including course goals, schedule, assignments, and grades, while providing support and offering advice only when needed. Although he did not remember exactly when he started doing this, he said it was after he had taught Learning Cluster a few times that he decided to have students create the syllabus. After some trial and error, he came to the current model of spending the first week to finalize the syllabus. Except for Learning Cluster courses originally proposed by students, Raymond's is one of the few courses, if not the only one, where students create the syllabus. He also currently has a two-year cycle in which students spend the first year of Learning Cluster on campus studying the topic. They then write the grant proposal so that they can travel and do field work in their second year. This two-year cycle was also developed as a result of failures in the first few years. He recalled how when students wrote the grant proposal without much knowledge, even though they learned a lot through the writing process, the final proposal was not really feasible and had some security concerns, which resulted in not being able to receive the travel grant. The following year, two students from the

previous year wrote the grant proposal again, and they were able to receive the grant and travel to Brazil. However, the rest of the class had no background knowledge. Raymond recalled,

> A lot of these students were going there asking, observing, and making conclusions based on faulty information, and some of them were reinforcing some negative stereotypes that I think they already had. I vowed I am never going to go back to Brazil with a group of students that didn't know enough about Brazil.

As a result of these experiences, he now has the abovementioned two-year cycle. The course I observed was the first of the two-year cycle during which students were first learning about the topic and building foundational knowledge as a preparation for writing the grant proposal so that they could travel and conduct field work during the following year's Learning Cluster.

Narrative Description of the Course

Day 1

Around 8:50am, I arrive at Gandhi 303B, where the class will be taking place. Some students are already waiting in front of the class talking with each other. Soon, Raymond opens the door from inside and greets everyone to come inside. He also finds me and welcomes me with a smile. The classroom is set up with desks around the edge of the classroom in a large U shape and an island in the middle. On the white board is a large "Welcome!" along with his name and the topic of the course, which is Brazil's Great Drought. As Raymond and I exchange brief greetings, students sit around the outer desks in the U shape.

At 9:00am sharp, Raymond starts the class by asking if they are all freshman and if this is the first time they are taking Learning Cluster. Except for one sophomore student, everyone else is a freshman, so they all know each other. Even the one sophomore student was a Student Orientation Leader taking care of the freshman class, so he also knew all of them. Raymond

shares that Learning Cluster is something in line with "Soka education" and is also promoted as such at Experience Soka, an event for admitted students. He says that he will explain this more later, but for now, he asks students to introduce themselves, their hometown(s), and their personal interests for this class. Raymond says that they can refer to what they have written in the application, and he asks students to write down their classmates' interests because that is where we will start today. The one sophomore student starts the introduction, and he says that he took Raymond's class during the previous semester and really liked his teaching style. The other students follow, sharing their interests, such as public health policies, government response to the drought, deforestation in Amazon, and the aftermath of the disaster. Raymond briefly commented on connections between the students' interests, but mostly nods and takes notes as he listens. The last student is from Brazil, and she says she's interested in the connection between poverty and disaster. It seemed like all students had already written their interests in an application to get into this class. Raymond briefly introduces two other students that are missing today's class due to their travel schedules. He then takes a picture of the class so that he can remember everyone's name. "I used to take these pictures with students holding the name tag, but it looked like mug shots." Everyone laughs.

After this, Raymond introduces himself, his hometown, his family, and the Learning Clusters he has previously taught. He also shares the two-year cycle he created for his Learning Clusters. He then transitions into asking students if they are reading the news on Brazil about prison issues and the government's response to it. He shares his interest in the great drought during 1877-1888, why it happened, how it happened, whether it was a "natural" disaster, and what are the consequences today. It is probably the worst "natural" disaster in the Americas in the modern period, yet people don't know about it.

It is about 9:30am, and Raymond asks students to look at their notes from everyone's introductions.

"Let's come up with themes, maybe later changing them into questions."

"Public health and public policy," immediately says one student. Raymond writes them on the board in black.

"Environmental issues."

"Social justice," another student adds.

"You said poverty, right?" Raymond asks one student. "Can we come up with questions based on these?"

"What can we learn from the Brazil's Great Drought (BGD) to cope with global climate change?" Raymond writes in red.

"What is the link between social justice and public policy?"

"What can we learn from previous disasters that have been forgotten or covered up?"

"How do memories of the past differ from those of the present when it comes to the BGD?"

"How do people in Brazil think about disasters in general?" Although some students are relatively quiet, most students have contributed something by this point.

"This is a good start. We will come up with a guiding question by the end of the class today. We usually write based on a thesis or argument, but we don't know that yet. So, we should start with a question, and as we work on, we will come to an argument." Raymond concludes and moves on to share the outline of the rest of today's class.

Here, the class moves on to discussing the development of the syllabus. "How would you define a syllabus?" asks Raymond, and a student responds by saying what a professor or teacher

expects. Raymond replies that it doesn't have to be the professor's or teacher's, but can be *our* expectations. He then shares about Learning Clusters when he first came to SUA around 2009-2010, many of which were designed by students. He then asks me to share if in my days students created courses. I shared my experiences of creating a Learning Cluster in my freshman and sophomore years. He further probed me to share what I thought was in the earlier culture of SUA for students to act in such a way. I wasn't quite sure, but I shared about how we were both confident and naïve to believe that our ideas were good and we just wanted to run with it. Raymond shares with students that he is trying to create what was more common in the earlier days by having students create the syllabus. He shares that although many students assume that only professors with expertise can design a course, they will actually learn more from designing the course themselves.

Raymond then starts sharing his teaching philosophy, negating the idea that there is one person (professor) who has the expertise and the rest do not and that students are empty vessels to be passively filled. "This metaphor of empty vessels assumes that students are just receiving, not giving, and diminishes the spark of curiosity. It's a passive way to live. Where's the desire to learn? Spark of curiosity is the value of education and what makes life meaningful." He explains that Soka education pushes against this empty vessel metaphor. Then, he draws a picture of construction of a building with scaffolds and shares that his role is a scaffold that offers recommendations for materials and design, but students are doing the construction of the building. The syllabus serves as the blueprint of this building. Therefore, although he has recommendations—expectations sound too rigid and not negotiable—, students will be creating the syllabus. He assures students not to be overwhelmed because they are only making the blueprint today, and they will be revising it by the end of the week. He ends this part of the

conversation by saying that, although if they asked other professors what they think Soka education is, they will get different answers, if they asked him, it's about moving away from filling the empty vessel and toward scaffolding.

After this, Raymond plays a podcast. The first half is about one woman becoming a violinist, and her teacher encouraging her to teach herself rather than giving the answer. The second half is about the same woman getting injured, can no longer play violin, and changes her career to behavioral science research in order to affect public policy. After discussion on the lessons from this story, Raymond probes students to think about the violin teacher's method. The teacher always collaborated with her (student), asking her what she thought.

"What is usually in a syllabus?" Raymond asks, shifting the conversation to something else.

"Goals," one student quickly responds. Raymond then writes it on the board in black, adding questions and sub goals to the list.

"I would recommend coming up with 1 to 3 big goals for the syllabus today. What else?"

"Assignments and readings." Another student adds.

"Why do we have assignments?" He asks while writing the students' suggestion on the board.

"To prepare for the goals and answering questions."

"Schedule," adds another student.

"What kind of schedules have you seen in a syllabus?" Raymond asks.

"Class time and weekly schedule."

"Grades." Another student brings up a different aspect.

"Why do we do that? Why is that part of the syllabi?"

"It is about fairness and everyone putting the same amount of work and effort into the class." As one student answers, Raymond adds "credit for work done" on the board.

"Incentives," adds another student. Shifting the conversation from the grades, another student shares that they should be communicating findings and what they learned. Raymond says that this is interesting and that it should go with the goal. Another student says "house cleaning" things such as plagiarism and ADA. He adds to the list and asks "anything else?" There is a silence, so he asks what kind of assignments and learning activities they have experienced. Again, there is a silence, so he says that he can start with reading and reiterates that readings should not be passive. One student says essay writing, another student says discussion, and yet another says presentation. Raymond shares that each of these has different modalities and hybridity. Then, another student adds field work. He asks what they just did, and one student answers that they listened to a podcast, so he adds multimedia. Then, he adds "pedagogical game/simulation" and asks if anyone has done it. Most students seem to have no experience doing these. He then adds "full group" and "group work" next to "discussion." He ends by encouraging students to keep in mind the diversity of learning activities because all students learn differently.

It is already 11:20am, so Raymond asks students if they can come back after lunch. They all say yes. He shares that he wants to reserve ten hours for a field trip at the end, but he recommends meeting more (four hours/day) this week and meet less next week so that they can have extra time to develop the syllabus this week and focus on their projects in the following weeks. He recommends having one vague overall goal for this week. Then, for learning activities, he asks if he could plan 50% of each day's class time scaffolding the content in relation to what students want to do. When it comes to grades, he asks to keep peer evaluation

within 25% of final grade, but students can come up with a grading system and determine the weight of each assignment/activity. After he makes sure that students do not have any questions, he recommends them to get together in the middle table, puts his books on the outside tables for a classroom library, and then steps out of the classroom for students to start working on the syllabus on their own. It is 11:40am.

Students move the chairs and come together at the middle table, while I remain at the outer table to place myself as an observer. One student takes a picture of the board and then erases it. Another student creates a Google Document to make it a shared document. One student asks the others if they should start with a goal, and then another suggests maybe they can start with a timeline because she feels she doesn't have enough knowledge about Brazil to form the best question. She recommends having more lectures this week and then coming up with the question by the end of the week. Another student suggests having one overarching guiding question, and then sub-questions based on their interests. Another student points to the stack of books the teacher left and suggests doing more readings this week to build that foundational knowledge. Everyone agreed to this idea, so they move on to discuss the schedule and decide on meeting 9am-12pm/1pm-2pm this week and 9am-11am next week. They then shift back to how to go about forming goals/questions. One student volunteers to act as a scriber. They start forming sub-questions, and then one student suggests that they can focus on one sub-question per week. Students are somewhat confused if this week is all about developing the syllabus or if the teacher is going to give some lectures. Nobody has the answer, so they decide to ask the teacher when he comes back after lunch. Throughout the discussion, the one sophomore student was taking the lead, but at this point he asks if those who are interested in environmental issues can speak up because he doesn't have background on that topic. Many respond, and one student

suggests that they should try to come up with a solution to these environmental issues by the end of the course. Another student asks if this course is just focused on "natural" disaster, and others clarify how labeling this as a "natural" disaster diverts the responsibility from the government. At this point, they realize that it is already past noon, so they leave for lunch.

Students come back from lunch right at 1pm and resume the discussion. One student asks who has a good background on Brazil, and the sophomore student says that he does. The student who asked the question asks what they should know. The sophomore student says maybe the economic forces of the time of the drought. Then the student from Brazil adds that they should know the political force, and she shares about the immigration patterns in different regions and how that leads to prejudice and stigma. They then start forming the goal and tentatively write, "What can we learn from the lessons/consequences of the Great Drought to better shape present-day environmental public policy?" One student suggests that they can focus on looking at the causes/problems this year and working on solving it next year. One student adds that it would be great to be able to help Raymond's research through this project.

After about 20 minutes, Raymond comes back into the classroom and asks, "How is it going?" Then, he asks what they have been doing before and after lunch. One student explains that they came up with the schedule and then moved on to forming the question/goal. Another student explains what is on the board about their thought process of moving from three sub-questions to dividing them into past and present, and then trying to merge them.

"Tell me about the challenges. What is most difficult for you at this moment?" Raymond asks after listening to what students have been doing.

"Lack of background knowledge." One student immediately responds.

"How do we overcome that challenge?"

"Through reading."

"Can you recommend any readings or resources?" Another student asks.

"I can sometimes recommend, but you have the skills to find resources yourselves. Any other challenges?"

"Our interests are kind of divided." One student responds.

"We've discussed dividing days or weeks for different topics."

"Maybe we can break up into groups."

"We can break up into groups this week to build the foundational knowledge." Another student jumps in. Raymond asks what they want to do in the next 20 minutes before the class ends. One student suggests coming up with one more topic for first week's research if it will be conducted in groups. Raymond shares that it will be great to have a working draft of the syllabus by the end of tomorrow and suggests that they can divide the labor. He also shares that they can count on him to give about 20-30 pages of reading tonight and 1.5 hours of lecture tomorrow to provide background, but they need to know how the rest of the day would look like. He leaves the room again to give space to the students.

Students resume their discussion. One student immediately suggests a possible reading for tonight. Others agree, so he shares that if the teacher is assigning about 30 pages, it's reasonable to assign about 30 pages themselves too. They discuss how it might be better to make a decision on whether or not to divide into groups after they have some background and also after the two missing students join the class. They then move on to discuss dividing their roles for creating a syllabus. The student who has been the scriber types it up and asks others to write down their email address so that she can share it as a google document which everyone can edit.

One student reminds the group that they have not discussed at all about the assignments and grading, so they all agree that they should brainstorm assignment ideas tonight.

Five minutes before the class end time, Raymond walks back in and asks where they are at. Students share that they are going to read *Collapse* and come up with five assignment ideas for tomorrow. One student jumps in to ask other students if they are going to discuss the book in class or do an online discussion board. They all agree to discuss in class. Raymond writes on the board what students decided, and then he adds what he can contribute: a lecture on Brazil's geography and its colonial origins, as well as a close reading of a newspaper article. He asks what the rest of the class will be. Students share that they are going to discuss *Collapse*, figure out how the missing two students can come in, and finalize the syllabus. Raymond asks if they can send him the readings and draft syllabus by 6pm tonight so that he can check them before leaving campus and prepare for tomorrow. Class ends at 2:13pm, and students decide to divide up the chapters of the reading now. They finish at 2:19pm and leave.

After class, I asked Raymond if this was a typical first day of Learning Cluster, and he said yes. We discussed how this class has some students who are more vocal, but it's a good group of students where everyone is comfortable speaking and contributing. Then, he mentioned the challenge of creating lectures that respond to student needs and interests as the course goes on. There is not enough time to prepare unless he has a pretty good knowledge base and also some lecture notes that he has already created in the past from which he can draw. He also said that although he used to do auditorium-style lectures at UC Berkley, he feels that lectures are where he struggles the most or has the most room for improvement. He says that he is always thinking of ways to bring in students and make lectures more engaging. He also asked me to share my research findings so that he can see how he can improve his teaching. I knew that he

was interested in both Dewey and Soka approaches to education from my previous interview with him, so I gave him a copy of *Living as Learning*, Ikeda's dialogue with two Dewey scholars, Jim Garrison and Larry Hickman. Because it had been a few months since we met last time, he also asked me where I was in my research and how things were going in general. We also talked about a mutual friend/student, as well as developments regarding the joint program with Claremont Graduate University. As I was in my previous trip, I left the classroom feeling very warm from his kindness and care.

Day 2

Students are waiting outside the classroom. Raymond walks over right around 9:00am and opens the classroom. About half of the students sit in the center island table and the other half sit in the back row. Today's class starts with a lecture by the teacher on Brazil's geography and its colonial origins. As Raymond pulls up the lecture notes on the screen, he tells the one sophomore student that because he has heard this lecture a few weeks ago in a different class, he should listen with one ear while looking for additional resources on his laptop as the lecture goes on. Then, he asks the one student from Brazil if she has taken any classes on Brazil's history. She responds in the affirmative, so he says that if this lecture is covering what she already knows, she can do the same as the other student looking for additional resources. The rest of the students have never taken a class on Brazil's history, so he encourages them to take lecture notes.

Raymond starts by providing the outline of the lecture and shares a printed copy of a book chapter on Brazil's history. There are enough copies for each pair of students to share. He says that he wants students to read them at certain points in the lecture to make it a little interactive. He starts the lecture by talking about the geography and local identities of people who live in each region. There is a map that is color-coded to show the five different groups who

live in Brazil. He describes these groups by their physical features, personality stereotypes, and accents in their language. After this, he explains in more detail about the Northeast region, which was the first region to be successfully settled by Europeans. Topics include early scattered settlements, sugar and slavery, African heritage including both oppression and cultural richness—drawing similarities with slavery in the U.S. —, and climate. All students are intently taking notes, some by handwriting and some with a laptop. After about 20 minutes, he stops for a moment and asks students to turn to the book chapter he distributed at the beginning of class. He asks for a volunteer to read a section, and one student raises her hand and reads the section. He then explains why they read that short section where the author introduces a specific key geographic term that refers to the dry area in the interior.

Raymond moves on to explain the next region: Southeast. Topics include gold rush and how that also brought immigrants not only from Europe but also from Japan and the Middle East, as well as slaves. Thus, this area quickly became the wealthiest region in Brazil and created regional inequalities. He asks students if they were aware of the Japanese population in Brazil because of the Soka connection today, which I think he is referring to the Brazil Soka School. He then asks one student if she knows some food from this region, and she mentions a few. He jokes how he also likes those foods and is starting to feel hungry. Everyone laughs. In this manner, he explains the other regions as well, and concludes that although Brazil has one of the most multi-ethnic and multi-racial national identities, it does not mean that it has achieved racial democracy where everyone is treated equally. He stops his lecture here and asks student if they have any questions and calls for a five-minute break. During break, Raymond approaches one of the students who was not here yesterday and asks if she has taken a class on history of Brazil. She says yes, so they decide to talk after class to figure out what would be the best for her to do

during these foundational lectures. One student comes to ask a question about the uncontacted tribes. Raymond is engaged in conversation with him, while other students talk with each other, step out of the classroom, or look at their phones.

After a few minutes, Raymond resumes the lecture and says that he will go through this part a little faster so that there is time to go over the reading from yesterday. The lecture in this section is about the indigenous population in the Americas. He wraps up the lecture by sharing a few remarks on the Portuguese colonization that was different from that of French or Spanish, and how the colonialization of Brazil was deeply connected to the sugar plantation and African slave labor. He asks student if they have any questions. This time, one student asks if the European settlers might have thought that God was punishing the indigenous people because they were dying. In response, he shares some stories from the Dutch settlers. Another student asks whether cotton was an important crop, and he answers that not until later, and certainly not as important as sugar and gold.

Raymond calls the end of the lecture portion and asks students to reorient around the middle table for discussion. He sits on the side of the table and asks students to take a few minutes to write down in 4-5 sentences what primary source they have read and the connection they found with the lecture. Some students are handwriting, while some students are either typing or looking at the reading on their computer screen. Once students are done writing, Raymond asks if anyone read a particular document included in the assigned reading. This class discussion is facilitated by the teacher, students mainly sharing what they wrote, drawing connections between the reading and the lecture. In the middle, Raymond briefly shares things to keep in mind when reading primary (and secondary) sources, such as thinking about the motives, intent, and audience of the author. After about 30 minutes, he closes this portion and takes a few

minutes of break before starting the discussion of *Collapse*, which was a reading chosen by students.

Once everyone is back from break, Raymond shares that he is going to hand it to the students now, but he shares that they might want to think about the rationale behind the chosen activity and method of discussion, and how they can learn best. He also encourages them to think if they are going to do a more organic discussion or designate a facilitator and have pre-determined discussion questions moving forward. The student who chose the reading opens up the discussion by asking where they should start. One student says she can start because her chapter was like a summary of the book. Another student comes in and recommends going in the order of chapters. Everyone agrees and one student starts summarizing the chapter she read. Unlike the previous discussion facilitated by the teacher, during this discussion, students are looking at each other, not the teacher. When the first student finished, another student inquires of the student who had the summary chapter if she sees any connection to what was just shared. After that, the student who had the next chapter starts summarizing. At the end, she connects back to what was shared by the previous student. This continues for a few more chapters, each drawing connection to the previous chapters. During this discussion, Raymond is completely silent but is constantly taking notes. In the middle of the discussion, a new student walks into the classroom and joins the circle. He is the last student who was missing. One student who had been quiet offers that she can share her chapter because it summarizes all the chapters shared thus far and how the environmental issues run through them all. Raymond steps in to share that they might want to think about how to use the last ten minutes before lunch. The student who offered to share decides not to and instead asks the student who picked the reading if he had any goals by having everyone read this book. He says that he thought there might be something that

contributes to their forming guiding questions, which they then start to discuss as a class. One of the topics that a few students start sharing is bottom-up versus top-down policies. Since it was almost noon, Raymond comes in to ask if there is anyone who has not had a chance to say anything. One student speaks up by posing a question based on her chapter. Raymond asks students what will be the main goal for the afternoon, and they answer that it is to create a draft of the syllabus.

When students come back from lunch, Raymond is already writing a few things on the board, including a list of learning activities, types, structure, and the guiding question students came up with yesterday. He also writes "Why learn? How learn?" After sharing what he plans to do tomorrow during his portion of class, he leaves the classroom saying that he will be back around 1:20pm. The moment Raymond leaves, one student puts on a big smile and says that he has a great idea. He shares that the Wikipedia on the Great Drought has only one paragraph, so he suggests they create a detailed entry. One student asks him if that is going to be the final project and if it is going to be a whole class project. They agree that it will be their final project and that each group will contribute a section. Another student jumps in to ask when they will be writing the grant proposal for next year's travel. They discuss if that should be the final project, whether they should divide into groups, and how it is going to be graded. Although no conclusion is made, one student directs the class toward figuring out the next three days. One student shares that she found some newspaper articles both from the time of the drought and some that are more recent. They agree on tonight's reading to be those articles along with what the teacher assigns. Another student changes the topic of the conversation to grading, and they start talking about peer evaluation. One student asks what the purpose of peer evaluation is, and after discussion, they decide to use it only for group projects.

They then start discussing other potential assignments. After one student asked about how to grade readings, they agree on having a larger percentage of grades for participation because they cannot participate in discussion if they do not do the readings. The one sophomore student who has taken Raymond's regular class suggests doing an exposition. He shares that he really likes the exposition in which one person or group designs activities, not just presentation, on the topic. Another student suggests doing a Socratic seminar, and the class debates the pros and cons of doing that and how it can be graded. Another student asks if this is part of the peer review, and yet another asks if they are going to start this tomorrow. They debate whether to do this every day, how many discussion leaders to have per session, etc. Students raise the point that they only meet two hours a day after this week, that they need time to work on the final project, and that they have a field trip. At this point, about 25 minutes have passed, and one student directs the class to think what to do with the guiding question and suggests working backwards from that. One student jumps in with an idea of writing a policy proposal/brief. The student from Brazil mentions that in her state there is a place where youth can submit policy proposals. One student suggests that next week they should break up and work in three groups: environmental policy, public health policy, and the Wikipedia article. They all agree very quickly and ask who is interested in which group. In one go, they split perfectly into three groups of four. They then move on to discuss the grading and deadlines. They agree on completing the policy proposals and the Wikipedia article by the beginning of week three so that they can spend that final week on writing the grant proposal. One student raises a question on whether Raymond has any assignment in his mind, so another student proposes creating a section on the shared google doc "Questions for Raymond." Because it is already 1:20pm, they discuss what to do for Thursday and Friday. They agree on keeping this week to reading about the history. One student

recommends a book chapter, and they decide who will be the discussion leaders. The two new students who joined today are mostly silent, but the rest of the class are actively contributing to the discussion. Raymond walks in, but as the students wrap up the discussion, he sits quietly outside the circle.

The one sophomore student takes the lead in asking Raymond what his expectations for written assignments are and also shares their ideas. Raymond likes the three group projects they came up with, and he shares that somewhere around 10-20 pages of writing in total would be good. The sophomore student also asks if the grant proposal could be the final assignment, and Raymond says yes. Raymond shares that he can bring in some of his former students who have worked on writing the grant proposal to offer advice. Since it has hit the four-hour mark for today's class, one student has to leave for a doctor's appointment, but Raymond asks if others can stay for another 5-10 min, and they agree. Another student provides a recap of what they decided on doing for the next three days. Raymond shares that he found out that another Learning Cluster is also focusing a lot on Brazil, so he is thinking of bringing the two classes together at some point. Class ends here, and Raymond asks the two students from Brazil (one is a student who joined today) if they can talk briefly. He asks if they want to listen to the lecture or do something else depending on how much knowledge they already have on the topic. He says that they can add to the google doc with the lecture notes so that the rest of the class can access them.

After class, Raymond asks me if students were making progress today and if everyone looked comfortable or overwhelmed. He shared how one student has become a natural leader because he is the only sophomore student and has the most background knowledge. I did share that although there are some more vocal students, most students are also contributing to the

dialogue while he is gone. From there, we naturally start talking about participation and how to grade them. Because I had also started teaching an online course at DePaul this week, I share some of the ways I have set up the online gradebook. I also shared the difficulty of a fully online class in establishing relationships. I show him some of my multimodal and interactive activities for week one, as well as some activities I have done in my face-to-face classes in the past. He says that he might consider doing some activities that are more interactive in class during his time as well, and he also suggested that, if it doesn't affect my research, maybe I can share some of these ideas with the students so that they have some ideas of what pedagogical activities might look like. He also shares that he is currently planning the syllabus for his spring course, which he has not taught in a while. Because it will be a three-hour block on Friday instead of the regular 1.5 hours twice a week, he is debating whether and how to change the structure. He also shares that he is wondering if he should get input from his former students. Rather than just me interviewing him about the class I am observing, this after-class chat is quickly becoming more like a discussion on teaching between fellow teachers, sharing each other's ideas and struggles.

Day 3

Today, Raymond walks in with *Living as Learning*, the book I gave him on the first day. At the beginning of the class, he shares the part where Jim Garrison talks about having mastery of a subject after doing his dissertation and Ikeda about his mentor Toda. He explains that he shared this part for students to think about the idea of mastery and the process to get there. He also says that he decided to do something new during the lecture. He hands out purple, green, and yellow cards to students. He asks all students to write questions on the purple card, and he also explained that he wants them to use green for resources and yellow for answers. He explains that this activity is to visually create a web of questions leading to answers and also to more

questions. He also shares that they should spend some time workshopping, or collectively thinking, about some of their guiding questions.

After this, today's class also starts with Raymond's lecture, providing some more historical background on Brazil. Students are also sitting in the same spots as yesterday: some in the middle table and some around the outside tables. The three students with more background knowledge are working on something on their laptop. Around 10:30am, the lecture ends and they take a break. During the break, one of the students who was working on her laptop comes over to Raymond to share what she found and talk about it. She asks if he knows about it, and he says he has showed it in another class before. He asks her to remind him later so that they can use it in this class as well. In the meantime, other students take a break and reconvene around the center table.

After the break, Raymond asks what to start with, and they all agree on doing what he has planned first and then moving on to discussing the other articles they found. So, he passes around a copy of the article they read last night and tells them to skim through it again and then to come up with some questions that they can answer together. After a while, he whispers to a student sitting next to him, and she starts the discussion by sharing her question. Raymond encourages students to try to answer each other's questions, and if they cannot, they can come back to those later. One student paraphrases the first student's question to clarify and then answers it. Next student shares his question. Some students are taking notes. Raymond reminds them that if they do not have an answer right now, they should take a note of that. Another student tries to restate this second question, and after clarification, he says he will try to answer this. He comes up to the board to draw a diagram to describe the social hierarchy. Another student jumps in to share from the chapter they read to answer the question. Raymond also goes up to the board and adds

lines to the student's diagram to explain the complexity of social hierarchy with interrelated aspects of class, race, and slavery. One student jumps in to ask a question whether people can move between the social hierarchy. Raymond clarifies that is a question of social mobility and explains the opportunities for slaves were slightly greater than British colonies. Then, the next student shares her question, and several students respond, while others take notes. A few more share their questions, sometimes drawing connections with previous questions. It seems like one of the things they read last night is Raymond's draft chapter that he is currently writing, so some students specifically directed the question to him. Although he offered thoughts most of the time, for one question, he shared that at this point in his writing, he is still looking for resources and not sure if he can fully answer the question. For another question, he turned to the students saying, "Let's ask the group." One student finds the answer from the reading. I am sitting outside the circle quite fascinated by how students are actively engaging with the reading and with each other. Although the class time facilitated by the teacher was longer today than yesterday, it was much more interactive and deeper than each student summarizing what they read.

For the one hour after lunch, they decide to use 30 minutes to discuss the newspaper article they read and the final 30 minutes to work on the syllabus. Raymond remains the facilitator for discussing the newspaper article. He starts by asking, "How do you make sense of this?" After a few moments of silence, one student asks how he found out the author of this article. Instead of answering the question, he asks if there are other questions. He reassures that he is not fishing for a particular question. He asks if someone can be a scriber to write them on the board, so one student volunteers. After some time, the list grew to the following:

- Who's the author?
- What's the purpose of this text?

- Why isn't this topic more well-known?
- What was the consequences of/response to this article?
- Did it generate any aid?
- Who was the biggest audience?
- What resources did they base this on?
- What was the state of Rio during and before the great disaster? Unable to provide proper funds?
- U.S. relationship with Brazil at that time?
- Why does he say it's worse than the Irish famine?
- Why has the author not mentioned any concern about the cause of the great disaster?

After generating the questions, Raymond passes around the colored papers and tells students to keep about five of each color so that they can start creating the trail of inquiry at the back of the classroom. After sharing what he is going to assign as reading for tonight and encouraging students to look up "immersive activities" and "experiential learning" to come up with more ideas for pedagogical games/activities, he leaves the classroom for students to work on the syllabus.

Students start discussing what to do today and agree on deciding grades and homework. They discuss who will assign homework for Thursday, and one student volunteers. They then discuss the writing assignment they will be doing in groups. When Raymond came back in, one student asks about the page requirement for the writing assignments. He shares that they can mix different modes of writing, so students decide to do informal online reflection/discussion posts starting next week. They finalize the schedule for tomorrow and Friday, and one student suggests that everyone write something tonight for the syllabus so that they come in ready. Another

student shares a potential article to read for Friday. Class ends here, and because I have office hours for my own class, today I leave the classroom without engaging in discussion with Raymond.

Day 4

I walk in about five minutes before class. Raymond and several students are already in the classroom. While Raymond is preparing his lecture portion for today, the two students who seem to be in charge of today's reading are talking about their plan for today's discussion and/or activity. Raymond starts today's class by asking students to take out the colored papers and use the purple card to write down up to three questions that they came up with yesterday. He then explains that later they will put a star on the questions that are most interesting to them so that the class can democratically decide which ones to tackle. As students write their questions, Raymond pulls up the lecture notes on the screen. He then asks students to keep a blank card next to them so that they can write another question as they listen to the lecture.

Raymond starts the lecture, but it is a little different today. At various points in his lecture, he calls on certain students to summarize the chapter they read and to draw connections between the chapter and the lecture. Based on the way in which he called on certain students, it was clear that he knew who read which chapter and had planned where to call on whom. When he finishes the lecture, Raymond sits down at the middle table, but he sits on the front side, which is different from the position he took during the student-led discussions during the past few days. At this point, he had only called on about half of the students, so he asks if anyone else has something to share. With this prompt, about five more students either share their reading, ask questions, or make other connections. Close to 11:00am, Raymond stops the discussion and calls for a break. His portion of the day is over, so he asks what they will be doing when they come

back. During the break, the two students in charge for today's class discuss how to divide the time for their readings.

After the break, students share the plan for the rest of the day and Raymond writes them on the board. He then asks in which order they will be doing these activities and how much time they will be allocating for each. They decide the order and the allocated time quickly (see below for what is on the board).

- Drought article (2) (20-30 min)
- Political history reading (1) (30-40 min)
- Syllabus (4) (after lunch)
- Q&A cards (3) (after lunch)
- (If time) workshopping the Harold source

Raymond asks students to gather around the center table, and he sits on the side as usual for student-led discussions.

The student who is in charge of the drought article starts the discussion by sharing his question on why the great drought only gets a short and a limited reference in the text. One student responds that the author might have not thought that it was relevant to the political structure. Another agrees and shares that it is not talked about in other texts either. Another student responds that the numbers do not match in various sources, so maybe people are not sure exactly what happened. One student asks the two students from Brazil if the great drought is covered in school curriculum, and they both say no. Another student comes in to share that the ambiguity between the death caused by the drought itself and by other factors might have contributed to less coverage. The facilitator comes back to share his own opinion that the Paraguay war that was happening around the same time is always covered over the drought.

During this discussion, Raymond is taking notes and flipping through the book occasionally. Several students respond to the point that drought is often considered as a "natural" disaster, whereas war is a disaster caused by humans and, therefore, is often considered to be deserving of more attention. The facilitator moves the conversation to whether Brazil is a democratic country. After many students share their perspectives, the facilitator shares the similarities between India and Brazil, both countries with huge inequalities. To this point, a student from Brazil and a student from India provide further detail on the housing situation in their respective countries. Here, the facilitator suggests moving on to discussing the next article because it is 11:30am. Raymond, who had been silent until this point, briefly intervenes that before moving on, if someone can write on a purple card a question as to whether many texts on Brazil's history exclude the great drought and why. He also suggests someone can write a question around the latter half of the discussion on the similarities between Brazil and other nations. Raymond shares that although he can answer some of their questions, he has been very careful what to answer and what not to so that students can find the answers themselves.

After they write those questions on the card, they transition to discussing the other article and another student resumes the role of a facilitator. She asks if they want to talk just about this article or in connection with the newspaper from the previous day. They agree to discuss just this one, so the facilitator starts the discussion with a question she had prepared. The discussion proceeds similar to the first article with many students sharing their perspectives and raising questions. Right before noon, Raymond jumps into the discussion, asking how we can verify sources. He points to one part in the article and asks students to find the source. They find it in the references. Raymond shares the idea of the Suzuki method that anyone can learn by listening to music, but there is the importance of the instructor to guide the learning process, which he

connects to the approaches by Montessori, Dewey, and Soka. He explains that that is what he is trying to offer here. He shares that Google Books and the Center for Research Library (CRL) are both great ways to find resources.

After lunch, Raymond starts the class by sharing one more database called Digital Newspapers. He then writes four groups: 1) Google Books, 2) CRL (Portuguese), 3) Digital Newspapers in English, and 4) Digital Newspapers in Portuguese. He asks the three Portuguese speakers to divide themselves for CRL and Digital Newspapers, then the rest can divide to browse the other sources. He then shares that he is going to turn the class over to the students to do the Q&A cards, develop the syllabus, and select a liaison to communicate with another Learning Cluster class on Brazil. He also shares that his portion of the class tomorrow will be the activities on the abovementioned sources and that he will be assigning about 20 pages of reading. He suggests their homework for tonight to be getting together to work on the syllabus if they cannot finish it during class time. He steps out of class, saying that he'll be back in about 40 minutes.

Students decide to get the Q&A cards out of their way before tackling the syllabus, so they go to the back of the room to lay out the cards. As students read each other's questions, two students suggest that if someone sees a connection between certain questions, they should categorize the questions. Some students finish putting the stars on the cards with questions they feel are most important and go back to their seats. When everyone is done, they reconvene at the center table. They first discuss tonight's homework. They all agree to reduce the amount of reading and also to send it out sooner. One student shares a book chapter he found and asks how much of that he should assign. Then, as they divide up into groups for the sources Raymond shared earlier, one student asks to clarify what they are doing with those sources. They are

confused whether they are supposed find something specific or just get familiar with the database. They then transition into talking about the group paper. They all seem to agree that it will be a group paper, but each person will take up a certain section of the paper. One student recaps the grade weight for each assignment. They then discuss how to use the class time next week and decide that they will spend a substantial amount of time working in groups. They then discuss what to do tomorrow. After a short silence, one student asks if there is anything else that they need to add to the syllabus. Another student asks if they need to add when they will be at the library to do some research. They agree that they should go next Tuesday or Wednesday, but they can ask Raymond. They then debate if they have to finish writing the grant proposal by the end of the course. They agree that they have to finish because it is part of their grade, but they can still work on it after class. Raymond quietly walks in and sits at the outer table. Students continue to discuss other potential activities. One student suggests an art project. Another student raises the question of what they will be doing for the Learning Cluster Fair. They do not reach a conclusion, but they move on to recap the dates for the field trip.

At this point, students bring Raymond into the conversation to confirm the logistics of the field trip. He then asks students if they planned a day to go to the library. They share that they are going on Tuesday. Students also share the schedule, the assignments, and grade weight that they decided. Raymond suggests that they should have some definition of what constitutes excellence for each assignment (e.g., rubric). When he mentioned this point, it was clear from students' expressions that they had not thought about it at all until now. Students then share who will be looking at which database for tomorrow. Raymond suggests that although they do not need to prepare a formal presentation, they should come prepared to share something. He compliments the students that they decided to take turns to find and assign readings. He also

shares that he will bring one more color for the Q&A cards to write hypothesis in addition to questions, answers, and resources. He then changes his mind and turns yellow into hypothesis, encouraging students to write some hypotheses before they leave today. One student had to leave, but other students stay to write hypotheses on the yellow card and add to the back table (see Figure 1).

As students wrote the cards at the back table, Raymond and I also started the teacher talks. We first discussed why he started doing the Q&A cards as a way to help students ask questions, organize them, and try to answer them collectively. We then started talking about how my online class was going with the one-on-one conferences with each student. We also diverged into talking about Chicago weather and Chicago neighborhoods as he is originally from Chicago.

Figure 1: Question and answer cards in progress.

Day 5

I walk in a few minutes before the class starts, and there are four students already in the classroom. Right around 9:00am, Raymond and the rest of class walk in, engaging in casual conversation. Raymond first compliments the students for their selection of last night's reading because it provides background for today's topic. He then starts the lecture by providing the

outline of his talk on the geography, history, and culture of the state of Ceará. He begins by sharing that he has hand-written notes on Ceará, but this is his first time giving a lecture on Ceará, and he has more questions than answers at this point. He starts the lecture by looking at the map and talking about the geography as well as the slave trade that affected the area. After a short while, he pulls up a painting and asks students what they see. One student shares that he sees the divide between the whites and the slaves and that there is a ship on the slave's side. Another student comments on the soldier's gesture. A student asks about the cornucopia in the middle, and Raymond asks students what it may represent. When one student answered that it represented abundance, Raymond directed their attention to how the palm tree and the tropical climate are painted prominently as the royal crown. He then directs their attention to the people and asks what they see. One mentions that the woman with babies are of mixed race. Another points out the kind of clothes one man is wearing, and Raymond shares the importance of having people from various regions represented. After this brief discussion of the painting, Raymond resumes the lecture on culture, religion, slave trade, and abolition of slavery.

Right at 10:00am, three students walk into the classroom. Raymond stops the lecture and invites the three students to the front. He introduces the first student who did the first of the two-year cycle Learning Cluster when he was a freshman in 2016. This student briefly shares his experience, emphasizes the importance of out of class experience, collaborating institutions, and learning outcomes. Raymond introduces the other two students who joined during the second year of the two-year cycle when they went on field work and worked with Raymond since then. Raymond says that he is going to leave the classroom so that the students can have a free and open conversation with these upper classmen. He asks his former students to share their project and guiding questions and then leaves the room. One of the former students compares the grant

proposal to the capstone, in which they must describe the methodology and how the project connects to the mission statement of the university. One of the current students asks if they can just show their current draft. A former student then asks what they want them to look for. A student requests if they can point out what they are missing. He also shared that they do not have a clear learning outcome in mind yet. One of the former students shares from his experience and explains that learning outcomes are a required part of the grant proposal. While he is talking about learning outcomes, the other two former students are reading the draft of the syllabus. One of them suggests dissecting the guiding questions and being more specific. The other then reassures that it is ok to keep it broad right now, but they need to get more specific as they move on to write the actual grant proposal. She encourages them to think why Brazil, why this topic, and how it is connected to SUA's mission. One student asks about how to address safety concerns in a remote area. Former students share the importance of having local connections. They share in particular about one alumni in Brazil who went to the area in advance to help coordinate their trip. Another student asks whether to start broadly or try to be specific from the outset. They share that they started broadly as health issues in Brazil and then gradually narrowed the topic and the region. They suggest to narrow the topic by the end of this Learning Cluster.

At around 10:30am, one of the former students had to leave. A current student asks about the grading criteria, but the remaining two former students had not experienced the first year of developing the syllabus. Another student asks if Raymond is a hard grader. They both agree that he is a hard grader, but he is always there to help. They both suggest to always submit a draft early and ask for feedback. If they did this, they are reassured that they would be fine. Because the time was running out, one student asks if he can text them if he or the class has any other

questions, and they both say “Sure!” The final suggestion from the former students was to clearly divide the task for the group work. During this discussion, I felt that the upper classmen were taking on a mentoring role not only by providing practical suggestions, but also by reassuring students that they were on the right path and cheering that they can do this.

Around 10:40am, Raymond walks back into the classroom. After the former students left the room, he asks students what is remaining for today’s class and lists them on the board. Students decide to go in the following order and allocate time for each item.

- Ceará history remaining lecture (20 min)
- Greenfield article found by a student (20-30 min)
- Source group discussion (15 min)
- Sources presented to class (20-25 min)
- Reading assigned by Raymond (15-20 min)
- Syllabus (30 min)

Raymond resumes the lecture on Ceará. He reiterates that this lecture is based on his working notes and that he is also just learning about this topic. He pulls up on the screen the map with winds in the Atlantic Ocean and explains how that contributed to certain slave trade pathways. He then shows a map of rivers in the Ceará area to explain which parts were more settled. He also pulls up a map created by the indigenous people, which depicts areas developed with small agriculture and cattle, not with large plantations using slave labor. This is where he brings up the drought that has happened in this area many times, and he wonders if the indigenous people’s mode of living was more adaptable to that kind of climate. He asks if anyone has a question, and one student asks if there were many slaves in Ceará at the time of drought. Raymond says that he honestly does not know exactly how many there were, but there were never many slaves in this

area. He stops the lecture here, and students come around the center table. Raymond suggests that they postpone the discussion of the sources to Monday, but asks students if they can briefly meet as a group prior to the class on Monday.

Once students gather around the center table, the student who chose the reading takes over to facilitate the discussion. He begins by asking others if anyone had any clarifying question before moving to the discussion question. One student asks what tropicalization means, so everyone skims through the reading and some offer explanation of the term. The facilitator then asks the first discussion question, and from there, active discussion unfolds as was the case during the past few days. As usual, Raymond remains silent, takes notes, and redirects some questions to the students, saying, "Let's ask the group." A little before lunch, he comes in to ask those who have not had a chance to speak to do so, possibly connecting the discussion to what they read earlier in the week. After some share their responses, he asks each student to write down one question on the card before leaving for lunch.

After lunch, one of the students approaches me and asks what I thought were the similarities and differences between Freire and Makiguchi. We engage in discussion for a few minutes before other students walk in and the class resumes. Students reconvene around the center table, but this time, Raymond takes the lead because they are to discuss a reading he assigned. He recaps that there are five sections in this chapter, so they will break up into five groups, and each group will discuss one section. Students count off numbers. Raymond asks each group to think what the guiding question is for that particular section and what the answers are. Students spread across the classroom. Most are pairs, but the group that has the main section consists of four students. Raymond walks over to the pair that is doing the conclusion and shares that instead of a guiding question, they can focus on the overall purpose of the chapter. He then

walks over to the pair that is doing the introduction and asks them to identify the overall guiding question for the chapter. There is one pair that is quietly looking up something or reading on their laptop, but others are engaged in active discussion. Raymond walks over to the first group to ask how it is going and listens to what they have written. He walks over to the next pair and observes quietly, then approaches them and asks how they are doing. He repeats this with each group. While each group is wrapping up their thoughts, Raymond reads through the Google Document with the draft syllabus that students had been working on. When all groups are ready, Raymond asks to go section by section, so the pair that did the introduction section shares what they thought of as the guiding question for the chapter. They briefly summarize the section and offer their own question. Then, they move to the next group and to the next in order. During this discussion, I was wondering if these "guiding questions" were students' guiding questions as they read the chapter, or if they are guiding questions that were guiding the author's writing. Those might overlap, but they could be different.

When all groups finished presenting, Raymond pulled up the draft syllabus on the screen and asked students to present it to him. He says he might be able to respond immediately or may have to think about it a little, and then asks if students can finalize it over the weekend so that it is ready to be sent to the registrar on Monday morning. One student starts explaining that he highlighted the parts that needed to be rewritten in a more professional manner. He also shares that there are some things that need to be in the grant proposal but not in the syllabus. They discuss that they still have to come up with grading criteria, so they decide to discuss that now. Students brainstorm what an "A assignment" looks like, and then turn to Raymond for advice. He shares that grades are really for honesty and fairness. He says, "Let me do some scaffolding," and suggests different ways to search for rubric samples and define excellence. While some

students search for samples on the web, other students discuss the elements to be included in the rubric for both formal writing assignments and discussion boards. During this time, Raymond quietly sits back. Because it is already time for the class to end, some students have to leave. Those who can stay decide to stay and receive feedback on what they have. The remaining students present the schedule for the following week working in the three groups of environmental policy, public health policy, and the Wikipedia article. Raymond suggests connecting each group's work to the learning outcomes. He suggests numbering the five learning outcomes and placing those numbers next to each group's work. Tuesday is when they plan to go to the library, so Raymond says that he still has to finalize with the librarian, but he encourages each student to come up with at least one question to ask the librarian. He says that one area they still need to work on is the assignment and the grading section. The assignments may need more descriptions, and how to grade participation in the Socratic seminar needs to be thought through. However, the syllabus is about 90% completed, so to end today's class, he congratulates everyone for their hard work and their accomplishments thus far.

Post-Observation Developments

Although I was only able to observe this first week of the Learning Cluster, I interviewed Raymond at the end of the following week to ask how the class evolved after I left. He identified two major developments and changes. One is regarding the question and answer cards he was trying to push students to do since the middle of the first week. He said that students were not doing it regularly, so he decided to move it to an online platform rather than doing it with paper cards. He did not know what exactly was the difference, but once it became digitized, students started to regularly and collaboratively work on forming questions, organizing them, and

answering them. He said that the online format also allowed students to collaborate outside of class without trying to find time to physically get together.

Another development was the group projects. As students started working in the three groups of environmental policy, public health policy, and the Wikipedia article (focused on history), Raymond noticed that they were completely separated with almost no interaction between the groups. However, when each group met with him to discuss their progress, Raymond noticed that there were four common themes that ran through all three groups. Those four themes were: 1) water, 2) geography and climate, 3) Sertaneja (group of people in the area), and 4) government and public action. Therefore, he asked students to designate one person per group to focus on one of these themes and then come together to discuss their findings from each group's perspective. For example, all the "water people" would come together to discuss how water was involved in the drought, as well as how it affected the environment and public health policies. In this way, he encouraged students to break the initial groupings and try forming new groups to see the topic in a new light. "I didn't want it to be three mini classes. There needs to be one big goal, and they need to be thinking about the whole thing," he explained. He hoped that by regrouping and working with new people, "they could talk to each other and share their insights from the research and start to see that there's a story that runs through all three groups." He emphasized the importance of all of them working together as one full team, especially when they go out in the field the following year. Therefore, he said that although he wants the students to ultimately decide, he said that he was going to suggest considering to write the grant proposal based on these four themes.

Although I did not get to see the final product from the course I observed, for the following year's Learning Cluster, these students were able to receive the travel grant to go to

Brazil to do field research. The second year's course focused on water accessibility and management in Brazil. They visited the Department of Water Resources in the state capital of Ceará, interviewing the current Secretary and former National Minister of Water Infrastructure.

Analysis

Now that I provided a narrative description of the course during its first week, I explain below where the three themes identified in the previous chapter—educating human beings and building character, guiding students to co-create knowledge and meaning, and critical self-reflection and continuous improvement—were manifested in this course.

Theme 1: Educating Human Beings and Building Character

Among the three themes, this first one is the most implicit. The idea of building students' character to contribute to the community through fieldwork the following year was underpinning their preparatory work during this year's coursework. As Raymond told me in the interview, he consciously created the two-year cycle so that students can gain a deep understanding of and critically examine their own biases toward the community where they will be conducting fieldwork. However, this objective was not explicitly shared with students at least during my observation.

One sub-theme that was most observable was developing trusting relationships and encouraging students. Although all the students knew each other, it was the first time for Raymond to have them in his class with the exception of one student, so he made efforts from the beginning to get to know them by asking not only about their interests, but also about their hometowns and cultural backgrounds. Throughout the first week when students were developing the syllabus, he trusted their ability to work on their own and come up with their own learning outcomes and projects. There were many instances when he praised the students' efforts and

progress and encouraged them to keep going. On several occasions during class discussion, Raymond said, “Let’s ask the group,” when students asked a question. In this way, instead of answering the students’ questions himself, he encouraged students to think for themselves, instilling in them the belief that they were capable of doing so. In addition, he always asked the quiet students if they wanted to share anything and warmly encouraged them to share their thoughts. There were also moments he showed vulnerability in front of the students. On the third day, they read and discussed a draft of his book chapter, which was work still in progress. Similarly, on the fifth day when he gave a lecture on Ceará, Raymond stated that this lecture was based on his working notes, that he was also just learning about this topic, and that he had more questions than answers at that point.

In these ways, it was evident that Raymond was making efforts to connect with and develop trusting relationships with the students. We can also infer this from the example of one sophomore student who said he chose to take this class because he really liked Raymond’s class he took during the previous semester. Another example is the three students from Raymond’s former Learning Cluster that came to offer advice. The fact that they quickly responded to his request and willingly spent their time to visit class speaks to the kind of relationships they have developed over the years.

Theme 2: Guiding Students to Co-Create Knowledge and Meaning

Among the three themes, this one on guiding students to co-create knowledge and meaning was most deliberately planned and explicitly addressed in this Learning Cluster. On the first day of class, Raymond shared his belief that the teacher is a guide and that the students are active agents in the process of mutual inquiry and learning. He negated the metaphor of filling

empty vessels and instead used the metaphor of scaffolding in the construction of a building to explain his belief. Such a belief was manifested in various ways.

The unique and most notable aspect of this course that emerged from Raymond's abovementioned belief is the fact that students created the syllabus. This meant that students decided not only the learning outcomes and guiding questions, but also the daily assignments, final project, and grading. The teacher provided advice and suggestions only when asked or needed. In this course, therefore, it was clear that the students were driving their own inquiry and learning. For their final projects, they designed assignments that required them to apply their learning. Two groups decided to write policy recommendations, and one group decided to write and publish a Wikipedia page that had hardly any information at the beginning of the course. All of these assignments were designed to lead to the following year's fieldwork, which was to be a further application of their learning.

While students were mostly the main drivers of the course, Raymond provided scaffolding in several ways. The most noticeable form of scaffolding was the lectures and the readings he selected. These provided scaffolding in terms of the content knowledge, which was more prominent during the first week when students were still primarily building the foundational knowledge on the topic. Another form of scaffolding was advice and suggestions for creating the syllabus. Because it was the first time for these students to create a syllabus, Raymond suggested things to consider that were missing in the students' draft. This included diversifying learning activities and clarifying grading criteria by creating rubrics. Based on his comments, it was clear that he had closely followed what students wrote in the draft syllabus shared as a Google Document. For both of these cases, Raymond explicitly explained to students that he was providing scaffolding. However, there seemed to be another, more subtle form of

scaffolding that came from his pedagogical decisions. One example is devising the question and answer cards. Although he did not explain the activity in terms of scaffolding, it was designed to help students engage in the inquiry process of question-answer-question sequence. Another example is asking students to consider the guiding questions for one of the readings. This was another way to help students to start asking questions to advance their own inquiry.

Another aspect of guiding students to co-create meaning was creating dialogic spaces in class. About half of class discussion was facilitated by the teacher, and as explained above, many such discussions also served as scaffolding. The other half of class discussion was facilitated by students. For these, students took turns to select the reading, and the student who selected the reading created the discussion questions and facilitated the discussion. During these student-led discussions, Raymond usually sat on the side, quietly listening to the discussion and taking notes. He usually joined the discussion towards the end either when students directly asked him a question or when he felt the necessity to probe students to think deeper on a certain point. As introduced in Chapter 5, this was similar to student-led discussions observed in other participants' classes as a way to give voice to students and have them explore their own interests.

Theme 3: Critical Self-Reflection and Continuous Improvement

The third theme of critical self-reflection and continuous improvement was also quite evident in this course. In addition to the larger structural changes Raymond made over the years, such as making Learning Clusters into a two-year cycle and using the entire first week for students to develop the syllabus, he made other changes as the course progressed this year. However, unlike in the case of some other participants introduced in Chapter 5, the improvements he made in this course mainly came from his own self-reflection based on observations of students' reactions rather than direct feedback from the students.

One clear improvement I observed was the increasing interaction during the lecture portion of the class. Raymond identified himself both during the formal interview and during our after-class informal conversations that lecture was one thing he struggled with the most and that he was always looking for ways to make it more interactive and engaging. The lecture on the second day was almost a one-way communication. The only interaction was when students took turns to read a supplementary text distributed in class. The following day, Raymond introduced the question and answer cards and encouraged students to actively write and ask questions during the lecture. Both the fourth and fifth days had more interactions. The fourth day was a more structured interaction where he called on certain students to share the connections between the lecture and the chapters they read. Because each student read a different chapter, Raymond called on specific students at specific moments during the lecture when he saw it most appropriate. In contrast, the interaction on the fifth day was more spontaneous. He prepared slides with images and maps and asked students to share what they noticed. In these ways, the lectures during the last two days of the week were much more interactive compared to the first few days.

Another change was the introduction of question and answer cards. Raymond initiated this activity because he noticed during the first two days that students were having a difficult time recording their questions and collectively trying to answer them. This activity was changed during the second week into an online format. This change was also in response to students struggling to consistently and continuously engage in the cycle of asking questions, answering them, and forming further questions. Another change, or as Raymond called it an “intervention,” was encouraging students to re-group by theme during the second week. This also came from his observation of students working in silos, focusing just on their own group projects. These

examples demonstrate how Raymond reflected on what was not working well and quickly devised ways to address the issue.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented a thick description of one Learning Cluster course and analyzed how the three major themes identified in Chapter 5 emerged in this class. The degree to which each theme was consciously and explicitly practiced varied. Furthermore, some themes such as scaffolding and creating dialogic spaces were deliberately planned and explained to students, whereas other themes such as developing trusting relationships and critical self-reflection were implicit and reactionary. In the next chapter, I discuss these findings relative to the research questions. I also present the implications and conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

In the preceding three chapters, I presented the findings of the research. Chapter 4 described the context of SUA based on the framework of Schwab's (1973) four commonplaces of curriculum: subject matter, teacher, student, and milieu. The contextual aspects presented in Chapter 4 are also the aspects that emerged in interviews and observations. Chapter 5 presented the participants' articulation of what they perceived as "Soka education," as well as the three major themes to describe what it means to be a "good teacher." The themes were: 1) educating human beings and building character, 2) guiding students to co-create knowledge and meaning, and 3) critical self-reflection and continuous improvement. Chapter 6 then described in detail one participant's Learning Cluster class and illustrated how all of the three major themes from Chapter 5 were manifested in this class. In this final chapter, I discuss the meaning and significance of the findings presented in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 collectively relative to my research questions and the extant primary and secondary literature in Ikeda/Soka studies. I conclude with the implications for practice and research in the field of Ikeda/Soka studies in education, as well as in K-12 teacher education.

Revisiting Research Question 1

How do SUA faculty perceive the aim of education and what constitutes a "good teacher," specifically in relation to their role as teachers, their relationship to students, the purpose of their subject matter, and the influence of institutional culture, policies, and curriculum?

As presented in Chapter 5, based on thematic analysis of interviews, class observations, syllabi, and SUA's website, the ten SUA faculty participants' perspectives of the aim of education and what constitutes a "good teacher" could be categorized into three main themes: 1) educating human beings and building character, 2) guiding students to co-create knowledge and meaning, and 3) critical self-reflection and continuous improvement. Within each of these

themes, there were underlying sub-themes evidencing the participants' beliefs and attitudes ("being") and concrete actions in and outside the classroom ("doing") that manifested these major themes. I address these themes relative to the extant literature in Ikeda/Soka Studies in Education under Research Question 3, so here I draw connections to Schwab's (1973) four commonplaces of curriculum and literature on teacher education.

When asked about the aim of education and what it means to be a "good teacher," many participants stated that their role is, first of all, to educate human beings regardless of what subject matter they teach. The attitude of fundamental respect for each and every student underlies the participants' efforts to educate their students to grow as human beings. Such a belief was present in statements made by Gregory, Paul, Scott, and Lucy to respect students' humanity, to interact with them at a human level, and to believe in each student's potential. Such an understanding of a "good teacher" is in stark contrast to the neoliberal conception of a "highly effective teacher" defined as those who can develop students' specific skills that enhance their economic productivity and market value (Attick, 2017; Scott et al., 2016).

The attitude of respecting students' humanity was most prominently manifested through developing trusting relationships. Tom, Scott, Lucy, Brandon, Paul, Gregory, Wendy, and Raymond all pointed to the importance of the teacher's character as a human being, such as being trustworthy, supportive, open-minded, empathetic, and honest. They asserted that these qualities were important for building rapport and developing trusting relationships with students. Such relational communal aspects of teaching and learning is absent in pre-service teacher assessments such as the edTPA, whose underlying message is consistent with the neoliberal conception of good teaching as hyper-individualized and focused on quantifiable outputs (Attick, 2017). The participants of this study made efforts both in and outside class to develop trusting

relationships. While some used the time before and after class to engage in informal conversations and check in with students, some emphasized the importance of office hours to get to know students. Yet some others created structures within class for them to be able to individually interact with students. Gregory's tutorials and Lucy's time for pair work are examples of this. Furthermore, Brandon, Scott, and Lucy explained that showing vulnerability "humanized" them and made them relatable for students, which contributed to building better relationships. Many discussed that these relationships served as the basis for them to encourage students when they faced difficulties both in class and in their personal lives. Encouraging students to never give up and to keep challenging difficulties were qualities of a "good teacher" identified by many participants. By building rapport and encouraging students, these professors modeled how to be a caring and supportive person.

In addition to modeling positive human behavior, many participants strove to build students' character to become global citizens. This included modeling respect for differences themselves and helping students develop respect for differences through class assignments and discussions. Examples of modeling respect for differences include Scott and Wendy changing their participation criteria and assessment to include informal writings in order to adapt to student needs and preferences. Furthermore, some participants designed course assignments in order to help students develop respect for differences that exist among each other and cultivate imaginative empathy for those who are different beyond the SUA community. Examples of such assignments include Wendy's oral history assignment to learn each other's cultural backgrounds, Lucy's exploration of death as a common human experience through literature, and Oliver's peace negotiation role-play to cultivate the human capacities of wisdom, courage, and compassion.

There were several contexts of SUA that contributed to the participants' beliefs and actions that can be categorized under this theme of educating human beings and developing trusting relationships. First and foremost, many participants asserted that small class size and low teaching load are critical in developing relationships. Because they had no more than 18 students per class (some classes had less than 10 students) with only one or two classes per semester, they were able to spend more time with each student engaging them in dialogue both in and outside class and get to know them. Many participants who had taught at large public universities recalled how it was difficult just to remember students' names when they had a hundred students in one room. At SUA, not only do all students live together in the residence halls, but every year one faculty also lives in the residence hall with students. Brandon recalled how this Faculty in Residence program gave him an opportunity to get to know students outside of class. In addition, some participants also noted how students' diverse perspectives and cultural backgrounds contributed to enriching the class discussion and to learning to embrace and appreciate differences. Cultivating respect and appreciation for cultural differences is also an important part of SUA's formal curriculum that has mandatory language learning and study abroad. Therefore, the curriculum commonplaces of subject matter (i.e., curriculum) and milieu (e.g., institutional policy and program) greatly contributed to enabling these professors to develop teacher-student relationships and to cultivate students' character to respect and appreciate differences.

The second theme of what it meant to be a "good teacher" was their ability to guide students to co-create knowledge and meaning. Although the concept of "best practices" is prevalent in neoliberal approach to teacher education, "best practices" refers to efficient delivery of content knowledge (Saltman, 2009). In contrast, the participants of this study emphasized the aim of education as leading students to create meaning and contribute to society by applying

their learning. Whereas the first theme of educating human beings and building character was often beyond the specific subject they taught, this theme of guiding students to co-create knowledge and meaning was specifically tied to the courses they taught. The fundamental belief shared by many was that the teacher's role is a guide and facilitator in a joint journey of mutual inquiry and learning. The metaphors of sailing a ship and navigating a cave shared by Raymond capture such an attitude.

There were many ways in which participants put their belief into practice, one such way involved designing application-based assignments. This included assignments that asked students to evaluate and form their own positions for a certain issue based on facts and theories they learned in class, such as in Oliver and Brandon's class. There were also project-based assignments that asked students to directly apply the learned skills. Examples of this type of skill-based application were more common in math and science classes and included creating computer games in Victoria's class and "adopting" a galaxy in Paul's class. Gregory and Tom designed open and creative projects in which students engaged in empirical research and other inquiries based on their interests. The idea that the purpose of learning is for students to be able to apply their learning to create new knowledge and meaning, not simply memorizing and regurgitating what is being taught, undergirded all of these assignments. In order to guide students to apply their learning, many participants identified the importance of scaffolding. Scaffolding took place in the forms of questioning, lecture, and feedback. Some provided scaffolding within one class session, whereas some consciously structured the entire course to gradually scaffold the content. Raymond's course structure of preparation and investigating stages and Scott's "narrativising" the semester are examples of course-level scaffolding.

Another element under the theme of guiding students to co-create knowledge and meaning was their focus on creating dialogic spaces in class. This is again in contrast to the neoliberal approach to teaching as explained by Saltman as "a delivery of transmission model of pedagogy that denies the educative process in knowledge making" (p. 90). The participants not only emphasized the dialogic process between the teacher and student, but also among students to create knowledge and meaning. Interestingly, when participants discussed the importance of discussion-oriented instruction, they placed more emphasis on students leading discussion and engaging with each other rather than the teacher facilitating the discussion. They explained that such practice gave students a "voice" and also encouraged them to pursue their own interests. In Wendy and Scott's classes, students led discussion on the assigned readings within a given structure. On the other hand, in Lucy and Raymond's classes, students were responsible not only for facilitating discussion, but also for determining the topic and reading. Many participants also described the importance of providing immediate and extensive feedback, which they considered as a form of dialogue between themselves and their students.

There were several contexts of SUA that were particularly important for this theme of guiding students to co-create knowledge and meaning. Similar to the first theme, small class size and low teaching load were identified as the most critical elements for engaging in dialogic and project-based inquiry. Everyone who had taught at large public universities recalled how they only had the choice to deliver a one-way lecture in those institutions. They explained the difficulty of successfully conducting a seminar-style class with even 20 students and how SUA's small class size enabled them to engage in what they believed to be "good teaching" as identified above. In addition, some participants described SUA students as more engaging and willing to come to office hours compared to students at other institutions where they previously taught. The

curriculum also encourages faculty and students to engage in mutual inquiry. Learning Cluster is specifically designed for that purpose as students can also propose and create a course. The capstone project is also designed for faculty to mentor students in conducting research. Furthermore, some participants discussed the culture, or ethos, at SUA where interactive and experiential learning is highly valued as good teaching. Therefore, for this theme as for the first theme, the curriculum commonplaces of subject matter (i.e., curriculum) and milieu (e.g., institutional policy and culture) greatly contributed to enabling these professors to practice what they believed to be "good teaching."

The third theme of what it meant to be a "good teacher" was critical self-reflection and continuous improvement. Although this was not something any participant explicitly identified as a quality of a "good teacher," more than two-thirds of the participants shared something that could be categorized under this theme. The belief that undergirded this theme was that teachers are learners constantly trying to improve their teaching. One of the most important factors many participants raised as contributing to their improvement in teaching was student feedback. Some feedback included informal questions and comments in and outside class, whereas other feedback came as formal evaluations. Scott shared a time when students felt pressure from his heavy emphasis on class participation, which led him to consider different forms of participation, and Raymond shared about students who demanded a more creative and interactive pedagogical approach, which led to his current course structure that requires students to create expositions. Lucy and Tom have created various changes to their courses based on formal student feedback in the mid-semester survey and course evaluation at the end of the semester.

In addition to student feedback, many participants shared their past failures as students and professors and how reflecting on those failures led to their current practice. Brandon recalled

a time during his graduate studies when he could not answer the "so what" question. In order for his students not to be in the same place, he always encourages students to ask why that knowledge or topic matters. Wendy, on the other hand, recalled her early days teaching at SUA. Her initial grading system did not work well to encourage students to put effort into class participation, so she changed to a "labor-based grading contract," which is a type of grading that values effort and the process of thought development through many informal writings.

For this theme of critical self-reflection and continuous improvement, the most influential commonplace was students. This is evident from how many of them referred to both formal and informal student feedback for facilitating critical reflection on and for initiating changes in their practice. Additionally, the institutional culture of encouraging faculty to experiment with and implement new methods and the creation of faculty development programs might have contributed to engaging in critical self-reflection and continuous improvement. Therefore, analysis of the three themes reveals that SUA faculty's perspective of the aim of education and what constitutes a "good teacher" cannot be separated from the other curriculum commonplaces that together form the culture and ethos of the university.

Revisiting Research Question 2

How has their experience at SUA changed/shaped their perspectives?

Based on the interviews, it became clear that many of the participants already held many of these beliefs regarding what it meant to be a "good teacher" prior to coming to SUA. Three participants identified themselves as members of SGI, and they not only knew about SUA, but they were also familiar with the founding principles and the philosophy of the university as expounded by Ikeda. For the others, even though they did not know about SUA or the philosophies of Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda, they stated that the mission statement and the

principles of the university resonated with their beliefs. Some also recalled their first time visiting the campus for the interview, and as they interacted with the faculty and students, they felt that "this was the place" they wanted to be.

During their time at SUA, they further developed their beliefs and practices through various experiences and encounters. One important aspect that might have been most influential is the culture, or ethos, that exists on SUA's campus. As Brandon stated that everyone at SUA knows the university's mission statement, there is a general and shared understanding that both faculty and students are there to become global citizens who can make a positive contribution to the world. Even though this concept is often not explicitly discussed in class, this ethos seems to penetrate the campus. Therefore, even those who initially did not know about SUA's philosophy are immersed in this culture, and over time, they come to uphold this mission as their own. For many faculty, this ethos of the university is first and foremost their understanding of Soka education. This is similar to how Nagashima (2016) explained the culture, or ethos, at Soka schools in Japan most contributed to her research participants' understanding of Soka education.

Although the founding administration and faculty of the university might have envisioned creating such an ethos, based on the interviews, it seems that the students are the ones who are continuously creating and maintaining this ethos on campus. Especially during the first ten years of SUA, most students were members of the SGI and had more knowledge about Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda's philosophies. As shared in Chapters 4 and 5, in some cases students explicitly asked for more interactive and creative pedagogy or asked faculty to use Makiguchi and Ikeda's writings as course materials. Students also created events such as the Soka Education Conference to both theoretically examine Soka approaches to education and experientially examine the practices at SUA. Many of the participants of this study have not only worked with students who

presented at the conference and supported behind the scenes by reviewing proposals, but they themselves also presented and organized workshops. For many participants, getting involved in the Soka Education Conference was their entry into reading books by and on Makiguchi and Ikeda. As they started to read them, they found many aspects of Soka approaches to education to resonate with their own beliefs.

Therefore, it seemed that for many of the participants, rather than completely changing their perspectives toward education and their pedagogy, their experiences at SUA reinforced and further developed in the direction they were already heading. In other words, there is no one cause that led to their current perspective (effect). Rather, it is more akin to moving in a cyclical spiral, encountering and integrating various elements along the way (see Figure 2).

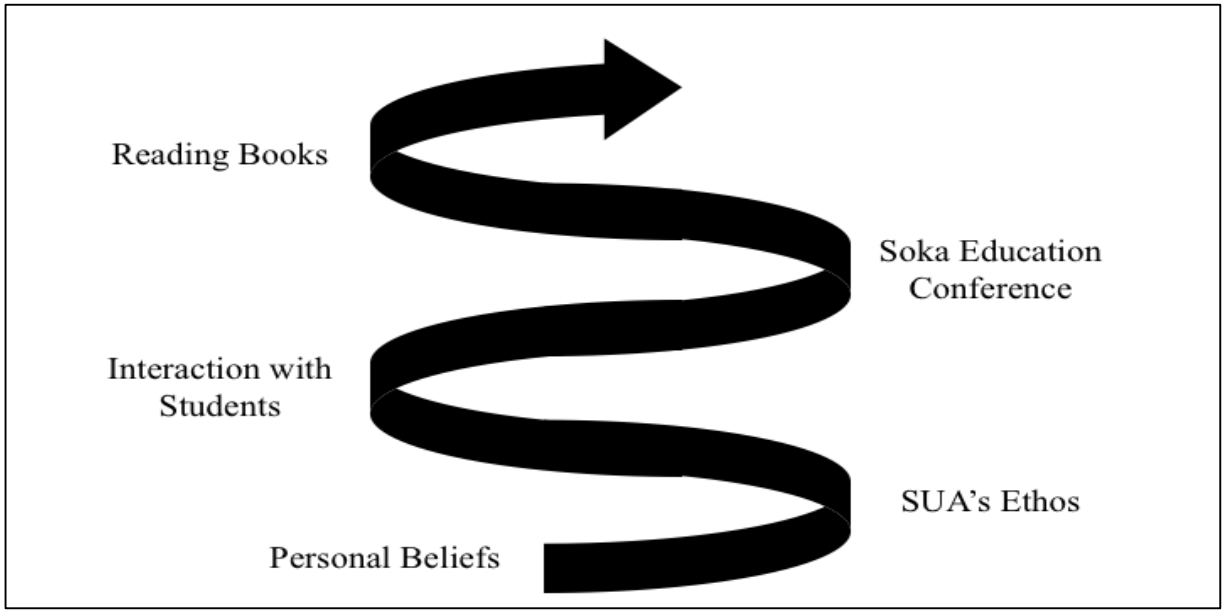

Figure 2: Participants' Development of Their Perspectives.

Revisiting Research Question 3

In what ways do their perspectives converge with or diverge from the primary and secondary, theoretical and empirical explanations of Soka approaches to education?

When considering the convergences and divergences between the participants' perspective and the literature on Soka approaches to education, it is crucial to understand the abovementioned process of how their perspectives developed. Even though all the participants of this study were actively engaging with the literature on Soka approaches to education, none of them started from the literature and tried to deductively apply the theories into their practice. Rather, they were picking up various aspects from the literature that resonated with their personally held beliefs and with what they experientially understood to be "Soka education" by being immersed in the culture of SUA. Therefore, what they identified as qualities of a "good teacher" are the overlapping part in the Venn diagram of the three elements: the participants' personal beliefs, SUA's ethos, and the literature (see Figure 3). As represented in Figure 3, the circle for Soka literature is larger than the other two circles. This represents the fact that the participants' reading of the literature is quite limited. In most cases, they had only read one or two books if any. Many referred to SUA's mission statement, values, and other statements that can be found on its website, which are certainly based on Ikeda's philosophy but are mostly the university's interpretation and representation of his philosophy. Therefore, there are many aspects that are central to the primary and secondary literature in the field of Ikeda/Soka Studies and yet are not part of this overlapping part of the Venn diagram. Therefore, in this section, I first present how the participants described their understanding of Soka approaches to education. Although this contains a great amount of data, I deliberately present it here and not in Chapter 5 because it is important to discuss their understandings relative to the extant literature. Then, I present how the previously identified three themes of a "good teacher" converge—sometimes explicitly and deliberately and sometimes intuitively and unconsciously—with the primary and

secondary theoretical and empirical explanations of Soka approaches to education. Thereafter, I present key concepts from the literature that are unaddressed in the participants' explanations.

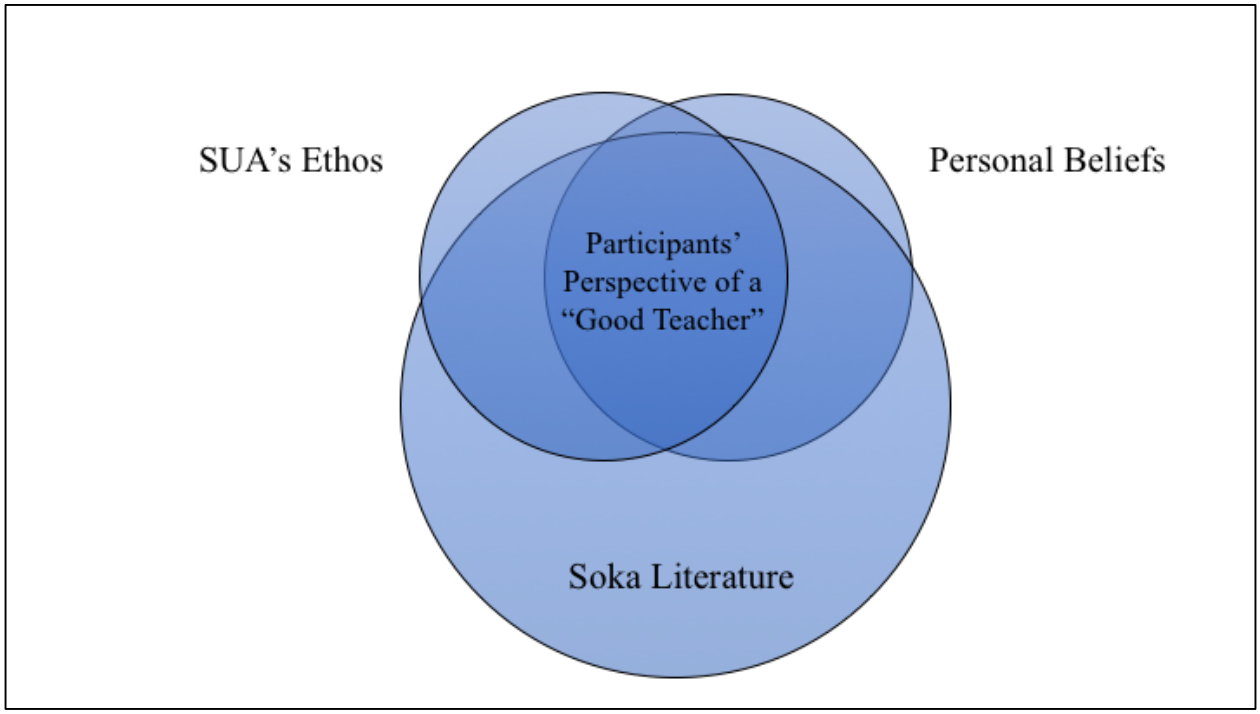

Figure 3: Participants' Perspective of a "Good Teacher."

Participants' Articulation of Soka Approaches to Education

As I wrote in the Introduction, it is worth noting again the complexity of the context of this study. None of the faculty at SUA has formally been "trained" in Soka approaches to education. Although there were three participants in this study who are members of the SGI and knew about SUA prior to working there, many came without knowing anything about its origins or principles outlined by Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda. Some of them stated that they read the mission statement, "to foster a steady stream of global citizens committed to living a contributive life" (Soka University of America, n.d.-g), during their job application and that it resonated with them. However, that was the extent they knew about the university and its principles, and they already held beliefs about good teaching. After coming to SUA, through reading some books by

or on Makiguchi and Ikeda, participating in the Soka Education Conference, interacting with students and other faculty, and in some cases just being immersed in the culture that exists on the SUA campus, they developed their own understandings about what Soka approaches to education means. Below, I present four main ways in which participants explained Soka approaches to education: mission statement, rejecting knowledge transmission and co-creating meaning, value creation, and happiness of the learner. I conclude this section by describing how these participants consciously and explicitly engaged these ideas in class.

Mission Statement

When asked about their understanding of Soka approaches to education, seven out of ten participants referred to SUA's mission statement to foster global citizens committed to living a contributive life. As most participants did not know anything about SUA or the founding principles of the university prior to applying for a job, for many of them, the mission statement was one of their first encounters with SUA as they were preparing for an interview. The mission statement and the term "global citizen" are used extensively throughout SUA's website and in its recruitment materials. Brandon stated, "Everybody knows it. I mean, if we go out to the cafeteria and ask people what the mission statement is, they are going to be able to say 'to live a contributive life,' 'be global citizen,' or some variation of that." Brandon's view is illustrative of others that the mission statement is widely known on campus. It is no surprise, then, that most participants equated a "Soka approach" with "fostering global citizens." However, the way in which they described global citizenship varied.

The most common description of global citizenship across participants was to live a contributive life, which is directly from the mission statement. Lucy, for example, stated that even though students will pursue various jobs in the future, as global citizens, "the purpose is to

contribute to our common goal, that is to make the world a better place for all people." Three other participants, Gregory, Scott, and Tom, described global citizens as those working for peace. Although some participants did not use the term "contributive life," they equated "peace" with the idea of contributive living. Gregory referred to the following passage from Ikeda's (1997) speech at the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation in India:

> What our world most requires now is the kind of education that fosters love for humankind, that develops character—that provides an intellectual basis for the realization of peace and empowers learners to contribute to and improve society.

This passage is on SUA's website to describe its heritage (Soka University of America, n.d.-a). The website also includes the previously mentioned reference to its founding on an ethic of peace: "Soka University is founded upon the Buddhist principles of peace, human rights, and the sanctity of life" (Soka University of America, n.d.-g).

Another way in which participants described global citizenship is with the qualities of wisdom, courage, and compassion. These are the characteristics Ikeda (2010b) himself identifies as qualities of global citizens in his speech at Teachers College, Columbia University. Oliver stated that he took inspiration from this speech and found commonalities with his discipline of human rights and peace studies. He redefined them as human capacities in the following way and strives to cultivate them in students:

> Wisdom as the capacity to acknowledge common ground despite differences, courage as the capacity to be able to confront differences without negating them, and compassion as the capacity to embrace differences across time and space.

Although without explicit reference to Ikeda's work, Paul also described global citizens as having the "courage to actually be energized by the challenge" of approaching "people from very

different cultures," which seems to have come from Ikeda's (2010b) notion of "the courage not to fear or deny difference; but to respect and strive to understand people of different cultures, and to grow from encounters with them" (p. 112). Scott similarly made no reference to Ikeda but described global citizens as "globally aware and open and having a sense of membership in one human family." He also asserted,

> To live peacefully in an incredibly diverse world, one needs a capacity for open and frank discussion and dialogue across different epistemologies, different perspectives, and different social values in a spirit of general inquiry and general curiosity.

Interestingly, wisdom, courage, and compassion are also listed as "values" upheld by the university (Soka University of America, n.d.-g), but they are not connected to the idea of global citizenship on the website.

Finally, Tom, who was a faculty in charge of institutional research and assessment, grounded his definition of global citizenship in the institutional learning outcomes, which are as follows:

- To foster an awareness of the needs of our changing world through developing a sense of history and an understanding of the nature of reality
- To think and investigate critically and creatively
- To be effective at various modes of expression and communication
- To acquire knowledge and appreciation of multiple cultures and traditions
- To become, through integrative learning, active and informed global citizens (Soka University of America, n.d.-l)

As someone who was involved in the development of these learning outcomes, he explained how the mission statement served as the basis for these learning outcomes, and how these learning

outcomes are addressed in each concentration and each course. He had a more detailed and skill-based perspective toward global citizenship than other participants, defining global citizens as those who are "globally educated," "integrated learners," "skilled in inquiry," and "civically engaged."

Rejecting Knowledge Transmission and Co-Creating Meaning

The next most common description of Soka approaches to education after the mission statement came in the form of a rejection of the knowledge transmission type of teaching. Whereas the mission statement and the notion of global citizenship came from Ikeda, this topic is mainly derived from Makiguchi's writings. Referring to Makiguchi (Bethel, 1989), Scott explained the rejection of knowledge transmission in the following way:

> Learning is a relational activity. Its fundamental value and meaning is developed in a relationship, not one where there is one side that is the source of all knowledge that is bequeathing it to [the other], or in a Makiguchian phrase, force-feeding it to a learner that are empty vessels to be filled up.

In a similar manner, Raymond rejected the idea of students being an empty vessel and continued as follows:

> It's more of a merging through the dialogic process. Even if it was a kind of vessel, they come in all shapes and sizes, so I think what I'm getting at is that to truly respect students as key active participants in more of a two-way or a multi-way process, rather than a one-way teacher to students in which [the teacher] knows the one path.

He further describes Makiguchi's approach as one of dialogic process of shared meaning-making:

> What I remember very much [from reading Makiguchi] is this kind of a new recognition of the student, not as a passive object in which you are to impart knowledge, but as an active participant in a dialogic and often collective process in which their creation of meaning is shared with your creation of meaning.

Scott also describes Soka approaches to education as "mutual inquiry and meaning-making" based on his reading of Makiguchi. Such a notion resonates with Makiguchi's knowledge cultivation model (Okamura, 2017) and the notion that value creation is inherently dialogic (Hatano, 2009), if not explicitly so (Goulah, 2018; Makiguchi, 1981-1988).

Furthermore, for Scott, rejecting the belief that the teacher is the all-knower and rejecting the method of knowledge transmission lead to a flattened hierarchy between the teacher and the student. Similarly, Paul described Makiguchi's humanistic approach as follows,

> It implies that the humanity of the student is central, which means that the separation, the hierarchy, the power dynamic between the teacher and the student is also reduced because each is considering the other as a human being.

This is similar to Gregory's responses, who cited Makiguchi's assertion that "teachers must come down off their thrones and serve" students (see Makiguchi, 1981-1988, Vol. 6; cf Bethel, 1989, p. 169).

Another way in which some participants described this concept of mutual inquiry and meaning-making between the teacher and student was by comparing it to constructivist approaches in education. Paul and Raymond respectively cited Dewey's notion of growth and creating learning experiences. Such a comparison between Dewey and Soka approaches to education is understandable given the multiple primary and secondary texts comparing Makiguchi's and Ikeda's perspectives with those of Dewey (e.g., Garrison et al., 2014; Goulah,

2010a, 2010b). Paul indicated that he had read an essay by Ikeda comparing Makiguchi and Dewey (Ikeda, 2010b), and Raymond cited in his teaching philosophy an essay by Bogen (2010) and a chapter in a book by Miller (2002), both of which compare Ikeda and Dewey.

Value Creation

The way in which participants described the notion of value creation was a combination of what has been described in the above two sections. Some described it as a process of mutual inquiry and meaning-making as described in the previous section. Many described it as living a contributive life. Lucy, for example, explained as follows:

> I think value creation is closely related to the way a person looks at the world, so the worldview and the view about yourself…everybody wants their life to be valuable. And to be a worthy person, you need to contribute to the world, it's not just about yourself.

Scott similarly explained that value creation is not just learning something for the sake of learning, but to "make it morally and socially meaningful in our lives and in the lives of society at large." Emphasizing the "creation" aspect of value creation, Brandon stated,

> We are still placing a heavy emphasis on repeating what other people have said. That's not value creation. Value creation is taking something and producing something.

Raymond also explained that to create something is to "take diverse elements that preexist" and "put them together in a novel way." Tom specifically defined value creation as "creating knowledge that is valuable." He paused for a moment and added, "In order to do that, research methodology skills are extremely important." Although all participants knew that the Japanese word *soka* means "value creation," their explanation of the concept was not as grounded in literature as that of global citizenship. Nonetheless, their explanations converge with Makiguchi's (1981-1988) explanation of value creation, which is to create something that

benefits oneself and others through the application of knowledge (see also Goulah & Ito, 2012; Okamura, 2017).

Happiness of the Learner

Although a minority, two participants shared that the happiness of the learner is a central concept in Soka approaches to education that resonated with them when reading Makiguchi. Paul specifically explained Makiguchi's notion of happiness as one "being embedded in a community," which he compared with today's "civic minded liberal arts approach." Although he started with the notion of "being embedded in a community," he articulated the respect for and focus on individual students as a way to develop their unique potentialities and talents. He shared how he creates flexible project-based assignments that can adapt to individual students' interests and talents. As Makiguchi (1981-1988) stated that "genuine happiness requires sharing the sufferings and joys of the larger public as a member of society" (Vol. 5, p. 131), living a contributive life that would benefit one's community is central to his notion of a truly happy life. Although this aspect was recognized at the outset, it was not fully articulated in Paul's explanation and concrete actions that ensued, which I address below.

Lucy, based on her reading of *Education for Creative Living*, Bethel's edition of Makiguchi's *The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy*, stated "I really appreciate the point that the happiness of the learner is the most important." Describing the current condition in which "students are just under the pressure of reading, writing, and all these things, and they have lost track of the purpose of learning," she then articulated the notion of happiness as follows:

> My understanding is that focusing on the happiness of the learner is not just to give them easy things to do or give them an easy A so that they can be happy; it's to stimulate the inner motivation and…sincerely enjoy the process of learning, even though sometimes

> it's difficult. After they overcome the difficulty, they can fully enjoy the outcome because they actually made effort and they are successful.

Although she did not directly reference Ikeda, her ideas resonate with the two guidelines Ikeda gave to students at Soka University in Japan at its opening: "Only labor and devotion to one's mission give life its worth" and "For what purpose should one cultivate wisdom? May you always ask yourself this question" (Ikeda, 2008c, p. 101). Lucy concluded with the idea of applying what they learned and making a contribution:

> On the one hand, they obtained the skills and knowledge, and on the other hand, they grew in terms of being a capable and compassionate human being who can continue to learn and can apply what they learned to the real world, and I think that is true happiness.

This connects to Makiguchi's notion of a truly happy life as one of living a contributive life.

Direct Engagement with Articulated Concepts of Soka Approaches

The degree to which these participants directly engaged students with their articulated components of Soka approaches in their classes varied. Some simply never discussed any of the abovementioned concepts in class with students. On the other hand, some used texts by Makiguchi and Ikeda in class. For example, Victoria mentioned that she assigned chapters from *Education for Creative Living*, a partial English translation of Makiguchi's *Soka kyoikugaku taikei* (The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy) in Core I as a way for students to explore the history and the founding principles of the university. Tom also assigned chapters from *Soka Education*, a collection of Ikeda's writings on education published in the US, when he taught Core II in the past.

As stated earlier, Oliver shared that he explicitly aimed to cultivate the human capacities of wisdom, courage, and compassion in his courses. Some shared that they created assignments

and questions to explore the concepts of global citizenship. For example, in one of his psychology courses, Tom created an exam question to design a quantitative study to examine the university's mission statement of fostering global citizens. He explained,

> Students don't think about the mission statement all the time, or even if they think about it, they don't really go deeper into what that means. And so…having students really think about that in and of itself I think is very valuable, so that they can understand why they are here. Right? And second of all, it's a really good question to test their knowledge of research methodology.

Scott and Raymond used global citizenship as a discussion question in class. Scott, for example, said that he asks students to reflect on the question of whether the United States is an empire. He explained,

> It can be quite jarring and a little disturbing to United States students to become exposed to the notion that the U.S. emerges out of empire. In fact, it's actually meaningful in that there might be very meaningful ways to think about the United States having an imperial presence in the world and how it changes our understanding of the U.S. Those are important reflections for anyone who wants to think of themselves as global citizens.

Similarly, Raymond also stated that he engages students in discussion on the notion of global citizenship in relation to nationalism and patriotism by asking, "Can national citizenship and patriotism coexist with global citizenship and feeling of solidarity? Or are they at odds?"

Among the ten participants of this study, Raymond was the only one who explicitly discussed what he considered as "Soka education" in class, which is described in Chapter 6. He also wrote his pedagogical framework using the language of "Soka" in his syllabus:

> I practice with what I define to be "Soka education." This approach acknowledges students *share* responsibility for what and how we learn. It practices "scaffolding" such that an instructor's role is not to entirely design and build the edifice of knowledge, but to provide scaffolds, support, tools, and ideas on the architectural plans so students themselves do the building and creative learning.

Further, he had a learning objective explicitly and directly rooted in the mission statement of becoming global citizens, which he wrote as follows: "To better become 'global citizens' dedicated to peace through an understanding of the history, problems, and peoples of Latin America's two largest countries."

Discussion of The Three Themes Relative to Literature

Among the three themes, guiding students to co-create knowledge and meaning was the one that many participants made the most explicit and deliberate connection to the literature, specifically Makiguchi's theory of value creation. It is interesting that, even though SUA is founded by Ikeda and its ethos was initially created by SGI member students, faculty, and administration who saw Ikeda as their faith mentor and wanted to embody his spirit, many of the non-Buddhist participants of this study associated "Soka education" to Makiguchi's theory rather than Ikeda's. This is probably in part because the term *sōka* originates from Makiguchi, and Ikeda (2005a, 2009b) himself often introduces Makiguchi as "the father" or "the founder" of Soka education in his messages to SUA. Reviewing all the presentations at the Soka Education Conference since 2005 also reveals that there are about twice as many presentations on Makiguchi than on Ikeda. Furthermore, when the content is examined, many presentations on Makiguchi have a thorough examination of his theory of value, such as the difference between cognition and evaluation, value in terms of beauty, gain, and good, and his concept of happiness.

In contrast, most of the presentations on Ikeda only reference his speech on global citizenship with hardly any examination of his other key concepts, such as human education, human revolution, and dialogue. Furthermore, the permanent exhibition on Soka education at SUA features Makiguchi's theory of value, but not the abovementioned Ikeda's educational philosophy. The section on Ikeda focuses on his broader efforts on peace, culture, and education, such as his dialogues with world leaders and the founding of Soka schools worldwide. Given these circumstances, it may be natural that many of these professors were drawn more to Makiguchi's theory and made it the basis of their understanding of Soka education.

Many participants stated that the aim of education seen from a Soka perspective is to help students create value that is personally and socially meaningful through their application of learning. Connecting to the university's mission statement to "foster a steady stream of global citizens committed to living a contributive life" (Soka University of America, n.d.-g), many stated that they aimed to cultivate the knowledge and skills that students can actually use to contribute to the larger society. They also saw their role as teachers to guide students in this joint journey of mutual and dialogic inquiry to help them become such contributive global citizens. Many specifically referred to Makiguchi's writing where he rejects the knowledge transmission model of instruction as "force-feeding education." As participants themselves made clear connections to the literature, such beliefs obviously converge with the primary and secondary literature, specifically Makiguchi's (1981-1988) value-creating pedagogy and his knowledge cultivation model (see Okamura, 2017). In his essay on teacher education, Makiguchi (1981-1988, Vol. 9) also emphasized the teacher's role as guiding students to be able to create value from what they learned. Ikeda echoes this, stating that the "essence of education lies in shared

value creation" (Garrison et al., 2014, p. 120) between the mentor and disciple, or teacher and student.

The actual practice of designing application-based assignments and guiding students toward this end is also consistent with Makiguchi's (1981-1988, Vol. 9; see also Okamura 2017) knowledge cultivation model and his (1981-1988, Vols. 5-6) value-creating pedagogy. Ikeda (2016) explained that, for Makiguchi, "the authentic objective of education is to foster the habit of discovering opportunities to apply the knowledge gained through education and to do so to maximum effect through concrete action" (p. 6). As Makiguchi (1981-1988, Vol. 4; see also Ikeda, 2016) emphasized the importance of the "courage of application," it takes courage to apply their learning in novel ways due to the uncertainty and risk of failure. Therefore, Makiguchi asserted that it was critical that teachers provide as many opportunities as possible to practice the act of application in the safe space of the classroom. Furthermore, both Makiguchi ([1936] 2015) and Toda ([1929] 2018) placed importance on the teacher's role of "guiding" students. As described by Inukai and Goulah (2018) and in the literature review section of this dissertation, Toda's method of a deductive guide focuses on guiding students to gradually move to solve more complex problems independently by applying previously learned knowledge and skills. This kind of method can be seen even in the earliest of Makiguchi's writings on composition instruction (Makiguchi, [1898] 2013; Gebert, 2013; Ito, 2017).

Although the participants were not aware of Makiguchi's ([1936] 2015) essay, *On Attitude toward Education*, their understanding of the teacher's role as a guide also closely resonates with Makiguchi's metaphor of teachers assuming the role of background chorus while students become the singers and dancers on the stage. Similarly, the participants were unaware of Makiguchi's ([1898] 2013) earlier work on composition instruction (see also Gebert, 2013;

Goulah, 2013c; Ito, 2017) and Toda's method of deductive guide (Inukai & Goulah, 2018) as instructional methods to guide students to application of learning. The participants' unawareness of these works by Makiguchi and Toda could partly be due to their inaccessibility in English until recently. However, Makiguchi's and Toda's methods are similar to what is today known as the "gradual release of responsibility" model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983), or more commonly as "I do, we do, you do" model, and scaffolding, both of which are common instructional methods today. Therefore, many participants practiced these methods without knowing that such practice converged with the primary and secondary explanations of Soka approaches to education.

Although the application of learning and guiding students to that end is central to Makiguchi's value-creating pedagogy and Toda's deductive guide, empirical studies and actual examples from classrooms on this aspect of Soka approaches to education is extremely limited. As presented in the literature review, Goulah's (2009b) study examines his students' creation of value in terms of beauty, gain, and good in a Japanese as a Foreign Language (JFL) class at a public high school. Similarly, Okamura (2017) presents examples of students' value creation from his JFL class in elementary and middle school classes. Hayashi (2014, 2015) explores how the theory of value can be used to design high school math courses. However, this aspect of guiding students to create value from the application of subject matter knowledge and skills is almost nonexistent in most of the existing empirical studies with self-identified Soka educators and teachers at other Soka schools (Hrdina, 2018; Ikegami & Agbenyega, 2014; Ikegami & Rivalland, 2016; Nagashima, 2012, 2016; Takazawa, 2016), as well as in the thousands of teaching experiences shared by Soka Gakkai-member teachers teaching in non-Soka schools in Japan (Soka Gakkai Educators Department, 2000). This is probably because hardly any of these

teachers are reading Makiguchi or Toda's work, and rather mainly relying on Ikeda's faith-based writings.

Another sub-theme under guiding students to co-create knowledge and meaning was creating dialogic spaces. As introduced in Chapter 2, dialogue is a central concept and practice for Ikeda, who himself has engaged in over 7,000 dialogues with thinkers and leaders around the world (Goulah, 2013a). For Ikeda (2010b), dialogue is "intense, soul-baring exchanges" (p. 57) that leads to a profound inner change and to becoming fully human. From this perspective, the many examples of student-led discussions introduced in Chapter 5 do not seem to resonate with how Ikeda defines dialogue. However, as Goulah (2018) argues, dialogue is not discussed as an explicit method in schooling by Makiguchi, Toda, or Ikeda. Therefore, these examples could be the participants' way of practicing and fostering the spirit of dialogue in their classrooms.

While many participants concretely attributed the theme of guiding students to co-create knowledge and meaning to their reading of Makiguchi in Bethel's (1989) *Education for Creative Living*, the first theme of educating human beings and building character was often not grounded in specific literature. The only exception might be Oliver's reference to the qualities of wisdom, courage, and compassion in Ikeda's 1996 speech on education for global citizenship (see Ikeda, 2010b). These three qualities are also presented as "values treasured by the university" (Soka University of America, n.d.-g). Otherwise, many of them explained this perspective more generally in relation to the university's mission statement of fostering global citizens and the humanistic approach to education that exists as an ethos at SUA. Therefore, for the participants who were immersed in the culture of SUA, most of the beliefs and practices under this theme, such as respecting the humanity of students, developing trusting relationships, and cultivating respect for differences, were intuitive rather than derived from literature.

However, as presented in the literature review, educating human beings is at the core of Ikeda's educational philosophy. Ikeda (2006) states that one of the educational goals of Soka schools is "fostering rich humanity combined with practical ability," which he explains as "students acquiring the practical abilities necessary to be leaders of society while simultaneously developing a boundless humanity based on the ideal of respect for the dignity of life" (p. 283). as a Buddhist, Ikeda often expresses his belief in the fundamental dignity of every human being regardless of their race, gender, education, or social status (Ikeda, 2013a, 2013b, 2017a, 2018a). SUA's website also declares "sanctity of life" as one of the founding principles of the university (Soka University of America, n.d.-g). The respect for every student as a human being and believing in their potential is also a theme found among teachers at other Soka schools (e.g, Ikegami & Agbenyega, 2014; Ikegami & Rivalland, 2016). Furthermore, believing in each student's humanity and encouraging students in the face of difficulties through developing trusting teacher-student relationships are core practices of teachers at other Soka schools and self-identified Soka educators at non-Soka schools in the U.S. and Japan (Hrdina, 2018; Ikegami & Agbenyega, 2014; Ikegami & Rivalland, 2016; Nagashima, 2012, 2016; Soka Gakkai Educators Department, 2000; Takazawa, 2016).

One sub-theme that emerged in relation to developing trusting relationships was showing vulnerability. Interestingly, vulnerability is not a term that comes up in any of the primary or secondary literature in Ikeda/Soka Studies, yet was emphasized by many participants of this study. However, this seemed to be one concrete way in which they embodied their belief that they are equal human beings as their students who also make mistakes and have weaknesses. They intuitively understood that showing vulnerability contributed to developing trusting relationships with students. Furthermore, when seen from the perspective that vulnerability

demonstrates the participants' attitude that they are in no way perfect and that they are always growing, this may resonate with the notion of human revolution, a conscious, volitional, and continuous process of inner transformation (Goulah, 2012d).

The third theme of critical self-reflection and continuous improvement was even more intuitive than the second theme, for the participants made no connection to the Soka literature or even to the university's mission and values. Therefore, in their minds, these practices may not be aspects of Soka approaches to education. However, their emphasis on how students helped them improve their teaching through formal and informal feedback closely connects to what Goulah (2018) identifies as Ikeda's notion of *kyoiku* (共育), or education as mutual growth of teacher and student. As Goulah (2018) explains, this is the attitude that the teacher can grow as a teacher and human being thanks to their students. Even though the participants had never read about this concept from Ikeda, they seemed to intuitively understand that students were integral to their growth as teachers as evident in the stories shared in Chapter 5.

Furthermore, their belief that teachers are learners and that they are in a continuous process of improvement has connections to the notion of human revolution as expounded by Toda ([1949] 1961, [1957b] 1961) and Ikeda (2010a). Ikeda (2010a) explains human revolution as an inner transformation from a "lesser self" that is "caught up in the snares of egoism" to a "greater self" that "seeks ways of alleviating pain and augmenting the happiness of others" (p. 175). However, the way the participants explained their improvement was mostly limited to instruction and assessment methods, with little reference to changes in their fundamental beliefs and attitudes toward the students or to the world. Therefore, their reflections seem to lack the depth in human revolution, which is a conscious and volitional inner transformation of one's

own mindset (Goulah, 2012d) and a ceaseless struggle to transform one's entire being by seeking to tap into our fundamental, inherent humanity (Goulah, 2010d).

Missing Key Concepts

Besides the depth in the process of human revolution, there are other aspects of Soka approaches to education prominent in the primary literature, yet absent in the participants' explanations. One important concept completely unaddressed at SUA is Ikeda's notion of human education, a process of becoming fully human, which Goulah's (in press) scholarship indicates is arguably the most important educational concept for Ikeda. Although participants discussed the importance of educating human beings and building students' character, they seemed to lack a concrete explanation of what this meant. Similarly, although global citizenship was one of the most often discussed concepts by the participants in relation to Soka approaches to education, their sole reference was the university's mission statement with a few exceptions of those who grounded it in the qualities of wisdom, courage, and compassion as defined by Ikeda (2010b). Also missing was Ikeda's (2010a) emphasis on dialogue as the means of becoming fully human endowed with the qualities of wisdom, courage, and compassion (see also e.g., Bradford, 2018, Goulah, 2013a, 2018; Urbain, 2018). In other words, for Ikeda, dialogue is central to human education and global citizenship education. Many participants discussed the importance of discussion-based classes for co-creating meaning out of the texts, especially as represented in the student-led discussions in various classes. However, again, these class discussions did not seem to have the depth of Ikeda's (2010b) description of dialogue as "intense, soul-baring exchanges" (p. 57) that lead to profound inner change. Put differently, these class discussions were not intended, at least based on the participants' explanations, for what Garrison (2019) calls "social

self-creation" (p. 23) and what Goulah (2020) calls self-actualization in the socio-dialogic space of the other.

Revisiting Research Question 4

What are the implications for teacher education?

The context of higher education, and specifically SUA, obviously differs from public and private K-12 schools for which teacher education programs are tasked to prepare teachers. Nevertheless, we can still draw implications for practices in teacher education. I first examine the direct implications of the three themes that emerged from this research for improving teacher education programs. Thereafter, I consider the implications of what the contextual differences signify in preparing "good teachers" based on Soka approaches to education.

The first implication is the need to address the "being" of a teacher. As I presented in Chapter 5, the "being" and "doing" are not separate; rather, there was always an underlying belief or attitude for their practices in the classroom. Therefore, it is important to help teacher candidates to reflect on and examine their beliefs and attitudes, not just teach instruction and assessment methods deemed as "best practices" (Saltman, 2009). Specifically, the themes of educating human beings and guiding students to co-create meaning both address the question of the aims of education. As Noddings (2013) asserts, teachers today have few opportunities to discuss the aims of education, with most of their conversations centering on the goals and objectives of specific lessons. Although teacher education programs traditionally engaged pre-service teachers with the larger questions of the aims of education, as presented in the literature review, neoliberal ideologies of reform are increasingly standardizing teacher education programs and narrowing their curriculum. The results of this study imply that it is important for

teacher education programs to engage teacher candidates with the questions of what it means to be fully human, the purpose of learning, and the role of a teacher.

Another important implication of this study's findings relative to the "being" of a teacher is their attitude toward students. Most participants not only shared their respect for students as equal human beings, but they also considered students to be integral to their own growth as teachers. This attitude was evident in the many examples of them improving their teaching based on formal and informal feedback from students. Although people may think it is difficult to see younger students in such a way and receive feedback from them, I used to have my fourth graders define a good teacher and a good student in order to keep all of us responsible for striving toward that ideal. I also heard of a former high school teacher having students fill out a survey on what they like about the class and what they wish to see changed. Therefore, it is possible and important in teacher education programs to cultivate such an attitude in pre-service teachers.

Once teacher candidates develop beliefs and perspectives regarding the aims of education, they can derive practices that would lead to achieving those aims. Therefore, the third implication addresses the "doing" of a teacher by reconceptualizing what "best practices" mean. While the neoliberal conceptualization of "best practices" refer to efficient methods to transimit knowledge deemed necessary and worthwhile by the national and state standards, SUA faculty's practices presented in this study suggest that what they consider to be best practices are relational, dialogic, and aimed toward meaningful application. For instance, as a way to model and educate students to grow as human beings, they made effort in and outside of class to develop trusting relationships with students, encouraged students when they faced challenges academically and in their personal lives, and showed vulnerability. They also created

assignments that they hoped would cultivate respect and appreciation for difference. Furthermore, with the belief that their role is to guide students to co-create knowledge and meaning, they designed application-based assignments and provided scaffolding for students to reach the application stage. They also created time and space in class where students could actively engage in discussion with the teacher and among each other. Although the specific methods for practice may differ depending on the context, teacher education programs can encourage pre-service teachers to find ways to interact with each student at a human level, as well as to design assignments and structure their classes in ways conducive to dialogic and mutual inquiry in their respective discipline. Both of these are aspects unaddressed in many pre-service teacher assessments, such as the edTPA, and thus might be increasingly overlooked in teacher education programs.

When we consider the implications for teacher education, it is also crucial to consider the contextual differences between SUA and public and private K-12 schools where many teacher candidates in teacher education programs will be teaching after graduation. The first and most obvious difference is between higher education and K-12 education. At a university, students are generally motivated and willing to learn because they chose to register for a course; therefore, there is usually very few so-called "behavioral problems." In contrast, at the K-12 level, teachers often have to deal with various behavioral issues, such as disruption of class, disengagement from learning, and fights and bullying among students. Unless these issues are resolved, it is difficult to engage them in learning activities. Therefore, the teaching experiences by Soka Gakkai's Educators Department members (Soka Gakkai Educators Department, 2000) and the narratives of the participants of Nagashima's (2016) study all emphasize their continuous effort in forming relationships with students who are disruptive in class, absent from school, or fight

with other students. When faced with these realities, it is more difficult for teachers to sustain the belief in students' humanity and potential and to develop trusting relationships. However, precisely because of these circumstances, such an attitude and commitment must be further emphasized and cultivated in teacher education programs.

Another important contextual difference between higher education and K-12 schools is academic curriculum. Whereas university professors generally have academic freedom to design their courses, as a result of neoliberal reform movement outlined in the literature review, K-12 curriculum especially in U.S. public schools is increasingly standardized. Due to high-stakes standardized tests, many teachers are under the pressure to teach to the test with little flexibility in determining the content, especially because students' test scores are often tied to their evaluation as teachers. Also with the heavy emphasis on "best practices" to transmit knowledge (Saltman, 2009), teachers may be discouraged from experimenting with dialogic and creative pedagogy, such as those identified by SUA faculty in this study. The large class size in many K-12 schools also makes it difficult to engage in dialogic inquiry and guide each student according to their needs and interests. However, examples by Goulah (2009b), Okamura (2017), and Hayashi (2014, 2015) indicate that it is not impossible to implement value-creating education in their respective disciplines despite the challenging circumstances of K-12 public schools. Given the realities of many schools, it is critical for pre-service teachers to not only study Soka approaches to education, but also discuss how to find opportunities to creatively implement them in their circumstances, or as Schultz (2017) calls "teaching in the cracks." Teacher candidates can also learn from Makiguchi and Toda's examples of what Goulah (2013c) calls "engaged resistance," an effort to reform the existing system while ensuring students' academic and social success in the system as it exists.

There is also an important contextual difference of the culture, or ethos. Unlike the previous two contextual differences, this is more of a difference between Soka and non-Soka schools than higher education and K-12 schools. As presented above, the study revealed that at SUA there is an ethos of care and of a commitment to live a contributive life as global citizens. Because of such an ethos, although the participants did not formally study Soka approaches to education, or consciously and deductively strive to apply the theories from their reading of Makiguchi and Ikeda, they nevertheless were able to intuitively develop beliefs and practices to educate students both to develop their character and to apply their learning in personally and socially meaningful ways. For the teacher candidates who will most likely be working at schools where such an ethos would not be present, it would be difficult for them to intuitively arrive at such beliefs and practices. Therefore, it is important to explicitly engage teacher candidates in teacher education programs with both primary and secondary explanations of Soka approaches to education.

Implications

Because I addressed the implications of the specific research findings for teacher education as part of revisiting the fourth research question, here I address implications for future research and practice in the field of Ikeda/Soka Studies, Curriculum Studies, and teacher education more broadly. This study was primarily concerned with SUA faculty's perspectives of what it means to be a "good teacher" and their practices, which targeted a population unexamined in other empirical studies in the field. However, it is important to triangulate the results of this study with students' perspectives and examine whether students are experiencing SUA's education in the way these faculty intended. Goulah's (2012d) study is currently the only existing study on SUA students' perspectives. It explored their understanding of human

education and value-creating education relative to their experiences of language learning and study abroad. However, it did not ask students about their teachers' pedagogy or their relationships with the teachers, and how these affected their language learning experiences. There could also be studies that examine students' perspectives and experiences beyond language learning and study abroad.

Another implication for research in the field of Ikeda/Soka Studies is to undertake comparative studies with other Soka schools. In fact, Nagashima (2016) who examined the experiences and perspectives of teachers who graduated from Tokyo Soka High School suggests conducting research at SUA and comparing the results with her findings. The results from this study and hers indicate that the ethos at Tokyo Soka that she described in her study is similar to the ethos of SUA I described in this study. Furthermore, even though they do not use the word ethos, studies at various Soka kindergartens (Ikegami & Rivalland, 2016; Ikegami & Agbenyega, 2014; Ikegami & Grieshaber, 2017) imply that there is a similar commitment among the Soka kindergarten teachers to display compassion and a belief in students' unlimited potential, enact dialogic student-child relationships, and help students to never give up during challenges. However, as I discussed above, there were also notable differences in the articulation of Soka approaches to education between the participants of this study and those of studies at other Soka schools. Whereas SUA faculty focused mostly on the pedagogical aspect of guiding students to co-create knowledge and meaning through application of learning that they associated with Makiguchi's theory of value, teachers at other Soka schools mainly drew inspiration from Ikeda's example and his writings and focused on developing relationships and encouraging students outside of their teaching of the subject matter.

To further such comparative studies of Soka schools, one site I suggest is the Soka school in Brazil. Not only the Brazil Soka Gakkai International's Educators Division has initiated and conducted Makiguchi Project in Action since the 1990's (de Melo Silva, 2000) and may have a stronger emphasis on Makiguchi, but the Soka High School in Brazil is also part of the International Baccalaureate program and has a strong emphasis on fostering global citizens. Therefore, comparing their pedagogy with that of SUA faculty may lead to significant findings. Within the past ten years, both Kansai and Tokyo Soka High Schools became a Super Global High School and Soka University became a part of the "Top Global University Project," both of which are initiated by Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. Therefore, these schools might have a similar emphasis on global citizenship education as SUA, which may lead to the teachers' consideration of pedagogy relative to the subject matter they teach. Sherman's (2019) study concluded that students at Soka University in Japan increasingly developed their identity as global citizens as a result of the university's normative environment endorsing global citizenship ideals and promoting global awareness. However, the study did not examine what faculty did to create such an environment or how global awareness was promoted in the classroom. It would be valuable to see whether the results from a study focusing on the faculty's perspectives and actions at these Soka institutions converge with or diverge from the findings of this study at SUA.

Another implication for research in Ikeda/Soka Studies is to consider that none of the participants of this study formally studied Soka approaches to education. Now that DePaul University has the Value-Creating Education for Global Citizenship program, there are students who have formally studied both the primary and secondary literature on Soka approaches to education teaching at various schools around the world. Examining their perspectives and

practices would offer an important comparison to the existing empirical studies. Furthermore, there is an increasing number of doctoral students and recent graduates who have formally studied Soka approaches to education and are currently examining their own practices as teachers and teacher educators. These studies have taken the form of dialogic inquiry (Bradford, 2018), duoethnography (Bradford & Inukai, 2016, 2017; Bradford & Nagashima, 2017), self-study (Bradford & Inukai, 2020), and theoretical research that includes anecdotal examples from the classroom (Goulah, 2018; Inukai & Okamura, forthcoming). These emerging studies will also provide interesting points of comparison to the existing empirical studies at Soka and non-Soka schools.

This dissertation also has implications for the field of Curriculum Studies. I used Schwab's (1973) four commonplaces of curriculum, and in particular, the notion of "teacher as curriculum" (Schlein & Schwarz, 2015) as the theoretical framework to consider what it means to be a "good teacher" from a Soka perspective. Although many articles and presentations in Ikeda/Soka Studies have appeared in journals and conferences in Curriculum Studies, and many doctoral students pursuing research in Ikeda/Soka Studies are also in Curriculum Studies, this dissertation is the first extensive empirical study to explore Soka approaches to education using a framework in Curriculum Studies. The findings of this dissertation suggest that both the "being" and "doing" of a teacher are essential elements when considering "teacher as curriculum." Furthermore, as Schubert (2009) puts it, an essential question in Curriculum Studies is, "What is worth knowing, needing, experiencing, doing, being, becoming, sharing, contributing, and wondering?" (p. 22). Key concepts in Ikeda/Soka Studies, such as human education, global citizenship, and dialogue, also offer new ways in which we can conceptualize "teacher as curriculum" and consider the "what's worthwhile questions."

Finally, in regards to teacher education, this dissertation considers teacher education through the lens of both Ikeda/Soka Studies and Curriculum Studies. In other words, it uniquely brings the three fields together. Currently, the only research in Ikeda/Soka Studies that directly considers teacher education is the work by Kuo and Aniezue (2018). Furthermore, even though the ideas of the four commonplaces of curriculum (Schwab, 1973) and "what's worthwhile question" (Schubert, 2009) may be implicit in teacher education programs, they are often not explicitly addressed or emphasized as pre- and in-service teacher assessments mostly focus on evaluating teacher efficiency in delivering content knowledge (e.g., Carter & Lochte, 2017; Saltman, 2017). However, this research suggests that theoretical frameworks from Ikeda/Soka Studies and Curriculum Studies can offer new perspectives to the ways in which we consider teacher education.

Conclusion

I started this dissertation with the words of my first professor in DePaul's doctoral program, "Research what you're *entangled* in, not just what you're 'interested' in." As I conclude my research, I would like to once again return to this "entanglement." During the research, it became even more apparent that I consider SUA as an integral part of my identity. When I presented the preliminary findings of this research at the Ikeda Center for Peace, Learning, and Dialogue, my dissertation advisor Jason Goulah pointed out that whenever I talked about SUA and the people there, I used the pronoun "we." This use of "we" as an alumna signified that I subconsciously considered myself as still part of the SUA community after almost ten years from graduation. Whenever I heard any news about SUA—whether positive or negative—my mind was immediately consumed by it, just as I would rejoice in a friend's

achievement or be concerned about a sick family member. This is different from the relationship I have with other instituions I have attended.

As someone who wishes for the further success of SUA, I could not help but think of what the findings of this research means for SUA. Through analysis, it became apparent that the participant faculty's reading of primary literature, especially major educational writings of Ikeda, was limited. Moreover, most of them were unaware of the growing body of theoretical and empirical research in the field of Ikeda/Soka Studies in Education. This was the case even when I selected participants who were most active in engaging with Ikeda and Makiguchi's ideas through their reading and participation in events that examined Soka approaches to education. Therefore, although their beliefs converged with the literature in many ways and they had developed great practices, I felt that there is still great potential in further developing their perspectives and practices. What if they had more engagement with the extant literature? What if they had opportunities to discuss key concepts from the literature with each other? Based on these readings and discussions, what if they examined their own practices and experiemented with new ones? What if there was an opportunities to collectively reflect on their practices based on Soka approaches to education? I have much respect and appreciation for the faculty who participanted in this study for their willingness to engage in dialogue with me about Soka approaches to education, and their expressed interest in reading the results of this research. I hope that, with the recent initiatives in faculty development for teaching and reseach, there will be opportunities for SUA faculty to further engage with Soka approaches to education and with each other on this topic. Through such efforts, I hope that SUA will become "Soka" University in the truest sense.

Another way in which I continued to be "entangled" in this research is through my position as a teacher educator. Since I started this research about two years ago, I have taught a number of undergraduate and graduate courses, engaging with both pre- and in-service teachers. As a result of this research, I started to use Schwab's (1973) four commonplaces of curriculum as a framework for many of my courses, emphasizing the notion of "teacher as curriculum" (Schlein & Schwarz, 2015), as I explained how Ikeda's notion of "human eduation" (e.g., Goulah & Ito, 2012) and *kyōiku* (mutual growth of teacher and student) (Goulah, 2018) guided how I considered myself as "curriculum" in those classes. I also engaged my students with Makiguchi's (1981-1988) concept of value creation (see also Okamura, 2017) and Ikeda's (2010b) education for global citizenship as a way to address Schubert's (2009) question of "What is worth knowing, needing, experiencing, doing, being, becoming, sharing, contributing, and wondering?" (p. 22). In these ways, I have attempted to bring the three fields of Ikeda/Soka Studies in Education, Curriculum Studies, and Teacher Education together in my own practice as a teacher educator. I also started to engage in a collaborative self study of our teaching practices based on Soka approaches to education with a fellow faculty member at DePaul University. As Ikeda (2013b) states, "Educators striving to perfect their characters and grow as human beings are the core of [human] education… Ultimately, educational reform comes down to the way educators live" (pp. 194-196), I hope to continue pursuing what it means to be a "good teacher" from a Soka perspective and striving to improve my practice accordingly so that I can educate good teachers who will shoulder the future of education.

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Appendix

Interview Protocol

Background Questions

- What is your educational and academic background before coming to SUA?
- What led you to teach at SUA?

Research Question 1: How do SUA faculty perceive the aim of education and what constitutes a "good teacher," specifically in relation to their role as teachers, their relationship to students, the purpose of their subject matter, and the influence of SUA's institutional culture, policies, and curriculum?

- What do you think is the aim of education?
    - Have you always thought that way as a student and as a teacher (if you taught before SUA)?
    - What has shaped your belief?
- What do you think constitutes being a "good teacher"?
    - (After hearing the initial answer) Are there other aspects, such as working with or fostering students in any particular way or toward particular ends?
    - What has shaped your belief?
- How do you see your role as a teacher?
    - How does that perspective affect the way you structure/teach your class?
    - How does that affect your practices outside the classroom, if at all?
- How do you see your relationship to your students?
    - How does that perspective affect the way you structure/teach your class?
    - How does that affect your practices outside the classroom, if at all?
- What do you think is the purpose of the subject that you teach?
    - What are the important things for you when you design a course?
    - What do you want your students to learn from your class?
    - How do you think the course you teach fit into and contribute to the SUA's liberal arts curriculum?
- What institutional culture and policies promote or inhibit the philosophies and practices you described?
    - (Possible aspects to probe after hearing the initial answer): class size, student demographics, living on campus (including some faculty), grading, and accreditation

Research Question 2: How has their experience at SUA changed/shaped their perspective?

- Do you think you were prepared to teach in the way you described when you first came to SUA?
    - If so, what has helped you prepare?
    - If not, what kind of training do you think might have helped?
- Has your perspectives and teaching changed since you came to SUA? If so, in what ways?
    - In what ways do you think students influenced you?
    - In what ways do you think institutional culture and policy influenced you?

Research Question 3: In what ways do their perspectives converge with or diverge from the theoretical explanation of Soka education and the existing "Soka Discourse"?

- How would you explain Soka education?
    - How did you come to that understanding?
    - Is there any formal introduction to the Soka philosophy? If so, how did you feel about it? If not, what led you to seek to study the philosophy?
- In what ways do you see similarities between how you described your philosophy and practice earlier and the way you explained Soka education?
- Do you think Soka education is possible outside of SUA?
    - Are there necessary conditions to make it possible?
    - What is unique at SUA compared to other small liberal arts colleges?

Research Question 4 (Not included in interviews): What are the implication for Teacher Education?

Closing Questions

- Is there anything else you would like to share about Soka education or your teaching at SUA that I have not yet asked?
- Do you have any questions for me regarding the research or anything else?