I. Introduction

It seems that the content for an introduction to philosophy course has been more or less standardized in most American colleges and universities. Intro courses often either take an historical approach or a topic-based approach. In the former, the class covers the ideas of philosophical luminaries like Socrates, Plato, Descartes, Nietzsche, and perhaps a selection of readings by various non-European philosophers. In the latter, topics like free will, skepticism, first order ethical theories, and arguments for and against the existence of God are covered, among other things.

The goal of this paper is to subvert this status quo. In this paper I will argue that a better way to teach introduction to philosophy is to center the course design not on the transmission of propositional knowledge, but rather on the cultivation of philosophical skills. Such skills might include methods like conceptual analysis, inference to the best explanation, thought experimentation, reflective equilibrium, etc. I hold that this approach to teaching introduction to philosophy is pedagogically superior for a variety of reasons.

In section II of this paper I draw a distinction between fact emphasis and skills emphasis pedagogy and discuss the criteria for distinguishing between the two. In section III I provide a variety of arguments in support of skills emphasis pedagogy over fact emphasis pedagogy. In section IV I argue that someone who favors skills emphasis pedagogy should center the course design of introduction to philosophy around the teaching of philosophical methodology. Finally, in section V I provide some practical details on how I teach such a course. I also address some practical concerns about teaching introduction to philosophy in this way.

II. Two Ways of Teaching Philosophy

Teaching involves the imparting of knowledge.[1] It is generally recognized that knowledge can sorted into three broad categories.[2] There is personal knowledge, propositional knowledge, and knowledge-how. Personal knowledge generally involves the mutual recognition between persons.

Propositional knowledge involves knowledge of facts. Knowledge-how involves the possession of some ability or disposition. In this paper, I will assume that knowledge-how and propositional knowledge are distinct kinds of knowledge.[3]

It seems plausible to suppose that imparting personal knowledge is not a primary goal for philosophy teachers. As such, I will set this type of knowledge aside. So, the teaching of philosophy involves the imparting of either propositional knowledge, knowledge-how, or some combination thereof. We can imagine the various approaches to teaching philosophy being located at various points along a spectrum. At one end of the spectrum, the teaching of philosophy involves the imparting of propositional knowledge only. Call this endpoint of the spectrum F. At the other end of the spectrum, the teaching of philosophy involves the imparting of knowledge-how only. Call this endpoint of the spectrum S. At the midpoint, the teaching of philosophy involves equal measures of imparting propositional knowledge and knowledge-how. I'll label pedagogies whose learning objectives lie somewhere between the midpoint and endpoint F (non-inclusive) *fact emphasis pedagogies*. I'll label pedagogies whose learning objectives lie somewhere between the midpoint and endpoint S (non-inclusive) *skill emphasis pedagogies*.

Whether or not a particular pedagogy is fact or skill emphasis can often be inferred from an examination of the various course components. Any instructor recognizes early on that there is not enough time during a semester or quarter to cover everything that she wants to cover. This is certainly true of a course like Introduction to Philosophy. Because of these constraints, the instructor must make decisions about what to include and what to leave out when designing her course. These decisions provide us with some data from which to infer whether an instructor is employing a fact based or skills based pedagogy.

Decisions about what to cut and what to keep will revolve around major course components, such as classroom activity, out of class work, and assessment. When examining classroom activity, we

can ask whether what the instructor does has its aim at imparting propositional knowledge or knowledge-how. For example, suppose that the instructor devotes class time to lecture and discussion. What is the learning goal of the lecture? Is it to impart propositional knowledge? What is the learning goal of classroom discussion? We can ask similar questions about out of classroom work and assessment. For instance, suppose that the course instructor assigns readings out of class. What is the pedagogical function of these readings? What sort of knowledge is gained through the readings? Regarding assessment, what is the instructor assessing? Is the instructor primarily assessing for propositional knowledge, or for knowledge-how?

Ultimately, what we decide to cut and what we decide to keep when we design our courses will reflect what we consider to be essential and what we consider to be ancillary to teaching the course. Is it essential that we cover facts about Descartes' substance dualism, Plato's cave allegory, or Aquinas' five ways? Alternatively, is it essential that we cover methods like conceptual analysis, reflective equilibrium, or thought experiments? What we consider essential to our course material may indicate whether we are employing a fact emphasis pedagogy or skill emphasis pedagogy.

We might believe that a pedagogy that places equal emphasis on the imparting of both propositional knowledge and knowledge-how to be ideal. Let us suppose that this is not feasible. With this option off the table, we are left to compare fact emphasis pedagogy with skill emphasis pedagogy. In the next section, I will argue that in introductory courses, skill emphasis pedagogy is to be preferred over fact emphasis pedagogy. If the reader is already convinced of this claim, then she may skip to section IV.

III. In Favor of Skill Emphasis Pedagogy

An instructor who employs a backwards course design approach when planning an introductory course will need to consider her course objectives first. What does she hope that students will have achieved or accomplished by the end of the course? These objectives can be roughly sorted into three

categories. The first category has to do with the student's attitudes towards philosophy. An example of a course objective that falls into this category would be that a student has a greater appreciation for philosophy or comes to value more than they did when they started the course. The second category involves the acquisition of propositional knowledge. Course objectives that get filed into this category would include the learning or memorization of facts, definitions, arguments, etc. Examples of these kinds of course objectives would include being able to state what utilitarianism is, stating the principle of alternate possibilities, or recounting William Paley's argument from design for the existence of God. The third category covers the development of knowledge-how. Course objectives belonging to this category would center around skills like deductive reasoning, philosophical dialectic, abductive reasoning, etc. Examples of course objectives include being able to perform conceptual analyses, being able to identify instances of analogical reasoning, being able to evaluate the truth of conditionals, etc.

In most syllabi for introductory syllabi, course objectives generally fall under either the second or the third category. Syllabi with course objectives falling primarily in the second category, and syllabi with course objectives falling primarily in the third category will reflect a fact emphasis pedagogy and a skill emphasis pedagogy respectively. In this section, I will argue that for at least introductory courses, a skill emphasis pedagogy is to be preferred over a fact emphasis pedagogy.

The first argument is as follows:

1. Teaching philosophy is primarily concerned with training students to become philosophers.
2. A philosopher is understood as an individual who possesses a certain skill set more so than an individual who possesses a certain body of propositional knowledge.
3. Therefore, teaching philosophy is primarily concerned with teaching a certain skill set.
4. If philosophy is primarily concerned with teaching a certain skill set, then a teacher of philosophy should prefer a skill emphasis pedagogy to a fact emphasis pedagogy.

5. Therefore, a teacher of philosophy should prefer a skill emphasis pedagogy over a fact emphasis pedagogy.

I will assume that premise #1 is analytically true. To me, what it means to teach philosophy is to instruct students to become philosophers, just as what it means to teach golf is to instruct students on how to be golfers, or what it means to teach piano is to instruct students to become pianists. It is important to note here that being philosopher does not at all imply being a professional philosopher, nor does it even necessarily imply being a skilled amateur philosopher. Being a philosopher only implies that one can at the very least do whatever it is that philosophers do at a rudimentary level. Of course, this is merely a baseline standard of teaching expectations. Most teachers would desire their students to attain a level of ability beyond the rudimentary, and thus tailor their teaching approaches to facilitate these sorts of outcomes.

The point here is that it is by no means a failure if teaching students to become philosophers does not result in every student pursuing and completing their doctorate in philosophy. It is only a failure if teaching students to become philosophers does not result in students being able to do whatever we may consider to be the very basics of doing philosophy, e.g. identifying and evaluating arguments.

Some might respond by holding that the teaching of philosophy is not primarily concerned with training students to become philosophers. Instead, they might argue that the teaching of philosophy, at least at the introductory level, is primarily concerned with introducing students to philosophical subject matter. At this point, I ask the reader to consult their intuitions about what they think teaching philosophy amounts to. When you teach an introduction to philosophy class, are you teaching philosophy, or are you teaching *about* philosophy?

With respect to premise #2, I appeal to the reader's intuition on what it means to be a philosopher. We can imagine two individuals, Alvarez and Chang. Alvarez possesses a highly developed set of philosophical abilities. Such abilities include making distinctions, analyzing concepts, finding

counterexamples, assessing validity or invalidity, creating thought experiments, etc. However, she has no propositional knowledge of anything that is considered to be traditional philosophy. She doesn't know who Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Kant, etc. are, nor is she aware of their theories and arguments. Chang does possess propositional knowledge of a large body of facts that are associated with traditional philosophy. He knows about all of the historical figures and what they had to say. He knows about the debates in contemporary philosophy, and what the positions are with respect to these debates. However, all of this knowledge is a product of rote memorization. Chang has no philosophical ability. He has no ability to analyze arguments, nor does he have the ability to participate in philosophical dialectic. Which of these hypothetical individuals more resembles a philosopher? As an instructor, it seems to me that Alvarez is a far more desirable learning outcome than Chang.

Furthermore, the following excerpt from the American Philosophical Association's Statement on Teaching of Philosophy provides additional support for the view that philosophy teachers should prefer a skill emphasis pedagogy to a fact emphasis pedagogy.

> Philosophical education involves **far more** than imparting of information about figures and developments in the history of philosophy, training in the latest techniques, or of getting students to learn the correct answers to philosophical questions, or even teaching them about alternative possible answers to these questions. **The development of an appreciation and grasp of philosophical methods, issues, and traditions is an important part of it; and another is the cultivation of students' analytical, critical, interpretive, and evaluative abilities in thinking about a variety of kinds of problems, historical texts, and issues, both "philosophical" and commonplace.** Courses in the history and problems of philosophy are most appropriately designed in a manner that is conducive to these endeavors; and successful teaching and learning in philosophy should be conceived and assessed accordingly, rather than in terms of other sorts of (more easily ascertainable) outcomes.[4] (Emphasis mine)

What the emphasized portions of the above passage seems to imply is that teaching philosophy involves the development of certain abilities more than it does the acquisition of propositional knowledge. If this interpretation is plausible, and if the American Philosophical Association is a source of authority with respect to teaching philosophy, then the above quoted passage is another reason why philosophy teachers should prefer a skill emphasis pedagogy to a fact emphasis pedagogy.[5]

Another argument in favor of skill emphasis pedagogy goes as follows:

1. Philosophers should adopt best practices whenever possible into their teaching.
2. Many of these best practices often presuppose that teaching is the cultivation of some set of skills.
3. Such practices that presuppose teaching as a cultivation of skill are better implemented in a context of a skills emphasis pedagogy.
4. Therefore, an instructor that wants to make use of such practices should prefer a skills emphasis pedagogy.

First, I will assume that the journal *Teaching Philosophy* is a reliable source of best practices in philosophy instruction. It is important to note here that when I claim that *Teaching Philosophy* is a reliable source of best practices, I don't mean to imply that the journal univocally endorses a skills emphasis pedagogy. I am instead claiming that the journal is a reliable source of best practices and that a number of these practices presuppose a skills emphasis pedagogy. This is consistent with the claim that a number of best practices found in the journal presuppose a fact emphasis pedagogy. Whether this argument is sound for the reader will thus depend on which practices found in the journal are most compelling. With these assumptions in place, we find that a number of articles detailing such practices presuppose teaching as a cultivation of skill.

Renee Smith and Dennis Earl, in their article, "Getting Started: A First-Day Activity in Philosophical Thinking,"[6] describe an activity "that can be done at the start of the term and that introduces students to philosophy by engaging them in the activity of philosophical thinking itself."[7] In this activity, students are either paired up or sorted into small groups. The groups are given a survey of yes or no questions. Examples of such questions include, "Is it possible to know anything about the future?" or "Do you have a moral obligation to help those in need?" Students work through these questions in their small groups, and share their results with the rest of the class. The authors state that

this activity “introduces students to many of the tools philosophers use in their quest for understanding – asking questions, defining terms, drawing distinctions, giving arguments, and raising objections.” What is noteworthy about this quote is the use of the word “tools.” Arguing for the merits of this activity by listing the tools that it introduces students to presupposes that to some extent, teaching philosophy is teaching a skill.

In "Developing Philosophical Literacy," author Thomas G. Miller draws a distinction between private and public philosophical activity.[8] Private philosophical activity is understood as philosophy done alone, i.e. without any direct interaction with other individuals. Public philosophical activity is understood as philosophy done socially. Private philosophical activity as a form of learning occurs when a student learns philosophy without directly interacting with others. Public philosophical activity as a form of learning occurs when a student learns philosophy primarily via interaction with others. The author argues that when teaching philosophy, public philosophical activity is to be preferred over private philosophical activity. Miller defines teaching philosophy as "the public ordering and timing, in response to the changing intellectual needs of students, of whatever particular enabling concepts (explanations, analogies, examples, questions, criticisms, etc.) are required to make their philosophical experience intelligible and meaningful, with a view toward developing philosophical literacy."[9] Miller defines philosophical literacy in terms of "the five distinguishable activities of philosophy: thinking, reading, writing, listening, and speaking, no one of which teaching should neglect."[10] It should be clear to the reader that for Miller, the practice of public philosophical activity within the context of philosophical education presupposes teaching philosophy as the cultivation of skill.

Jennifer Wilson-Mulnix and Alida Liberman's article, "Philosophers Folding Origami: Illustrating Essential Strategies for Learner-Centered Teaching" centers around an activity conducted at the Teaching and Learning workshop sponsored by the American Association of Philosophy Teachers, and draws certain pedagogical lessons from the activity.[11] In the activity, participants were sorted into

groups, and all were given the task of creating a paper crane. One group received no instructions. Another group received detailed instructions, as well as an experienced Origami practitioner providing extensive coaching. Other groups received instructions with varying degrees of specificity. The authors observed generally that outcomes improved with better coaching and instructions. From this observation, Wilson-Mulnix and Liberman draw lessons about best teaching practices in philosophy, which include backwards course design, active learning, timely and targeted feedback, etc. The paper crucially relies on an analogy between making paper cranes and philosophizing. Successfully making paper cranes requires the development of a particular skill set. As such, successfully teaching someone how to make a paper crane requires the cultivation of that skill set. If the analogy holds, then it follows that successfully teaching philosophy requires the cultivation of a skill set.

In his paper, "Philosophy Has Consequences! Developing Metacognition and Active Learning in the Ethics Classroom," Patrick Stokes argues that the teaching of moral philosophy should involve active learning and have metacognition as a desired learning outcome.[12] He goes on to suggest ways of teaching moral philosophy that involve active learning and cultivate metacognition. What is metacognition? According to Stokes, metacognition is a "reflective and critical awareness of what and how one thinks".[13] It is important to note here that metacognition is not some set of propositions that an individual retains. Rather, metacognition is an *ability*. If the reader agrees that metacognition is a desirable learning outcome, then the reader should also agree that the development of a skill is a desirable learning outcome. If the reader agrees that metacognition is a *primary* goal for the philosophy teacher, then the reader should also agree that a skills emphasis pedagogy is preferable to a fact based pedagogy, since a fact based pedagogy will be less effective in attaining the primary goal of developing metacognition.

The last example comes not from *Teaching Philosophy* but rather from the blog of the American Philosophical Association. Kristopher Phillips writes a series of posts where he argues for an alternative

approach to teaching the history of early modern philosophy.[14] Instead of the common approach wherein students are required to read some selections from the Rationalists (i.e. Descartes, Spinoza, or Leibniz), and some selections from the Empiricists (i.e. Locke, Berkeley, or Hume), Phillips recommends a teaching approach that emphasizes breadth instead of depth. He suggests spending the entire course focusing on the work of just three philosophers rather than trying to cover six or seven in your typical survey style early modern course. Phillips' argument relies on a different conception of teaching early modern philosophy. Instead of teaching early modern philosophy as the transmission of propositions related to the ideas of prominent early modern philosophers, Phillips approach conceives of teaching early modern philosophy as the development of a set of skills central to the work of doing the history of philosophy. As Phillips puts it, "I made a case for abandoning the survey approach to the teaching of modern philosophy. In place of the survey I proposed a philosophical skills-based approach that focuses on only three figures from the modern period."[15] It should be clear to the reader that adopting such an approach requires a skills emphasis pedagogy.

The next argument comes from Paulo Freire's distinction between the banking model of education and dialogue in his seminal monograph, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.[16]

1. Philosophy teachers should prefer dialogue to the banking model of education.
2. A skills emphasis pedagogy is closer to dialogue than it is to the banking model of education.
3. A fact emphases pedagogy is closer to the banking model of education than it is to dialogue.
4. Therefore, philosophy teachers should prefer a skills emphasis pedagogy to a fact emphasis pedagogy.

I will refer the reader to Freire for a defense of the first premise. Let's suppose that the first premise is accepted as true. Why should we believe the second and third premises? In order to defend these premises, we must first do some exposition of Freire's notions of the banking model of education and dialogue.

Freire says this about the banking model of education.

> Narration (with the teacher as narrator) leads the students to memorize mechanically the narrated content. Worse yet, it turns them into "containers," into "receptacles" to be "filled" by the teacher. The more completely she fills the receptacles, the better a teacher she is. The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are.
>
> Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiques and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the "banking" concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits. They do, it is true, have the opportunity to become collectors or cataloguers of the things they store. But in the last analysis, it is the people themselves who are filed away through the lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge in this (at best) misguided system.[17]

It seems a reasonable interpretation to say that what is being deposited in the banking model of education is propositional knowledge. If this is indeed the case, then the connection between the banking model of education and fact emphasis pedagogy should be clear. Fact emphasis pedagogy can be seen as resembling a kind of banking style of education. In both cases what is prioritized is the transmission of facts and information.

In contrast to the banking model of education, Freire introduces dialogue.

> Dialogue is the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world. Hence, dialogue cannot occur between those who want to name the world and those who do not wish this naming - between those who deny others the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied them. Those who have been denied their primordial right to speak their word must first reclaim this right and prevent the continuation of this dehumanizing aggression.
>
> If it is in speaking their word that people, by naming the world, transform it, dialogue imposes itself as the way by which they achieve significance as human beings. Dialogue is thus an existential necessity. And since dialogue is the encounter in which the united reflection and action of the dialoguers are addressed to the world which is to be transformed and humanized, this dialogue cannot be reduced to the act of one person's "depositing" ideas in another, nor can it become a simple exchange of ideas to be "consumed" by the discussants. nor yet is it a hostile, polemical argument between those who are committed neither to the naming of the world, nor to the search for truth, but rather to the imposition of their own truth. Because dialogue is an encounter among women and men who name the world, it must not be a situation where some name on behalf of others. It is an act of creation; it must not serve as a crafty instrument for the domination of one person by another. The domination implicit in dialogue is that of the world by the dialoguers; it is conquest of the world for the liberation of humankind.[18]

The connection between dialogue and skills emphasis pedagogy may not be as apparent as the connection between fact emphasis pedagogy and the banking model of education. But, as Freire points out, the connection between the two is crucial, particularly with respect to philosophical skills.

> Finally, true dialogue cannot exist unless the dialoguers engage in critical thinking - thinking which discerns an indivisible solidarity between the world and the people and admits of no dichotomy between them - thinking which perceives reality as process, as transformation, rather than as a static entity - thinking which does not separate itself from action, but constantly immerses itself in temporality without fear of the risks involved.[19]

Freire not only asserts that dialogue requires critical thinking, but he also argues that dialogue is capable of generating critical thinking.

> Only dialogue, which requires critical thinking, is also capable of generating critical thinking. Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education. Education which is able to resolve the contradiction between teacher and student takes place in a situation in which both address their act of cognition to the object by which they are mediated.[20]

If we reasonably assume that the critical thinking Freire talks about is the same kind of critical thinking that philosophers teach, and if we reasonably assume that critical thinking is essentially composed by a set of skills, then the connection between dialogue and skills emphasis pedagogy has been established. As I mentioned above, the reader can see for herself whether Freire convincingly argues for dialogue in favor of the banking model of education. What I argue for here is a conditional. If the reader is convinced by Freire, then she should favor a skills emphasis pedagogy over a fact emphasis pedagogy.

The final argument comes from John Dewey's influential book, *Experience and Education*. Like the previous argument, this argument supports a conditional: If you agree with Dewey's pedagogy, then you should favor a skills emphasis pedagogy.

1. The pedagogy that a philosophy teacher should adopt is one that most effectively utilizes educative experiences.
2. A skills emphasis pedagogy more effectively utilizes educative experience than a fact emphasis pedagogy.

3. Therefore, a philosophy teacher should favor a skills emphasis pedagogy over a fact emphasis pedagogy.

As with the previous argument, I will assume that the reader agrees with Dewey and accepts the first premise. I refer readers that are skeptical of the first premise to Dewey's own arguments.[21] A defense of the second premise will require some elaboration on the notion of an educative experience. Dewey defines educative experience in terms of another concept that he employs called *continuity*. All experiences are continuous in that they lead to further experiences. Whether or not an experience is educative depends on its role in this continuous chain, i.e. whether it leads to a certain set of experiences.

> The belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative. Experience and education cannot be directly equated to each other. For some experiences are mis-educative. Any experience is mis-educative that has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience. An experience may be such as to engender callousness; it may produce lack of sensitivity and of responsiveness. Then the possibilities of having richer experience in the future are restricted. Again, a given experience may Increase a person's automatic skill in a particular direction and yet tend to land him in a groove or rut; the effect again is to narrow the field of further experience. An experience may be immediately enjoyable and yet promote the formation of a slack and careless attitude; this attitude then operates to modify the quality of subsequent experiences so as to prevent a person from getting out of them what they have to give. Again, experiences may be so disconnected from one another that, while each is agreeable or even exciting in itself, they are not linked cumulatively to one another. Energy is then dissipated and a person becomes scatterbrained. Each experience may be lively, vivid and "interesting," and yet their disconnectedness may artificially generate dispersive disintegrated, centrifugal habits. The consequence of formation of such habits is inability to control future experiences. They are then taken, either by way of enjoyment or of discontent and revolt, just as they come. Under such circumstances, it is idle to talk of self-control.[22]

According to Dewey, experiences that stunt or distort growth of further experience are mis-educative. Examples of cases where growth of further experience is stunted or distorted include cases where a student develops a negative attitude to the course material, or cases where the student's attitude may be good, but the course material is so disorganized that the student has difficulty seeing how they all fit together. From here, it is reasonable to infer that an educative experience is one that promotes the growth of further experiences.

Why think that a skills emphases pedagogy utilizes educative experiences better than a fact emphasis pedagogy? I will give two arguments that correspond to the two examples of mis-educative experiences given in the previous paragraph. First, a skills emphasis pedagogy has the potential to unify the course material better than a fact emphasis pedagogy. A skills emphasis pedagogy will focus on the skills and methods that are common to philosophical work across a variety of topics, and across different periods of the history of philosophy. A student in a class taught with a fact emphasis pedagogy may have a harder time seeing how various topics like free will, skepticism, or philosophy or religion are tied together. Similarly, a student in a history of philosophy course may have a difficult time seeing how philosophers from different periods are related, other than to note that they may have belonged to a similar school of thought, or held different positions. This sort of unity strikes me as relatively shallow, and it is harder to see how this kind of commonality opens doors for further philosophical study. In contrast, the unity of method puts a student in a better position to understand more philosophy in the future. Skills emphasis pedagogy thus promotes growth of further experiences by showing how philosophy across time and sub-discipline can be unified by method. A student taught in this way is better prepared to engage in philosophy in the future.

Second, a skills emphasis pedagogy is more likely to increase motivation than a fact emphasis pedagogy. Increased motivation promotes a better attitude about the course material, which enables growth of further experiences. One major factor in motivation is relevance. All else held equal, if a student finds the course material to be irrelevant to other areas of importance in her life, then she is likely to be less motivated than a student who finds the material to be relevant. A skills emphasis pedagogy has a greater potential for relevance than a fact emphasis pedagogy. Philosophical skills apply not only to traditional areas of philosophy, but to nearly every facet of life. It is hard to find some aspect of one's life that cannot be improved with the ability to reason philosophically. In contrast, a fact emphasis pedagogy does not seem to have such a universal application. A student learning Descartes'

Evil Demon argument is likely to find the connection between this and her life goals to be quite remote. Compare this to a student learning how to perform a conceptual analysis. The ability to effectively analyze concepts like happiness, racism, or freedom seems much closer to a student's everyday concerns than knowing Anselm's Ontological Argument or Type Identity Theory of mind. If the reader agrees with Dewey about educative experiences, and if the reader agrees that a skills emphasis pedagogy promotes educative experiences better than a fact emphasis pedagogy, then the reader should prefer a skills emphasis pedagogy to a fact emphasis pedagogy.

IV. Philosophical Methodology and Skills Emphasis Pedagogy

If the reader is convinced that a skills emphasis pedagogy is preferable to a fact emphasis pedagogy (at least at the introductory level), then the next question to consider is what sort of format best facilitates the implementation of a skills emphasis pedagogy. I argue here that at least at the introductory level, the best way to implement a skills emphasis pedagogy is to teach an introduction to philosophical methodology.

What is philosophical methodology?[23] Philosophical methodology can refer to the set of procedures whose aim is the production of philosophical knowledge. Philosophical methodology can also refer to the study and training of procedures whose aim is the production of philosophical knowledge. The study and training of said procedures can be understood either positively or normatively. As a positive study, philosophical methodology attempts to describe the procedures philosophers actually use to produce philosophical knowledge. As a normative study, philosophical methodology attempts to prescribe the procedures philosophers should use to produce philosophical knowledge. An introduction to philosophical methodology focuses more on the positive aspect of methodology. However, the aim of such a course is not for students merely to learn facts about how philosophers produce philosophical knowledge. Instead, by training students, the aim is for them to gain some level of proficiency at executing the kinds of procedures described by philosophical

methodology. An introduction to philosophical methodology does not merely teach students what philosophers do. It teaches students to do as philosophers do.

Why think that an introduction to philosophical methodology is the best way to facilitate a skills emphasis pedagogy at the introductory level? The argument is fairly straightforward. By definition, a skills emphasis pedagogy focuses on the acquisition of knowledge-how. Philosophical methodology, by definition, includes the study and training of procedures that produce philosophical knowledge. Training students to gain proficiency in the procedures that produce philosophical knowledge amounts to the teaching of knowledge-how. Furthermore, philosophical methodology is the only branch of philosophy where such procedures are the explicit focus. All other areas of philosophy rely on such procedures, but such reliance is implicit. From all of this it is reasonable to infer the following conditional: If an instructor prefers a skills emphasis pedagogy, then she should prefer teaching an introduction to philosophical methodology to students at the introductory level.

What are the sorts of procedures that constitute philosophical methodology? If we were to examine the syllabi of the average introduction to philosophy course, we would likely draw the conclusion that there are three procedures: constructing, summarizing, and evaluating arguments. I certainly agree that these procedures are central to philosophical methodology. However, I want to argue that the traditional approach to teaching these procedures is less than optimally effective. Roughly speaking, the traditional approach involves the instructor going over selected readings either from contemporary philosophy or the history of philosophy. The instructor provides an exposition of the reading, reconstructs the arguments given, and gives some sort of evaluation of the arguments. The instructor basically teaches by example in class, and the students are expected to do likewise in their papers.

The problem with this approach is that it fails to make explicit the fact that argumentation - whether making one's own arguments, summarizing another's, or evaluating arguments – is a complex

activity that consists of various component procedures. For instance, let's examine the task of evaluating arguments. Many instructors might teach their students that the evaluation of arguments consists of two steps: evaluating the truth of the premises, and examining relationship between the premises and conclusion. Evaluating the truth of any premise is a complex task. First, the student must be able to identify what sort of a claim the premise is, and how the truth of that claim would be verified or falsified. Is the claim empirically known? Is the truth of the claim known a priori? After identifying what kind of a claim the premise is, the student must then be able to determine how the claim will be verified or falsified. Suppose that the student correctly identifies a particular premise as being a claim that if known, is known a priori. How does a student determine whether such an a priori claim is true or false? In order to perform such a task, a student would need to avail herself to the toolkit appropriate for the job. Such tools would include conceptual analysis, conceivability, examining intuitions, etc.

Similarly, we find the same is true with respect to assessing the relationship between premises and conclusion. Again, the student must be able to identify what sorts of relationships exist between premises and conclusion. For instance, premises can be related inductively or deductively to their conclusion. If a student can correctly identify the type of relation, then she must then be able to determine what constitutes a good relation given this type. If a student correctly identifies the relation between premises and conclusion to be a deductive relation, then the student must then be able to determine what constitutes a good deductive argument. Such a task requires the student being able to recognize the difference between valid and invalid arguments. Such a task would further involve the ability to recognize truth conditions of conditionals, disjunctions, or quantified formulas.

The tasks and procedures described above are exactly the sorts of things that are covered in philosophical methodology. These procedures are the components that constitute the more general tasks of producing and analyzing arguments. A student who is not proficient at such component tasks will at best marginally benefit from a class that follows the aforementioned traditional teaching

approach. Put another way, the traditional approach to teaching introduction to philosophy places the cart before the horse. A more effective teaching approach would first introduce these component skills and provide students with various opportunities to exercise and master these skills before proceeding to argumentation in general. Consider the following analogy. Suppose that the task of creating and analyzing arguments is analogous to the task of playing and analyzing chess games. If the analogy is indeed apt, then the traditional approach is one where the instructor analyzes famous games, and the student is then expected to analyze and play their own games. However, playing or analyzing a chess game is a complex task that involves component skills such as tactics, positional play, openings, and mating patterns. Students who enroll in an introduction to philosophy course are analogous to beginning chess students. At best, beginning chess students are familiar with the basic rules of play, but it seems unreasonable to assume that such students are familiar with component skills like tactics or mating patterns. Without some proficiency in these component skills, the pedagogical yield from analyzing games will be limited at best.

In sum, an instructor that favors a skill emphasis pedagogy will focus on teaching of knowledge-how. In philosophy, knowledge-how is primarily the domain of philosophical methodology. So, an instructor that focuses on the teaching of knowledge-how will find that teaching philosophical methodology best facilitates this goal. Furthermore, simply teaching by analyzing arguments is insufficient as an introduction to philosophical methodology. This is the case because the analysis of arguments is a complex task that is composed of various component skills. In order to adequately teach knowledge-how with respect to philosophy, the instructor will see better learning outcomes by focusing on those component skills that constitute the skill of analyzing and evaluating arguments. Thus, the better way to teach an introduction to philosophical methodology is to focus on these component skills and facilitate proficiency and knowledge-how with respect to these skills. In the next section, I will

discuss these component skills in more detail and give some suggestions on how to teach Philosophy 101 as an introduction to philosophical methodology.

V. Teaching an Introduction to Philosophical Methodology.

What are these component skills that constitute argumentation? There will certainly be various ways to list and organize all of the skills, procedures, or techniques that make up philosophical methodology. In this section, I will detail how I organize and teach these skills. Much of what I say here will refer to the sample syllabus that is found in the appendix of this essay. The reader should note that this is only one way to approach the teaching of philosophical methodology. I encourage the reader to experiment with different approaches to find what produces the best learning outcomes.

1. Desired Learning Outcomes

The goal of this class is for students to gain proficiency at core philosophical skills. This proficiency can be broken down into two types. The first is constructive. Students should be able to use these skills to construct and articulate their own philosophical views. The second is evaluative. Students should be able to use these skills to assess their own philosophical views and the views of others.

2. Course Topics

Currently the course covers five topics: conceptual analysis, thought experiments, explanation, argumentation, and worldviews. I tell my students that philosophy (as well as other disciplines) generally answers to kinds of questions: "what" questions and "why" questions. As can be inferred, "what" questions typically come in the form, "What is x?" "Why" questions usually come in the form "Why is x?" A primary method for answering "what" questions in philosophy is conceptual analysis. A primary method for answering "why" questions in philosophy is explanation. For conceptual analysis, desired learning outcomes are proficiency in identifying necessary and sufficient conditions, and proficiency in devising counterexamples. For explanation, desired learning outcomes include the ability

to differentiate between different kinds of explanation and to identify what kind of explanation is appropriate to the context, the ability to hypothesize multiple explanations for a particular set of observations, and the ability to evaluate between competing explanations.

In this course, teaching thought experimentation serves as a way to transition from conceptual analysis to explanation. Students learn how thought experiments are used to provide counterexamples to proposed conceptual analyses. Then, students also learn how judgments about thought experiments serve as data for philosophical explanations. Desired learning outcomes for thought experimentation include the ability for students to be able to identify the variables being tested in a particular thought experiment, and for students to be able to devise their own simple thought experiments.

Once students gain some proficiency at using conceptual analysis, thought experiments, and explanations, they are in a position to better understand and evaluate arguments. Students learn two kinds of argumentation that are developed from conceptual analysis and explanations. The first kind is more or less your standard deductive reasoning by definition. Rather than learning Modus Ponens, Modus Tollens, and various categorical syllogisms by rote memorization, it seems more intuitive for students to see how arguments are constructed after they've mastered necessary and sufficient conditions. Once students have mastered the mechanics underlying this form of reasoning, then the instructor is free to give names like "Modus Ponens" or "Modus Tollens" to argument forms that students at this point already understand. The second kind of argumentation is theory selection, or Inference to the Best Explanation. Once students have mastered the construction and evaluation of explanations, it is a short step to constructing and evaluating arguments using explanation. At this point, students learn to see how various forms of rational persuasion, such as scientific and philosophical argumentation, rely on the relationships posited between theory and evidence. Instructors often gesture towards ideas like evidence and explanation, but at this point in the course, students should have a clear grasp of these ideas and how they work.

After mastering these skills, the last step in this course is to apply them in constructing and articulating their worldview. This project involves two phases: constructing their worldview, and defending their worldview. Their worldview is articulated at three levels. The first level is their values, i.e. what they find most important and what constitutes the meaningfulness of life. The second level explains why they have these values by appealing to their understanding of human nature. The third level explains their view of human nature by articulating their metaphysical view of reality, which forms the backdrop against which humans are placed. The project incorporates all of the skills they've learned throughout the course. They will use conceptual analysis to define key terms like happiness, love, personhood, free will, God, science, etc. They will use explanation to connect the three different levels of their worldview. They will use thought experiments and argumentation to defend their theory and also to explore logical implications of their worldview.

3. Assessment

For the purposes of this course, assessments have two desiderata. First, assessments must be able to evaluate the student's proficiency at using a skill. This is best done as close to real time as possible, just as the best way to assess a guitar player is to watch her play the guitar, or the best way to assess a ballet dancer is to watch him dance. Second, assessments should be what Ken Bain calls "learning based assessments."[24] Assessments should not only inform the instructor of a student's mastery of course material, but should also provide further opportunities for instruction. Assessments should provide timely and targeted feedback, and should motivate students to improve.

In an introduction to philosophical methodology, what is being assessed is not the student's knowledge and understanding of theories, philosophical positions, or particular arguments. Rather, what is being assessed is the student's ability to use certain philosophical tools. To use an analogy with musicianship, what is being assessed is not the student's repertoire, but rather their technique. To this end, my preferred form of assessment is the email dialogue. The merits of this form of assessment, as

well as responses to both theoretical and practical concerns, have been argued for elsewhere.[25] In what follows I describe how I use this form of assessment in a skill emphasis approach to an introduction to philosophy course. I don't mean to imply at all that email dialogues are the only possible form of assessment for this type of course. While I personally think they are relatively less effective, one could certainly employ more traditional forms of assessment to this style of teaching introduction to philosophy.

An email dialogue is a conversation conducted over email. The dialogue begins with a student answering a particular question, such as, "What is justice?" After emailing the answer to the instructor, the instructor responds with follow up questions to the student's email. This exchange continues until the student has satisfactorily completed the objectives of the dialogue, which the instructor gives in a rubric.

I use the dialogue assignments primarily to observe students employ philosophical skills in a back and forth exchange. For instance, in order to assess a student's mastery of explanation, I have the student construct scenarios where she selects some observation or set of observations, and then provides several competing theories that purport to explain these observations. Next, I have the student engage in theory selection by assessing the merits and drawbacks of each competing theory. These assignments allow me to assess a student's ability in real time, and to provide timely and targeted feedback. Moreover, these assessments also provide the student with additional opportunities to practice. The assignments are low stakes. Students do not lose points for making mistakes. Rather, the assignments are not complete until the student has successfully executed the particular philosophical skill, and so the student has as many chances as they need to demonstrate mastery.

4. Classroom teaching

Since the course centers around the mastery of core philosophical methods. Most of the classroom time is devoted to practice. Classroom time over the course of the semester generally follows

this format. First, I give some lectures on the method. I explain what the method is and how it is used. I provide some examples of the method in action. Second, I have students practice using this method in contexts with which they are familiar. Third, and finally, I have students practice using this method in philosophical contexts. To use conceptual analysis as an example, I begin this section of the course with lectures on what conceptual analysis is, and how to perform it. I explain necessary conditions, counterexamples, and jointly sufficient conditions. I go over some examples of conceptual analyses. After this series of lectures, I have students practice performing analyses in class using examples from everyday life. In the past, I've used general concepts like sport, art, or religion. I've also used pop culture genres like fantasy, science fiction, rock, or hip hop. I've used examples from society and politics like racism, sexism, conservatism, or liberalism. I have students perform these analyses individually or in groups. Students present what they take to be necessary conditions. The class then discusses these conditions and try to devise counterexamples to them. After practicing on familiar concepts, students then practice conceptual analysis on more traditionally philosophical concepts. Here I use concepts like knowledge, happiness, justice, god, personhood, etc. In particular, I focus on concepts that are relevant to the construction of worldviews. I employ this process for each philosophical method, and the process generally takes about three or four weeks over the course of a semester.

In addition to practice in the classroom. Students practice outside of the classroom via the email dialogues that I described in the previous subsection. One advantage that I alluded to earlier about email dialogue assessments is that they combine practice and assessment. I will either give students assignments via the dialogues, or students can choose for themselves how they will practice and demonstrate proficiency at a particular philosophical method. In keeping with the conceptual analysis example, I either give students a concept to analyze, or students select for themselves what concepts they will analyze. If a student has not yet demonstrated proficiency at analysis, then I continue

to give them more and more concepts to analyze until they've shown that they know how to perform a conceptual analysis.

5. Textbooks

Most introductory textbooks in philosophy take either a topical or an historical approach to the material. In either case, the focus is on the information itself, i.e. biographical information about philosophers, and exposition of theories and arguments given by various philosophers. These sorts of textbooks are suitable for an intro course that employs a fact emphasis pedagogy, but are less than ideal for an intro course that employs a skills emphasis pedagogy. The only textbook that I've been able to find that explicitly introduces philosophical methodology is *The Philosopher's Toolkit* by Julian Baggini and Peter S. Fosl. While I don't personally agree with the way the material is organized, the textbook is still useful as a way for students to reference techniques and concepts covered in class. In addition to the textbook, I often upload class lecture notes, additional readings, and videos onto the learning management system for further reference. As already mentioned, the primary function of this material is for students to be able to reference these methods until they've obtained proficiency and no longer need them.

For the remainder of this section, I will address several questions about this way of teaching introduction to philosophy.

1. Isn't this just a critical thinking class?

Whether or not this class amounts to just another critical thinking class will depend one's understanding of a critical thinking course. Based on my own limited experience, a typical critical thinking course will cover topics like basic argumentation (i.e. What are premises? What is a conclusion?), basic forms of inductive reasoning, formal and informal fallacies, and possibly some symbolic logic. If by "critical thinking class" we mean something like what was just described, then an introduction to philosophical methodology will not be just another critical thinking class. In a broader

sense of the phrase "critical thinking," I would agree that an introduction to philosophical methodology is a kind of critical thinking course. However, I see nothing wrong with that. I tend to think that all of philosophy is critical thinking understood broadly. So, under a narrow construal of critical thinking, this course would not be considered a critical thinking course. Under a wide construal of critical thinking, this course would be considered a critical thinking course, but this would be trivial, as all philosophy courses would be considered critical thinking courses.

2. My department requires coverage of certain topics in my 101 course. How do I do that if I am focusing on method?

Incorporating certain topics to an introduction to philosophical methodology should be fairly straightforward. All (or nearly all) of philosophy uses philosophical methodology of some sort. So, one can certainly use required topics as ways of applying philosophical skills. For instance, a department may require that an introduction to philosophy course cover topics like knowledge, mind, the existence of God, free will, and first order moral theories (e.g. Utilitarianism, Kantianism, Virtue Ethics). One can use philosophical methods to explore these topics. One can practice conceptual analysis on concepts like knowledge, free will, mind, God, and moral obligation. One can examine thought experiments in ethics (e.g. trolley cases), mind (e.g. Chinese room), and free will (e.g. Frankfurt cases). One can practice explanation by examining arguments for the existence of God (What best explains suffering in the world? What best explains the observation that the universe is highly ordered, or "fine-tuned?"). There should be no issue incorporating philosophical topics into an introduction to philosophical methodology. The important thing to note here is that the focus is on mastery of philosophical method. Philosophical topics serve as a means to this end, not ends in themselves.

3. How does a course like this satisfy writing requirements?

Satisfying writing requirements for a course focused on methodology shouldn't really be any different from satisfying a traditional introductory course in philosophy. As mentioned above, writing

assignments in many introduction to philosophy courses involve some form of exposition and evaluation of arguments given by some historical philosopher. In a course centered around philosophical methodology, writing assignment can be similar. In this case, an instructor can have students identify the methods a particular historical philosopher is using and evaluate how effectively the philosopher uses these methods to achieve his or her ends. Instructors can also have students write papers where they use philosophical methods themselves to argue for their own positions in areas like ethics, metaphysics, or epistemology. These are just a few examples. The general point here is that there should no theoretical difficulty in assigning work that satisfies writing requirements in an introduction to philosophy course that focuses on method.

VI. Conclusion

What I've attempted to do in this paper is to introduce a new way of teaching introduction to philosophy, one that I take to be superior. I did this first by arguing for the superiority of skills emphasis pedagogy over fact emphasis pedagogy, at least at introductory levels. I then argued that the best way to apply a skills emphasis pedagogy in introductory philosophy is to teach an introduction to philosophical method. Finally, I provided my own approach to the course design of an introduction to philosophical methodology. As this approach seems to be uncharted territory, experimentation will be required. There is much ground to cover, but I believe the results will more than vindicate the effort.

Appendix: Sample Syllabus

Introduction to Philosophy
Fall 2018

Text:
The Philosopher's Toolkit: A Compendium of Philosophical Concepts and Methods, Julian Baggini & Peter S. Fosl
Other readings will be available on your local learning management system.

Description
This class will teach you how to do philosophy. What does it mean to do philosophy? On one interpretation, doing philosophy means thinking in a clear, precise, and systematic way. Why should you care about learning to think this way? Learning to think in this way is what is required in order for you to think for yourself. Thinking for yourself is what you need if you want to be in control of your life and your decisions. Therefore, if you value being in control of your life and your decisions, then you should value the ability to think like a philosopher.

Course requirements
Attendance: 20%

Dialogues: 20% each
Dialogue assignments are conversations that you and I will have over email. You will begin each dialogue by sending me an email that answers the questions listed below. The dialogue is finished when you've either demonstrated to me that you are proficient at certain philosophical skills (dialogues 1-3), or you've clearly articulated your worldview (dialogue 4). In each of the first three dialogues, your task is to teach me about each skill in your own words and perform that skill for me with examples. In the fourth dialogue, you will use these philosophical skills to articulate your worldview.

Dialogue 1:
What is conceptual analysis?

Dialogue 2:
What are thought experiments?

Dialogue 3:
What are explanations?

Dialogue 4:
What is your worldview?

Course outline
Preliminaries
Week 1
- What is philosophy?
- Why does philosophy matter?

Conceptual Analysis

Week 2

- What is conceptual analysis?
- Necessary and sufficient conditions
- Counterexamples

Week 3

- Conceptual analysis in everyday life
  - Art and culture
  - Religion
  - Politics
  - Science

Week 4

- Conceptual analysis in philosophy
  - Epistemology
  - Metaphysics
  - Ethics

Thought Experiments
Week 5

- What are thought experiments?
- Identifying the function of a thought experiment
- Identifying the important conceptual relations in a thought experiment

Week 6

- Thought experiments and counterexamples

Week 7

- Thought experiments as data or evidence

Explanation
Week 8

- What are explanations?
- What is evidence?
- Theory choice, i.e. what is the difference between a good and a bad explanation?

Week 9

- Explanations in everyday life
  - Natural science
  - Varieties of diagnostic work
  - Criminal investigation
  - Explanations of social and cultural phenomena
  - Human behavior

Week 10

- Explanations in philosophy
  - Ethics

  - Epistemology
  - Metaphysics

Putting it all together: Forming a Worldview
Week 11

- What are arguments?
- Conceptual analysis and categorical reasoning
- Arguments by appeal to definition

Week 12

- Gathering evidence and eliminating explanations
- Inference to the best explanation

Week 13

- What is a worldview?
- Analyzing key concepts in a worldview
- Conceptual implications of a worldview

Week 14

- Worldviews as explanations
- Different levels of explanations in a worldview

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[1] Teaching involves other things, such as the development of motivation, the recognition of the value of what is being taught, and the cultivation of desire to learn the course material. This essay will focus primarily on just the imparting of knowledge, as described below.

[2] See Fantl (2012).

[3] See Fantl (2012) for a survey on the debate regarding the relationship between propositional knowledge and knowlwedge-how.

[4] "Statement on the Teaching of Philosophy," accessed October 9, 2018, https://www.apaonline.org/general/custom.asp?page=teaching

[5] For more arguments along these lines, see Rudisill (2011).

[6] See their (2005).

[7] Smith & Earl (2005), p. 250.

[8] See Miller (1995).

[9] Miller (1995), p. 47.

[10] Miller (1995), p. 47.

[11] See Mulnix & Liberman (2017).

[12] See Stokes (2012).

[13] Stokes (2012), p. 144

[14] See Phillips (2017).

[15] Phillips (2017).

[16] See Freire (1970).

[17] Freire (1970) pp. 71-2.

[18] Freire (1970) pp. 88-9.

[19] Freire (1970) p. 92.

[20] Freire (1970) p. 92-3.

[21] See Dewey (1938).

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[22] Dewey (1938) pp. 25-6.

[23] See the introductions in Cappelen, Gendler and Hawthorne (2016), D'Oro and Overgaard (2017), and Haug (2014).

[24] See Bain (2004).

[25] See Lee (2018).