Volume 18, No. 2

Thinking

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For chapters within books: Reed, R.F. (1992) On the Art and Craft of Dialogue. In Sharp, A.M. & Reed, R.F. (eds). *Studies in Philosophy for Children.* pp. 147-157. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
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Thinking in Stories
by Peter Shea

Richard Wilbur, *The Pig in the Spigot,* Orlando, Austin, New York, San Diego, Toronto & London: : Harcourt Inc., 2000. Illustrations by J. Otto Seibold. 01.

Here's a book to help us think about words. *The Pig in the Spigot* informs the reader that a pig in the spigot is no big problem; a little extra water will flush him out. An ox in the phlox is more worrisome. The elf in the belfry *has* a problem; a belfry is too gloomy for an elf. And the rat on Ararat has no problems at all; he should go make friends with the lady rat. In short verses, the poet Richard Wilbur invites the reader to find friendly little words inside big words, and then to imagine why they're there.

The trick is addictive. Friendships have ends, your mother is other, there's occasionally a bat in the bathroom, stewards sometimes serve stew, and gophers frequently go, but there's no sin in sincere, thunder is over, not under, and balloons don't have to be balls. *The Pig in the Spigot* sets up games to keep on playing, for parents and kids or kids alone—a useful benefit for a book, when the games are good games.

These games are very good—for banishing the natural fear that culture arouses in beginners. Mysterious words are scary to everybody. When adults run into "eleemosynary" or "unprepossessing" or "reticulated," they feel they have been found out, shown up as not smart enough. That happens more often than not to children. The culture keeps hammering at them: "There is so much you don't know." This book suggests instead: "Make a friend within the scary word, and then work together with that friend to figure out the place where it lives." That's good strategy for coming to terms with new words. Indeed, it's pretty good strategy for coming to understand any complex thing: find some part you know about, and work outward from there.

These games also show up the hidden power of words. The feeling one has, coming off the book, is that words carry stories inside them. Words are not just passive tools. Words, on the view Wilbur evokes in this book, have all sorts of interesting relations with other words. One just has to listen to them, let the words tell their stories. That's an attitude that is at least as accurate as the "words are shovels and hammers" attitude, and much more helpful for a beginning writer, or for a reader hungry for meaning.

When someone plays the game that *The Pig in the Spigot* starts, he or she will eventually come to make distinctions between fanciful presences of words in words and the deep ways that words are compound and complex and bearers of strange construction histories. This investigation is deep in the roots of philosophy; the many ways that words contain meaning in their internal relations is the theme of the first effort at linguistic understanding in Western philosophy, Plato's *Cratylus*, a work as playful in its own way as this one, though largely inaccessible to those who don't know Greek.

Someone might object: "Yes, words are serious business, and should be taken seriously. A child should learn about roots and prefixes and suffixes properly, in order, without all this misleading fanciful talk. There is no scientific way that 'ant' is a part of 'pantry.' Any educated adult knows that." There are a couple of answers to that objection. First, kids who are forced to learn lists of prefixes and suffixes and Greek and Latin roots generally end up hating word work, despising dictionaries. They are given many answers before they have had the chance to ask any questions, and the possibility of word-geology as fun is stolen from them. I'd guess that, once children get started Wilbur's way, finding words in words and wondering what they are doing there, they'll take on information about prefixes and suffixes and roots as a way to make the game more fun, and they'll develop a life-long habit of squinting at words to see what might be in them.

Also, as with many things that adults allegedly learned and now know, it turns out that mostly they didn't and don't. People usually have as little sense of how words work as of how computers work. The person who sets out to discover something seldom wonders what is *covering* it up: that might be a good question to start with. If I inform you of something, I seldom think about making a *form* in you (a sort of brain surgery). But I should think about that. When I want to understand something, a plausible strategy is to *stand under* it. And responsibility, that grand thing parents are always trying to drum into their kids, insists on being about *response*, not neatness and obedience. The old ways of teaching don't make poetic adults.

We can learn from our words, if we listen to them and play with them and see what they contain. That's a lesson from the outer limits of philosophy, from Heidegger and Wittgenstein and Ricoeur. But the journey of listening to our own words can't begin with these venerable giants. It has to start with fine springboard books like *The Pig in the Spigot* and with good games, played for life.

— Peter Shea —

Through Marush's Eyes

DEBORAH K. COLVIN

Introduction

I live in at least two cultures. There is the one I was born in and carry with me through my first language and my personal history. There is the one I continue to experience through literature, art and the sciences. And there is the one I have chosen to live in and which every day is a new adventure for me. For the past few years I have been doing Philosophy For Children here in my chosen home in the Chiapan Highlands of Mexico. My first contact with the Lipman and Sharp novels was through the translations and adaptations in Spanish which we use.

The children's work with these texts has been rich and transformative, yet I always had the feeling that texts with other cultural contexts as starting points for philosophical dialogue could enhance the connection between the philosophical tradition and the children I work with.

I was given the opportunity to attend the May Mendham workshop in 2004 and this text began as an exercise in curriculum development. It has turned into a full-blown writing project for me, one that could hopefully be used both as a way to jump-start an intercultural dialogue with children who are not from this area, as well as a way for children from indigenous communities to begin a philosophical journey in their own backyards. Here I share an excerpt of the work-in-process.

Chapter 1

Marush lives in the cool country with her mother, Xuna, and her six-year-old brother, Santiago. Marush's father doesn't always live in the same house with the family. He often travels down the mountain with some of the other men in their village to the hot country to work in the sugar-cane fields. Their house is a one-room structure made of mud and wood with a red tile roof. It is set down in the mid-

Deborah Colvin has lived and worked in schools in Mexico for the past 19 years. She is originally from Texas where she studied Psychology and Philosophy and worked in the field of Mental Health and Mental Retardation. Her first experience with Philosophy for Children was in the "Pequeño Sol" as a fifth grade teacher. Currently she lives in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas with her two children and travels throughout Mexico doing teacher training for the "Casa de la Ciencia."

dle of a clearing, on the side of a forested mountain. The mountain lies on the edge of her village, near the community well.

In the middle of the dirt-floored room there is a round hearth set with the three stones that each hearth in her village has. There Marush's mother cooks their tortillas and prepares the sweetened coffee that everyone drinks in the misty dawn hours before starting off for school or work.

Mama says that the three hearth stones are the turtles that carry our world on their backs. Once, Papa showed her those three turtles in the stars of the night sky. Marush asked him how they could be turtles and stars and stones all at once, but he just laughed and shook his head.

The family's farming tools and baskets of seed, along with large sacks of wool, are stored in the open rafters in the house. Sometimes, after dark, you can hear the movements of mice and night creatures scurrying around in that "other space." Sometimes, when Papa tells stories on special nights about the adventures of the mouse and the *tlacuache*, Marush wonders what it would be like to live up there.

"Does my world look different from up above?" she asks herself when no one is listening.

Every afternoon when Marush comes home from school, she calls out to her dog, Cleo. Cleo bounds towards Marush, pulling up abruptly just as she lands at Marush's feet. You would think that the dog might tumble Marush over and knock her down. But, it never happens. Just as Cleo approaches that dangerous moment when anything could occur, she stops at Marush's feet and waits for her to give some sort of sign.

"What's Cleo waiting for?" Marush asked her mother one day. Xuna just shrugged her shoulders and continued to weave the new *huipil* for the saint in the church.

"Well I'll have to ask Cleo herself to be sure." Marush decided. In any case, Marush has her own ideas about what's on Cleo's mind.

Marush has always felt that she could communicate with Cleo... each nod of the dog's head or lifting of her ears is a special code between the two of them. And Marush is sure that the communication works both ways. Somehow it seems that Cleo can read her mind. She knows when Marush needs to go down to the river or to carry some fire-

wood in from the forest or when she is going down the mountain to take care of the herd of sheep.

Marush and Cleo have been together for many years. Although she has tried to think back as far as she can, Marush can't remember a time that Cleo hasn't been with her family.

"Was Cleo around when Marush was born or did she come later? Can you tell the age of someone by looking at him or her?" Marush wondered. Cleo doesn't change every year like Santiago, who every year is bigger and different. Marush asked her mother how old Cleo was, but her mother replied that only dogs know their own age. "Somehow," Marush thought, "I will find out the answer to that question."

At the end of the day everyone pulls out his or her sleeping roll from its place on the wooden platform against the wall. When her father isn't home there is room on the platform for Marush to sleep next to her mother and her little brother, but she prefers to sleep alone next to the hearth. There, when her mother and Santiago are asleep, she feels protected by the fire and can imagine that it is her own private space.

* * *
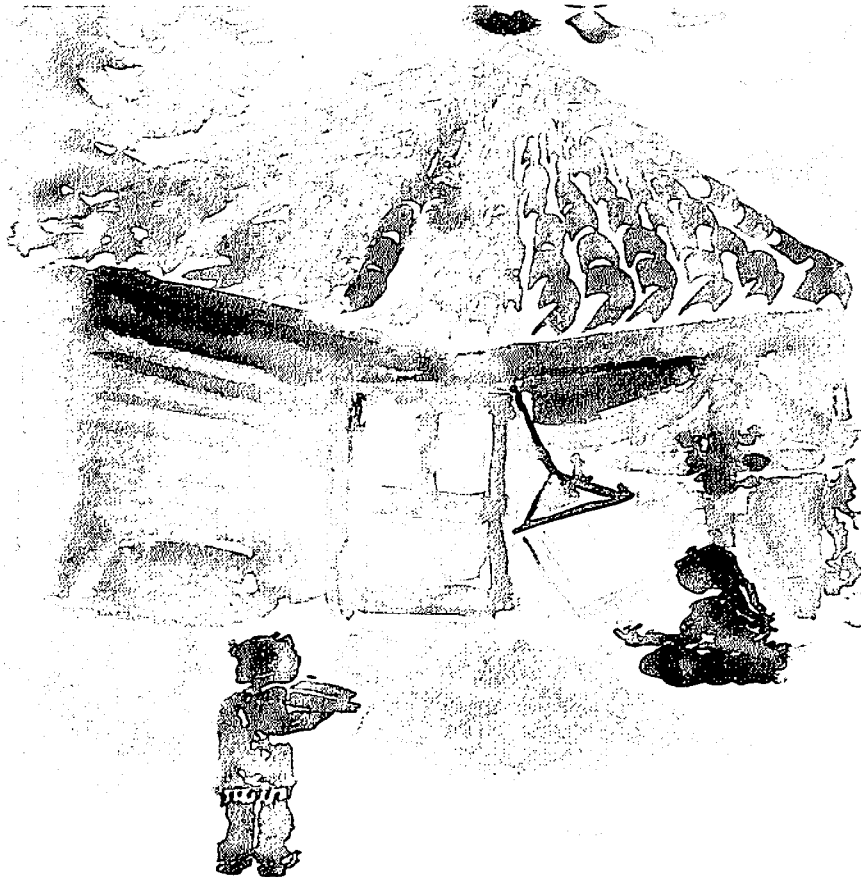
Marush finished her chores as fast as she could. She would not be going into town to sell handcrafts to the tourists today and Lupita, her best friend, was coming by as soon as she finished her own responsibilities. Walking home from school they had made plans to play.

First Marush fetched water in the two bright blue and white striped jugs from the community well. Cleo followed her to and from the well.

Then she went to the clearing below the house to call her brother Santiago and they walked together to the lower pasture to find the small herd of sheep that provided their family with wool for her father's *chuj* and the women's

woolen skirts. Cleo ran ahead and by the time Rachel and Santiago arrived, they could hear their dog rounding up the herd with her familiar barks and nips.

As they were returning home, Marush saw that Lupita was coming up the path towards them.

"Oh, Santiago," said Marush with dismay, "Lupita has already finished her chores and I still have the firewood to gather. She won't want to wait for me to finish again."

"Humph." grunted Santiago with very little sympathy, "That's your problem."

"Won't you do it for me just this once?"

"You've said that before." Santiago reminded her, "The last time I got stuck helping Mama with the sheep when everyone else was already at the festival. Besides, Mama said that from now on the firewood is your responsibility, not mine. It's girl´s work!"

"There's nothing special going on that you would miss today," pleaded Marush.

"And anyway, it's just one little load of wood to bring in. What does it matter who does it as long as it gets done? Pleeease." Just as Santiago was saying "Well... I will under ONE condition..." Marush was already running off to meet Lupita with Cleo trailing behind her.

Santiago walked off to bring in the load of firewood muttering to himself, "She could have at least waited to listen to my condition."

* * *

Lupita and Marush were walking along the edge of the riverbank. Cleo was occupied on the bank pestering a frog that was sunning himself on a rock when Marush noticed something flashing in the water. Marush stopped and leaned over the bank to see into the water. A slim, silvery bug was skimming along the surface. Then she noticed that below the surface there were miniature insects swimming and chasing other, even tinier creatures. Marush found that if

chasing other, even tinier creatures. Marush found that if she held her head just so, she could see clearly to the bottom of the riverbed, but if she moved slightly from that position, she lost the clear view of that underwater world. Suddenly, there were no insects visible below the surface, no life and death struggle, just water and light reflecting in patches over the surface.

Lupita peered over Marush and tried to look, too. "What do you see Marush?" she asked.

"I'm looking at the bugs below the water. Have you ever noticed that there is a another universe that is smaller than us?"

"What do you mean another universe?" exclaimed Lupita in her most unconvinced voice. "The universe is already everything and you're talking about *another* universe, smaller than ours. So, you think that there is *more* than one? That's impossible!"

At first Marush thought that Lupita was really overreacting. Marush was just trying to describe what she saw, but as usual her words seemed to come out meaning something else. Nevertheless, Lupita's objection made her think for a minute.

"Who says that our universe is the only one or all that there is?" inquired Marush after a pause. "Just because you don't know about something doesn't mean that it doesn't exist. I didn't know about these bugs before I noticed them but I think that they were here anyway. Couldn't it be the same for another universe? We just haven't noticed it yet.

"It's not the same thing. We don't notice it because it's not there. You're just talking nonsense." At that Lupita, who felt she had put the issue to rest, sat down and began braiding pine needles.

Marush wasn't quite so sure that Lupita had proved her wrong, but she felt a bit silly insisting on discussing her idea with Lupita. Even though she was her best friend, Lupita didn't always understand her. Sometimes Marush felt that she and Lupita were from two different universes!

Leading Ideas — Chapter 1

1. Different ways of life and Culture
2. Family relationships and structures
3. Stories and myths
4. Can something be more than one thing?
5. Sign, symbol and meaning
6. What does Cleo know?
7. Age and appearance
8. Responsibilities
9. Appearance and reality
10. Imaging other worlds
11. Perceiving and knowing
12. What is "Universe"?
13. Overreacting
14. Saying something and meaning something else
15. Giving good reasons
16. Friendship
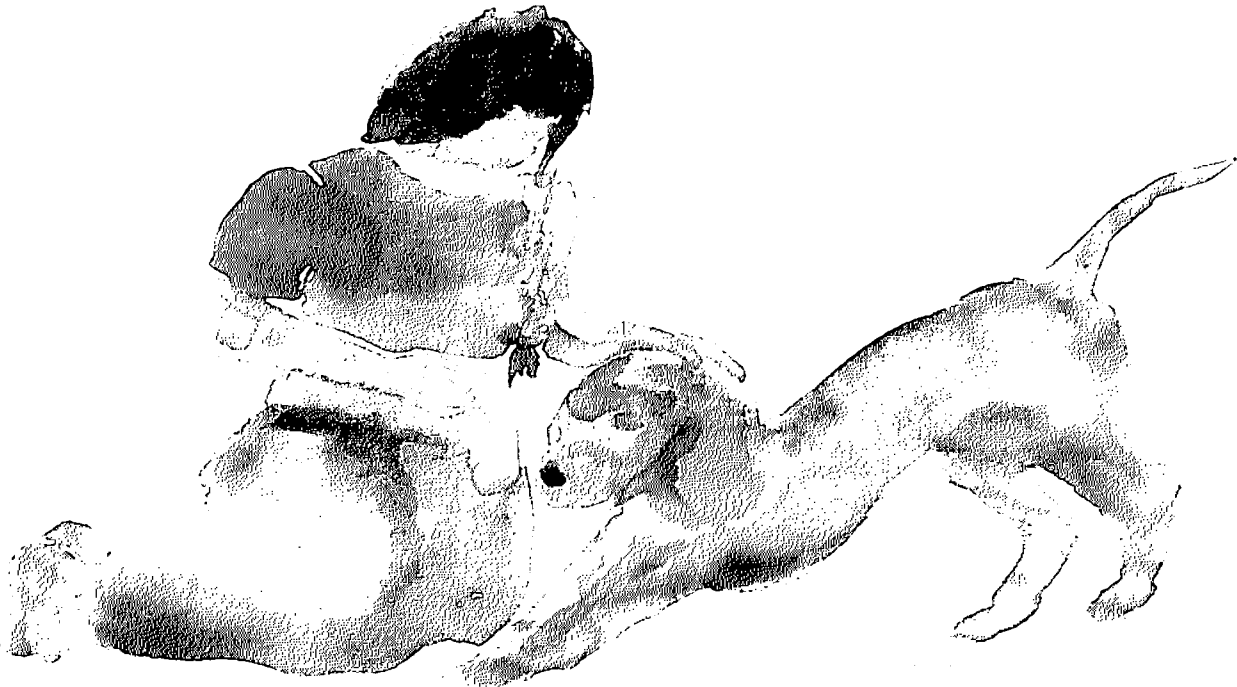
Leading Idea 1: Different Ways of Life and Culture

Rachel lives in an indigenous Maya community in the highlands of southern Mexico. She has a special way to dress and speaks a different language from children in other parts of Mexico. Her way of life might be different in many aspects from your own. There could be aspects which are very similar to your own way of life. Helping children identify the similarities to and differences between their own daily experiences and those of others will provide them with the tools to be more sensitive to cultural contexts.

Exercise: Ways of Life

Try to decide if the following activities are the same, similar or different from your way of life.

	Same	Similar	Different
Getting water from a well			
Living on the side of a mountain			
Eating tortillas			
Cooking on a fire in the middle of your house			
Sharing chores			
Telling stories at night			
Sleeping in the same room with your family			
Speaking one language with your family and another one in school			
Going to community festivals			
Weaving your own cloth for clothes			

Discussion Plan – Culture

One's culture one is identified by many elements— from the daily ways of life to the traditions, customs and language (*costumbres y tradiciones*) which permeate daily life.

1. Does the language you speak determine your culture?
2. Do the things you eat determine your culture?
3. Does where you live determine your culture?
4. Does how you think determine your culture?
5. What is your culture like?
6. How many cultures can there be in one place?
7. Can you have more than one culture?
8. What do people mean when they say that someone has no culture?

9. What is culture?
10. Can a culture change?
11. Can you create a culture?

Leading Idea 8: Responsibilities

In the story Santiago tells Rachel that bringing in the wood is her responsibility, not his. How responsibilities are allocated in a family or a culture and the notion of being responsible are two themes that you can discuss.

Discussion Plan: Responsibilities & Being Responsible

1. What are your responsibilities?
2. Does everyone have the same responsibilities in a family?
3. Should boys and girls have the same responsibilities?
4. Should people who are different ages have the same responsibilities?
5. Can you give someone a responsibility?
6. Can you have no responsibilities?
7. What do people mean when they say someone isn't responsible?
8. Is it the same thing to fulfill your responsibilities and be responsible?
9. Is it the same thing to be responsible and be responsible for something?
10. Is being responsible something you learn or are people just responsible?

Exercise: Are You Being Responsible If...

You should give reasons for your answers.

	Yes	No	Not Sure
You do someone else's chore?			
You always do your homework?			
You don't do your homework because you were helping someone else?			
You pay someone to do your work?			
You decide to do your chore later?			
You fulfill an obligation but you didn't agree with it?			
You don't fulfill an obligation because you didn't agree with it?			
You allow something to happen that hurts someone else?			
You always try to protect your younger brother or sister from harm?			

Philosophy for Children in Teaching

ANGÉLICA HURTADO ADAM

The incorporation of P4C as a teaching model is a process that requires time and ongoing reflection about the daily occurrences in the classroom. The present work documents my experience in integrating my formation as a P4C teacher with the teaching of natural sciences. It demonstrates the importance that belonging to a group of investigators and their accompaniment has had on this process.

In order to make this clear, I have asked Mónica Velasco, director of the P4C center and coordinator of our community of inquiry, to include her observations of the process.

My Experience

I am a primary school teacher working in a private school that emphasizes humanistic philosophy. As part of my school training, I have taken part in a study of the philosophical basis of the P4C project, using different methodologies to facilitate learning and choosing those that are most helpful in each of the different areas in the primary school in which I work.

In addition to the training I receive in school, I began—on my own initiative—my preparation in the P4C program in 1997[1], and have used it in the classroom since then. I have become aware of how the Philosophy for Children program has changed my understanding of the philosophical foundations of the school, the way I do my work in the different areas of the classroom curriculum, my understanding of myself as a teacher and the way I perceive and understand the children with whom I work.

Within this context, we analyzed the following teaching goals in the program for the natural sciences:

- That the children acquire knowledge, attitudes and values that manifest themselves in their respectful behavior in their natural environment, in their understanding of the workings and transformations of the human organism, and in the development of adequate habits for the preservation of their health.
- To help develop the children's abilities to observe, ask and offer simple explanations.

As an alternative that allowed us to get closer to our goal, we chose to work with the project method in the area of natural sciences.[2] We agreed to start with the unit "Natural Resources," developing the classroom work using the following process:

1. Explore the students' previously existing knowledge of the topic, posing questions to help clarify concepts, complete the information and generate new questions.
2. Classify and prioritize the students' questions.
3. Plan strategies to obtain information and elaborate a working plan.
4. Define the characteristics of the final project.
5. Periodically share the results of the students' investigation, assuming that the required content will be covered, as the program stipulates.

One of the valuable things I learned in the P4C training has been the development of the disposition and the ability to formulate questions that are not directly focused on obtaining information, but which facilitate the thinking process in myself and in the students. Thus, I was able to integrate into this working scheme questions that we formulated during our sessions: What do you want to say with... For you, what is....? What do you understand under....?

Even though this might appear obvious or too basic for those of us who have worked with P4C, I realized that other teachers in the school didn't use these kinds of questions. Despite their expressed concern for clarifying concepts, their way of asking questions was not consistent with this goal. Rather, they asked for information seeking questions or closed questions that served as the introduction for an explanation that the teacher—not the student—was going to give. Though I shared more facilitative and open-ended questions with the other teachers, they were not used as tools when interacting with students. I realized then, from my observations of my colleagues, how much I had incorporated into my work as a result of my training in P4C.

Angélica Hurtado is member of the P4C Center in Guadalajara. Master in Philosophy for Children. She teaches philosophy and coordinates the Parent School in a primary school in Guadalajara.

The Support of the Center

Angélica tells me about her classroom experience and when she talks about classifying the questions. She says that it is very difficult for the children to explain why they connect one question to another. She explains that when they mention a relationship and she asks them for an explanation of their answer, they say things like: Both of them talk about living things, both start with...etc. The students seemingly are not yet able to make the intellectual step to explain certain relationships.

I ask her then in what other ways she might phrase the questions so that her students could explore them. By means of a short discussion about possible ways to address this problem, imagining the children's possible answers, we are able to formulate alternative questions that help children to explain their answers. For example: what is the relationship that you find among these questions that can go together? Apart from the words in which the questions are phrased, do they have anything else in common? Even though all the questions refer to the same thing, such as water, is there a question that does not fit into this group?

In our community of inquiry, we work with the multiplicity of relationships that can exist within questions and which constitute the perspective under which a group of questions may be explored. There are questions that look to establish cause and effect; others that look for distinctions or which seek to establish criteria. This effort was quite helpful in the process with the children in the classroom, and also helped in our sessions in the community of inquiry in the P4C center. In some way, a community of inquiry to which people belong for extended periods of time is prone to become routine in its proceedings, such as in its ways of relating to questions on the agenda and to simple changes in the way the questions are posed.

Another important aspect of the practice of P4C is that, once having classified the various questions, Angélica asked the students to rank them hierarchically. She asked them questions like: "What do I have to know first?" "Which is the most important?" Angélica was happy to learn that the children knew perfectly well that the first question they had to work with was "What is a natural resource?"

It is common that teachers start a discussion with an attempt to define words and concepts, believing that only after everyone has agreed on a common terminology can there be constructive dialog and conclusions be drawn. However, Lipman points out that to foster a discussion implies: "...adopting a conversational style that enables a variety of questions to be posed in ways that are casual and improvisational, so that they do not seem to be mechanical interruptions in the course of the dialogue, but appear instead as welcome techniques for intensifying that dialogue. In so doing, the discussion will probably be raised to a higher level of generality. The aim should not be to make the discussion more abstract, but to make it more compre-

hensive."[3] This way, inquiry can begin with a concrete experience and then move on to a concept or general idea concerning the implications it might have for concrete experience.

The topic "natural resources" requires a sophisticated level of abstraction, and perhaps the students see their own personal experiences with natural resources as the most meaningful approach to this topic. Sometimes definitions, rather than helping to clarify concepts, make them more difficult to understand. Based on this idea I asked Angélica: "Why do you think it is the first question that you should be working with? How could you justify it as the most important question?" Angélica's facial expression was one of distress as she explained to me that this is just a given, that it is the usual way to present material in the curriculum.

This led us to reconsider our own personal experiences in the community of inquiry. We reviewed some of the sessions where the questions that began our inquiry were not related to definitions but to practical problems, and this way we started inquiries by playing with the ambiguity of concepts in order to explore our understanding of the problem. Sometimes, when we reached a definition, this was not enough to understand concrete situations in concrete contexts. Our inquiry in the Center does not always follow the conventional order suggested by teaching programs and sometimes results in a deeper understanding of the complexities of a problem. We talked as well about the importance of including our own experiences in the inquiries made in the classroom.

My Experience

As I continued the process of the project within the classroom unexpected things happened.

1. What the children were supposed to learn, they already knew.
2. Their questions went beyond the content or explored aspects and perspectives that were not contemplated in the program. Additionally, especially these questions and others that were not specifically focused on reaching the goals established by the science program aroused the children's attention and interest.

When we reviewed the research findings, the questions on the agenda were invariably increasing. This caused anguish among the schoolteachers and led to a questioning of the viability this approach might have for working with children. It was suggested that we "limit the questions the children ask to the program content"—which is what happened in the majority of the classrooms—but I was worried about the mixed message that this implied. The children in my group maintained their lively interest and dynamic attitude toward investigation even though I could not cover the required contents of the unit within the same time limits as the other groups. However, developing a more inquiring sort of student is the contribution of this working model for

projects and one of the objectives of P4C.

In the following excerpts, I present some notes from my teaching diaries, which will illustrate this.

Teaching Diary, September 21st, 2000

Pablo proposed fire as a natural resource. That does not appear in the references and so other children argue that fire is an element and not a natural resource. Pablo takes water as a counter-example, water being mentioned in the references as a natural resource but also as an element. The resulting questions were:

- What is the difference between an element and a natural resource?
- What are the elements?
- Can all elements be natural resources?

(Personally, I could not clarify these questions, I had never thought about them this way). The children go on to propose that a natural element is anything that can be used for something that is used for our benefit and to produce other goods.
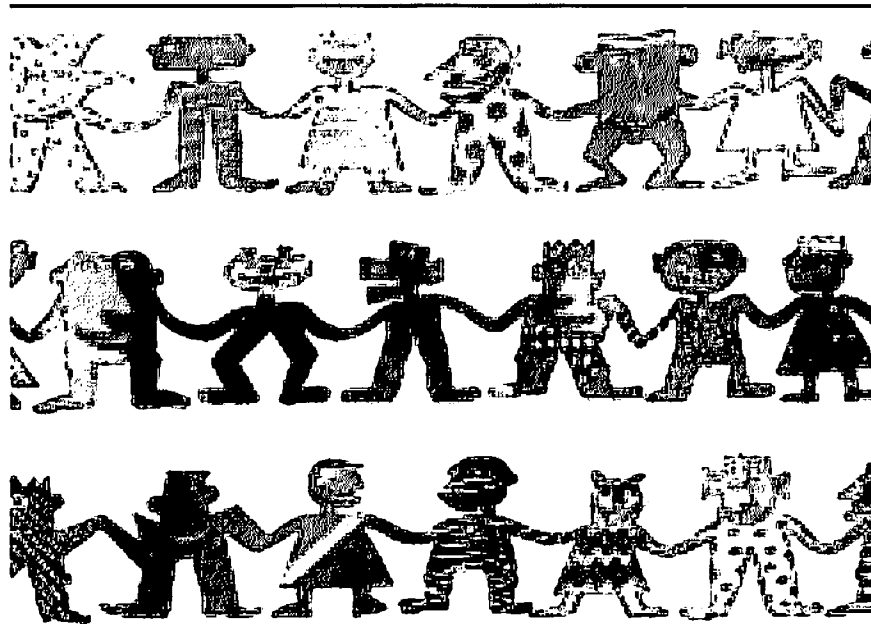
Teaching Diary, September 28th, 2000

The children distinguish between natural resources that are naturally produced on the planet, such as water, air, sun, etc., and natural resources that are generated by man, such as planted resources, bred animals, etc.

So, Alex asked whether, given the proposed definition and the distinctions, humans could be considered a natural resource. The group decides that further investigation is necessary. This question is added to the research index.

When I shared Alex's question with the other teachers, my colleagues were very interested in discussing it, and we dedicated an entire working session to it. It was an enriching experience as we realized that even though we knew the correct answers from the textbooks, we needed to cultivate our capacities to wonder and inquire as, whenever we let the children express their questions genuinely, we realized that we do not have the final word on the topic. This insight was also threatening for some teachers.

Based on these experiences, I made some modifications in my teaching during the next school year. One decision was to trust that the children would be able to engage in good, in-depth investigations of a small part of the project,

without the necessity for all the children to investigate all topics. Another was to try to support the learning of all the students in the various research groups and to give enough time for the program content to be covered, while at the same time project aims could be met.

No hierarchy of questions, just classifying, permitting each group to start its investigations with the questions it considers most significant for them, knowing that at the moment of integration, there will be a need to define "natural resources," and the group will have the necessary elements to do so.

I also realized that not all children had to do the same investigation. If we already had groups of questions, projects could be done in groups. The idea of unifying the groups emerged as each group contributed to the understanding of the topic. This referred me back to the experience of inquiry at the Center. Our intention was to recognize the perspective contributed by each member; to learn to function as a "cable" and working intentionally to facilitate the development of mutual trust among the children. The idea is that whatever the other contributes I can use for my own knowledge, and that the relationships are reciprocal.

Another aspect that modified the classification of the questions came as a result of a session we had with Kio and Gus.

Teaching Diary, October 2001

We read episode 1, chapter 2 , where Gus asks: Mom, can some people hear better than others?...Are there people who can not hear anything?.... do I hear well, mom?....

Among all the questions suggested by the children, they chose: why is Gus asking questions all the time?

Montse: it is your question, what were you thinking of when you asked it?

Montse: Gus is always asking questions—that must bother his mother.

David: Yes, because adults always get tired when you ask a lot.

Teacher: And why do you ask?

Isabel: To know something exactly.

Montse: Out of curiosity.

Pedro: To understand.

Teacher: Let's see, wait. To know, to be curious and to understand are different things?

Yes (they answer in unison)

Teacher: Like what kind of questions do you want to ask?

Isabel: How old are you?

Juan: Where does the world turn to?

Rafa: What is your name?

Frida: Why are you called that?

Diego: What is mathematics?

Natalia: What is your address?

Teacher: And the curiosity questions?

Alejandro: What is the name of your grandmother?

Isabel: Have you ever met an artist?

Natalia: Who are your cousins?

Javier: Are you afraid of death?

Teacher: And questions about understanding something?

Joana: What is the universe?

David: What are the stars?

Diego: What are comets?

Natalia: What is the sun?

Jacobo: What is there in the universe?

Arturo: What is death?

Pedro: What is the atmosphere?

Teacher: How do I distinguish questions to know, to understand and those that are asked out of curiosity?

(silence)

Isabel: Well, the ones to know give you the answer and that is that. You know.

Pedro: Like the multiplication tables.

Rodrigo: Well, you know them so so.

(Here we discuss if you can know something so so, or if you just know it or don't know it).

Teacher: And those questions out of curiosity, what are those?

Alejandro: Because just the person who knows can answer those.

Frida: You cannot investigate those.

Teacher: And the ones to understand?

Isabel: Those are very difficult.

Pablo: You have to think and think because you do not understand those.

The discussion followed, and we reclassified the questions. The important thing is that the children were seemingly able to distinguish questions of a scientific nature, of a philosophical nature and personal questions, even though they cannot define them in this way.

In a following session, we reviewed the Kio and Gus session and we talked again about the ideas we had used to distinguish the questions; then I divided the blackboard into 3 columns re-taking some criteria to classify the questions: questions to know were those that had specific answers and

which we could find in science books or in other sources. Curiosity questions were those that were personally interesting and for which we were not certain to find answers unless someone knew them and could tell us. The understanding questions were very difficult and we discussed them at length.

Following our conversation, I asked them to formulate their questions in terms of the topic under investigation, telling me in which column they thought those questions should be written. At this juncture, there was some disagreement about which column any given question should be assigned. We discussed this issue, they justified their decisions and we recorded them once we came to an agreement.

Finally, we made a list that turned out like this:

Questions to know.
1. How much water is there in the world?
2. What color is water, and why?
3. How does the water get to us?
4. How do they get the salt out of the seawater?
5. How is water purified?
6. How do we know whether water is purified?
7. What happens if we drink water that is not purified?
8. How many liters of water do we use every year?

Questions of curiosity.
1. How old is the water?
2. When did they discover the water?
3. What would happened if we ran out of water one day? (I think this question would be better in the "questions to understand" category, but the children did not want to change it—they said it is like "imaginatory." I left it as they suggested, understanding that there may be a distinction between this question and "questions to understand," that I do not see).

Questions to understand.
1. How was water made? How did it come into existence?
2. What would have happened had there never been any water in the world?
3. Why is it called water? Why did they name it this way?

This classification scheme allowed me to establish a clear criterion to pass the subject: it was necessary to have answered all questions to know. We were going to use the questions of "curiosity" as challenges. If we could not find the information, we used class time to discuss possible answers. One of the children said "You mean a hypothesis". For the questions for understanding we were going to have P4C-like sessions. I hope that when we have the discussion concerning these questions, part of the argumentation will be based on what we learned investigating the first category questions).

When we started to integrate the investigations of the different groups, it was interesting to see that what we really discussed were the *questions for understanding.* These were the ones that brought us closer to the objectives in science class. The *knowledge questions* were useful, but it was the questions for understanding that awakened the children's sensitivity and caring for natural resources.

In addition to my being a primary school teacher, I work in the teacher training program in the center for P4C in Guadalajara, teaching logic. So, I decided to work with my children on the project "living beings" during the next school year. I integrated the modifications that I made during the experience with logical sentences and their representation as a whole. The children developed a great ability to "standardize sentences" based on acquired information, and they incorporated it into our P4C sessions and in other moments of dialogue in the group.

My working perspective has been widened in other areas through my participation in the community of inquiry in the Center of P4C, through conducting P4C sessions with my students, through observations of other teachers and comparing experiences with them, as well as through the integration of projects.

I always keep a record of my teaching practice in my teaching diary. Apart from that and the incorporation of projects in the classroom, there have been many other aspects that have allowed me to appreciate the thinking process and the attitudes of my students that are a direct result of my training in P4C. This has allowed me to examine myself regarding the things that I teach, the techniques I use and has allowed me to establish priorities in the process of inquiry of my students, trusting that they will learn the facts that the program requires. I have learned how to ask relevant questions and change my way of interacting with the children in my work.

My participation in a community of inquiry and the center's support in reflecting on my practice have helped me develop a better way of thinking about learning, and to make important changes in the classroom experience for the children. What started as practice in the P4C program has become a way of being a teacher that extends to other areas as well. It influences my science projects and other subjects, but it has especially influenced my way of being present in

the learning process of my students and my way of relating to them. This has made the philosophical framework of the school meaningful to me, and P4C has made this even more evident in my classroom. Maybe one way of expressing the difference that I see in my work is through the phrase that one of my students used in the final evaluation at the end of the school year: you are a teacher that teaches us things beyond those that we have to know.

Final Comment (Monica)

I hope the experiences shared in this article promote an appreciation of the way different perspectives converge in the practice of classroom teaching: the perspective of the school where Angélica teaches; Angélica's perspective on her own work in relation to her intentions, proceedings and her formation in P4C, the perspective of the community of inquiry regarding Angélica's work with the students and of her own thinking process, Angélica's perspective of her colleagues teaching and the perspective that has been contributed by her participation in the process of teaching other teachers in the P4C program. I consider that this rich variety of perspectives and the way these perspectives interact at any given moment illustrates that the integration of P4C in the practice of teaching takes time. It is achieved through joint reflection and in dialogue with others, and can become a source of enrichment both professionally and personally.

Notes

[1] 1997-1998: Doll's hospital- 2nd and 3rd grade; 1998-1999: Doll's hospital- 2nd and 3rd grade; 1999-2000: Kio and Gus – 3rd; 2000-2001: Kio and Gus- 3rd and 4th grade- Initiate "Projects in Natural Science"; 2001-2002- Kio and Gus- 3rd and 4th grade- Initiate "Logic Seminar" for teachers at P4C Center in Guadalajara; 2002-2003: Pixie- 3rd and 4th grade; 2003-2004: Kio and Gus- 3rd and 4th .

[2] Hernández, Fernando; Ventura, Montserrat (1992) *La organización del currículo por proyectos de trabajo.* Barcelona: Grao. Work proposal that is based on the pedagogy of John Dewey, with the objective that students generate questions and the answers to these questions, connecting what happens in the solar system, the reality being that that gives meaning to formal knowledge.

[3] Lipman, Matthew; Sharp, A. Margaret; Oscanyan, Frederick. (1980) *Philosophy in the classroom.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press. p. 125.

[4] Hurtado, Adam: Acta de academia, 2000.

Education for Justice

TERESA DE LA GARZA

The first agreement that the very first gods had was to recognize and accept the difference and to accept the existence of the other... After this first agreement, they kept the discussion going, because one thing is to recognize that there are others that are different, and another, very different, is to respect them...
Then they were silent and each one talked about his difference and each one of the other gods that were listening, realized that it was by listening and knowing the differences of the other that they knew themselves better, so they reached the agreement that it is good that there are others that are different, and that we should listen to them to know about ourselves.
Relatos del Viejo Antonio

Latin-American Philosophy has been following the traces of European philosophy in search of an origin and an identity. But in the case of Mexico, these traces can be painful, because from the start there is denial - denial of the humanity of the Indians, precisely because the European categories could not understand difference.

This denial is not only epistemological, but above all, ethical and political. It is expressed first in conquest and then in colonization—which proves the incapacity to conceive difference in a way that is not hierarchic. This incapacity can be seen very early in colonial history. As Luis Villoro has pointed out, even those who defended the humanity of Indians, like Bartolomé de Las Casas, were incapable of a complete recognition of difference, because that would imply accepting the possibility that there are different ways of understanding reality, and to accept that these other ways could be as valid as one's own.

Mexican thought, like the nation itself, arose from a violent encounter, so identity has to be constructed painfully from alterity. The traces of this construction can be followed in art, literature, religion and language...all elements that can help us to understand the experience of alterity, lived as domination. Mexican thought emerges from the margins of European western thought; in this case, marginal means outside of it, but at the same time,

constituted by it. Out of this paradox we have sought in Europe a mirror that can show us a clear image of our identity. But in this mirror Europe is also able to see itself in Latin America; this image complements Europe and allows it to understand its own identity.

This is so because the experience of marginality contains a new element that is not part of the Western model of universality. It represents the hope of obtaining some keys to construct a new model of universality, a model that instead of excluding or assimilating differences becomes enriched by them. This model can also help to find foundations for political ethics based on the idea of justice, one that is closer to our diverse reality—a true identity that reflects this diversity. This is not only a theoretical enterprise, but also a practical one. We must not forget that without universality, solidarity and justice are not possible.

The Latin American experience is necessary to understand the insufficiencies of the Western concept of rationality. Hegel pointed out that history has to do with Christian Europe and its children—all other human groups are out of history and because of their incompleteness, they will be wiped out by the force of the Spirit. But for Rosenzweig, the experience of the excluded is the basis for thinking that which has not been thought before. The marginal point of view represents the hope of constructing a new universality, one that does not exclude, but rather includes difference. To think from this perspective is to think from the experience of denial, from the experience of alterity, from the point of view of those:

> ...that have to die in order to be heard... those always forgotten...those without a face...those whose voice is not important... (Relatos del Viejo Antonio p.5)

Carlos Fuentes says that the questions Mexicans have

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asked themselves in our history of *mestizaje*—questions of identity, questions of justice—are the kind of questions that are needed in our time. This is so because the questions characteristic of the foundation of a country born from conquest and *mestizaje* are the questions of today's contradictory and migrant society, captured between the traditional idea of identity and the contemporary alterity, between local and global villages, between economic interdependence and political balkanization.

Nations have defined themselves by unifying elements: language, culture, history, values... In the Latin-American world, independence was attained when a small group became aware that they no longer belonged to the Empire—because they are different, because they do not share the same values or the same history. When independence is achieved, it becomes necessary to define the new nation, yet this was done following the European model, in spite of the fact that the population was very far from being homogeneous.

"Nation" is a modern concept that was developed during the French Revolution. This idea of Nation, which designated the sum of all citizens, is linked to the idea of popular sovereignty. It is later that the concept of Nation was identified with a territory, a language or a common historical experience, which then led to the rise of nationalism. The most important feature of nationalism in connection with liberation from colonialism was the insistence on self-determination.

Thus, the identification of the idea of State with that of Nation is a modern phenomenon, one that does not correspond with reality due to the different relations existing between states and nations. We can find states with a multiplicity of nations, such as Spain, Canada and India.

We can find federal states such as Germany, which recognize regional variants in a homogenous nationality, as well as states with one dominant nationality and others that are in a minority, such as China or Mexico. On the other hand, we can find nations divided into several states, like Kurds, Mongols, the Massai, etc., or nations without a state, such as Palestine. States that coincide with *national unity* are the exception.

The concept of identity refers primarily to that which singularizes, that which allows us to distinguish one individual from the other. In the case of collective identities, it can be a shared representation formed by a system of beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, ways of seeing the world and a way of living that is shared and transmitted to younger generations.

In the case of colonized people we can frequently find tension between what has been and that which one wishes to be, between a conservative attitude aimed at preserving the heritage of the forefathers, and one that searches for a new and original way of being. In the case of Mexico we can find different projected identities in tension with one another. (*Conservadores* and *liberales*).

But it is important is to remember that identity is not something that has been lost and must be found. Rather, it is something that must be constructed and continually reconstructed.

Samuel Ramos relates identity to authenticity. He warns us about two ways of being unauthentic: false Europeism and an exclusive Mexicanism. He maintains that our identity should be constructed by making universal culture ours in a way that expresses our soul. Through this idea we become aware of the need of every culture to participate in the construction of a true universality, one that is not exclusive.

Modern philosophy, starting with Descartes, is founded on an unlimited confidence in human reason, faith in progress, history conceived as meta-narrative, and a para-

digm—both epistemological and ethical-political—centered in the subject and tending towards universality.

But beginning at the end of the 19th century we can find strong voices that question this paradigm: Nietzsche, Marx, Freud and pragmatism, vitalism, historicism, existentialism, critical theory and the different kinds of post-modernism.

Walter Benjamin and Franz Rosenzweig saw in the First World War the end of this model of history founded on the ideas of continuity, causality and progress. In their place they proposed the ideas of discontinuity and actualization of time. According to Benjamin, the western model of History excludes failures from the collective memory, emphasizing the victories, thus hiding the issue of the rights of the defeated. But memory awakens this forgotten past, making us aware of those rights (Angelus Novus).

Benjamin is against the idea that progress is the ultimate goal of human history, because this produces an ideology that justifies the suffering of persons in order to achieve that progress. The rights of the defeated are not cancelled: we have to recognize them and work at revealing past injustice while impeding its reproduction. We have a responsibility towards the victims of past injustices in constructing a present that does not deny them.

According to Levinas, Western Ontology includes an element of domination. In spite of the fact that this element becomes evident in Hitlerism, it is present even in the origins of Western Ontology. But there is another possibility—instead of Ontology as the foundation of philosophy, we could follow the road of Ethics. Here we find that what constitutes being is difference, and this leads to responsibility.

In reflecting upon these ideas, we have to ask ourselves if this exclusion of the rights of the defeated in history (of which we can give many examples) began in the Conquest and Colonization of America. These processes are projects of domination that are at the origin of our societies. And these processes of exclusion have not ended; in the midst of our societies we can find injustice and exclusion. As long as we are not able to address this problem we cannot construct a healthy identity, because the condition of indigenous people in our countries is that of extreme poverty and ignorance. Their exclusion is not only economic, but also political and cultural. In Latin-America we can find a double marginalization, that of the Europeans towards the Americans (Euro centrism) and that of the *mestizo* majority towards the indigenous people. The exclusion of Indians in our societies is a task we must address before we can begin to talk about identity. It demands that we direct our efforts towards justice and solidarity. The foundation of an ethics of responsibility and compassion can only be found in the recognition of our responsibilities in history. The injustices of the present are the result of the injustices of the past. Here our double condition of excluded and *excluyent, nepantla*, in the middle, could be a privileged starting point for assuming responsibility in the inclusion of the defeated in

our society.

One of the most significant experiences I had was a visit to an Indian community, San Juan Chamula. In the church, with the floor covered with pine leaves, the smell of copal and the incredible colors of the dresses of the saints aligned in the walls, an old woman was praying. Suddenly, she turned towards me and looked at me briefly. In her black eyes, surrounded by wrinkles, I could see all the suffering and the impotence of the excluded among the excluded. Entire generations of Indian women, oppressed, exploited, excluded, were contained in that look. Responsibility is linked with compassion. Through compassion we come to admit that we are responsible and that it is our duty to work towards the *construction of an identity that, instead of excluding the other, enriches itself through their inclusion.

1. Ethics of Compassion

Horkheimer places compassion at the heart of ethical investigation, as the nucleus of his criticism of idealistic ethics. He proposes compassion that is directed towards the other not because he is powerful, but because he is in need. It is a loving and solidarity-based approach to the other, coming out of the experience of suffering and the hope of achieving happiness. His approach is different from the modern approach, in which compassion appears when we have lost the battle against injustice, and all we have left is to ease the pain. On the contrary, Horkheimer thinks about compassion as a feeling, but rationally mediated. The other is worthy of compassion because his universal human dignity has been denied and has to be restored.

From this idea we can arrive at the political dimension, that is, to talk about the ethics of compassion in Horkheimer as a political ethics, because it can't be understood without an interest in eliminating social injustice, one that is also historical, ie., related to praxis.

The point of departure is the fact of poverty in our world, together with the will not to resign. The one who suffers, the one who is hungry, who has been the victim of an injustice, is not the *object* of commiseration. He/she is a human *subject* that has been deprived of a dignity that is rightfully his/hers: here is where compassion appears as a feeling for a human being that, at the same time, is a demand to recognize his/her dignity.

But precisely because this subject has been deprived of dignity, we cannot speak of symmetrical relationships as Habermas would. The only possible relationship is solidarity, which implies action so that the other can recover the dignity that is rightfully his/hers. In that same movement, meanwhile, we achieve our own dignity as moral subjects.

Compassion involves two subjects; it is not a feeling directed simply towards the other. The subject that perceives the other as deprived of his dignity also perceives himself as deprived and dependent of the other for his own

dignity. Recognition is mutual, but not equivalent: solidarity is the movement from the I to the other, and the movement from the other towards the I would be the condition for becoming a moral subject.

The true problem of evil is suffering caused by men, and the greatest suffering is poverty, not only in its physical aspect, but as a deprivation of dignity that hurts our consciousness and becomes a social matter. Social inequality is not natural, it is caused by a free act—that is why it is unjust. Both the rich and the poor have the challenge to become moral subjects. Here is where compassion is revealed as the key. The experience of suffering—and compassion as the answer to the call of the suffering—allows us to become moral subjects.

2. W. Benjamin: The Rights of the Defeated

Benjamin is among those authors who have most forcefully condemned progress as the sole end of modern societies—an end upon whose altar the rights of those who have been deprived of their dignity have been offered as a sacrifice.

However, the excluded, the defeated, are entitled to their rights. They are a reminder that we all come from one tradition, and that we are the heirs of a history that must be acknowledged. Injustice leading to suffering and misery can be found in this throughout this common history. Benjamin's idea is that temporal distance does not liberate us from responsibility. The past is central for Benjamin; he criticizes the conception of history as linear progress, capable of self realization. Instead he presents us with the image of the *Angel of History*, who sees the future in the past. The future holds within it the unrealized hopes of past generations, hopes that must be acknowledged by the present generation. These hopes illuminate our conscience, making us aware of our own chains; at the same time they give us the strength for liberating ourselves. Only by the present generation actualizing the hopes of past generations, can the present can be altered—generating change. But the only past that can liberate us is the past of the defeated, the forgotten past—not the past of the winners, which is already contained in the present. The only way to perceive this liberating past, which at the same time represents fracture and liberation, is through *memory*, that special kind of memory that Metz has called *anamnetic reason* or *memoria passionis*.

Benjamin tells us that without memory, yesterday's vanquished will join those of today, producing more victims. What we need is a level of solidarity that transcends the barriers of space and time, a relationship of responsibility between past and present generations. That is why he says that: *"not even the dead are safe from the enemy if he wins"* (*Thesis on the Philosophy of History*).

Fernando Coronil, commenting on Benjamin, tells us the story of a Venezuelan peasant whose family had been killed due to a false accusation of being a Colombian guer-

rilla. He said: *"If you can write this, tell them that, in spite of the lies told by the powerful, they cannot hide the truth. Sooner or later it will be known. Even if you don't believe it, the dead also speak."* (*Teorías sin disciplina*). Coronil also points out the bond between Zapata's demand for land and freedom and that of the Zapatistas today. Those who speak for the dead are, as always, those who have to die in order to live.

The responsibility of the present generation is rooted in the idea that if we don't recognize the rights of the victims, the same injustices will happen again. This perspective, as well as that of Levinas, provides a defense for the authority of the sufferer which, through the acceptance of responsibility, opens the path to morality.

We must remember that in Enlightenment Modernity, social inequality is seen as a natural fact, while from Benjamin's perspective, it is caused by human decision—thus giving rise to responsibility. One fundamental category is, therefore, that of memory capable of discovering responsibilities. Through memory, we can see suffering as being caused by men, and therefore, in need of repair by men. We need this perspective in order to construct a common identity—we must be authentic and recognize our common history.

Responsibility, of course, leads to action. Any political transformation requires the projection of a critical approach to ethics, in order to propose to society a social order based on justice. Critical ethics should be, therefore, disruptive and capable of transforming society. This is only possible if it is concrete, rooted in the context, and answers to the needs of concrete individuals and communities.

The experience of injustice and solidarity with the exploited give rise to the need to live in a society in which everyone is free and equal. The project of creating a new social reality in which suffering and injustice tend to be eliminated is born from a rational argument moved by the desire for justice.

Another category is language: questions should be asked about a common history that has been built upon the victories of some and the defeats of others. The problem is that the latter have been forgotten. When the questions of the defeated bring to light their violated rights, we can see the forgotten inheritance, we can hear the voices of those who express suffering caused by injustice. From this perspective, the task of ethics is political: it is defined by the need to do justice to the victims.

We cannot arrive at true identity without justice and memory. Injustice will continue to menace our societies if we do not accept that a culture that has produced as many victims as ours can produce even more. Memory forces us to take responsibility for injustice. The special perspective of the excluded, the oppressed, the sufferer of injustice, is the critical perspective, and, therefore, the perspective of hope.

On the other hand, memory helps us to remember the issue of human nature. For this reason, Hanna Arendt said

EL 13 DE AGOSTO DE 1521
HEROICAMENTE DEFENDIDO POR CUAUHTEMOC
CAYO TLATELOLCO EN PODER DE HERNAN CORTES

NO FUE TRIUNFO NI DERROTA
FUE EL DOLOROSO NACIMIENTO DEL PUEBLO MESTIZO
QUE ES EL MEXICO DE HOY

that the importance of the Holocaust lays not so much in the number of victims, but in showing us what kind of men we are. What is at stake here is human nature itself.

In many Latin-American countries, poverty is regarded as a *quasi*-ontological deficiency. Meanwhile, social Darwinism has excluded the poor—almost always the Indian. Poverty is experienced as deprivation of land, culture, language, and dignity. That is why we must recover that part of our history that lies hidden, the memory of injustice that will allow us to take care of the rights of the defeated. History is a common weave of different experiences: each one is personal and partial, but, at the same time, necessary for the reconstruction of a common history that prevents the reproduction of injustice. This is the task of a political eth-

ics of compassion and justice and the right way to construct an authentic identity.

3. Educating for Justice

When we talk about education, citizenship and democracy, me must remember that not all persons living in our societies are real citizens. While they remain in conditions of ignorance, exploitation and poverty, many of our children are very far from experiencing democratic citizenship.

They speak a different language, they have a different *Weltanschauung* from that of Western culture. But the main problem is that these differences are linked to hierarchy,

because in fact we are talking about second rate citizens, those who are deprived of the same opportunities of education, political participation or work. Can P4C make a difference?

We at the Mexican Federation of P4C have been exploring two paths. The first one is to include ethical and political reflection in our regular schools. Children can learn to accept difference as an opportunity for mutual enrichment, and can become sensitive towards injustice, in order to develop respect and solidarity for others and the desire to work together for a just society. At the same time, through reasonable and collaborative dialogue, they can develop responsibility and a reasonable desire for justice.

One strategy is the use of short stories in which children from different socio-cultural environments engage in dialogue. We think that this is a more appropriate model for a society such as ours, in which 52 languages and cultures co-exist. In order to write these stories, philosophy students lived with Indian communities during the summer, and learned about their ideas, ideals and beliefs.

The second path refers to education in Indian communities. This is more difficult for several reasons. The first is a well-founded distrust on the part of Indians towards "ladinos"; we must have patience so we can develop a relationship of trust.

The other problem is with the structure of public schools. All public schools in the country must use the same text book and follow the curriculum approved by the Ministry of Education. It is not easy to find space for P4C in Indian public schools.

Last year we had the opportunity to work on a project approved by the State of Mexico Ministry of Education. We worked with public school children from the *Mazahua* and *Otomí* communities. The Indian teachers participated towards a Diploma in P4C, together with non-Indian teachers . The workshops were held during week-ends, and even when the Indian teachers had to travel a long way, they were the first to arrive each Saturday morning. At first we had some difficulties arising from linguistic misunderstandings, as well as from a different perspective due to our different world views. However, with everyone's help we were able to overcome these difficulties, and started to share points of view. At first the Indian teachers spoke very little, but after a while they began to gain confidence, offering interesting new perspectives on the ideas we discussed.

During our eight months of working with these teachers in Diploma program, we had the opportunity to visit several schools. The first time we visited a school in an Indian community, we were surprised by the quality of the dialogue and the seriousness with which both children and the teachers were involved. We were received very formally, and one of the children told us that although they always spoke *Mazahua*, they would speak Spanish so that we could participate (one of the aims of the project was to improve bilingual efficiency). At the end of the session, the parents offered us a light lunch they had prepared. This being a

poor community, we were ashamed to eat their scarce food, but they were so proud of sharing with us, and so grateful that their children were doing so well at school, that we had to accept.

In another school, we visited a pre-school teacher who picked up her pupils from their houses, combed their hair and washed their hands, gave them breakfast and then started the CI by showing the children an illustration from a magazine. The children were eager to participate and seemed to have mastered the basic moves of a CI.

When the teachers graduated from the Diploma program, they presented their interpretation of *Pixie's* plays. We had the chance to see the Indian teachers comparing the myths of origin of their own culture with the Platonic myths, providing us with a beautiful example of intelligent conversation between cultures.

In one of the representations they showed a traditional betrothal ceremony, but with a surprising innovation. The girl's parents asked the boy's parents not only for fair treatment and sustenance for their daughter, but also for the right to study and work if she so desired. The girl in the play said: "I want to finish my Diploma in P4C and then do philosophy with children in the primary school."

Afterwards, there was a formal ceremony with a speech from one of the teachers, in which he thanked us for what they called "the light of philosophy." We had a celebration sharing delicious tortillas hand-made by the teachers.

But the transformation worked both ways. The other teachers as well as we, the teacher educators, grew out of this experience. We learned not only that difference enriches us, but also and more important, that difference should not be conceived hierarchically. We formed a community committed to combining our efforts for justice. So, who learned more?

These experiences showed us that by using these two strategies, the CI can help to develop sensitivity and commitment towards the other, who is also part of our identity. Through memory and compassion we can educate for a social order based in justice and solidarity.

In educating for democracy we must not forget that a necessary precondition is education for justice. Without justice, reasonable participation of citizens in democratic life is impossible.

A democratic society requires education in critical ethics, capable of presenting to the current social order a new ethics based on justice and solidarity, in which memory prevents us from repeating injustice—so we can work towards real political transformation.

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Teacher Education in Philosophy for Children in Mexico

EUGENIO ECHEVERRÍA

The best guarantee for seeing results in the implementation of Philosophy for Children anywhere in the world is adequate teacher preparation. This, however, is easier said than done. P4C is not an educational approach that simply requires following described steps. It is not teacher-proof. On the contrary, it requires an attitude change in the teacher in terms of her perception of children's potential, educational objectives, and a vision of a desired society.

What does a teacher need to know to teach P4C to children? Teacher education in Philosophy for Children includes an aspect of theoretical content that the teacher must know, a set of practical skills needed to conduct a community of inquiry, and a third aspect having to do with control of a group of children in a classroom setting. These three aspects are analyzed separately during teacher education, although it is understood that in practice with children they are completely intertwined.

The disciplines involved are mainly Philosophy, Psychology and Pedagogy.

Philosophy

People often ask how much philosophy a teacher needs to know in order to do P4C with their students. The answers that I've heard to this question in international and national meetings vary widely—from very little or none, to a diploma in philosophy, to a bachelors degree in philosophy. I would answer that a teacher should know some philosophy in order to get started with her children, and that her motivation to learn more about philosophy increases gradually but constantly as work with the children develops.

What do I mean by "some philosophy"? In Mexico a teacher needs to undergo approximately 35 hours of an introductory course in P4C for her to have access to the nov-

els and the teacher manuals for the age group with which she will be working. Within these 35 hours, we (teacher educators) should be able to provide teachers-in-training with that degree of "some philosophy" we deem necessary for them to get started. Fortunately, in Mexico and many other Latin American countries philosophy is part of the educational curricula for all high schools. Most schools require a course in the history of philosophical thought, another in ethics, and a logic course. All this takes place before the students decide what to do for a bachelor's degree—if they have the opportunity and desire to seek one. Unfortunately, in most cases the way these philosophy courses are taught serves to turn teachers and other students against philosophy, rather than conveying a sense of wonderment and curiosity for exploring further into the questions of the discipline. The truth is that most teachers who want to do P4C in their classroom know very little to no philosophy before they enter a P4C course.

We want the teachers to be able to explain to a parent, another teacher, or even a philosopher why what we do with the children in a community of inquiry is really philosophy. In order to answer this question, teachers must be familiar with the main concepts involved in the different branches of philosophy, i.e., aesthetics, ethics, logic, epistemology and metaphysics. They should also be aware of the five or ten concepts or questions that are addressed in these philosophical areas, and of how children are perfectly able to discuss some of these questions in the classroom. By engaging them in this process, we are helping teachers develop the

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philosophical dimension of their lives, and of their experience. I consider this one of the main objectives of Philosophy for Children.

During this introductory course we try to give teachers some practice in identifying philosophical questions, knowing how to turn a non-philosophical question into one that enables the community to engage in philosophical dialogue.

Given that our time in this introduction to P4C is very limited, we also need to give them some practical criteria so they can recognize a philosophical question. Three of these criteria are:

1. A philosophical question is controversial, open for discussion.
2. It does not have an easy answer; there may be several possible ways of dealing with it.
3. It is important for every human being.

We work in small groups with the teachers, helping them develop many examples of philosophical questions, trying to identify these questions within some of the main branches of philosophy. Several examples would be: When can we tell something is just? Are we really free? When can we say that something is beautiful, good, etc?

As I said before, this introductory course should motivate the teacher to further explore the realm of philosophy and gradually come to develop a positive attitude toward the learning of philosophy.

Psychology

How much psychology should be involved in teacher education for Philosophy for Children? Again this question needs to be approached according to the prospective P4C teacher's educational background. In most cases the curricular program for the formation of any regular teacher includes one or more courses on child development and at least one related to children's cognitive development—the changes this development undergoes over years.

In Mexico, almost every teacher knows who Piaget was, especially with regard to his theory of stages. They know that during the formal operations stage there are important qualitative changes in the thinking of the child. In P4C teacher education we introduce Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and show how social interactions among young children in the community of inquiry help them promote and provoke each other's cognitive growth. We also talk about Bruner and Ausubel, trying to convey the fact that regardless of what Piaget says about development, we prefer to believe that learning precedes development—as opposed to the contrary. The implications of this belief lead to the assumption that if we interfere adequately we can accelerate and refine the cognitive growth of the child by promoting discussions with his/her peers, discussions in which they are enabled to challenge each other's assumptions, make good inferences, identify contradictions and self-correct, to mention only some

achievements.

Let us now return to the 35 hour introductory course to get teachers started with P4C in their classrooms. Here the challenge is to get them to understand these things and to equip them with the basic tools for creating a philosophical community of inquiry with their children in their classrooms. We won't manage to do this by having them read about Vygotsky and the zone of proximal development, or an article in which Brunner explains his concept of scaffolding while explaining that a child at almost any age can be taught about anything if it is presented at his/her own level and in small, clearly organized chunks. Teachers need to live the experience of the community of inquiry, and ideally to feel the ground move under their feet as they are challenged in their set ways of thinking. They must be sufficiently open in order to transform and enrich their old ideas with the collaboration of others.

Pedagogy

How long should the training take? We usually work with the teachers for 35 hours in an introductory course. After the course, most of them are eager and able to start working with their children, even when they realize that it is more complex than they thought before taking the course.

There are three main activities during this first encounter with teachers interested in doing Philosophy for Children:

1. Five short readings on the philosophical, pedagogical and psychological foundations of P4C.
2. Practice in forming a community of inquiry using some of the chapters of *Harry Stottlemeir's Discovery, Pixie,* and *Lisa.*
3. Identification of some of the thinking skills developed by P4C, using and analyzing the New Jersey Test of Reasoning Skills.

Most beginning teachers arrive with open expectations regarding what should happen when we start with the introductory course. As the different activities in the course develop, they realize, on the one hand, that it is possible to do this kind of work with their children—that they can really help them develop their thinking. On the other hand, they also realize that this is an enterprise that will take time, patience and effort.

In our experience of over 20 years working with teachers and P4C, one of the recurring problems has to do with the difficulty teachers have in identifying philosophical concepts, making adequate follow-up questions, and in many cases, keeping order and disciplined behavior in the community of inquiry.

Once teachers start working with their group, it is advisable for a teacher-educator to make a follow-up visit to their school and observe them working with their children. During this visit the teacher-educator identifies the concerns, needs and expectations of the teachers and gives indi-

vidual feedback, plus planning an agenda to work with them two or three afternoons, usually from 4 to 8 pm. Many schools take advantage of this visit and organize a conference for parents. If the group of parents is not too large, the teacher-educator can start a session with the parents, conducting a dialogue based on one of the chapters of the P4C novels, followed by a period for questions and concerns from the parents. This engages the interest of the parents in the work their children are doing and also their support for the maintenance of the program in the school.

After the visit the teacher-educator writes a report with general observations about the work with P4C in the school, including suggestions for improvement and comments to the school administrator about the needs expressed by teachers. These are stated in terms of scheduled times for the P4C classes, places where the classes take place, acquisition of needed materials, etc.

Between the first and second module of their training, teachers are asked to conduct an average of 20 P4C sessions with their class. They are also required to bring a five minute video of their work conducting a community of inquiry with children in their school to the second module. Since many schools offer the program school-wide, it is easy to assign a person who sets up a schedule of visits to the classrooms where teachers are conducting a community of inquiry, who records 5 minutes of them facilitating a discussion. When possible, we can have a tape for each school level, one with the preschool teachers, one for elementary and another for middle school and high school. These tapes become part of the pedagogical tools to be analyzed during the second module.

The purpose is not to have an excellent instance of performance by the teacher, but to have a piece of a regular class to reflect on and give positive feedback. The tapes are intended as a tool for learning in community, not for evaluating or criticizing individual teachers.

During the second 35-hour module of theoretical and practical work, the teachers start by expressing their experiences during their first P4C classes. We also do about four short theoretical readings, this time beyond the introductory level. Some of them develop the relationship between P4C and reading comprehension, academic achievement and self-esteem. They are also exposed to a psychometric instrument which measures Ego Identity Development. This is relevant in terms of the relationship that has been found between identity development and some of the activities and topics addressed in the discussions—especially for middle school and high school students. In this second module, the Ego Identity Status instrument is done and analyzed, a task that can also be used for research purposes in their respective schools.

During this part of their formation, teachers have to prepare and conduct a P4C session with the rest of the group. This is done generally in teams of two or three teachers, depending on the total number of teachers being trained. Emphasis is placed on the analysis of every step of the session, including, of course, an evaluation of its pedagogical and philosophical dimensions.

We combine a viewing of the five-minute tape of the teachers conducting a session with their children with the

same teachers planning and conducting another session with the others involved in training.

During this stage the teacher-educator explains the nature of the final paper they must submit in order to obtain their P4C Diploma. This consists in a transcript of a dialogue with their group, in which they identify examples of thinking skills, philosophical concepts, and work with the exploration of values—or what we call here in Mexico 'valorative thinking'.

Before enrolling in the third and last module they are required to teach another twenty hours of P4C with their groups.

The third and last module emphasizes the impact that Philosophy for Children can have in the context of a school that adopts it as a major part of its curricula. Children's families, and the general community, should know about this approach so that they can be supportive of it. There is also an exploration of how students can construct a personal and social project, gradually, as they reflect on the topics being raised in their communities of inquiry. The personal project addresses the question of what kind of person one wants to be, while the social project looks at what kind of world one would like to live in and leave for future generations.

When they finish the Diploma, teachers have had undergone about 150 hours between theory and practice. After this training, if they desire to become teacher-educators in P4C they have to study a diploma in philosophy. This implies about ten or eleven courses in which they explore the philosophical foundations of P4C. Besides this, they need to co-direct two workshops with a certified teacher-educator recognized by the Mexican Federation of P4C.

When is a Teacher Ready to Start with Her Group?

We think she should start doing P4C with her group right after she has undertaken the first 35 hours of training in the first module of the diploma. She should feel that the practice of doing some sessions with her peers during the training in the diploma has given her a pretty good idea of the "moves" that have to be made to get a dialogue in a community of inquiry moving in the right direction. She should also have practiced the follow-up questions that have to be asked in order to promote the display and practice of thinking skills in the group, as well as having practiced identifying philosophical questions. The more time she allows to pass between the introductory workshop and practice with her children, the more difficult it will be for her to get started. Once teachers see the potential they are extracting from their students with this kind of interaction in a community of inquiry, and the original and creative ideas they come up with, this work with them becomes the best motivation to continue.

What are the objectives?

There are three main objectives in P4C:

1. To develop a space in the school setting where children can practice and develop their reasonin skills.
2. To enable the children, through philosophical dis cussions in a community of inquiry, to construct philosophical concepts and discover and develop the philosophical dimension of their lives.
3. To explore ethical issues and to construct a moral framework that can help them give direction to their behaviors in their everyday lives.

What Does the Process Look Like?

The process for developing a community of inquiry could be described as one in which children get together with their teacher and begin by reading from a text where the characters are also children discussing issues relevant t them. These issues are philosophical in content in the sens of being controversial, problematic, and difficult to define clearly. The role of the teacher is to facilitate a dialogue such that it allows children to listen to each other, build upon each other's ideas, give examples and counterexam- ples to support their claims, analyze alternatives, predict consequences, etc. In other words, to practice and develop their reasoning while engaging in discussions in which the explore values and reconstruct their own experience with the help of social interaction with their peers.

How Can a Teacher Evaluate Her Own Performance?

A very practical way for a teacher to evaluate her per- formance is to tape a session and then measure the amouitn of time children talk against the amount of time in a sess that she talks. If she talks more than the children, then something is wrong. She is a facilitator of the dialogue and discussion among the children, and they should be the on who do most of the talking.

Another tip is to analyze the kinds of interventions sh - has in the community. If her interventions are mainly trans mitting information to the children about the issues dis- cussed, then something is very wrong. If her interventions consist mainly in questions to the children, paraphrasing what they say, looking for clarification, trying to relate (through questions) what one child said with what another said, then she is on the right track.

How Does a Group of Children Evaluate Their Own Performance?

One way of doing this is to use the list of cognitive be- haviors provided below. After the class, the students can g through the list and discuss briefly how many of these hap- pened, and what they can do to make such things happen more often.

Group or Individual Evaluation

What are the Changes That Appear as Children Becom More Able to Function in a Community of Inquiry?

As children become more able to function in a commu-

	Yes	No	More or Less
1. Asks relevant questions			
2. Builds upon the ideas of others			
3. Accepts reasonable criticism			
4. Is willing to listen to others' points of view			
5. Respects others and their rights			
6. Supports his/her opinions with convincing reasons			
7. Provides examples and counter-examples			
8. Tries to discover underlying presuppositions			
9. Makes balanced evaluative judgments			
10. Addresses his/her commentaries to other students and not only to the teacher			

nity of inquiry—accompanied by a teacher who knows what she's doing—several things begin to happen:

1. They become more able to listen to each other and to be interested in what their peers have to say.
2. They become more tolerant toward people who think differently.
3. They are more cautious when judging others ideas and opinions.
4. They become more reflective and analytic.
5. They develop a healthy skepticism.
6. They acquire the tools that help them make sound, intelligent decisions in the variety of settings where they have to do so. School, family, friends......life.

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Some Challenges in Building a Community of Inquiry

MÓNICA VELASCO A.

For the last ten years that I've been working with P4C, I've had a special interest in developing a community of inquiry with the people who, through all these years have participated in the teacher's training program we have at the P4C center in Guadalajara.

I have found and argued through these years that it is not enough for any of us to participate in a teacher training program to become an effective force in transforming educational conditions. We may develop sensitivity to the process of personal growth, we may develop sensitivity and proclivity for thinking critically, and we may have a strong desire and basic skills to implement the program in our classrooms. However, it seems to me that if we continue alone our educational practice after our P4C training, it will be difficult for us to go further.

That is why ten years ago I thought that we must have a *permanent* community of inquiry in the P4C center in Guadalajara. I wanted the center to become a project in which trained teachers could find support, company and an opportunity to exercise their own thinking process and abilities. Our permanent community of inquiry would become a place where those teachers could enrich upon and deepen their disposition to think and talk with others, have P4C sessions and take turns leading, and receiving feed-back concerning their educational practice. I really believed this community of inquiry could become an alternative setting to consolidate and give strength to the training program on a long term basis.

Throughout these years many people have been involved in this community of inquiry. There are from eight to ten teachers who have been there for close to five years. And I personally settled on this project—and these teachers—with a great deal of expectation. Some other teachers have been part of this community of inquiry from time to time (I'm talking about six-month periods). Their intermittent presence in this CI project helped me to realize and

register some things that can be easily forgotten when not put into practice. That same intermittent presence also allowed me to put our CI into perspective. I found out that we can easily develop the kind of self-confidence with P4C methodology that almost leads us to arrogance or carelessness. For example, we may go into a classroom with no discussion plan prepared; we may be impatient with other teachers if they don't understand what we try to say. We may come to believe that our thinking skills are strong, but we may also be disregarding empathy, consideration and respect for others. Sometimes we forget the time and effort that we ourselves needed to understand the program and to gain the self confidence to go into a group of students and work with the novels.

This is why I would like to share some reflections about the challenges of building a community of inquiry as a long term project. Experience has shown us that we can be, or work with, academics and teachers trained in P4C, that all of us may be aware of its philosophical foundations, pedagogical implications, and have years of practice with the program...yet still be unable to constitute a community of inquiry. We may still be unable to act like one when the occasion arises. This situation makes me feel uncomfortable, mainly because I find no sense in 'working with' P4C, if the 'spirit' of the program doesn't make itself evident in daily life.

After all, my understanding is that the main purpose of P4C is to offer all of us—*teachers and students*—a process of growth, an exercise in better thinking in order to become a better person, and to contribute to making the world a

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better place for everyone. So I asked myself, after all these years of working in this permanent community of inquiry project: why can't we give a consistent testimony of it? What is missing? What else do I—we—have to do in order to make it happen? How can I—we—help bring the 'spirit' of community into our daily lives?

When referring to the relationship between P4C teacher and students, *Philosophy in the Classroom* points out that, "In particular, it [the discussion] promotes children's awareness of one another's personalities, interests, values, beliefs, and biases. This increased sensitivity is one of the most valuable by-products of classroom communication. Unless children have some insight into the nature of the individual with whom they share their lives, they are not likely to make sound judgments regarding them....There can be little reason to expect sound social judgment from the child unless interpersonal insight is first cultivated, and such insight is often the product of successful philosophical dialogue."[1] I think this text sheds some light on the previous questions.

If we put ourselves in the place of the 'children' referred to in the text, there are two important things to take in account: cultivating insight into the nature of the individual with whom we share our life implies that at some point in the process, we must focus our inquiry on ourselves. I think this is a challenge in the CI. Sometimes we lose track of ourselves by centering our attention on other's thinking and talking—sometimes in order to facilitate their thinking, or sometimes, I fear, to avoid thinking about our own ideas- and this prevents us from getting genuinely involved in a philosophical discussion.

Another important thing, notes the text, is that this insight is *often* a product of successful philosophical dialogue. It is important to remember that this insight *can* occur, but it does not happen necessarily, not always, and not for all. The challenge then becomes to find out what else is needed to arrive at that insight, to create a situation where it is more likely to occur, where it is likely to occur more often, if not always, and where insight into each other's lives becomes the basis for making judgments about each other because that's the way we prefer to live. As P4C teachers, we must decide whether or not to assume this responsibility.

Thinking about this quote makes me realize something that may be obvious to many, but not for me when I started working with the CI project. The fact is that a group of trained teachers can participate in philosophical discussions in a way that 'looks like' a CI—following the methodology of P4C, using the novels or other texts, keeping progress indicators in mind, trying to fulfill the list of abilities and social dispositions during the time devoted to philosophical inquiry—but all this does not mean that they are willing to assume a *personal commitment* to arriving at an insight into the persons themselves through philosophical dialogue, nor to bringing the 'spirit' of the program into their usual ways of acting, talking and thinking. Accepting this commitment, I think, is one of the ethical and moral implications of being

a member of a CI.

I've always thought that, in order to maintain a permanent CI in the Guadalajara center, we have to work together towards the goal of spreading the seeds of the cultivation of personhood, to see our work together as a way to facilitate self-consciousness and responsibility. But now I have begun to think that I should not expect too much. Although our work at the center is an extraordinary means for facilitating personal and social growth, we also need the space and time to cultivate our sight in silence. I believe that we must continue the exercise of talking and thinking with others, but that each one of us must also engage in an internal dialogue about the question of "who I am." We have to engage in a process that will help us go beyond our *rational* approach to the human condition, one that will help us to facilitate the sense of well-being that comes with making a *whole* connection.[2] While I am convinced that I have identified a problem and a way to solve it, I'm still not sure whether this is something I have to assume as a *personal commitment* with the teachers that come to the CI at the center.

I remember the following goal concerning our work as P4C teachers from the IAPC seminars—that of developing pedagogical strength and philosophical *humility*. Sometimes I think we develop good pedagogical skills, but that we have to work harder to develop philosophical humility, given its fundamental importance to our moral character as P4C teachers. If we want to invite others to join the program, and to provide a positive example of P4C, then we have to *embody* its spirit.

Let us take another look at my question regarding the CI: What do I—or we—have to do in order to make the spirit come alive, and to go further than the P4C session?

I would say we have to *cultivate our garden*,[3] and I know for sure I am responsible for that.

References

[1] Lipman, Matthew; Sharp, A. Margaret; Oscanyan, Frederick., *Philosophy in the classroom*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980, p.65

[2] I make reference to John Dewey's work *A common faith* (1934) Yale: Yale University Press, 1962, ch. II : Faith and Its Object, ch. III : The Human Abode of the Religious Function.

[3] At the Master Program at the IAPC we use to have some sources to work with the novels. One of them regarding Harry Stottlemeier's discovery, chapter 14, was Voltaire's book "Candide", from which I take this expression. Voltaire, Francois Mariew Arouet., *Candide or optimism*. London: The Nonesuch Press, 1938, p. 147.

Critical Thinking & Reading Skills: A Comparative Study of the Reader Response & the Philosophy for Children Approaches

MOOMALA OTHMAN & ROSNANI HASHIM

Introduction

Teaching critical thinking in schools has become a necessity, not only in Malaysia, where the research reported here took place, but elsewhere in the world. Teaching students to think critically has a very high premium in education because it is considered to be directly related to cognitive development. It is understood to enhance ability in reasoning skills, logical skills and also in reading and mathematics (Lipman, 1980; Reed, 1992). It has been universally argued that critical thinking ensures one's success academically and professionally (Abbott, 1997; Gelberg, 1993; Resnick, 1989).

Since endorsing this view of the importance of critical thinking for students' overall development, Malaysia has incorporated, in stages, critical thinking skills into schools since 1989 (Suhailah, 2001). This is in line with the Malaysian educational policy termed the National Education of Philosophy (NEP). The NEP emphasizes holistic education designed to produce an intellectually, spiritually, physically and emotionally balanced character. As such, philosophy acts as a framework for curriculum design and its practices. To promote intellectual development, the Ministry of Education has emphasized student-centered teaching methodologies such as the inquiry and discovery method, the Socratic method, discussion in general, and project and group work. To promote critical thinking skills, the strategy adopted is an infusion approach, whereby the teaching of thinking skills is incorporated in all lessons or subjects taught, including the subject of English, which is, of course, in Malaysia a second—if widely used—language.

However, a review of the literature indicates that the infusion approach is fraught with uncertainties. Its success is dependent on many factors, including the attitude and behavior of teachers, teacher preparation, and constraint factors such as crowded syllabuses and shortage of time. Thus, Suhailah (2001) has suggested implementing other programs that have been successful in teaching thinking skills to students. This study aims to explore two of those—Philosophy for Children and the Reader Response program—and to assess their relative success in this regard.

The Reader Response approach is based on a literary criticism model, and is widely used in language and literature programs in the schools. In this approach, the reader plays a prominent role in interpreting a text: she is seen as an active participant in the creation of the meaning of the text read. This departs from a traditionalist view, which asserts that the interpretation of a piece of literature lies

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within the text. On the contrary, the Reader Response approach proposes that the interpretation of a text is dependent on the interaction of the reader's background knowledge and the text (the author's interpretation). The resulting "response" is a dialogic product of the text and the reader. The process of reading leads to discussion and further reasoning, resulting in the creation of different versions of meaning. Thus the program presumes to teach critical thinking through the reasoning process and discussion which accompany learning how to critique a piece of literature.

The Philosophy for Children program (P4C) is a thinking program which also uses stories—stories specifically written to raise important philosophical issues in the readers' minds, which then form the topics of subsequent discussion. The P4C novels are read in a group, usually aloud, and the Socratic conversation which follows explores various interpretations of the meaning of the text as well as the philosophical issues which the text has awakened for the readers.

It is interesting to note that the methodology adopted in the Reader Response approach as well as the Philosophy for Children (P4C) approach are those recommended by critical thinking proponents. Some of the strategies recommended are: discussions of controversial issues; collaborative learning; metacognition; questioning strategies (Socratic questioning, inductive questioning or deductive questioning); the use of content-based language termed immersion; relating or finding relevance in terms of what students learn in the outside world so that they find personal meaning; and lastly, learning strategies. In the Reader Response approach, the methodology adopted includes questioning (Page, 2001), brainstorming, journal writing, the use of literature logs, group discussion and/or responding to their peers' opinions or responses, role play and displaying students' writing or oral response (Miller, 2002). P4C, on the other hand, stresses discussion, dialogue, Socratic questioning, responding to peers' opinions, collaborative learning, reasoning, and debating (Lipman, 1993).

Both approaches use reading materials whereby students give various interpretation of the meaning of the text read. This calls for active participation in the process of learning or giving opinions or interpretations or meaning of what is read. Since both approaches involve reading, the study also looked at the relationship between critical thinking and reading skills. At the same time it aimed to find which approach would improve students' reading skills, as well as accommodate a reading-for-meaning model.

Active involvement is essential to both approaches. Via this active involvement, the thinking that takes place is made explicit and critical thinking is promoted and maximized. This agrees with the notion that critical thinking involves participants daring to take risks in voicing their opinions or interpretations on important issues in ongoing conversations (Nussbaum, 2002)—for, as Langer (1997) argues, the methods of instruction in the classroom

have a direct effect on the process of learning and thinking that takes place among learners.

Objectives of the Research

The general objective of this study was to explore the strengths and limitations of two different teaching approaches in enhancing critical thinking in the English classroom in Malaysia. It intended to determine if the two approaches improve students' critical thinking, and to assess which of the two approaches is more effective in this regard. Since reading is involved in both approaches, this study also looked at the effect of each approach on reading skills, and, subsequently, the relationship between critical thinking and reading skills. Thus the study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. Is there a statistically significant difference in means of the pre and post tests for critical thinking skills using the New Jersey Test of Reasoning Skills (NJTRS) for each treatment group?

2. Is there a statistically significant difference between the Reader Response (RR) and the Philosophy for Children Program (P4C) groups for critical thinking?

3. Is there a statistically significant difference in means of the pre and post test for reading skills using TOEFL for each treatment group?

4. Is there a statistically significant difference in means between the Reader Response (RR) and the Philosophy for Children Program (P4C) for reading skills?

5. Is there a correlation between the mean scores of the NJTRS and the mean scores of the reading skill across the two groups?

Methodology

The school selected for this study was a fully residential science school in a rural setting in Malaysia. The population was homogenous, comprising Malay students who had achieved good grades in the standard government examinations, for instance, the PMR Examination. Most of the students were from the state of Selangor or Wilayah Persekutuan and were from middle to upper income family groups. The research design adopted was an experimental one, which aimed to find out which of these two *approaches* or treatments was better at fostering critical thinking and reading skills.

The population of the form fours (ages 12-13) in the school was about 125 students and they were assigned in five classes through convenience sampling. Subsequently, to carry out this experimental design, two classes out of the five were randomly assigned as the treatment group one and two respectively. Treatment group one was the P4C group, and treatment group two was the RR group. Each group had 24 students. Pre and post tests were given to both groups, resulting in quantitative data. Qualitative data were also gathered in the form of students' journal entries, observation during the lessons, and teachers' journal entries. Before

collecting the data, a pilot test was carried out to determine the reliability of the instruments used. The experimental study involved three stages. Stage one was the pre-test stage, where the critical thinking and reading test was conducted. The second stage involved giving the respective treatment, which was carried out for 16 weeks. The third stage was the post-test stage, where the two tests were carried out again.

From the tests scores, the *t* test was run to determine if there was a statistically significance mean difference between pre and post tests for each treatment and between the two treatments. For the *t* test, the significance level was set at $p < 0.05$. In analyzing the data, a triangulation strategy employing qualitative instruments was employed. Triangulation was also used to sustain findings or conclusion drawn from the quantitative analysis.

Instrumentation

The P4C reading text chosen for use was *Lisa* (Lipman, 1983), used for grades 7 – 9 in the United States This novel focuses upon ethical and social issues such as fairness, lying and truth telling. Other issues explored include the rights of children, job and sex discrimination, and animals' rights. The book comes together with a manual (Lipman, 1983) in which are compiled the activities that could be carried out or issues that could be discussed. The Reader Response (RR) group used the Literature text recommended by the Malaysian Ministry of Education (2000): *Selected Poems and Short Stories for Form 4 Literature in English for Upper Secondary Schools.*

The instrument used to measure reasoning skills was the New Jersey Test of Reasoning Skills (NJTRS). This test was developed by Dr. Virginia Shipman, then a Senior Research Psychologist at the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey (Shipman, 1983). The test had 50 multiple-choice items, representing 22 reasoning skills areas. It is a test of ability to reason, rather than a test on scientific inquiry or on judgment. It is clearly and simply written (its Flesch reading level is 4.5) and its reliability (ranging from 0.84 to 0.91) compares favorably with other thinking tests such as the Cornell Critical Thinking and the Whimbey Analytical Skills program. Since the subjects involved were upper secondary forms, an adopted version of TOEFL was used to measure reading skill.

Results and Discussion

Inferential statistics were employed to investigate if the two groups were comparable in critical thinking and reading skills. Table 1 shows the results of the independent *t* test for means of the two groups on the pre test scores of the critical thinking ability (NJTRS scores). There was no statistical significant difference (Table 1) in the pre test scores of both groups. This showed that the two groups were comparable in their critical thinking skills at the beginning of the experiment, although RR has a higher mean than the P4C group.

Table 1: Two-tailed t test between the treatment groups for the pre-test NJTRS scores.

Treatment Groups	N	Mean	M.dif f	S.d.	t	df	P
P4C	22	33.68	-1.32	5.37	.917	41	.365
RR	22	35.00		3.91			

Results of the independent *t* test on the reading skill ability also revealed that the two groups were comparable in their reading skills at the beginning of the experiment. As shown in the following table (Table 2) there was no significant statistical difference.

Table 2: Two-tailed t test between the treatment groups for the pre-test TOEFL scores.

Treatment Groups	N	Mean	M.dif f	S.d.	t	df	P
P4C	20	35.22	0.76	5.27	4.28	43	.671
RR	20	35.45		6.6			

To investigate the research questions involved in this study, inferential statistics were also employed.

The result of a paired difference *t* test for the pre and post tests (see Table 3) showed that there was a statistically significant mean difference for the reasoning skills in the P4C group, (t = .993, df = 21, p < 0.025). Therefore, there was adequate evidence to reject the null hypothesis (Ho).

Table 3: The paired difference t test for the critical thinking skills of the P4C group.

	Mean	M.dif f	N	S.d.	t	df	P
Pre NJTRS	33.68	2.27	22	5.37	-2.993	21	.007*
Post NJTRS	35.95		22	5.21			

* Significant α = 0.025

On the other hand, Table 4 indicates that, there was adequate evidence not to reject the null hypothesis (Ho) for the Reader Response group, (t = -.929, df =19, p > 0.025).

Table 4: The paired difference *t* test for critical thinking skills of the RR group

	Mean	M.dif f	N	S.d.	t	df	P
Pre NJTRS	34.90	0.5	20	3.99	-.428	19	.638
Post NJTRS	35.40		20	4.82			

Thus, it can be concluded that there was no statistically significant mean difference in the pre and post tests in the critical thinking skills in the RR group. Only the P4C group showed a significant difference in the improvement of critical thinking skills. The RR group also showed enhanced critical thinking skills (mean diff 0.5), but the improvement was not statistically significant.

An independent two-tailed t test was employed to compare the two groups of the P4C and the RR for critical thinking. It was also to determine if there were significant differences in the critical thinking scores after undergoing the treatment of the two approaches.

Table 5: Two-tailed t test between the treatment groups for critical thinking.

Treatment Groups	N	Mean	M.dif f	S.d.	t	df	P
P4C	22	35.954	0.5	5.214	.336	42	.738
RR	22	35.454		4.626			

The results of the t test (see Table 5) reveal that the mean score in critical thinking was higher for the P4C group than for the RR group. However, the null hypothesis was not rejected, t (42) = .336, p > 0.025. Hence, there is no statistically significant difference in mean between the Reader Response and the Philosophy for Children program (P4C) approaches for critical thinking, although the P4C group on its own showed a significant improvement as revealed by the test on hypothesis one.

The results of a paired difference *t* test for the pre and post test for reading skills in the P4C group is shown below. Table 6 shows that there was adequate evidence to reject the null hypothesis, Ho. This meant that there was a statistically significant mean difference for reading skills in the P4C group, (t = -3.253, df = 22, p < 0.025).

Table 6: The paired difference *t* test for the reading skills of the P4C Group.

	Mean	M.dif f	N	S.d.	t	df	P
Pre TOEFL	35.22	2.39	23	5.27	-3.253	22	.004*
Post TOEFL	37.61		23	4.27			

* Significant α = 0.025

However, Table 7 indicates that there was no significant difference for the reading skills of the Reader Response group, (t = -.697, df = 19, p > 0.025). Therefore, the null hypothesis, Ho, was not rejected.

Table 7: The paired difference *t* test of the reading skills of the Reader Response Group.

	Mean	M.dif f	N	S.d.	t	df	P
Pre TOEFL	33.40	0.55	20	5.97	-.697	19	.495
Post TOEFL	33.95		20	4.52			

Hence, it could be further concluded that the P4C intervention was effective since it had enhanced reading skills significantly. The RR intervention had *not*.

An independent two-tailed t test was employed to compare the two groups of P4C and RR for reading skills. Table 8 reveals the result of the t-test.

Table 8: Two-tailed t-test between treatment groups for reading skills.
* Significant α = 0.05

Treatment	N	Mean	M.dif f	S.d.	t	df	P
P4C	23	37.6087	3.228	4.2719	2.352	42	.023
RR	21	34.3810		4.8319			

Table 8 shows the mean score for reading for both groups. As shown, the P4C group scored higher than the RR group. The t test also shows that there was sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis (Ho), t (42) = 2.352, p < 0.025. Therefore, it could be concluded that there was a

statistically significant difference in mean between the Reader Response and the Philosophy for Children program (P4C) in reading skill scores. P4C was shown to be a better approach than RR for enhancing reading skills. This was consistent with the results of tests of hypothesis three.

Table 9 shows the results of the correlation between the TOEFL and the NJTRS scores. The results indicate a statistically significant positive linear relationship between thinking ability and reading ability (r = .582). The test showed a significant correlation between thinking ability and reading ability for the P4C group.

Table 9: Correlation Table of Post Reasoning Scores (NJTRS) and Post Reading Scores (TOEFL) of the P4C Group.
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

	NJTRS (Reasoning Score)	TOEFL (Reading Score)
Post NJTRS Pearson Correlation	1.000	.582**
Significant (2-tailed)		.006
N	22	22
Post TOEFL Pearson Correlation	.582**	1.000
N	21	23

The same was true for the Reader Response group, as indicated in Table 9. There was a statistically significant positive linear relationship between these two variables: post- NJTRS scores and post-TOEFL scores. Therefore, it could be concluded that there was a positive correlation between reading ability and thinking ability in both the treatment groups. This confirmed the assumption or premise that language ability is related to thinking ability. Thus, enhancing thinking skills would also improve reading skills and vice-versa. The next section considers findings in the quantitative data.

The qualitative findings from the students' journal entries showed that there were distinct differences in the quantity and type of entries (see Table 10).

In the RR group, the opinions or arguments were related to the story line of the literature, while in the P4C group, the entries were philosophical in nature, for the topics were related to ethical matters or philosophical issues discussed

Table 10: General Findings on Journal Entries.

Items	RR	P4C
1. Entries	Short/brief entries About 7 entries per student. Average word count per entry 137. Each entry was based on the story	Longer entries Ranged from 15 – 20 entries per student. Average word count per entry 370. Entries were based on episodes of the text.
2. Style	Majority had narrative, moralizing—class had discussion but not transferred	Tend to have question followed by answer—based on text and pattern of discussion held
3. Outlines	Narratives, what happened in the classroom, moralizing, react to story, characters or lessons held.	Giving opinions, reasoning, discussions, probing and questioning.
4. Discussions/ arguments	Lacking (no transfer of the classroom discussion or argument into the journal)	Plentiful discussion, arguments and reasoning. Transfer of discussion or arguments in the classroom was visible in the entries
5. Variety	Lack of questioning, reflection, metacognitive, discussion, argument and probing.	Sufficient questioning, reflection, meta - cognitive awareness, and inference of the text, probing, discussion and argument.
6. Moral judgment	Affective response—moralizing	There was affective response—moralizing
7. Improvement	No gradual improvement—in fact some entries superficial and brief.	Gradual improvement was visible especially among students of low proficiency level.

during class or raised in the text. In other words, the text and class discussions determined the topic of journal entries. Further evidence of the influence of the text was that the entries were episodic and had the question format typical of the P4C text.

Another difference was found in the variety among the the P4C journal entries. There were examples of reflecting, rationalizing, probing, wondering, and the relating what was discussed with happenings around school. In short, the

P4C entries showed more evidence of critical thinking elements.

The following are some examples of RR entries, presented as they were written:

- Today we learned something about the Necklace. It told us about the story of a husband and a wife who had a different perception. Then after that we had a debate between the girls and boys entitled. "Is Loisel a weak husband?"
- Yesterday, our EST class was a little interesting. We. four Iman, have discussed and learned about a short story called "The Necklace." It a kind of interesting story. It tells us about Matilda who had lost her friend necklace and repay it back with even more expensive necklace.

As shown above, the RR entries did not describe the classroom discussion. This contrasted with the P4C entries, which were about the discussions held during class. The following P4C journal entries clearly show this:

- Then we discussed about. "Do we avoid doing something because of consequences or because it is set by law?" I think both of them are the reasons why we avoid doing something. But people who is more responsible will always think about consequences even though it is not set by law. For example littering rubbish in public places. In some places, there are no signboards which said, "Do not litter" we can do as we like but...
- Next we discussed why in Islam that the deads were buried quickly even though his or her close family who have to arrive late, wants to see his or her face for the last time. After much discussion and arguments, I came to the conclusion that in Islam we have the concept of the soul. A soul is permanent and when the body is dead the soul is trapped until the body is buried. So it is important that Muslims bury the body as soon as possible so that he (the soul) can go to meet his maker, Allah s.w.t.

In the classes we observed—the last of both groups (RR15 and P4CP15)—the lessons held were in the form of Socratic discussions, with the students seated in a circle. Socratic discussion is a form of classroom talk that is moved forward by a series of linked questions. As a qualitative aspect of the study, we analyzed the questions and the events in the classroom in relation to the promotion of critical thinking.

Even though both lessons conducted ostensibly the same sort of discussion, it was obvious that the P4C group was student-led while the RR was teacher-led. In the P4C group, a student was appointed to lead the discussion. He or she informed his classmates of the purpose of the lesson, determined the structure of the lesson, elicited responses from his or her classmates, and nominated a fellow student for a verbal response. The teacher sat behind the students,

and participated at times. In the RR, the Socratic discussion was teacher-led, and the teacher addressed the whole class. He or she determined the flow of discussion, elicited questions, and did most of the probing for further meaning. However, for both groups, the teacher concluded the lesson or topics discussed.

Since the P4C class was student-led, the onus was more on the students—especially the moderator—than on the teacher to get the discussion going. This contrasted with the RR class, which remained teacher-centered. In the P4C group, students felt more responsibility to bring about interaction among themselves than between students and the teacher. This was not so in RR, where interaction among students was not emphasized, for the lesson or method did not give much opportunity to bring this about. In the P4C lesson observed, there were two distinct forms of interaction which took place during the discussion—one among students, and the other between the students and the teacher. Both interactions were prominent features of this P4C class. In the RR group, interaction among students was not frequent, and what exchanges there were, were short and few. Secondly, there was a distinctly higher quality of cognitive interaction among students in the P4C group than in the RR.

In the P4C classroom, pupils were involved in eliciting questions from each other and determining the topic of discussion, after gleaning questions from the text that they had read. In these arguments for what to discuss, elements of critical thinking were obvious. Students were making judgments, drawing from personal experience, linking ideas and facts, and evaluating the contribution of their peers. In other words, the students manifested reasoning skills, made critical thinking responses and assessments, and enquired collaboratively. Community of inquiry behaviors were evident in eliciting opinions or posing questions for reflection, countering opinions with arguments, or disagreeing with the view points raised by their peers with relevant statements, and justifying judgments made. In the RR groups on the other hand, counter-argument emerged most typically in differences of opinion between the two subgroups of boys and girls. In all cases, the exchanges were brief and consisted of short statements or incomplete sentences that were not clear. The discussion tended to lack seriousness and depth, each group arguing in adversarial mode, without a concern to justify or even to give reasons.

The findings here showed that in the P4C groups critical thinking was enhanced when the students themselves raised questions and thus became a community of inquiry. Some of the characteristic of the nascent community of inquiry observed here were the ability of its members to make relevant statements and to probe with questions, to elicit questions or topics for discussion in the form of questions, to draw on personal experience, to use previous knowledge as evidence, to clarify ideas, to link facts or ideas, to justify examples, and lastly to make judgments and critical assessment.

Another contrasting pattern was the number of

elicitation acts (a question or statement which functions to gain a verbal response from another speaker) in the pupils' responses. The P4C pupils asked more questions of their fellow classmates than did the RR. The P4C group asked 14 questions, while the RR group asked only 5.

The type of questions raised also differed. Table 11 and Table 12 itemized the questions raised by the respective groups. As shown in Table 11, the P4C group showed a variety of questions posed compared to the RR group. The questions raised by the P4C group were higher-level, cognitive (divergent) questions, unlike those raised in the RR.

Table 11: Questions raised by pupils during P4C class 15.

1. What can we get from this passage?
2. Why do people feel ashamed when they think about their past?
3. Do we feel ashamed when we think of the past?
4. Do we avoid doing something because of the law or the consequences?
5. Can someone explain what this question (above) means?
6. Are we afraid of the law or are we afraid of the consequences?
7. Can some one describe some of the things or events that happened in the past that embarrassed you?
8. How do the girls study to make it memorable?
9. How? (to make studying interesting). Give examples
10. Do you think it is good to have such a law? (referring to a ban on chewing gum in Singapore)
11. So is the barbecue.. .so why don't we have a law against barbeque?
12. We have a right even to barbecue isn't it?
13. Will it affect the ozone layer? Will smoke really affect the ozone layer?
14. Are you sure the smoke, the barbecue smoke doesn't have CFC?

Qualitative data from teachers observation notes and journal entries noted a marked distinction between the two groups in the structure of the lesson. The structure of the P4C lessons was ritualized—that is, it had a set of mandatory routine procedures involving three stages. The first stage, reading, was followed by the next stage, elicitation of questions. The last stage was group discussion. In contrast, the structure of the RR lessons was mixed, for there was variety in its lesson plans. There were role-plays, interviews, a debate, a Socratic discussion and a trip to the theater—all methods suggested by proponents of the RR approach, and aimed to enhance students' response towards literature. Although the underlying philosophy of the RR approach is to enhance students' response to a literature text

Table 12: Questions raised by pupils during RR class 15.

1. (If) the man can marry four, why can't the women marry four?
2. Why don't you stay married with one? Why marry another (the other one)?
3. She doesn't want to be shared. So how can you be fair?
4. Why you marry her in the first place?
5. How to be fair with one wife? Teach me how to be fair.

through their making their own interpretations, the critical thinking element in such an approach comes through the teacher's probing questions during the response stage, or through discussions throughout the lessons.

The activities carried out succeeded in eliciting student responses, although the degree of response differed. However, despite the good response at the initial stage (especially during role play), the level of response could not be sustained in the subsequent discussion. Questions from the teacher or subsequent probing after a role-play, for instance, were not keenly answered or even responded to at all. At times, the teacher ended offering probing question after question, sometimes with no takers. This was significant, for as explained earlier, the input of the critical thinking element in Reader Response is expected to come from the teacher's probing questions during the response stage and subsequent discussions or lessons.

The underlying principle of P4C is to enhance the critical thinking of its students through two approaches: leading students to ask their own questions, and thereby create a community of inquiry. This was carried out in this case through the use of the text *Lisa*, combined with the teacher assuming the role of one of the community members, as well as acting as a guide in the classroom discussion, and helping to shape the formation of a community of inquiry. For this, the role of the teacher in offering probing questions during the discussion was essential. In fact, in both approaches the teacher was seen to constantly probe the students; the number of probing questions in each group was almost equal. However, constant probing by the teacher was not a guarantee that students would acquire the ability to probe. In the RR group, student probing was not as frequent as in the P4C group. In the P4C group, the students probed increasingly throughout the testing period, and were seen to probe their classmates especially in discussions when the student became the moderator. This occurred at a later stage of the study, and corresponded to the growth and maturation of the community of inquiry.

In general, depth and a seriousness of discussion with classmates was observed more frequently in the P4C than in the RR groups. The topics discussed and the lack of dramatization in the P4C lessons led to the more serious nature of the discussions, while in the RR groups, role-playing either by the teacher or the pupils enlivened the mood of the class, which was an important trigger for pupils' responses, but

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contributed to less depth of discussion. The P4C pupils were also observed to elicit more questions from their peers during class discussion. Elicitation of questions occurred during the questioning and discussion stage through either teacher-pupil or pupil-pupil interaction. Elicitation of questions from and between pupils was of a lesser degree in the RR group. Again more questions from pupils were raised during specific types of lessons such as the debate, the role-play lessons, the interviews, and to a lesser extent, the Socratic discussion.

The questions raised in each group were highly dependent on the text. This was obvious in the P4C group, where students gleaned questions from the text or backtracked to the text in order to explain something. As such, the content matter and flow of discussion in the P4C group were highly dependent on the text and its various interpretation. As we have seen, the P4C text contained topics pertaining to ethical issues, but the discussion of issues in the classroom depended on selection and interpretation. In fact, the issues raised in the P4C discussions cut across all disciplines—including morality, civics, science and technology, mathematics, social analysis, personal development and the environment. In the RR group, students were seldom seen to refer or backtrack to the text for any questions, which came mostly from the teacher. Even then, the questions raised were related to the story line of the piece of literature discussed. Thus, the type of discussion was dependent on the approach.

The types of questions raised in each group differed as well. Those raised in the P4C group were more diverse. Some of the topics were related to moral rights and the sense of justice, and this influenced the type of discussion that followed. The questions raised in the RR group focused around the story line of the literary piece. They also included questions about events, characters or the setting of the story. It was also observed that the RR students rarely had difficulty in answering the questions raised, whereas in the P4C lessons, the students took time to reflect on questions, posed by themselves, for which there was no clear answer. The higher cognitive level of the questions raised in the P4C group is evident from an examination of those listed in Tables 11 and 12. Nor was there any doubt that the types of questions raised affected the nature of the discussions that followed.

As is clear from the literature review undertaken for this study, the community of inquiry is essential to the P4C

methodology in fostering critical thinking or awareness. However, in this study, evidence of the formation of community of inquiry behaviors and dispositions was only detected at the later stage—particularly in fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth lessons. In fact, three stages of development were observed over the course of the P4C lessons. The initial stage lasted from the first through the twelfth lessons, a transition state was evident in the thirteenth lesson, and the third stage—the nascent stage of the community of inquiry—emerged in the fourteenth through sixteenth lessons.

During the initial stage, the discussion was teacher-led, and the latter played a central role in guiding the discussion. The students were relatively passive, participation was lack-luster, and there was a tendency for chorus response from pupils, or a one-word response after being probed individually. Often the responses came from the same persons, typically the average or high-achievers. The low achievers responded curtly (one word response) when the teacher deliberately probed them. Thus, up until the twelfth lesson, no community of inquiry was detected. Because of this, the teacher decided to appoint a student as a moderator during the thirteenth lesson, and subsequently the students' participation increased as the discussions became student-led. However, the teacher did not participate in these discussions and all, and as a result, there was some confusion, and the students' arguments tended to be ambiguous and vague. From the fourteenth to the sixteenth lesson, the teacher became involved again, and it was at this point that signs of community of inquiry were detected. Negotiation of meaning was observed between students, moderator and teacher during the discussion. Because of its late formation, we have characterized this form of community of inquiry formed as nascent. During this stage two types of interaction were observed—student-student and students-teacher. It was also observed that students began to relate what was being discussed at the moment to previous topics. In the previous lessons, only the teacher had been doing this. In this stage, the responsibility for initiating and maintaining the discussion going was on both the students *and* the moderator.

While community of inquiry behaviors and dispositions were observed in the last sessions of the P4C group, none were observed in the RR group. The discussion was teacher-led throughout, and student participation during discussion was generally lacking. As stated earlier, students responded well during role-play, but their enthusiastic re-

sponse could not be sustained during the discussion stage. No student-student interaction was observed, and the responsibility for moving the discussion forward was clearly considered to be the teacher's. Similar observations were made during the initial stage of P4C lessons.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that, comparatively speaking, the P4C methodology enhanced students' critical thinking more than the RR. The critical contributory factors were the quality of discussion, the emphasis on developing one's own questions, and the character of the text. The latter was a story in which were embedded philosophical issues, and the characters of the story were about children who were themselves thinking critically, and thus represented role models for the students. The philosophical issues embedded in the text were often picked up by the students and formed the raw material for their questions, which then became the source for in-depth discussion. In other words, the text guided the class in what to discuss and how, and the elicitation of questions was the preparatory stage or impetus for subsequent discussion. This explains the result of the *t* test—a statistically significant difference in the pre and post test skills in the P4C group but not in the RR group. That is, the P4C intervention was effective in significantly enhancing critical thinking skills, while the RR was not so effective.

However, a comparison between the two approaches shows that improvement in critical thinking skills was not significant in either. The qualitative findings suggest that community of inquiry understood as a set of dispositions and behaviors was still in the nascent stage in the P4C group, suggesting a reason for the absence of significant improvement in critical reasoning skills in the latter. This is understandable, given the importance which the literature attributes to the pedagogy and group process of community of inquiry in promoting these skills.

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Teaching Social Studies Through Dialogue & Dialectic: Restoring the Practice of Philosophical Inquiry

JOHN ROEMISCHER

In a recent publication on impoverished schools in American inner cities, Jean Anyon asks: "How do people become involved in political contention?" and can a "new social movement" be built that will alleviate those conditions which have negative consequences for inner city students? (Anyon 2005). In Anyon's "social movement theory," the tendency to tinker politically with education does not accomplish what social movements—for example the Civil Rights Movement—can achieve. But if "building a new social movement" is the desideratum, then where shall this begin? *When* should "people become involved in political contention?" And if that "contention" needs to be more than reflexively expedient, more than merely reactive, then should it not be based on serious thinking? And if such thinking does not begin in the minds of schoolchildren, then where does it begin? George Counts once asked, "Dare the schools build a new social order?" But the schools have not responded. They have waited for political and legal redress, with sporadic effect. Social Studies education, large in extent and pervasive, has not empowered children to act with deliberation on the moral direction of their lives.

Philosophic thinking has for too long been seen as a leisure class activity, available only to middle or upper class university students and professors who are out of touch with the vicissitudes of life. Children in ghetto schools have minds and they can think—both philosophically and critically. Examining social issues philosophically and analyti-

cally should be a strong part of their Social Studies curriculum. These children are no different from those Greek children in Plato's day whose responses to the questions of Socrates contributed to the formation of the Western cultural involvement with philosophy.

The contemporary direction of American education in general, and especially the teaching of Social Studies, involves a wholesale elimination of 'philosophical inquiry' for the sake of 'information processing'—even on most college campuses, philosophy is no longer a degree requirement. The attempt to eliminate philosophic inquiry, considered a useless enterprise because of its effort to move beyond "common sense," has haunted Western education from the start. It is not far-fetched to say that our students have not advanced much beyond those Socrates first confronted in the Greek marketplace: their 'knowledge' still consists either of "unreflective intuition" (everyday experience) on the one hand, or unexamined propositions (definitions) on the other hand. For the Socratic teacher, simply acting virtuously does not provide knowledge of 'virtue'; nor do the propositional generalizations which define such terms. The frustration and impatience which this generated in Plato's time is still with us today.

> In asking "What is virtue?" [Socrates] is not seeking some knowledge possessed by generals, friends, or temperate people, but rather a distinctly *philosophical* knowledge. In beginning with ordinary experience he clearly intends to transcend it. But the question is whether or not Socrates succeeds in leading his interlocutors and us the readers beyond ordinary experience. If the search

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for definitions ends in failure [as it does in the *aporetic* dialogues of Plato], are we not left with that vague understanding of the virtues with which we came to the inquiry?....Socrates' inability to answer his own questions, it might be thought, is the best proof that philosophy is useless. Any attempt to go beyond "common sense" and everyday [propositional] know-how cannot succeed (Gonzalez 20).

Gonzalez spends an entire volume demonstrating that philosophic knowledge, like the "knowledge of virtue," can be known, but that in being philosophic it is "neither unreflective intuition...nor a knowledge of propositions;" that is, that such knowledge is in fact different from commonplace definitions because it is simply "non-propositional." Neither merely behaving in a certain way nor providing formulaic characterizations of such behavior through gross definitions is adequate. In order to bring his students to this realization, the teacher needs to introduce a special (non-technical) methodology and establish an exceptional educational forum: a 'community of inquiry.' That philosophy and, *a fortiori* Social Studies, should *not* be construed as the development of "a universal (propositional) *encyclopedia* of the concept," but rather as the "more modest task of a *pedagogy* of the concept" is arguably one of the most significant distinctions for characterizing what is most problematic in contemporary American education (cf. Deleuze 12). To transform the teaching of Social Studies into a pedagogy of the concept, and thereby reduce the educational influence of 19th century Prussian philosophic encyclopedism (Herbartianism), is to transform teaching into philosophic activity. The paradigm case for non-propositional knowledge is simply knowing *how* to do something; propositional knowledge, knowing *that* something is the case, is always the more limited

knowledge of the properties of some complex thing or action.

Transforming Social Studies education into philosophic *work* turns such education away from typical propositional knowledge toward a knowledge of (social) knowledge, i.e. from a knowledge of objects which are external to the act of knowing (no matter how general or comprehensive that knowledge might be—that is, how encyclopedic) to a dialogical-dialectical engagement with social problems. Social Studies education can have productive moral consequences only when such education is itself experienced as morality at work: what is *good* is revealed in the very activity which constitutes dialogical interchange; as an activity, it is not reducible to the propositions which might be used to characterize it. Gonzalez sees this equation, which links philosophic work with the discovery of the nature of "virtue," as the paramount contribution to philosophy which Plato makes in his *aporetic* dialogues (Gonzalez 58f).

Philosophy, then, is *protreptic*—i.e. is reflexive: the substantive (moral) questions and the methodology are intrinsically the same. Support for Gonzalez's position on philosophy as protreptic can be found in the work of Robert Nozick, as we shall soon see: engaging in philosophic dialogue does not produce propositional knowledge which can simply be handed over to the student: "To learn why and how to pursue the good, that is, why and how to *philosophize*, is to learn what the good is" (Gonzalez 97). And is it the fact that philosophy is a complex *activity* that frustrates students who are looking for its *content?*

To the extent that Social Studies education is guided by protreptic philosophy, students will gain substantive insights from the activity of dialogical engagement rather than the mere didactic transmission of propositional knowledge. To convert the student to a certain course of action rather than to certain beliefs, that is, to engage in protreptic methodology, transforms teaching into a pedagogic pragma-

tism—into a "pedagogy of the concept" in its most produc-
tive sense. For example, "knowing how to do" History (not
just consume it propositionally) is a knowledge that can
never be reduced to a simple set of properties: it is that di-
versiform activity which differently contextualizes seem-
ingly simple propositions concerning past events. Protreptic
philosophy of History allows the student to dialogue with
Marx or Toynbee or Hayek: pursuing the knowledge of his-
torical knowledge, the student might, for example, investi-
gate the historiographic uses of dialectic in the work of the
historian; was Marx a philosopher or an historian, and what
is the difference?

But before moving into the larger study of this philoso-
phic approach, we need to contextualize Social Studies edu-
cation in a broad-based sociology of knowledge. And for
this task, Baudrillard's distinction between three social
models for contextualizing knowledge is helpful. Using his
distinction, we can identify three types of classrooms: the
classroom as 'empire', which uses a hierarchic-
transmissional methodology (the Prussian model)—this
classroom opts for a universal encyclopedia of processed
information. The classroom as 'state', which involves a
disseminational-vocational model, is at present in competi-
tion with the imperial model. And following the Classical
Greek view of civic virtue, the classroom as
'city' ('cooperative education' is its shadow version) con-
sists of a democratic-dialogical involvement of its members
in the cognitive examination and determination of signifi-
cant (social) concepts (Deleuze 8). In comparison with the
vertical-pedagogic design of the 'imperial model', the hori-
zontal dialogical approach, for which Plato instituted
protreptic philosophy, brings social inquiry to bear on the
commonplace problems of its members. The latter approach
attempts to bridge the gap between process and knowledge,
since the knowledge which unfolds involves, in large part,
an understanding of the process itself. In contrast, teaching
Social Studies as a transmission of vast stores of informa-
tion to students reduces meanings to mere references and
sacrifices conceptualization to facticity.

In modern times, the Classical quest for the achieve-
ment of knowledge through genuine dialogical inquiry has
been replaced by knowledge simulations reduced to the
level of simple, disconnected perceptions (the general ten-
dency toward philosophic reductionism is critically exam-
ined in Gadamer's work on the dialogue and dialectic of
Plato). The irony is that while the typical laborious peda-
gogic involvement with an encyclopedic content gives the
impression that teachers and students are heavily engaged,
the reality is that it involves little or no meaningful work.
"The students' distress at having diplomas conferred on
them for no work complements and is equal to that of teach-
ers....Even the domestic squabbles between teachers and
students, which today make up a great part of their ex-
changes, are nothing but the recollection of, and a kind of
nostalgia for a violence or a complicity that heretofore
made them enemies or united them around a stake of

knowledge or a political stake" (Baudrillard 156). That is,
the transcendental condition of an authentic pedagogy is a
confrontation with the dialectic of possibilities, and the
methodology for confronting such possibilities is dialogue.
As Baudrillard (and Martin Buber) recognized, the need for
dialogue will assert itself in the teaching moment in either a
perverse or productive fashion; but it will assert itself!

Though he does not use the vocabulary of Classical
protreptic philosophy, the importance of dialogue and the
development of the dialogical imagination for moral devel-
opment is given 'foundational' significance by Robert
Nozick. In his discussion of the "Foundations of Ethics," he
writes:

> To engage in a moral dialogue with some-
> one is itself a moral act, whose moral char-
> acter does not lie solely in being an attempt
> to get at the moral truth, or in being a vehi-
> cle to change and deepen a personal rela-
> tionship and thereby be a means toward re-
> solving a moral conflict. Rather, (sincere)
> engagement in moral dialogue is itself a
> moral response to the other's basic moral
> characteristic, apart from its being a means
> toward a satisfactory accommodation with
> the other....When each is aware that the
> other is responsive to his or her own
> (valuable) characteristics in the very act of
> discussion and in the course the discussion
> takes, then this noticing of mutual respect is
> itself a force for good will and the modera-
> tion of demands; the altered conditions cre-
> ated by the dialogue may fit different moral
> principles so that new solutions are appro-
> priate. (Nozick 469).

Implicit in Nozick's discussion of dialogue is the recog-
nition that the 'empire' model of knowledge identified by
Deleuze, notwithstanding its popularity in most contempo-
rary classrooms, fails to provide an appropriate basis for
moral education:

> We want to be in mutual value-theoretic
> situations; only then is the value in us
> (including our own value responsiveness)
> adequately answered. Hegel's discussion of
> the master-slave relation elaborates how
> domination thwarts this: the master cannot
> force this responsiveness from the slave, and
> unless the master shows responsiveness to
> the slave's basic moral characteristic (but
> then he could not remain his master) the
> slave cannot respond to that (Nozick 470).

With the sacrifice of dialogical teaching to materializa-
tion—that is, when content is stressed at the expense of ra-
tional form, a sacrifice Socrates recognized in his repudia-
tion of the Sophists—the ends and means of education are

degraded. Thus what Baudrillard says of the contemporary condition of the university without doubt applies to those schools which prepare students for higher education:

> ...the university remains the site of a *desperate initiation to the empty form of value*, and those who have lived there for the past few years are familiar with this strange work, the true desperation of non-work, of non-knowledge....The students' distress at having diplomas conferred for no work completements and is equal to that of the teachers. It is more secret and more insidious than the traditional anguish of failure or of receiving worthless diplomas. No-risk insurance on the diploma —which empties the vicissitudes of knowledge and selection of content— is hard to bear (Baudrillard 155f).

If Nozick's claim is credible, namely that a "moral dialogue...is an especially clear example of a mutual value-theoretic situation....where each participant is responsive to the other's basic moral characteristic, and aware that the other is responsive to her own, and is responsive to the other's responsiveness [and so on...]," then one might argue that much of contemporary teaching is devoid of value-theoretic situations. But since teaching is an interactive process, there must be some way to characterize the theoretic basis of the contemporary classroom: if it isn't dialogical, then what is it? Nozick offers a seminal possibility, though he does not mention the classroom specifically: the "game-theoretic situation." His parenthetic contrast of these two types of situations is tantalizing: "(We might view a game-theoretic situation as also having a structure of mutual—iterated—responding, but where the characteristic originally responded to is not 'being a value-seeking I,' but 'being a maximizer of utility with knowledge of the game matrix'.")

> In a game-theoretic strategic situation we interact with another rational reflexive consciousness and agent, taking account of his desires. However, in no way need we take account of the fact that he is a value seeker. The utility functions of game theory encapsulate desires, wants, and preferences, and provide a way of measuring their strength if certain conditions are satisfied....Nothing within the apparatus of game theory, either in the normal form specifying a game or in the rationale underlying bargaining model solutions, requires that any participant be a value seeker or takes account of the fact that he is. The game-theoretic interaction of pursue and kill does not treat another as a value-seeking I (Nozick 463).

We might claim, then, as we compare the work of the contemporary teacher with the dialogical teacher, that the contemporary classroom conforms more to game-theoretic situations than to value-theoretic ones. Interpersonal relationships—students to students and teachers to students—generally lack the moral contours which the value-theoretic situation provides. In some contemporary instances, if not in all cases of teaching interactions, the teacher's attempt to demand respect is just an indication that the value-seeking I is simply missing; that is, teaching children has lost its moral compass. R.S. Peters concurs, in his *Ethics and Education*, that "respect" arises in shared value situations. What follows is significant: a classroom which is constituted as a game-theoretic situation transmutes the traditional concept of discipline into the concept and practice of behavior management. Here, the original concept of discipleship is lost in a degraded (because logically asymmetric) form of disciplining children. The value-theoretic situation of the value-seeking I is abandoned for the sake of a more mechanistic reification of rules: non-rational (read "behavioral") rule-conformity is the practical result, and controlling children becomes the worst nightmare of the contemporary teacher. Children learn to play the game at the expense of education—to play with that "nostalgia for a violence" which Baudrillard identifies as a mark of the absence of true dialogue.

That many students see Social Studies as drudgery is ironic, since the fact that it is experienced this way should be a core Social Studies issue to be examined dialogically: it involves an estrangement between method and content. The absence of dialogue from the one course of study in which traditionally it was an essential component has serious ramifications for the socio-political lives of citizens: political conversations on a national level as well as in personal exchanges are more and more instances of game-theoretic situations rather than value-theoretic situations. Commenting on contemporary American political culture, Matt Miller has critically implicated Nozick's distinction without noting it: "Let's face it: the purpose of most political speech is not to persuade but to win, be it power, ratings, celebrity or even cash." Inattention to the "value-seeking I" best describes Miller's analysis of contemporary politics and journalism:

> Ninety percent of political conversation amounts to dueling "talking points."....By contrast, marshaling a case to persuade those who start from a different position is a lost art. Honoring what's right in the other side's argument seems a superfluous thing that can only cause trouble, like an appendix. Politicos huddle with like-minded souls in opinion cocoons that seem impervious to facts....Pols have figured out that to get votes you don't need to change minds. Even when they want to, modern media make it

hard. They give officials seconds to make their point, ignore their ideas in favor of their poll numbers or showcase a clash of caricatures, believing this is the only way to make "debate" entertaining....There's only one problem: governing successfully requires influencing how people actually think. Yet when the habits of persuasion [read "dialogue"] have been buried, the possibilities of leadership are interred as well....Alienation is the only intelligent response to a political culture that insults our intelligence. Resurrection of persuasion will not be easy (Matt Miller A15).[1]

The dialectic-dialogical approach to teaching, which the Classical tradition bequeathed to Western Civilization, recognized and defined the major fault line which underlies the failing pedagogy of the contemporary classroom: it was providing an exclusive attention to transmissible content devoid of attention to rational form. This content, which Plato recognized as necessary but not a sufficient condition for teaching, consisted of "names, propositions, and images." These were already noted in Plato's *Seventh Letter* and reformulated for us in F.J. Gonzalez's study of Plato's interpretation of dialectic. Plato argued that names, propositions, and images could not produce (philosophic) knowledge. He must have recognized that if these three could produce knowledge directly, then immediate cognition would be possible (the possibility of which is a critical issue in Medieval philosophy)—thus obviating the need for dialogical inquiry (or any other form of inquiry). Turning these into knowledge directly was precisely what was problematic with Sophistic teaching. (On this note, the epistemological attempt to give cognitive status to perception, as Dewey argued in his *Essays in Experimental Logic*, makes the term knowledge ubiquitous: here, the qualitative difference between ordinary concepts and those which are products of inquiry is lost.)

Gonzalez formulates Plato's position as follows:

1. Names, propositions, and images are incapable of expressing what a thing truly is (*ti esti*) and consequently are always open to refutation.
2. Names, propositions, and images are nevertheless indispensable as a means of attaining knowledge of what a thing truly is.
3. One can use these three means in such a way as to obtain an insight that transcends them, an insight into that nature which they themselves presuppose but cannot express (Gonzalez 271).

The standard textualized pre-digestion of Social Studies information into a content consisting of names, propositions, and images has reduced contemporary pedagogy in this and other fields to the point where conceptual meaning, which involves the cognitive bridging which dialogical inquiry provides, is reduced to immediate awareness. The use of *time* is the clue: social studies curriculum when it consists of an engorgement of names, propositions, and images makes teaching a function of time and content selection always problematic. In the dialogic-inquiry approach to pedagogy, time is always a function of the demands of the inquiry, and form and meaning are never sacrificed to content—a sacrifice evident even in contemporary approaches to the teaching of writing. In the dialogical approach, the objective is an evolving understanding rather than inflexible knowledge, and this involves an analysis of arguments, verbal analysis, and the use of imagination. In essence, the need is to reverse the two centuries-old attempt to isolate social studies from its Classical connection to phi-

losophy; to finally eliminate the Prussian attempt to make Social Studies curriculum subservient to the class-related interests of the empire or the state, and in the process transform those public schools which, ironically, are employed as instruments of alienation.

The most natural place for instituting a transition from game-theoretic situations to value-theoretic situations is in the teaching of Social Studies, since it is here that two vital elements are practicable: first, the maieutic role of the teacher can reassert itself; and second, creating a community of discourse out of a typical classroom neutralizes the single most destructive feature of the classroom conceived as a game-theoretic situation: it raises discourse, and classroom comportment, to the level of the *impersonal*. Though it might seem ironic to say so, the 'level of the impersonal' is the *sine qua non* for entering into value-theoretic situations in their dialogic-dialectic form.[2]

To be impersonal so that one can take seriously the *other* person, in and through dialogue, presents a conceptual puzzle for the solution of which the Greeks developed the *aporetic* method, an important part of protreptic philosophy. Teaching Social Studies dialogically requires that teachers uncover those Socratic *aporia* which often come in the form of paradoxes that need to be resolved. The notion that "patriotism" is 'good because it is desired' when contrasted with the notion that "patriotism" is 'desired because it is good,' is a case in point. The notion that saving money is an economic 'good' though consumer spending is necessary for economic growth is a Social Studies issue requiring *aporetic* examination.

The *aporetic* approach, developed and utilized in the early (*aporetic*) dialogues of Plato, appeared in those dialogues precisely at the moment when the dialectical issues under consideration were quickly resolved, by the students, in a game-theoretic manner: that is, instead of fully engaging in protreptic philosophy, students would quickly resolve dialectical problems through *word-play*. This game-theoretic strategy, governed by the desire to win a point, led to the contradictions or paradoxes which Classical philosophers identified as *eristic* thinking and to the need for *aporetic* examination. What is distinctive about this 'intellectual activity' is that it does not leave the student with the sense that he has failed in his quest for knowledge and understanding; rather, that his dialogical discoveries are of permanent value, even if incomplete. This approach, by simply seeing a student's faulted idea as part of a value-theoretic situation, honors this idea by putting it into a dialectical relationship: the *aporetic* act of teaching transforms it into a paradox that needs resolution, but at the same time recognizes and values the essential contribution which is made by the experiences reflected in a student's response.

The game-theoretic character of *eristic* thinking is precisely what distinguishes it from protreptic philosophy:

> While eristic aims to force a conclusion on the respondent with the purpose of defeating

him, dialectic aims to convert the respondent to the pursuit of wisdom and virtue, a conversion that is not forced but is freely undergone (through agreement) (Gonzalez 105).

Both eristic and protreptic approaches take seriously fallacious reasoning: in the former, the objective is to win through the use of non-detectable fallacies; the latter is not thrown off by fallacious reasoning, since its purpose is mainly to point the dialogue in the right direction rather than force a conclusion (Gonzalez 104). The enemy here is reductive simplification at the expense of an evolving conscious activity.

It is precisely because language is a problematic medium for achieving knowledge that a dialogical-dialectical approach to teaching needs to be *elenctic*. *Elenchus* is an examination of the language of an argument for purposes of clarification and refutation: it is especially designed to show how two or more opinions held by someone are inconsistent with each other. The *aporia* is the end-point of this process, when the paradoxical nature of these views is discovered. "*Sophistic elenchi*" (Aristotle) are the simplistic solutions of *eristic* thinking. There is an important qualitative distinction between *elenctic* and *eristic* processes, a distinction most vital for teaching: in the former approach, which is essentially a value-theoretic situation, the aim of the teacher is to be *gentle*—to avoid the harsh rejections which game-theoretic situations produce.

In essence: The loss of the teacher's maieutic role in the technologization of methodology and the ironic elimination of the 'social voice' from the social studies classroom needs to be reversed. An important question is whether dialogical inquiry and contemporary technology can evolve in a symbiotic relationship, since now that the world is selectively available on the world-wide-web, the gross materialization (propositional knowledge) which textbooks provide becomes dated. Dialogic teaching reintroduces the reflective voice of the student as a moral factor in his own education.

Working with philosophy in the classroom is working dialectically: it involves a "knowledge of how to use language, argumentation, and images in such a way as to awaken an insight that transcends them (i.e., cannot be directly expressed by any of these means)" (Gonzalez 14). To the extent that working with these means produces propositional knowledge, such knowledge is hypothetical when compared with dialectical interchange, especially since propositional knowledge is often fallacious and self-serving. Unexamined generalizations, analogies and other material or informal fallacies, which are often hidden from view, are the products of eristic thinking.

The elenctic method is not a 'technical methodology'— unlike medicine or carpentry, it does not provide a specific set of instructions. The elenctic teacher merely *leads* students through questioning. But the unique pedagogic advantage in its use is that it requires an available set of beliefs or

experiences on the part of the student and a determination to raise these to the level of critical consciousness. It is not any form of didacticism. Thus, whatever is being sought (for example, the nature of 'virtue') is not merely the object of the search (i.e., propositional); it is also a significant factor in that search. The process involves an internal examination of the consistency of the various expressions of belief which the student holds and unfolds.

Historical Context and Summation

This discussion and proposal is rooted in Erich Neumann's Jungian reflections on the "Creation Myth" (Neumann 1954). The decision, by some contemporary philosophers, to bring the human capacity for philosophic thinking back to childhood is ironic, since it was the miracle of the child's capacity for conceptualization that led to the earliest generative "creation myths" in the first place. For the ancient Greeks, the Hebrews and Buddhists, there is an "original wisdom" which is "preworldly, i.e., prior to the ego and the coming of consciousness [which] the myths say…is prenatal." This mythic view of childhood has been lost in the "foreground" foundations of contemporary education, a loss that has supported a mechanistic and reductionist view of childhood:

> The mythological theory of foreknowledge also explains the view that all knowing is "memory."…It is the same conception as Plato's philosophical doctrine of the prenatal vision of ideas and their remembrance. The original knowledge of one who is still enfolded in the perfect state is very evident in the psychology of the child. For this reason many primitive peoples treat children with particular marks of respect. In the child the great images and archetypes of the collective unconscious are living reality, and very close to him; indeed many of his sayings and reactions, questions and answers, dreams and images, express this knowledge which still derives from his prenatal existence….[it is] ancestral knowledge, and the child [is viewed] as a reborn forbear (Neumann 24).

Contemporary teachers of Social Studies bring to mind those wrongheaded educators mentioned by Plato (*Republic* 518B) who think "they can put into the soul knowledge that was not there before, like sight into blind eyes." If the serious questions in Social Studies are, as Plato would have argued, issues in moral and political philosophy, then the most authentic learning consists of what the individual can discover for himself. For this to occur, only the Socratic elenchos will work, that is, a dialogical method in which "A person will say the right things if one can only put the right questions to him" (*Phaedo*, 73A). Philosophical thinking, as

well as moral investment, comes into play much more when the pupil becomes a participant in the method of inquiry than in the mechanical assimilation of knowledge content. Dialogical inquiry, at once moral and social *in structure*, would ground Social Studies education in a "protreptic philosophy," a philosophy which gives ethical significance to the motivational disposition of the questioner and responder. "Protreptic Philosophy" and Social Science, when combined, could transform Social Studies education from the typical "game-theoretic" situation to a situation that is inherently moral: a "value-theoretic" community of discourse which respects the dialectical-conceptual capacities and contributions of children.

Teachers will need to be trained as "dialogue facilitators" and classrooms transformed from competitive-isolationist mechanisms into agencies for the development of group synergy. Social Studies education will then organically interconnect two functions: to provide philosophic knowledge through a thoroughgoing dialogical investigation of concepts—a pedagogy of the concept, and to create, in the process, a community of inquiry which is run on an impersonal basis.

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Notes

1 David Bohm has developed this theme at great length in his study of Dialogue. He bemoans the fact that there has been a breakdown in communication on a national and international level: "...in schools and universities, students tend to feel that their teachers are overwhelming them with a flood of information which they suspect is irrelevant to actual life." (Bohm 1).

2 This use of the "impersonal" has been developed in the evolutionary philosophy of Andrew Cohen's *Embracing Heaven and Earth*. 35.

The Face of the Other

ANN MARGARET SHARP

I remember when I was a graduate student reading an essay by Georg Simmel on the face. Simmel stressed the mystery of the human face in its fragileness, its vulnerability, its ambiguity, coupled with its uncanny ability to communicate meaning, without uttering a word. Later, in working with teachers on a chapter in *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery*, the chapter that focuses on the relationship between aesthetics and ethics, I began to realize that this chapter was a form of moral adventurousness. I remember being struck by the lines:

> As they sat on a marble bench, Suki gazed about her with quiet pleasure. But Anne was angry at herself for having forgotten to bring her sketchbook.
>
> She would have liked to sketch Suki's face. Suki's face was so marvelously different! Every detail was so delicate and so perfect -her eyes, her cheekbones, her bangs- what a beautiful portrait could be made of them (Lipman, p. 69).

Anne perceives the beauty of Suki's face and yearns to capture it in a sketch. Later, she tells Suki she wants to take her home to meet her family. Her mother is an artist with her paintings hanging all over the walls and her father collects butterflies and arranges them in collages. Anne is sure that her parents would find her so interesting.

"Like a butterfly?" Suki asks.

When the teachers and I discussed Suki's response— the three words "Like a butterfly"—the teachers readily saw that Suki's words indicated her objection to being treated as someone's collection, an object, a thing, a means to someone else's enjoyment.

I invited the teachers to imagine they were blind and just met the person next to them. I asked them to close their eyes and, using only their hands, to try to construct an im-

age of the other's face: his eyes, his mouth, his forehead, his nose, his ears, the texture of his skin, and most importantly, the relationship of the parts to each other.

I then invited the teachers to express the image they constructed in a short poem or a drawing. When they finished, we shared our creations. The aim of the exercise was to enhance the students' sense of touch in detecting what the other "looks like" in inferring what the other's face connotes, while at the same time heightening their awareness of the wonderful complexity of the human face. When we talked about our creations, we realized that one theme that seemed to run through our thinking was the extreme vulnerability of what it is to be human and how very easy it is to hurt the other.

Learning how to read faces (as well as body language in general) is an important part of being educated. It fosters the growth of one's ethical sensitivity, empathy, the ability to listen and pay attention to the other, and of compassionate solidarity—so important in philosophical dialogue. Elizabeth Costella, the main character of Coetzee's recent novel, speaks of why she disagrees with Thomas Nagel's conclusion in his famous essay "What is it to be a bat?". If you remember, Nagel thinks that there is no way that we can know what it is like to be a bat. But For Elizabeth, *"There is no limit to the extent to which we can think ourselves into the being of another. ... There are no bounds to sympathetic imagination" (Coetzee, p.80).* She goes on to say that there are persons who have the capacity to imagine themselves as someone else, there are people who have no such capacity (when the lack is extreme, we call them psychopaths), and there are people who have the capacity but choose not to exercise it *(Coetzee, p.79).*

It is not a matter of "accurately seeing" the face of the other, but of learning how to read the meanings that this face connotes by empathetically entering into relationship with the meanings that one perceives. "The relationship with the face is a relationship with something completely fragile, completely exposed, naked and, as a result, with whom one is completely alone" (Levinas, 1993b, p. 130). "The face is imposed on me without my being given a chance to ignore its call, or forget it. I cannot avoid being responsible for its misery" (Ibid.). I am free to respond to this face, open up to the other person, listen to the order to respond, or opt to actively ignore her. In his ethical theory,

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Levinas moves away from the traditional image of autonomy, towards a conception of the self as originally relational. The other, by her mere presence, makes the I responsible for another person and confirms him as a moral subject.

This new way of seeing ethics has consequences for moral education. It translates into the development of what Dewey calls "intelligent sympathy" as well as the ability to critically analyze the reality of one's own environment using just and equitable parameters, of taking on the student in all of her reality—because a human being cannot be understood outside her environment and the network of relationships she establishes with others.

For Levinas, to be a moral person is to be able to take responsibility for another person. This is impossible unless the student has been encouraged from the earliest years to be open to others, whether or not they share a similar world view, and to develop both the cognitive and emotional skills that are essential in understanding the other. This other person, different and diverse, demands to be recognized, not as much on account of his analytic and argumentative skills in

the dialogue but because of his personhood. The other becomes important to us through the immediacy of face and dignity as well as the exercise of dialogical and argumentative skills.

If I habitually walk through the corridor with my head down to avoid eye contact with others, if I have no ability to pick up facial clues of anxiety, or hunger or misery, in all probability I will fail to respond to the needs of others. If I do respond, it will, in all likelihood, be an inappropriate response. The face of the other has the potential to challenge my conscious and unconscious assumptions about what is needed in a particular situation. Levinas situates his ethics in another view which constructs meaning in relationship with the other—the idea of the "face to face" relation with the other that calls out to you to help. In Levinas view, the commandment, "Thou shall not kill" originated in that moment when we confront the otherness of the Other without prejudice and we hear the Other silently saying, "Please don't hurt me." The heeding of that call, and the realization that I am most true to myself when I am open to that call, is for me the ultimate reason for not abusing that person, not overwhelming that person, not talking down to or above that person, not making that person feel inadequate—in a word, not hurting that person. In a community of inquiry, one can learn how to help another who is confused, or not aware of his assumptions, or in contradiction with himself, in a way that is both sensitive and educative, helpful and not hurtful. One knows if one has been successful when the other expresses his gratitude for helping him self-correct, to understand, to realize his own assumptions and how they compare with other points of view.

Levinas tells us that if we want to experience anything of the mysterious in our everyday experience, we need to learn how to "perceive" the face of the other, to learn how to encounter the other in all of her unpredictability. In every relationship with another, Levinas thinks that one finally reaches the point where one is unable to express the being of the other without using a language of infinity. Becoming conscious of the infinity in that relationship, in that encounter, determines for many of us how we experience the world, whether we ever come to sense the transcendence that is immanent in the human face (Groenhout, pp.79-103).

In his essay, *Of God Who Comes to Mind*, Levinas writes,

> We think that the idea of the
> Infinite or the transcendent
> comes to me in the concreteness
> of my relation to the other man

in the
sociality which is my responsibility to the
neighbor. Here is found the responsibility
that I contracted in no "experience", but of
which the face of the other, through its alter-
ity, and through its strangeness, states the
command that came from who knows
where? (Levinas, p. xiv.)

For Levinas, morality finds complete expression in
compassion. "For me, compassionate suffering, suffering
because the other is suffering, is just a moment in a far
more complex and complete relationship of responsibility
towards the other" (1993b, p. 133). The origin of this moral-
ity is not only cognitive but also involves pathos—
solidarity with others who deserve happiness and recogni-
tion just as much as we do. For Levinas, the Other does
more than suffer, the Other calls out in his suffering, the
other does not call out to the void, the Other calls out to
you. When you look into the eyes of a person who is suffer-
ing, a homeless person in the street, and you make eye con-
tact, and allow yourself to be open as much as you can to
the plight of that person, and that person is also willing to
be open to you, then I think that what you encounter in that
moment is the call of someone. Not just the brute fact. And
it is a call that demands of you a response. It is a dynamic

model, it is an intersubjective model: you are called to re-
spond. For Levinas, as it was for Buber, that is the source of
morals, far more than any notion of rewards of punishment.

When Levinas speaks of infinity, he does not mean
something abstract, totally other than human experience,
but something immanent in nature. Even if I get accus-
tomed to your face, even if I begin to understand your facial
expressions, even if I eat with you, study with you, create
with you, live with you, have sex with you; I will never
totally know you. I will continue to be in the presence of a
consciousness that looks at me out of eyes I can never to-
tally see through, whose thoughts I can never fully know,
predict nor control, someone whose life is ultimately not
mine.

It is precisely the otherness, the uniqueness, and the
irreplaceability of the other that Levinas is pointing to, what
it is in the other that calls me to respond ethically—that
commands that whether I want to or not, I assume some
responsibility. All of us are complex and multi-layered,
filled with secret images, memories, desires. I find it amaz-
ing that we often seem to forget this. Even within the same
language, communication is a miracle.

The radical subjectivity of the other can never be
determined in advance of the encounter, nor can it be cap-
tured in words after the encounter. Because the other is,
ultimately, her own self, as a site of highly subjective and

intimate experiences such as crying, laughing and loving—her individuality, her uniqueness, social, psychological and physical, can never be captured in some descriptive analysis. Because she is constantly experiencing, reflecting, self-correcting, self-creating, personality descriptions like intro-vert, extrovert, melancholic or whatever are always doomed to miss the mark. They assume that someone can capture the real you—whatever that is. The problem is that when a human face has spent so many years beneath a mask, de-prived of light and oxygen, it changes. Not only does it age, as all faces do, but it tends to get a bit pallid, flaccid, puffy as it takes on a world of its own which is to a great degree untranslatable.

If one tries to cap-ture the other in words, one loses her. To be in relationship with another is to con-front something of the unknowable, the un-predictable, the mys-terious element of nature itself.

Persons and Bodies

In 1961, in a show for the BBC, the mar-ried poets Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes spoke of their creative partnership in which they said they were "very similar" and "very different." They also said they had one "shared" mind. Eight-een years later, pre-paring to write his *The Birthday Letters*, Hughes tells us how after reading the jour-nals of his then dead wife, he came to un-derstand, for the first time, the power of the "secret life" her imagination had been conducting through-out their marriage.

She had a secret life, as he did, lived in the imagination. Her secret life was not secret in the sense of action undertaken furtively or de-ceitfully, but language that did not enter their everyday dis-course. Plath had been an expert at transferring her subjec-tivity into words on a page. Her journey was a treasury of

expression drawn from an entirely personal reservoir of language that evolves from the beginning in each human being, "very different" yet paradoxically "quite similar" in each speaker of the common language.

Hughes had learned something else important from reading Plath's journals, and re-thinking her growth into womanhood. He and Plath had been conducting secret lives in their imaginations because they occupied essentially dif-ferent human bodies: biologically different. They had made a serious mistake when they assumed that they shared one mind. No person shares the mind of another, whether it is the mind of a lover, or a wife or a friend of many years. At best, Hughes con-cludes, one's mind can only be attuned to the complexity of the imagery that rises from the creative expression of the other (Middle-brook, p. 274).

The body is for each of us a per-sonal realm which distinguishes us from others. Our body is the secret place for which only we possess the key of access and where we may return to con-firm our experi-ence that we exist as individuals. No one else can tell us what we feel within our bodies. Only we can ex-press ourselves through our bod-ies (Melluci, 1996).

Levinas stresses the impor-tance of this em-bodiment. We are the creatures who delight and marvel at our bodies and the bodies of others. When we are young we play with the body parts, we explore, we compare, we try to understand how they work. In time, we use our bodies to express ourselves. It is the body which houses and ex-presses our thoughts, our images, wishes, dreams, fantasies. The relational existence we experience with another

(probably our mother or father) is one of physical encounter, one body meeting another body.

We become aware of the face of the other and feel the ethical responsibility we have toward her. We see the misery or fright in her eyes. We feel his chest and know that he is cold or upset or feverish. We sense when she is hungry, or depressed or anxious. Humans are neither disembodied minds nor rational computers. It is your face that reminds me that here is a person with physical and emotional needs, toward whom I have responsibilities.

Ethical responding means responding to an embodied person, someone who gets sleepy, tired, excited, angry, hungry, grumpy, worried, distant, apathetic, cold, warm, tense and sexual. This embodiment expresses itself in our gestures, the raised eyebrow, the half-smile, the wink, the twinkle in our eye, our grimace, smirk, frowns, the intonation of our voice, the way we hold our shoulders, cock our heads, swing our hips, stride, slide, sprint, scamper around. As the song says, it's the way she "holds her knife, the way she sips her tea." We say of our lover "She's poetry in motion."

Levinas reminds us that human beings naturally come into the world caring about their own good, and well they might. He describes this "hedonism" of the child's existence, when one's life is an endless matter of needs that we seek to meet and desires that we seek to fulfill. To be an infant is to have no other appear in the world to call me to responsibility.

To be in such a state is certainly not fully human. In *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas argues that we become fully human, that is, persons, when we realize that we do not exist solely for our own sake, that the others in our life are central to our own existence. Moreover, this ethical relationship for Levinas is prior to ontology. We find ourselves first in an ethical caring relationship. For Levinas, we can only speak of human beings in ontological terms against the background of already being in an ethical relationship.

To come to perceive the face of the other is to perceive the beauty, the fragility, the vulnerability, the misery and mystery of the other. Once we perceive this, we have the obligation to respond ethically, to treat that person as an embodied individual who has the capacity to think, feel, suffer and express herself in a myriad of unpredictable ways, if encouraged by her peers and teachers. If we don't learn how to perceive the face of the other, we lose more than the other does. We lose ourselves.

Conclusion

It follows for Levinas that education of young persons is a social and political act imbued with passion and commitment to the uniqueness of each student as person and possible creator. Hannah Arendt (1996, p. 208) takes it a step further and says that it is an act of love: "Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it and thus save it from the ruin which would be inevitable if it were not renovation, the arrival of new young people."

Thus, to the extent that the classroom community of inquiry fosters listening, attention to the other, *intelligent* sympathy, and compassion among students, as well as the cognitive skills of communal ethical inquiry, to that extent it engages in moral education. Behind compassion there lies a global sense of justice which calls to us in the face of each student who stands right in front of us. Discourse ethics, without what Lipman calls caring thinking, runs the risk of reducing moral education to argumentation by those who have the analytic skills and loud voices to argue well, depriving others who have yet to discover their skills or voice any chance to effectively participate in the communal enterprise of dialogue and inquiry.

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NOTES FROM THE FIELD

BEING ME
Lynne Hinton

Lynne Hinton (mhint3@eq.edu.au) is Principal of Buranda State School, a small, inner city school in Brisbane, Australia. She has led the school through a process of significant curriculum and pedagogical reform over the last eight years, for which she continues to receive national and international recognition.

I really thought it was good. I thought it was the best I had ever done, and I couldn't wait to show everyone. My mum said I had found relevant information, and my dad said it was simply brilliant. He always says that. I took it to show Grandma last weekend and she said the colours were beautiful, just like the colours of the sunlight in the forest after the rain. Even my big brother said 'Good job Squirt'.

I was ready for school so early that no-one was awake except Muffy. Muffy has been in our family for longer than anyone, except for my mum and dad. I showed it to him, but he just scratched himself and yawned. I wonder if dogs can understand about school work.

When I got to school all the other kids were standing around in the playground checking out everyone else's work. Mary's was beautiful. It always is. She is very smart. Sam's was good too. He is like a real artist.

I showed them mine. I felt really good about it. But no one said anything. They just went quiet. Then they walked away. I saw them whisper, and heard them laugh. I felt bad. I felt a bit silly too.

The funny thing is that no one seemed to like my work. The teacher said she could see I had tried hard, and Mary said it was okay except for the smudges. Robbie laughed. My best friend said not to worry too much because I could try harder next time. She thought that would make me feel better.

But I won't try harder next time. I did my very best this time. Guess I'm just dumb.

* * *

'Mum,' I asked that afternoon in the car, 'what makes a good assignment?'

'Well,' said my mum as she drove us towards my dance class, 'my teacher always told me that good assignments had to have relevant information.'

'Mine had relevant information Mum. You told me. But they said it wasn't good.'

'Well then,' replied my mother, 'when I was a little girl your grandma always told me to make my work colourful. She said that everyone loves colourful things.'

'Mine had all the colours of the rainbow Mum. Grandma said so. She said the colours were beautiful, just like the sunlight in the forest after the rain. I used up my whole purple crayon! But Robbie laughed!'

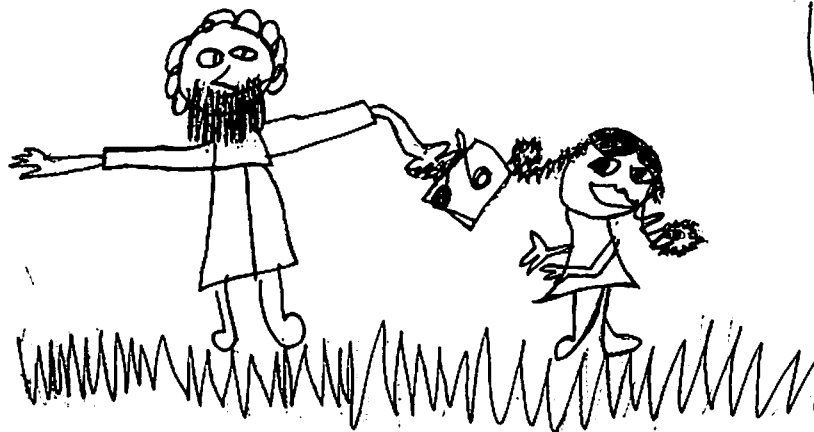Mum just said, 'We're here. Do you have all your things ready?'

It takes a lot of questions to get to the bottom of things!

why Do people give presents to other people when they dont want them ?

* * *

I love my dance class. I've been going for nearly my whole life!

I love the jumping and the swaying and the turning. I love the loud, fast bits and the quiet, gentle, slow bits. I love how I can make my arms float like feathers and my feet beat like drums. Most of all I love the music, and how it just washes into my body and fills me up. Sometimes when the music is playing, my body seems to move by it-

self. That's awesome.

Mary goes to my dance class too. I don't think she likes it very much. Sometimes she trips when we are skipping fast, and she forgets what steps to do next. I try to show her, but she doesn't want my help.

Last year at the Christmas concert I was the Sugar Plum fairy. That is the most beautiful music I have ever heard.

At the end of the concert my dance teacher called my name and I had to go onto the stage all by myself. She gave me a beautiful doll for being the most improved dancer in the class.

My whole family was there, even my grandma. I felt great.

Leading Idea: Families

The notion of a family is broad and constantly changing. Children come to school from a huge variety of domestic situations, some of which they themselves may classify as a family and some not. Ongoing exploration of this concept is probably warranted.

Discussion Plan: What is a Family?

1. Do families all live in the same house?
2. Is everyone in the same house part of the family?
3. Could someone live in a different country and still be part of the family?
4. Could someone who has died still be part of the family?
5. Could a family have only one member?
6. Are animals part of the family?
7. Should people in a family always help one another?
8. Why would you want to be in a family?
9. Do all people in a family have to be related to one another?
10. Would it be better if you could choose your own family?
11. Why do people have families?
12. Is there such a thing as 'The Family of Man'? What would that mean?

Leading Idea: Relationships Between Children and Animals

Many households have animals as pets. Where there are also children in the home, especially small children, interesting relationships can develop between animal and child. Many of us can cite examples of when an animal protected a family member in some way, or when a dog that is often quite skittish and unpredictable is quiet and gentle with small children. It seems also that children can find solace in the company of family pets.

Discussion Plan: Being with Animals

1. Can animals such as cats and dogs understand what you are saying to them?
2. Can they understand how you are feeling?
3. Can they sometimes better understand how you are feeling than grown ups can?
4. Have you ever felt that animals are more fun to play with than grown ups?
5. Have you ever felt that animals are more fun to play with than other children?
6. Would having a robot to play with be the same as having a dog to play with?
7. Do you think that animals have the same feelings as people?
8. Are animals part of the family?
9. Would a pet dog or cat think it was part of the family?
10. Do animals have their own families?

Leading idea: Making judgments About Ourselves

What others think of us would be of little importance did it not so deeply tinge what we think of ourselves.
— Santayana —
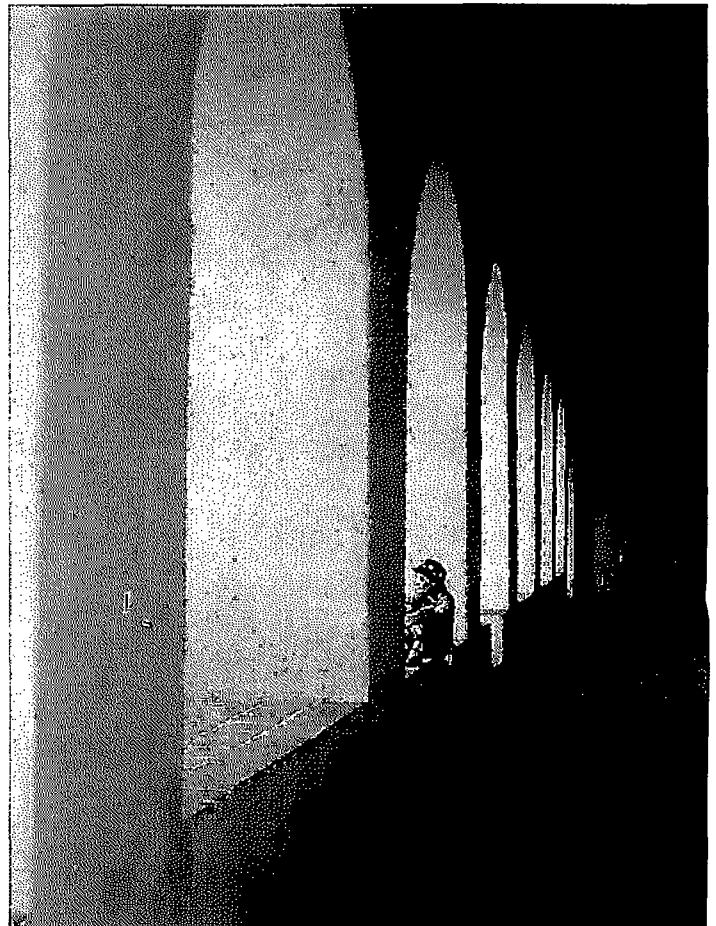
The people we meet in our lives can affect the way we feel about ourselves. Consider the following scenarios and decide whether the action provides good evidence to make a judgment about yourself, whether it does not provide good evidence, or whether you cannot tell.

First decide alone, then discuss it with someone else. Be sure to have reasons for your decisions.

	Good Evidence	Not Good Evidence	???
Everyone laughs at your work.			
Your best friend says she can't come to your party but does not give a reason. Instead, she sends a gift – the doll you have always wanted.			
You win the prize for your dance class.			
The kids in your class are going on a school excursion. You really want to go, but you can't because your grandma is sick and wants to see you.			
Your mother says, 'That's just what I would expect from you!'			
Three children in your class are chosen to look after a new child for the day.			

Exercise: Counterexamples

Sometimes statements can be shown to be false by the supplying of a counterexample.

Consider the following:

Sam: All puppy dogs have tails.

Marie: My grandmother has a dog that has no tail. It was born that way!

Supply a counterexample for each of the following statements.

1. Everyone who tries their best will receive good marks on their assignment.
2. Good assignments have relevant information.
3. Only American citizens are able to participate in the summer program at Mendham.
4. The houses in Mendham are quite beautiful.
5. Only frogs croak.
6. All red-headed people have bad tempers.
7. All my classmates are better at school work than I am.
8. People who are good at dancing are not good at school work.

Exercise: Metaphors/Similes/Meanings

Sometimes we liken something to something else, to help us try to understand the first thing better. For example, we might say 'Sarah is a greedy pig.' to better explain Sarah's voracious appetite.

Explain the following metaphors and then make up some of your own.

Metaphor/Simile	Meaning
Sarah is a greedy pig.	Sarah eats more than she needs, noisily, like a pig is thought to do.
The colours were beautiful, like the colours of the sunlight in the forest after the rain.	
My arms float like feathers and my feet beat like drums.	
The music washes into my body and fills me up.	
It takes a lot of questions to get to the bottom of things.	
My test result was a nightmare.	
My father is an ogre.	
After the race, her face was a beetroot.	
His prepared speech for the class went swimmingly.	