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When James Agee was sent to Alabama in 1936 by Fortune to write an article about the lives of the sharecroppers living there, he was shocked by what he saw. The lives of those tenant farmers struck him as so deprived of the most basic of human necessities that he could not in good conscience write about them in the way he was expected to. As a result, his magazine article became the nearly 500-page book, Let Us Now Praise Famous Men: Three Tenant Families in which the text embodying Agee’s moral outrage is preceded by the photographs of Walker Evans.

Although Agee was revolted by virtually every aspect of the way that the tenant farmers were forced to live, none bothered him more than the educations that their children received. After stating that the birth of any child is a rebirth of “the potentiality of the human race” and, thus, also a reawakening of the responsibility that all of us share towards fostering such life, Agee turns his attention to a domain in which that responsibility is desecrated: schooling.

‘Education,’ whose function is at the crisis of this appalling responsibility, does not seem to me to be all, or even anything, that it might be, but seems indeed the very property of the world’s misunderstanding, the sharpest of its spearheads in every brain: and that since it could not be otherwise without destroying the world’s machine, the world is unlikely to permit it to be otherwise.1

I imagine David Kennedy vigorously nodding his head in agreement with the beginning of Agee’s sentence, but furiously shaking his head to dissent with its ending. For Kennedy also sees the failures of education as at the heart of the failure of our society to foster human life. But he departs from Agee in seeing an alternative possibility for education, one in which education, rather than being the heart of the world’s “misunderstanding,” can be the center of a new mode of being. Indeed, The Well of Being has the dual project of indicting the current educational system for its failures and showing the possibility of an educational system that might be capable of accepting the burden of responsibility that Agee claimed each of us had towards human life itself.

From this description of the book, a reader might expect The Well of Being to be a detailed critical assessment of the school as a social institution in contemporary society. But The Well of Being is something other, and a great deal more, than that: It is a philosophical investigation into the foundations of education that lays bare the ontological presuppositions of modern schooling and shows that there are ways of educating the young that do not result in diminishing their sense of possibility, as our current so-called educational system does.

Of course, as one might expect from a philosopher, the key to such an educational system will be its inclusion of philosophy in the curriculum for children from a very young age. But this means something for Kennedy that it would not mean for most academic philosophers. For rather than

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introducing students to the “great men” of the Western tradition, as most pre-college education courses in philosophy do, Kennedy envisions a mode of philosophical education that “takes up the questions that the philosophical tradition has always asked, but does so as if for the very first time.” (p. 180) Those familiar with the work of Matthew Lipman—as I assume most readers of this journal are—will recognize his influence in these words. For Lipman’s attempt to transform the educational system was predicated on the idea that philosophy as a mode of inquiry was basic to the possibility of a fully democratic citizenry. And, in following him, Kennedy views philosophy less as a specific subject matter—though it is that as well—than as a mode of human interaction that models the ideal that will transform not only education, but society as well.

So instead of arguing, as Plato did, that a just society will not come into existence until philosophers are kings, Kennedy believes that the just society will have to await the presence of philosophical inquiry as an encompassing form of human being-in-the-world. But the key to this is a new understanding of childhood, one that does not result from what he calls “adultism,” a form of social oppression that Kennedy sees as pervasive and harmful as “rationalism, ethnocentrism, and sexism.” (p. 63) Like these other forms of oppression, adultism is, according to Kennedy, the result of an illogic “subspeciation,” a division of the human race into different subspecies, with one seen as superior to the other. Kennedy’s brief is that the adult repression of childhood results in a society that is harmful to both adults and children.

For this reason, Kennedy launches into a lengthy and very meaty discussion of both childhood and adulthood, with the intent of showing that there are radically different ways in which the child-adult binary can be conceived. In particular, he focuses his critical gaze upon the scientific notion of the child, in which the child is seen to be an object of investigation that is radically different than the investigator himself or herself. He sees this way of understanding the child as supporting “the ambition of the increasingly hegemonic and reactionary nation-state and its dominant elites” (p. 56) to colonize childhood and thereby render children into adults who are suitable material for what Agee called the “the world’s machine.”

Kennedy counters this understanding of childhood with a number of alternative conceptions. He employs a range of resources in developing this idea that are sweeping and show the range of his thinking. He taps into, first of all, Romantic poetry and philosophy, where he finds a notion of the child as, in many ways, having a less alienated relationship to the world than the adult. Friedrich Schiller and William Wordsworth are two of the authors he cites as exemplifying this conception of childhood. He weds this view to the Freudian notion of childhood as not only a life-stage prior to adulthood, but as a permanent mode of being that exists in dialogue with adulthood in mature individuals. This conception of childhood is further reinforced by a dialogical notion of inquiry that Kennedy sees developed not only by American pragmatism and, particularly, John Dewey, but also within Continental thought by the philosopher and theologian Martin Buber.

Kennedy’s synthetic mode of argument ultimately leads to a conception of the self as a field notion, as opposed to the atomistic, isolated self of modern Western philosophy. When the self is conceived as what might be called a “node” in a field, its social nature is taken to be essential to it rather than as a supplement. Once the self is recognized to be constituted through social relationships and dialogue, Kennedy believes, the ground has been laid for a fundamental reform of society and, more specifically, educational practice, for it will be important to develop selves that are keenly aware of their field nature, their dialogical being.

In the final chapter of The Well of Being, Kennedy finally turns his attention to how a school could be constructed that will foster the sort of self that we truly are, a self always in formation that is in touch with its own inner child. Although in some ways modeled on the extraordinary practice of the schools in Reggio Emilia, Kennedy’s school is a utopian institution in that it would require a restructuring of not only primary and secondary schools, but also the university, for the school as Kennedy envisions it will be home not only to teachers, but professors as well, for they will conduct their own research within the context of the school. Such a school, as Kennedy admits, will “imply the reconstruction of the world of work as much as the world of leisure and the world of politics.” (p. 167) That is to say, for schooling to really succeed in teaching children to become non-alienated adults, it will require the social context of a completely reconstructed society, one that has a space for the curious and non-coerced individuals who are the outcome of this process of genuine education.

As my all-too-brief summary indicates, Kennedy’s book does not lack ambition. Although his ultimate aim may be to show what he takes the real philosophical basis for the philosophy for children movement to be, he undertakes a highly theoretical investigation of the notion of childhood—and, of course, its pair, “adulthood”—for only on the basis of such an investigation does he think it possible to show the fundamental aspirations that inspire philosophers to engage, as he does, with children in a serious and yet playful manner. So far as I know, there is no other book that attempts such a bold and systematic foundational inquiry into the philosophical basis for and implications of teaching philosophy to children. For this reason alone, The Well of Being should be required reading for anyone interested in the idea of philosophy for children.

Another important virtue of The Well of Being is the
range of reference that Kennedy appeals to in making his case for the necessity of a fundamental change in our thinking about education—and self and society. Here is a partial list of the thinkers that Kennedy enlists in support of his project: Rousseau, Schiller, Wordsworth, Dewey, Freud, Jung, Buber, Merleau-Ponty, Marcuse, Winnicott, Foucault, and Levinas. This list is impressive both in its historical scope and its disciplinary variety. Although Kennedy is a philosopher, he draws on both literature and psychoanalysis to bolster his case. One cannot help but be impressed by Kennedy’s synthetic method of showing how the insights of all of these theorists and artists support his own view.

I do, however, have some worries about Kennedy’s argument. Let me be clear, however, that these are more worries than objections. The Well of Being is a theoretical work that cannot help but be impressed by Kennedy’s model based upon the philosophy for children inspired notion of the self and an inquiry based notion of education is a radical departure from schooling as we know it. He is quite up front about this implication of his theory and, I think, even revels in it. That is, I take Kennedy to genuinely hold that the radical implications of his justification for an educational model based upon the philosophy for children inspired notion of dialogical selves is one of the selling points of his theory. He wants us to see how radical, indeed how revolutionary the methodology of philosophy for children really is. And while this is, as I have already indicated, a great strength of this book, it is also a source of concern. Let me explain.

My own modest efforts in the area of philosophy for children have focused upon elementary schools. What I have tried to do—both on my own and with my own college students—is to get elementary schools to include philosophy in their classrooms. So what I am always on the lookout for are compelling justifications for getting young children to do philosophy in precisely the way that Kennedy means it: thinking about philosophical issues as if they have been raised for the very first time. Perhaps this orientation has made me too focused on small steps, but I cannot conceive of attempting to convince a teacher or principal to let me or my students into her classroom(s) by appealing to the sorts of broad, highly controversial goals that Kennedy cites. If the case for introducing philosophy into classrooms where it has not been before requires that teachers and administrators accept the goal of radical social transformation that Kennedy puts forward, I’m dubious about the success of the project. To put the point more positively, I think that there are less systematic and grand benefits to be gained by having young children introduced to philosophical thinking that the ones acknowledged by Kennedy, and I think it is very important to pay attention to them. For they are the sorts of reasons that will lead schools to open their classrooms to us philosophers. I’m concerned that Kennedy’s deep justification for philosophizing with children leaves out more modest goals that are the ones we actually have to appeal to in order to transform education.

That said, I want to reiterate my admiration for this book. It is, as I have said, the most systematic and well-thought out attempt to provide a philosophical grounding for teaching children philosophy that I know of. As such, it deserves to be read and thought about by everyone interested in children and the importance of providing them with educations that support rather than diminish their natural potentials.

Notes

Subjective Time and Encounter in the Moment: Towards an Ethical Attitude for Intergenerational Dialogue within the Context of Various Theories about Childhood

Barbara Weber

Introduction

“We may not regard children as mere objects of our studies; they belong together with us to what Kant once called the sphere of ends.”

G. Matthews

Introduction

In a lecture about pedagogy, Schleiermacher once asked if we may sacrifice a precious moment of lived present as a means to an end. In pedagogic situations, we very often sacrifice the present moment for the future. We explain, admonish and educate in order to cultivate the seed of humanness within the child. But a further question would be: Does not the current generation usurp the space of the future by enforcing the education of particular values and norms?

Human life is lived in the field of tension between life and death. But every child brings another time, a new beginning, into this world. Wouldn’t we reject a wonderful gift if we seamlessly annexed this new beginning to our old traditions, opinions, values and ways of thinking? Of course, it’s unquestionable that children must learn to read, write, etc. But I’d like to suggest the creation of an open space where an equal dialogue between generations can take place so that we can receive children’s gift, namely: the future.

In this article, I’d like to show how certain notions of childhood disregard children’s innovativeness and otherness. Philosophizing with children creates a chiasmatic space where meaning can arise on the cusp between learning from tradition and projecting a new life. In the first part of this article, I’ll refer to different theories of childhood and show how these theories try to negate the children’s otherness either by romanticizing or disregarding their way of thinking and being in the world. Holding such an attitude towards children, an encounter and equal dialogue is impossible.

Notions of Childhood as Appropriation or Expropriation of the Child’s Strangeness

In the following paragraph, I’d like to select certain exemplary branches from childhood research to show how these concepts influence our valuation of how children think and act, thereby narrowing the potential scope of an open-minded encounter with children.

In his article “The Recapitulation Model,” G. Matthews mentions three basic theories of childhood: the Preform Model, the Logical Model and the Recap Model. The first one regards children as little adults, rather like the depictions of the Christ child in some medieval paintings. This corresponds with the pre-pedagogical images of “in-difference” within current childhood research. Within this concept adults and children share the same space and are engaged in similar activities. Here, children don’t need special treatment or even
an education since everything is already embedded in their nature and develops naturally with the years. In an extreme form, it ignores that there is any difference between children and adults, and might even take away the entitlement of adults to educate children at all.

There is a legitimate reason to suspect that (like the Preform Model) philosophizing with children might ignore children’s difference and burden them with a thoughtfulness that in fact overtaxes them. I ask myself if and how it might be possible to respect the strangeness of children’s question-

ing, pondering and doubting, without disregarding the wittiness of their ideas.

The Logical Model regards the child as only a generalized ‘sketch’ (or outline) of man. Specification and generalization proceed with increasing age; the sketch is filled in. This concept can be traced back to Aristotle, who claimed that the human embryo is first a living thing, but not yet an animal, and that the small child is an animal, but not yet a human animal. Only later does the child finally become a specifically human animal. If we peer through these theoretical lenses, we would see young children’s questions as merely pre-human.

Piaget is one of the most famous protagonists of the Recap Model. His theory sees man as passing through all levels of physical and cognitive development in the history of the human race. These various level-specific cognitive ways of thinking and worldviews are not compatible with one another. This is also why the child, who is still on the same level as a so-called “primitive,” cannot really communicate with an adult.

Within the framework of the Recap Model, children’s displeasing behavior and questioning are regarded as precursors to reason. But this shortcoming will gradually be rectified through the child’s development and socialization, during which the child’s otherness becomes absorbed into our adult way of reasoning, thinking and acting.

In recent research about childhood, those last two theories especially are termed “difference images.” Unlike the situation with indifference images (e.g. the Preform Model), these theories regard education as a need. They emphasize children’s ability to learn, grow and develop, but they define learning as children’s gradual outgrowing of analogical thinking and their overcoming of mystical being-in-the-world. The aim is to learn the Western way of reasoning and thinking, which is based on a written tradition and Western logic.

When we consider that most thinkers in Classical Antiquity assigned animals, women, slaves and children to one level or viewed them more as property than as human beings, it seems to us that we have indeed come a long way. But the marginalization of children is by no means over. In the following paragraphs, I’d like to ask: Why and what kind of threat does children’s strangeness pose to our Western way of logical thinking? On the fundament of subjective time I’ll then show how we could widen our concept of learning – which merely is the overcoming of childish irrationality – by a procedural and dialogical aspect of encounter in the moment.

The Child as Stranger

We experience the phenomenon of strangeness either contemporaneously or separated in time. The encounter with Incan culture is an example of experiencing this phenomenon of strangeness separated in time. An encounter with dreams is a strangeness within a contemporary moment. We can distinguish between a phylogenetic strangeness (e.g. submerged cultures like the Incas) and ontogenetic strangeness (e.g. children). We can also encounter exceptional states of mind such as pathologies, dreams, delusions, etc. This fearsome fascination of the strange originates in the tension between similarity and strangeness. All the aforementioned examples are anthropoid, yet simultaneously strange. The encounter with strangeness is typically followed by either of two extreme reactions: the appropriation of the strangeness or its expropriation.

The Recap Model is an example for the appropriation of the child’s strangeness. It regards childhood as a primitive precursor to reason. Its spiritual and intellectual world is absolutely (cf. this word’s Latin root, which means “to remove, to resolve”) alien to the adult’s world of thinking. Education
within this model means gradually to explain the world in a reasonable way to the child and therefore liberate the child from his or her irrationality. The Recap model attempts to overcome the child’s otherness by erasing the child’s analogical and mystical way of thinking, but this alignment is one-sided.

A structure of communication based on this image of the child will necessarily be asymmetrically weighted towards the adult. It is a mere monologue in which the adult explains to children the world as it “really” is. But I doubt whether true dialogue is possible at all as long as children continue to be regarded as strangers who inhabit an ontogenetically atavistic level. Matthews writes: “The most disturbing feature of the Recap Model (as I understand it) is that, according to that model, we are inevitably blocked from understanding our children and they from understanding us; culturally we and they are ineluctably isolated from each other. […] It will go on giving us adults ilicit justification for treating children as intellectual and emotional primitives (where, incidentally, our concept of the primitive may be just as fantasy-laden as our concept of childhood.” I believe that such theories are seriously in danger of leading towards a self-fulfilling prophecy, which would mean that we would never even come close to talking with children as equals because from the very first moment onwards, we never see them as humans on an equal level and therefore we never make “space inside ourselves” to encounter children’s decentering otherness.

A second possibility is to expropriate strangeness. When we do this, all the “faults” are turned into their opposites. Primitiveness becomes beautiful and natural; illness becomes sacred and a special opportunity; and children are suddenly the unspoiled and pure humans. “Egocentricity is overcome by giving up what is uniquely our own in exchange for something alien and other.”

A danger inherent in this kind of attitude towards children is that adults may regress and become childish themselves. This would also mean shirking our responsibility to educate and care for children. Especially in the context of doing philosophy with children, we should be acutely aware of the danger of romanticizing childhood. Here we would again neglect the possibility of encountering the strange (as the absolute other) which leads to a decentering of the ego, which would mean that we would never even come close to talking with children as equals because from the very first moment onwards, we never see them as humans on an equal level and therefore we never make “space inside ourselves” to encounter children’s decentering otherness.

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“The reason why we suffer from anxiety is because we are unable to live with our fears.”

Dimensions of Strangeness

But how is it possible to really accept the child’s strangeness without simultaneously appropriating or expropriating it?

The phenomenon of strangeness occurs on three levels.

The first is “the Otherness of the Other.” This is the precondition for first recognizing a separation of the own and the strange. Empathy and affective participation are possibilities for bridging this gap. This bridging can succeed if the transmitter and the receiver are interconnected by the same code and if the structure and logic of the communication are based on the reciprocity of perspectives and the reversibility of viewpoints. Within such a dialogue of questioning and answering, where speaking and acting flow into one another, we can no longer maintain a separation between speaker and listener. A chiasm occurs. It’s no longer obvious who had an idea first and who built upon it afterwards. This situation transcends the one-dimensional logic of cause and effect.

“A shared foundation emerges from the experience of the dialogue between me and the other; my thoughts and his interweave to create one whole cloth; my words and those uttered by my interlocutor are elicited by the prevailing state of the discussion and are evidence of a mutual creation – whose creator neither of us is.” Such grasping into one another and interlocking leads to a reconstruction of what is ours and what is strange. I find myself within the Other, as though the Other occupies my innermost self. The community of inquiry undoubtedly leads to a complex system of different chiasms, but I’d like to save the analysis of this chiasmatic system for another article since its analysis here would lead too far from my present focal point.

A second level might be termed “the otherness of myself.” I become aware that I’m not completely transparent to myself. This concerns both my physical appearance (e.g. I cannot see my back, my eyes, how I move, act, speak, etc.) and my ego (my unconscious part, certain aspects of my past, my early childhood, etc.). Normally we try to overcome or influence these “blind spots” by styling our body, putting on makeup, seeing ourselves in photos, or undergoing psychoanalysis or hypnotherapy. I don’t want to criticize these behaviors here, but seek simply to understand why we so eagerly occupy ourselves with them.

Childish behavior is especially threatening because it latently touches a part of our self which eludes our grasp. “The authentic experience of the child within itself and for us is an experience refused; but as such, it is an ongoing challenge, supported by intimacy and intensified by disquiet. Children are both strange and close to us. Only because they are strangers in our closeness, is their strangeness so particular and disturbing.”

The third form of otherness is the “otherness of a strange order.” The own structure collides with the strange on this level. Language is one example of this. The language of children can seem as strange to adults as the language of adults seems to children. But one can, of course, also opt to resist the invading structure.

In principle, within the field of the order of language, we can talk about interdiscursivity and more often transdiscursivity – if there is a new interpretation and active learning involved. Because the subject is not only an underling who merely imitates. Learning language always already breaks into a web of meaning. In the appropriation of meaning, we
no longer find a vertical relationship in favor of the adult, but more so a horizontal interweaving of meaning.  

This crossing over of our own structure and strange structures leads to a reorganization of both systems. “This weak and constantly changing little being brings the whole family into movement. Little children rule and educate their families to the same degree as they are educated and ruled by their parents.”  

If theories like the Recap Model reduce children’s way of thinking and behavior to a precursor form of reason and if they define learning as overcoming this way of being in the world, then we may suppose a certain fear of irrationality and therefore an attempt to protect against the irrational or analogical thinking of children. On the other hand, we suspect that the devaluation of childhood makes our loss of childhood less painful. This will further strengthen the repression of childish, analogous and unconscious structures within the ego. To phrase this in Lévinas’ terms, it is the assertion of the self against the other.  

The Time of the Child  

To approach this question from a different perspective, we ask: Can we justify leaving children within their otherness? If we are to educate children, if we are to act upon them genuinely pedagogical way, isn’t it imperative that we respect and preserve the difference between children and adults? Can we conceive of an image of childhood which gives us the right to educate children, yet simultaneously respects the fresh start and innovative way of valuing and thinking each child brings into the world? How can we encounter children without usurping the space of their future? What does learning mean within the diachrony of adult and child?  

To trigger these questions, I’ll refer to Arendt and Lévinas. Although they were contemporaries, each of them independently developed a concept of the child which emphasizes the impossibility of usurping subjective time. By comparing and combining these two views, I’d like to show how an unconditional respect for children’s subjective and future-oriented time would influence our debate about meaning and values in a democratic society.  

For Aristotle, time is still an impersonal *arithmos kineses* or *numerus motus* (i.e. a number in motion). Not until Heidegger was time finally understood as *Dasein des Menschen*, i.e. man’s being towards death (*Sein zum Tode*). Heidegger also unfolds the three ecstasies of time – past, present, future – from himself. Time remains synchronous: it’s my time, my freedom, i.e. I’m sovereign. 

In her book *Vita activa*, Arendt divides human activity into three kinds: working, manufacturing and acting. These three forms of activity occur within two different images of time: natural, cyclical time on the one hand and linear-human time on the other. Cyclical time represents the indiscriminate coming into being and passing away of nature. This is why working – as the lowest form of human activity – occurs within this image of time. Work for Arendt is continual production and consumption on the level of mere survival. 

But we create some stability and continuity within this never-ending change when we manufacture things (the second form of activity). A chair, a table or a house very often survive the lifespan of an individual human. The possibility and destiny of this manufactured world of things is to create an abiding home within the continuous flow of time; i.e. to settle within or to indwell the niches of cyclical time. But working and manufacturing both still belong to the sphere of private life and therefore do not belong to the original meaning of the human condition. 

The highest form of activity for Arendt is to act. Action belongs in the public sphere. Unlike working and manufacturing, action is always interwoven within a *Mitwelt*, which means a weave of words and actions. Action for Arendt always occurs within linear time, which is the specific human time. Through a unique and unpredictable action, man breaks out of the cyclical time of nature. 

Every child’s birth brings a new beginning into the world. Bare of any history or any past, the infant’s first cry is a free act of will which unfolds reality into unlimited chambers of possibilities. “Only because each human being is born he is an *initium*, a newcomer and therefore we can take the initiative, become beginners and set something in motion.”  

But this is also the Achilles’ heel of the human situation.
No one can foresee the results of his actions, because each action spawns innumerable consequences. Hence this marvelous gift of a new beginning shrinks with every step and every breath we take. Each ensuing moment bends us back towards the consequences of our past.

“But the cure against this irrevocability – that one can never undo our actions, although one had never known or was even able to know what the consequences of those actions would be – is the uniquely human ability to forgive. And the cure against the unpredictability – and therefore against the chaotic uncertainty of the future – lies embedded in the ability to make and keep promises.”

I’d like to broaden this last thought about forgiving and promising by introducing the notion of time and suggesting that children’s fresh start releases us from our past. In history, i.e. in the encounter between generations, we hand down our tradition as a present, but children bring us a much more precious gift. It is their time, their future. They inscribe an absolutely new symbol into the world and therefore break with the continuity of time and history. This alien time of our children invades our time, takes something from it and carries it away, into the open and unoccupied spaces of the future.

Here I’d like to refer to Lévinas’ notion of the diachrony between me and the other in order to find an ethical attitude which would reveal, within the dialogue with children, an open space in the future. Although in Arendt’s work, linear time occurs within the subjective sphere of action, time always remains my time. Lévinas focuses instead on the encounter between two different times. This is the situation where the Other (the child in this case) breaks into my time.

“The future is that which can’t be grasped, but which attacks us and seizes hold of us. The future is the Other. [...] The face-to-face situation is the primal revelation of time; the encroaching of presence on the future is not the act of a lone subject, but the intersubjective relationship.”

In this point, where another time invades my time (but also occurs in my time like a thought), an abyss opens and gapes – but it is an abyss which descends from a height. This time of the Other does not subordinate, but the Other’s freedom crosses my path. His presence compels me to accept responsibility for the past. His gaze; my visibility: there is no escape. I’m his hostage, I must surrender. This gaze does not tolerate the simple acceptance and taking over of the responsibility of my past – a past which doesn’t belong to me anyway. I subordinate this presence of Otherness, to whom I must respond within the encounter and whom I’ve always been responsible for without ever choosing to be so. “Summons to identity because of the response of responsibility, where nobody can be substituted without becoming guilty.”

History is not an object that we can take responsibility for. History is an imperative for the future. The challenge is to accept the responsibility of history not as a mere theoretical act which already stops when done, but as an imperative for each moment in our lives, as a response within the present encounter, to expose ourselves to the uncertainty of the moment with all our vulnerability as well as with the burden of all the violence of past generations. Bent down to our knees, we crawl like crones towards the void of the future, which we come face to face with a fresh, flexible and spontaneous newborn baby – reaching down, breaking with the continuity of history. Void, silence and emptiness are the preconditions of real encounter with the other. Children are asking for that response. It is not enough to explain or to give well-meaning instructions for the future.

What we must face is a decentering which keeps us flexible and free from the authority of yesterday’s thoughts. Truth reveals itself in time, so our self unfolds meaning in the encounter – flowing through time. How can I create enough space within myself so that I can receive this dignified and divine guest as the absolute Other? The possibility: my responsibility for the Other to occur within the structure of being and time.

Within such encounter, I’m summoned. My time is broken up into another time. I surrender a future which will always flee from me. This is the situation which Lévinas calls “diachrony.” Diachrony begins with a simple encounter, but I would suggest that it fulfils itself in parenthood. The child is a stranger in a very special and extreme way. Lévinas says about his son: “...il est moi. C’est moi, étranger à soi.”

Through this affirmation of an alien future, a free child is born ex nihilo “as my future and not my future, as my possibility, which is given to me, but is also the possibility of the Other.” But because this child is neither my deed nor my creation, my relation towards him occurs neither in categories of knowledge nor ability.

By learning a certain culture and the usage of tools, children continue our lives and our subjectivity. On the other hand, the future of the parent is not the future of the child. Each child embodies a break with history. Therefore children assume responsibility if it’s already too late for us to do so. History becomes discontinuous. But if we usurp the space of the future, there will be no end to the entanglement of the human history of violence.

“Transcendence is time and moves towards the Other. But the Other is not the destination; he does not stop the movement of desire. The Other, which desire craves, is still desire; the transcendence transcends towards the person who transcends – this is the adventure of parenthood, the transubstantiation; it allows us to transcend the mere renewing of the possible within the unavoidable aging process.”

Résumé: The Philosophical Dialogue as a Chiasm between the Journeys through Life of the Adult and the Child

On the basis of these theories, I’d like to mediate between the necessity to reflect upon the role of children in our society on the one hand and the danger of either appropriating or expropriating the strangeness of children in formulating such theory.

We pedagogues often find ourselves in a vertical dialogue
with children. This means we explain the world to children. We give them instructions. Or we ask them questions whose answers we already think we know.\textsuperscript{37}

Let us refer again to the analysis of strangeness as offered by Waldenfels/Meyer-Drawe, who write: “The separation between the own and the Other works better the more our dialogue [with children] remains within a reproductive and applicative structure and is constrained to a repetition and handing down of a prefabricated meaning.”\textsuperscript{38} A genuine exchange, one in which the child and the adult are of equal value and have equal rights, is impossible within such structure of communication.

Seldom do we discuss with children issues which we ourselves find awkward, unanswered or problematic.\textsuperscript{39} “What has not been taken seriously, or even widely conceived, is the possibility of tackling with children, in a relationship of mutual respect, the naively profound questions of philosophy. I hope that what follows will convince my readers that children can help us adults investigate and reflect on interesting and important questions and that the children’s contributions may be quite as valuable as any we adults have to offer.”\textsuperscript{40} Philosophizing with children, we expose ourselves to the hazard of a dialogue vis-à-vis. When we take this risk, we no longer merely confront the deficiency within the child, but also recognize and encounter the child’s inherent dignity.

Since a philosophical dialogue is focused on meaning and values which concern both adults and children to the same degree, it gives us a specific opportunity for this decentering experience. Furthermore, philosophy is not a field of knowledge where we could hope to find prefabricated contents or thought patterns of absolute truth, but an ongoing and unresolved exercise that involves pondering, questioning and thinking.\textsuperscript{41} The role of the initiate is neither privileged nor advantageous, and is perhaps not even relevant. This is why adults are most exposed to the child’s strangeness of thinking and being in the world within the new creation of values and meaning that transpires during philosophical dialogue. Concerning the encounter between the own and the other, Waldenfeld/Meyer-Drawe indicate: “The separation between the own and the Other works less, the more productive the dialogue is and the more it contributes to new conditions of understanding and changing standards, rather than merely applying them.”\textsuperscript{42}

This means that a chiasm occurs between child and adult in a discussion which concerns both and in which meaning is newly created. This is the threshold where present crosses future. Adults bind children to the past by passing down traditions; children free adults from the past by children’s embodiment of a new beginning, which casts a net of hope into an innocent future. Confrontation of this kind within a philosophical dialogue may sometimes be confusing or even disturbing. But it is precisely these moments which shatter the structures of the adult self and may lead towards a decentering and reconstruction. “There comes a certain moment in adult development when it becomes possible for the ego to be ‘ousted from its central and dominating position,’ and to give up its ‘illusion of mastery’ – to recognize its inability to act as the monological control center of subjectivity – which allows for what he refers to as a vitalizing of the personality through an ‘afflux of unconscious contents.’ [...] I would suggest that it can begin at any time in the lifecycle, and that parenting is a critically important opportunity to initiate this process, and perhaps its most frequent trigger for many adults.”\textsuperscript{43} The self-centered ego encounters nothing but its own projections.\textsuperscript{44} But the invasion of an alien time and way of thinking surprises or even confuses us and sets us into motion. This makes children into our partners; not homogeneous or of the same kind, but rather of equal value. I’d suggest that learning might profitably be thought of as motion and transformation of ourselves and our environment. Because learning is action.

Here it might help to reflect on the etymological meaning of the word “pedagogue” (from the Greek paid-agogós, i.e. the one who leads the child towards its home). Quite the contrary, in a democratic society which builds on the strength and plurality of each member, pedagogues shouldn’t be regarded as leaders who know already the truth, but should be viewed instead as experienced and trustworthy companions who encounter children on the path of life. This is a path which neither the pedagogue nor the child knows in its entirety. As pilgrims along this path, the pedagogue and the child can thus experience each moment of life with full intensity and awareness.

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2 Lévinas, E.: Totalität und Unendlichkeit. Versuch über die Exteriorität (Totalité et Infini), (München 1993), p. 408
3 The invasion of an alien time shatters and reconstructs the adult self. See Kennedy, D., Reconstructing Childhood, (Thinking, 14,1), 1998, 29-37
5 With this distinction between indifference and difference images I refer to: Ulrich, H.: Das Kind in der pädagogischen Kindheitsforschung (The child in childhood research), (Pädagogische Rundschau, 54/2000), p. 683-701
6 See u. a. Piaget, J. Das Weltbild des Kindes (The worldview of the Child), (Stuttgart 1978)
7 See Wagenschein, who tries to integrate the mystical world perception of children with the Western scientific paradigm by means of the Socratic method. Wagenschein, M. Verstehen lehren. Genetisch – Sokratisch – Exemplarisch (Learning to understand. Genetically – socratically – exemplary), (Weinheim 1970)
8 See Postman, N. Disappearance of Childhood, (Frankfurt am Main 1984)
9 See according to the different forms of power in Aristotlet, Politics First book, 1253b 1
11 See Meyer-Drawe, K. und Waldenfels, B.: Das Kind als Fremder, op. cit., p. 272
13 Meyer-Drawe, K., Waldenfels, B.: Das Kind als Fremder, p. 274
14 See Kennedy op. cit. 2001
15 A quotation from the butoh dancer Tatsumi Hijikata in an interview in 1974
16 See according to the three levels of strangeness: Meyer-Drawe, K. und Waldenfels, B.: Das Kind als Fremder, op. cit., p. 275
17 Waldenfels, Meyer-Drawe op. cit., 275
18 Merleau-Ponty, M. Phänomenologie der Wahrnehmung (Phénoménologie de la Perception), (Berlin: 1966), p. 406
19 It would be very interesting to further investigate up to what level we may encounter the Other comparing Lévinas and Merleau-Ponty. Obviously enough, in Lévinas, the Other always remains the Other and he is on another level (the encounter is asymmetrical); whereas in Merleau-Ponty the I and the Other are on one level, yet never really mix, instead creating something entirely different which we can’t simply break down into a mere synthesis in the sense of Hegel’s dialectic.
20 Meyer-Drawe, K. und Waldenfels, B.: Das Kind als Fremder, op. cit., p. 286
21 See Waldenfels, Meyer-Drawe, op. cit. 282
22 Erikson, E. Kindheit und Gesellschaft (Childhood and Society), (Stuttgart 1984), p. 63
23 Aristoteles, Physik, 219B2
24 See Heidegger, M.: Sein und Zeit (Being and Time), (Tübingen 2001)
27 Arendt, H., Vita activa oder Vom tätigen Leben, op. cit. p. 215
28 Arendt, H.: Vita activa oder Vom tätigen Leben, op. cit., p. 301
29 To explain about the time of the child in Lévinas I refer mostly to the three books: Lévinas, E.: Totalität und Unendlichkeit. Versuch über die Exteriorität, (München 1993), Die Zeit und der Andere (Time and Other), (Hamburg 1984) in his later work his thoughts become much more radical. See: Lévinas, E.: Jenseits des Seins oder anders als Sein geschieht (Autrement qu’être ou au-delà de l’essence), (Freiburg; München 1992)
30 Lévinas, E.: Die Zeit und der Andere, op. cit., p. 48 und 51
31 Lévinas, E.: Totalität und Unendlichkeit, op. cit., p. 438
32 Here compare also Sartres notion of the connection between the visibility of a person and his/her ethical responsibility.
33 Lévinas, E.: Jenseits des Seins oder anders als Sein geschieht, op. cit., p. 311
34 Lévinas, E.: Totalität und Unendlichkeit, op. cit., p. 391
35 Lévinas, E.: Totalität und Unendlichkeit, op. cit., p. 392
36 Lévinas, E.: Totalität und Unendlichkeit, op. cit., p. 394
37 Matthews here points out the widespread misunderstanding of the Socratic method. Mostly we think of it in terms of maieutic, which would mean that the person asking the question already knows the answer (cf. “Meno”). But this is only one version of the Socratic method. Cf. Matthews, G.: Vom Nutzen der Perplexität, a.a.O, p. 11 und ders.: Socratic Perplexity and the Nature of Philosophy, (New York 1999)
38 Meyer-Drawe, K. und Waldenfels, B., Das Kind als Fremder, op. cit., p. 275
39 Matthews, G.: Dialogues with Children, op. cit., p. 2
40 Matthews, G.: Dialogues with Children, op. cit., p. 3
41 See according to the understanding of philosophy: Matthews in: ders.: Denkproben (Philosophy and the Young Child), op. it., p. 107
42 Meyer-Drawe, K. und Waldenfels, B.: Das Kind als Fremder, op. cit., p. 275
44 I’d like to remind the reader of a scene in the movie “Being John Malkovic” where the protagonist repeatedly encounters no one but himself in multiple incarnations.
A Community of Barberians1: The Community of Inquiry as a Strong Democracy

Monica Glina

Dewey argues that individuals’ capacities are released as a result of their engagements in various communities. “Society…is many associations not a single organization. Society means association, coming together in joint intercourse and action for the better realization of any form of experience which is augmented and confirmed by being shared” (Dewey, 1985, 197). The notion of education for global citizenship is a noble pursuit, but is unattainable without education for citizenship on the micro level. Noddings (2005) argues that global citizenship is “the value of working for and preserving a network of relationship and connection across lines of difference and distinctiveness, while keeping and deepening a sense of one’s own identity and integrity” (22). Before we can move toward education for global citizenship, educators need to acknowledge its importance and incorporate its practice in the classroom.

In classrooms in which content is delivered by transmission and passively acquired by students, students are effectively denied the opportunity to actively participate in a shared, thoughtful experience. However, students should have the opportunity to inquire into and dialogue about their classmates’ divergent perspectives and experiences. “The more communities are truly democratic in that they educate members to understand their own interests and actions in relation to those of others, the more they will tend to break down the barriers that separate us…” (Siegfried, 1996, 225).

Likewise, teachers should have the opportunity to dialogue with other teachers about important policies and issues that affect their students, make decisions about actions that should be taken and act for the sake of a common purpose. As a member of several groups with seemingly divergent interests, such as the community of teachers in their schools, the universal community of all teachers, the community of teachers and students, the community of teachers and administrators, etc., teachers’ capacities to be political leaders and change agents can and should be released. If they engage in a community of inquiry, teachers will have the support and inspiration to serve as change agents. Such action is sorely needed. “Teachers cannot wait for society to get it right. They will become their own worst enemies if they do not take action to help break the current deadlock of despair that envelopes public schools everywhere” (Hargreaves and Ful-lan, 1998, 4). Teachers who are members of a community of inquiry learn its value as a vehicle for political education. A community of inquiry can be a forum within which teachers can discuss their practices, the issues that affect the lives of their students, and the importance of reflecting on such matters. “Experience without contemplating the meaning or purpose of that experience is just doing; educative practice requires doing, thinking about what you’re doing, and consid-ering why it matters” (Oakes et al, 2002, 72).

The community of inquiry, as it is discussed by advocates of the approach such as Laurance Splitter and Ann M. Sharp, “is characterized by dialogue that is fashioned collaboratively out of reasoned contribution of all participants” (Splitter and Sharp, 1995, 336). Furthermore, it respectfully acknowledges the importance of regarding “the production of knowledge as contingent, bound up with human interests and activities and therefore always open to revision” (Splitter and Sharp, 1995, 337) and the importance of understanding that “the meanings that totally subjective experience do reveal are narrow and paltry compared to the meanings one can derive from communal inquiry” (Splitter and Sharp, 1995, 341). Thus, the conventional understanding of the community of inquiry seems to mesh perfectly with Dewey’s logic of inquiry and the importance of the role that the community plays in the process.

This ideal account of a community of inquiry sounds auspicious. It has been described as “an educational means of furthering the sense of community that is a precondition for actively participating in society” (Splitter and Sharp, 1995, 337). Furthermore, its proponents argue that the community of inquiry succeeds in cultivating the growth of individuals by virtue of their association with others in the community and, as a result, helps to release individuals’ capacities in much the same way that Dewey describes. Thus, a community of inquiry in which teachers participate in and dialogue about the policies that affect their students is a forum for great hope. Likewise, a classroom community of inquiry in which students are reasoning, challenging, hypothesizing, listening, corroborating, generalizing and clarifying bodes well for the future of democratic citizenship. Dialogue, though, is where the community of inquiry stops and is, therefore, insufficient for a community of inquiry interested in action. This paper will argue that a community of inquiry is an important addition to the classroom. However, in its current formulation, the
community of inquiry requires enhancements that will serve to cultivate not just good thinkers, but good thinkers who are active, thoughtful participants in the world.

The literature on the community of inquiry asserts that, "it is only to the extent that individuals have had the experience of dialoguing with others as equals, participating in shared, public inquiry that they will be able to eventually take an active role in the shaping of a democratic society" (Splitter and Sharp, 1995, 343). The literature says nothing of action but only alludes to the potential for action that comes from dialoguing. "It is only [through the conversion of classrooms into communities of inquiry] that the next generations will be prepared socially and cognitively to engage in the dialogue, judging and on-going questioning that is vital to the existence of a democratic society" (Splitter and Sharp, 1995, 343). Thus, while the literature on the community of inquiry offers an explanation of the important role of the many dimensions of dialogue, it neglects the mechanisms by which reasoned dialogue can and should become meaningful action.

Why should the community of inquiry move toward action? According to Barber (2003), action is an opportunity for a community to make a commitment to what it has decided is worth doing. Action is also a critical element in reinforcing the bonds that participants have created amongst themselves and in developing new bonds. Kluth (2000) described meaningful action as a vehicle for authentic, community-referenced instruction for all students. Meaningful action has a significant role to play in the community of inquiry. Gent and Gurecka (1998) have suggested that the potential benefits of action include creating more natural peer supports, responsible citizenship and integrated learning, while enhancing students’ ability to reflect on the impact of what they have learned as a result of the action they took. The literature on meaningful action further recognizes action as a strategy for enabling students to integrate and apply the knowledge and skills they learn in school to address significant needs in their school or communities (Yoder, Retish & Wade, 1996). Thus, action is an opportunity for a community to make a commitment to what it decides is worth doing and is a critical element in reinforcing the bonds that its participants have created amongst one another and in developing new bonds. This is accomplished as individuals work with and for each other to effect significant change.

...Programs of common work are valuable both to participants and to the communities they serve. They build a genuine sense of community in the neighborhood. Such programs...lower the pressure on central government to monopolize the governing and administering of functions.... They provide dignifying work for those who in the present economy are disqualified by age or race or training from succeeding in the private sector....By completing the cycle of citizenship begun with common deliberation...these projects provide a complete institutional framework for civic action and civic responsibility... (Barber, 2003, 211).

Furthermore, there is evidence that meaningful action by students results in enhanced personal development, such as higher self-esteem (Williams, 1990). Thus, scholars have argued that action offers various contributions to students’ educational experiences. Barber’s strong democracy shows how to incorporate action.

In his political philosophy, Barber (2003) argues for a strong democracy, which is characterized by three distinct but interrelated components: talking, deciding and doing. His discussion of the tenets of a strong democracy is grounded in a Deweyan sensibility. Barber begins by arguing that “the task of democracy must be to invent procedures, institutions, and forms of citizenship that nurture political judgment and succor common choice and action in the absence of metaphysics” (Barber, 2003, 166). Thus, Barber reiterates Dewey’s shift from the metaphysical to the pragmatic. He reinforces the Deweyan notion that ideas gain strength when they are mediated and that these ideas must be flexible enough to withstand adjustment and modification when new information is received. This complements the notion in the community of inquiry that individually formed ideas are less powerful than those that can be derived by filtering one’s notion through the multiple perspectives of members of a community. “Many citizens are bound together intimately through their common citizenship, and they interact guided by opinions that in themselves are slender and provisional but that when woven together into a communal will and a public purpose inspire powerful conviction” (Barber, 2003, 166). Thus, the communities help to release individuals’ capacities and deepen the meaning of ideas through ongoing talk about ideas. For Barber, though, this is only one of three important components of a strong democracy. He would argue that ideas, once deepened, have the potential to be willed by and for the community that is, decided upon and then acted upon.

Barber argues that political talk is at the heart of any strong democracy. He explains that, “strong democratic talk [1] entails listening no less than speaking; [2] ...is affective as well as cognitive; and [3] manifests intentionalism [which] draws [strong democratic thought] out of the domain of pure reflection into the world of action” (Barber, 2003, 174).

The first characteristic, which “entails listening no less than speaking,” seems to fall well within the conventional un-
derstanding of community of inquiry that itself allows for the many different dimensions of dialogue, including listening. Without listening, one is unable to offer counter-examples, infer consequences, recognize logical fallacies, perceive implications, and respect the other participants and perspectives in the community (Splitter and Sharp, 1995). Silence, which is highly valued by Barber, is also recognized by the community of inquiry. For Barber, “…one measure of healthy political talk is the amount of silence it permits and encourages, for silence is the precious medium in which reflection is nurtured and empathy can grow (Barber, 2003, 175). Splitter and Sharp (1995) agree with this conception of silence and see it as that which opens the way for meaningful dialogue and questioning to take place, and in a community of inquiry it can be an important indicator that the group itself is engaged in thinking: pausing to reflect, to ponder, to wonder—and to consider how to move forward (47).

Thus, both Barber and the community of inquiry regard silence as an indispensable form of participation.

The second characteristic of the role of talk, described by Barber as “affective as well as cognitive”, is paralleled by the community of inquiry. Lipman (2003) argues that having education revolve around inquiry requires that the classroom be converted into a community in which friendship and cooperation would be welcomed as positive contributions to a learning atmosphere (94).

Five of Barber’s nine functions of strong democratic talk parallel a characteristic of an ideal community of inquiry that “not only care[s] for the logical procedures but for the growth of each member of the community” (Splitter and Sharp, 1995, 338). For example, persuasion (legitimizing the argument) in Barber’s framework parallels developing and delivering a logical argument in the community of inquiry. Exploring mutuality (exploring each other’s value commitments) in Barber’s framework parallels discovering and respecting each other’s beliefs and points-of-view in the community of inquiry. Maintaining autonomy (constantly reencountering, reevaluating, and repossessing…beliefs and principles”) in Barber’s framework parallels reflection in the community of inquiry. Witnessing and self-expression (reformulation of personal interests and beliefs while allowing for disagreement and dissent) in Barber’s framework parallels a commitment to deliberation in a democracy in the community of inquiry. Reformulation and re-conceptualization (formulating a new, invigorated understanding based on mediated perspectives) in Barber’s framework parallels self-correction in the community of inquiry. Thus, there are characteristics of the community of inquiry that fit nicely into Barber’s framework and promote his desire to move talk out of the realm of pure philosophical reason and invigorate it with feeling and affect.

Ultimately, the cornerstone of the community of inquiry is strong reasoning, making good connections, making valid inferences, and recognizing logical fallacies (Splitter and Sharp, 1995). Therefore, the affective element of feeling, while present, is clearly subordinate to the cognitive element. Thus, one cannot ignore that the community of inquiry, while concerned with the development of individuals, has as its utmost concern the pursuit of logical, well-reasoned inquiry as mediated and reformulated by the members of the community. Adding Barber’s affective element to the conception of the community of inquiry clearly serves to enrich the understanding of the potential for the inquiry and bring the dialogue one step closer to political talk.

Barber’s third characteristic is that “[talk’s] intentionalism draws it out of the domain of pure reflection into the world of action” (Barber, 2003, 173). Within the conventional understanding of community of inquiry, one could generously argue that this is addressed only in the most marginal respect. The community of inquiry alludes to the potential for action by individuals who have engaged in dialogue. It acknowledges the importance of preparing individuals to take action by honing their reasoning skills. “A community of inquiry should be prepared, even eager, to apply its hard-earned value judgments in and beyond its own physical environment” (Splitter and Sharp, 1995, 181). It does, not, however, see action as its immediate goal or the community of inquiry in its conventional formulation as sufficient. “We are prepared to invoke the community of inquiry as a necessary ingredient in the formation of a better, more reasonable world, but we know only too well that it is not sufficient” (Splitter and Sharp, 1995, 182). Thus, if students are to engage in a community of inquiry, they need an enhanced version of the community in which they are moved to do more than just talk. “Strong democracy is pragmatism translated into politics in the participatory mode” (Barber, 2003, 178). Students’ talk must, ultimately, translate into action, action that would help them bring their ideas to fruition, would serve to raise consciousness and would move inquiry from the safe realm of talk to the sake of talk where risks carry few to no overt, global repercussions to an action-oriented inquiry “where participation is harder [and] the stakes are much higher” (Barber, 2003, 211). In its current formulation, the community of inquiry does not address decision-making and action as central steps, and it must.

Not all communities of inquiry need to embody strong democracy. However, this paper argues that a strong democracy includes transferable components that could enrich - and may even be critical to - a community of inquiry interested in action. While the failure to treat decision-making and action as ends is a deficiency of the community of inquiry as it is currently understood, it is a deficiency that is easily remedied. In order to accomplish this, the community of inquiry would need to be enhanced so that it encompassed decision-making and action as key focuses of the community. However, this remedy needs to be discussed with agenda-setting in mind. Agenda-setting is one of Barber’s nine functions of a strong democracy and “cannot precede talk, deliberation, and decision but must be approached as a permanent function of talk itself.” (Barber, 2003, 182) The members of the community need to allow their goals to arise organically from their
discussions. For example, students who engage in a community of inquiry cannot commit to topics they have seriously considered, or to changes they will make, until they have discussed the issues, listened to each other’s perspectives, and explored each other’s value commitments. It is only by the community’s commitment to engage in political talk that proposed agenda topics worthy of inquiry and dialogue can organically arise. Once the agenda is set, talk can occur and decisions can be made.

Since decision-making and action have been suggested as enhancements to the community of inquiry in order to propel it closer to a strong democracy, it is important to understand what Barber means by decision-making and action. Decision-making is the second phase of Barber’s strong democracy and is “predicated on will rather than choice and on judgment rather than preference” (Barber, 2003, 200). An individual may have several different preferences but may have to act against those preferences for the sake of the common will. Thus, “In place of ‘I want Y,’ the strong democrat must say, ‘Y will be good for us.’” (Barber, 2003, 200).

In a conventional community of inquiry, it is not uncommon for the group to arrive at possible discussion questions and then vote on those questions. One could argue that this process constitutes decision-making because the community clearly chooses a question to discuss, and those who did not vote for the question understand that they must go along with the choice the community has made. However, this is not consistent with Barber’s conception of decision-making.

...If [one assumes that] public willing cannot be reduced to mere choosing, then it seems evident that voting is the weakest rather than the strongest expression of the spirit of democracy and that the majority principle corrupts rather nourishes... (Barber, 2003, 202).

The choice of which question to discuss is merely an aggregate of the greatest number of “I want Y” responses in which the majority principle wins. Thus, the decision is a result of personal choice instead of “a seeing that is common” (Barber, 2003, 202) as well as a will for ourselves and not for all, both of which are contrary to successful decision-making in a strong democracy. Furthermore, it is as if “choosing” over “willing” reduces the community’s decision-making to something that cannot be taken seriously because it has no implications beyond the discussion itself. In fact, this reduction characterizes a fairly typical experience for participants in a conventional community of inquiry in which a question is chosen, but there is no substantive end in view toward which to work.

To will is to create a world or to bring about events in a world, and this act entails...the ability to create or modify reality....Or preferences are merely contemplative or speculative until we make them subjects of our wills and transform them into actions (Barber, 2003, 200).

If the community thought about the topic under discussion as something that required action, something that could be arrived at by addressing “Y would be good for us,” it would more closely resemble what Barber has in mind when he talks about decision-making.

Engaging students in an enhanced community of inquiry that exercises real political decision-making has considerable benefits for the future of democracy in its focus on the Y in “Y will be good for us.” Thus, teachers engaged in the decision-making process who wish to will a common good might decide that it is imperative to engage students in a classroom community of inquiry in its expanded formulation, that is, a community of inquiry that allows for agenda-setting through enriched talk, decision-making and action. As the test of common talk, common decision-making “serves to transform interests and to reorient identity...” (Barber, 2003, 209) and necessarily lends itself to action, which is the third phase of Barber’s strong democracy.

Earlier in this paper, I used Barber’s (2003) definition to define action as an opportunity for a community to make a commitment to what it has decided is worth doing and a critical element in reinforcing the bonds that participants have created amongst themselves and in developing new bonds. These goals are accomplished as individuals work with and for each other to effect significant change. Action brings together the community of teachers as change agents, the community of students as learners and the community of teachers and students as active, thoughtful participants in a democratic classroom community of inquiry. Each has a purpose and a contribution to make to the process, whether as performer or recipient. Thus, enriched talk, decision-making, and action can enhance a community of inquiry by embedding strong democracy at its core and imbuing it with qualities that promote change.

Implementation of an enhanced community of teachers can occur when someone identifies an authentic problem or a frustration and invites others to engage in the first step of the enhanced community of inquiry: inquiry. Teachers are surrounded by problems, so finding one will not be one of them. How, though, do you engage students in a community of inquiry that stays true to Dewey’s notion of inquiry by starting with an authentic problem?

As a strategy for teaching academic content, implementa-
tion of a classroom community of inquiry can be partnered with a social studies or a science class in which students are encouraged to identify problems about which to inquire. However, manufacturing a problem seems far less inspiring than addressing a problem that has immediate relevance. For example, consider a student who challenges a school policy or rule. The teacher who is faced with this dilemma has two choices. The teacher can either shut the student down completely or serve as a nurturing pedagogue who uses the situation as an opportunity to bring her student into the process of strong democracy.

For example, suppose that a student uses roller blades for transport to school. Rather than changing into another pair of shoes, he wears his roller blades to class. He rolls into his fifth period class, and his teacher explains that school policy prohibits him from wearing roller blades in class. The student asks, “But why? They get me to class faster!” The teacher has several options for responding.

First, she can acknowledge that the student has a right to question the policy, and, if the rationale for the policy is known, share that rationale with the student.

Possible response: You are entitled to question the policy. I questioned it myself, and the reasons for the policy make a lot of sense. Ms. Locke explained that if a student wears roller blades in school, there is a danger that the student could hurt himself or someone else.

On the other hand, if the underlying rationale is unsatisfying or unknown, the teacher can suggest that the student research the problem and see what, if anything, can be done to change it and to whom, if anyone, they might be able to present a proposal.

Possible response: You are entitled to question the policy (and I might even agree with you). However, this policy is in place, and it is my responsibility to enforce it. But, that does not mean that you shouldn’t try to do something about it.

Finally, she can explain to the student that as an employee of the school, she may or may not be willing to help him herself. However, she can reassure the student that he will be given whatever resources possible to help him pursue his inquiry, do his research, and engage in discussion.

Possible response: Because my job is at stake, I won’t be able to be too involved, but there are a lot of things you can do. You can use the Internet to find out what led to instituting the policy. You can assemble as a group and discuss the information you acquired and what your next steps should be. You can write a letter to the board of education explaining why you believe the policy to be antiquated.

This approach has several advantages. First, it dissolves the power struggle between the teacher and the student. Second, it empowers the student. Third, it engages a problem with meaning and relevance for the student. Thus, the problem serves as the (Deweyan) starting point for inquiry, and the relevance sparks the student’s (Deweyan) interest to pursue the inquiry and, hopefully, follow the problem through all the stages of the enhanced community of inquiry.

Barber’s comprehensive plan for a strong democracy offers great potential for the community of inquiry even beyond that which has been discussed thus far. For example, concepts such as empathy, continuity and imagination invite exploration. However, the purpose of this paper was to begin to show how the tenets of a strong democracy can be applied to the current construal of the community of inquiry in order to make it a powerful vehicle for political talk, political decision-making, and political action. “We have to learn how to teach children to think for themselves if we are to have a democracy worth having” (Lipman, 2003, 35). In an educational system that disempowers teachers and students with policies and procedures that are often inexplicable and prescribed content and standards that are often stifling, an enhanced community of inquiry that truly celebrates its participants as global architects committed to democracy and change proffers great hope for the state of education and a world worth living in.

References


Endnotes

1 A note to all the compulsive editors, like me: “Barbarians” is not misspelled. This is a reference to Benjamin Barber, whose theoretical framework is utilized in this paper.
2 This is understood as the way in which community of inquiry is discussed by Splitter and Sharp.
**Philosophical Quality of Children’s Thinking Patterns**

**Thecla Rondhuis**

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**Introduction**

Why do some children and adolescents, when dealing with philosophical questions, demonstrate thinking patterns with a remarkable authentic hypothetical-deductive quality? And why do others seemingly refuse to think beyond well-known and well defined certainties? A common underlying quality in the performance of thinking patterns in response to philosophical themes seems plausible, especially among children and adolescents. Would it be possible to identify a philosophical quality in their thinking patterns? How can such quality be quantified and measured? What causes the ability to perform philosophically qualified thinking patterns? Are these qualities stable, and if so, are they linked to intelligence, to personality traits? Are they dependent on age, gender or particular life experiences? In Philosophical Talent, empirical investigations into philosophical features of adolescents’ discourses (Rondhuis, 2005), these questions are addressed and systematically studied.

This article describes the scientific approach, the methods of investigation, the data, and some results of the research. Before, some remarks will be made about the essence of philosopher’s activity, followed by some actual and recorded examples of philosophical quality in communication with children and adolescents.

**Main features of philosopher’s activity**

‘Philosophical quality’ strongly relates to concepts of ‘philosophy’, ‘philosophising’, and ‘wisdom’. Attempts to characterise the mental activity of philosophising revealed a wide spectrum of results. However, philosophers are quite unanimous about the boundaries of their discipline. Exercises in thinking were based on the energetic process of questioning and answering, and are still represented by dialogues called after Socrates. In pursuing the truth, analytically and disinterestedly, philosophy arrived at its typical characteristic inclining towards indecisiveness and uncertainty. Common in all descriptions is the emphasis on producing consistent thought, independently, avoiding dogmas, certainties or definitive judgements. Three main features of philosophers’ mental activity were derived from history and from descriptions by leading current philosophers (Rondhuis & van der Leeuw, 2000):

- Analysing and reasoning qualities
- Qualities detecting ambiguities, vagueness, uncertainty and borderline explorations
- Clarification of everyday experiences in moving smoothly from theory to practice and vice versa.

Empirical studies on wisdom (Sternberg, 2003; Brugman, 2000) revealed similar qualities, referring to individual human characteristics, with a strong involvement in life pragmatics, and a penchant for dynamic interaction between knowing and experiencing. However, such empirical approach is based on the processing of real-life data mainly, while philosophers do approach their theme in a pure hypothetical-deductive way. The search for philosophical quality in this study is based on empirical investigations into philosophical (hypothetical-deductive) features of adolescents’ discourse.

**Thinking patterns of children and adolescents**

**Examples of real life expressions of philosophically qualified thinking patterns by children**

- A ten year-old girl was asked to clean the mess in her room. For a moment, she dropped silent, apparently to consider the question. Then she replied: ‘Does a mess exist if nobody sees it?’ Although the child is not aware of the great movements within epistemology, her question obviously but unintentionally points to the discussion between rationalism and empiricism. Whether something exists due to its observable qualities or just because of its logical inevitability to exist, may be conceived by schoolchildren as one of the most exiting questions. The question may generate some spiritual
unrest, especially among youngsters.

- Another example from a twelve years old boy. He was suggesting making things bigger by placing them under a microscope and subsequently inventing a formula to assess the expanded version as the real. Maybe, he is constructing a circular or contradictory argument, maybe he uncovers hidden standards, and maybe he is just fantasising without searching for consistent thoughts.

However, both, the girl of the mess and the boy of the expanding formula explore their reality and imagination through wonderment and tentative behaviour, trying to ‘capture’ the unknown. They are proceeding along their own non-predictable mental moves. While their themes refer to classical philosophical topics, they share an attitude of spiritual inquietude with philosophers of all times. Their thinking patterns are often expressed in sensitivity to ambiguity, questioning and searching for how things ‘hang together in the broadest possible sense’ (Sellars, 1963). While running the risk being criticised, children and adolescents often see no problem in disagreeing with themselves, many of them have no problem in avoiding certainties and dogmas, and easily suspend generalized judgments. Vagueness and ambiguity are the pre-eminent drivers in the process of evolving philosophically qualified concepts and ideas.

Perhaps Dennett (1993) experienced a similar fascination when questioning his audience: ‘Why are you actually so surprised that a scientific career is nothing more than an enlargement of children’s questions that are not yet answered?”

Many challenging philosophical issues can be found in everyday experiences and newspaper reports. A real life discussion between several 11 to 12 years old schoolchildren dealing with a philosophical question, generated from the discovery of a new source of the river Danube, is described below.

Steve: I don’t think we can know where the Danube starts. All we can do is look at the patterns of the water, or of the ground; see which is the oldest.

Inez: Maybe one of the tributaries is the real Danube.

Prisca: Why is the Breche not called the Mindel, or the Mindel not Breche, and why isn’t the Breche called the Danube?

Rein: That’s what people have called it. But maybe you have to give it some thought.

Steve: The Danube might well be older than people.

Prisca: How do you know?

Steve: That’s what you read in books.

Inez: But we still don’t know where the Danube starts. If you start thinking about it, your thoughts aren’t necessarily always right, are they? You can try to get it right, you can actually think: I’m right.

Steve: The truth is just a guess. And even if that guess is true, it was just a guess.

Inez: OK. One tributary is the longest one. That one can collect the most rain, and I think that it’s the oldest one too. Well, it’s possible. Because the oldest one forms the longest route, because it’s had the most time to do it. Can’t we have a look to see which tributary flows most like the Danube? About the oldest water: if it exists, it’s been in the Black Sea for ages, and you’ll never find out which river it comes from.

Jacob: Of course, it might have been rain?

Inez: Droplets of water in the Black Sea might have evaporated again and now in the Atlantic Ocean…

Jacob: All that water must have been made out of rain. And if water is water… Water has simply rained, hasn’t it? Well, in that case it must surely have rained for a very long time? In that case, it’s all just the same water, isn’t it? I think that everything is the Danube. But where does water come from? (Rondhuis, 2001)

The discussion demonstrates that its philosophical quality is more than just its reasoning quality, its correct use of arguments, and its presentation of valued knowledge or ideas. As Russell (1981) pointed out, philosophy is the no-man’s-land between theology and sciences (i.e., all definitive knowledge). The concept of philosophy is open to all attacks from the rational as well as from passion, astonishing, and imparting a degree of spiritual and intellectual uncertainty to the researcher. Many thinking patterns exposed by 11 to 12 years olds in response to philosophical questions share this intellectual turmoil.

About the philosophical content

Perhaps the most striking remark in the fragment above is Steve’s statement about truth. It carries a highly sceptical quality. Steve’s reasoning seems to be a circular argument, but it is rather a subtle paradox, similar to that of the Cretan liar. It witnesses Steve’s awareness of the arbitrary character of truth like that of Nietzsche.

Another example of the arbitrary character of sentences can be noticed in the utterances of Prisca and Rein when they asked for names of the relevant streams. ‘That’s what people have called it. But maybe…’ They seem to say that names are just constructions to make the relationship between words and reality fit. Moreover, the fragment demonstrates several expressions of ‘not knowing,’ especially by Steve (first utterance) and Inez (utterances starting with ‘But we still don’t know…’ and
‘OK…’). Trying to get a handle on the identity problem, Inez reasons from space into time as the longest route might offer the best option for containing the oldest waters. In her opinion, the river’s identity depends on its shape, moving away from the initial question on where the Danube actually originates. Identity is one of the main issues in modern metaphysics.

About children’s answer finding procedures

The quest for the origin of the Danube seems to be driven by knowledge displayed at an early stage. According to Steve (in the first utterance), observation of the senses is the ultimate base of knowledge, while Inez is likely to follow a more rational path of reasoning and deduction. Questioning is, and will always be the starting point of philosophising. ‘Why is the Breche not called the Mindel?’ Such expressions of wonderment, including Jacob’s last utterance, demonstrate a form of openness to new experiences and knowledge. But also performances of tentative behaviour play a role here. Children seem to experiment continuously with cognitive problems and possible solutions. Their trials are often reflected in the use of special words like maybe and other expressions of modalities: might be; you can try; it’s possible; might have; can’t we have a look?

Assessing philosophical quality

How to measure qualities of not knowing and qualities that fan out all directions? Qualities of divergent explorative thinking patterns hamper judgment by conventional criteria, referring to the discussion content and to evaluative norms, such as presuppositions of maturity, requirements of correctness and cultural justified agreements. To uncover the philosophical quality of thinking patterns, a new conceptual framework must be developed. This was realised by matching conceptual considerations derived from the main features of philosophy with observations of real life expressions by children and adolescents dealing with philosophical questions and subsequently by processing their oral expressions of thinking patterns as a collection of observable and countable philosophical indicators.

Philosophical indicators are determined by grouping of philosophical meaning components stored in linguistic expressions of youngsters. In its most simple mode, these comprise specific words, as verbs of modality or causal conjunctions. More complicated modes of expression may be noticed from the discourse above. A variety of semantic, pragmatic, and syntactical features are collected to identify philosophically qualified thinking patterns. They may differ in quality and are not detectable in one dimension only. However, all of them grasp philosophical meaning components. Following ‘Grounded Theory’ (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), such components were grouped into indicator categories. Once indicator categories were saturated and no new phenomena of expressions appeared, six philosophical quality indicators were identified and assessed. Each indicator covers a group of linguistic expressions; together, they construct the conceptual framework for assessing philosophical qualities.

Six philosophical indicators:

- Sensitivity to ambiguity, vagueness, and uncertainty, awareness of the multiple ways to understand events (‘it looks like’, ‘seemingly’, ‘in principle’)
- Questioning and offering openness, the apparent readiness to meet the unknown, and denial to accept views without further ado
- Tentative and experimental behaviour (‘perhaps’, several expressions of modalities)
- Epistemic position with respect to the propositional content of the utterance, sometimes showing reflection, sometimes depicting detachment between speaker and his declaration (‘I think…’, or ‘according to me’)
- Trials to reason and analyse how things hang together in the broadest possible sense (causal junctures, analogies, comparisons)
- Anecdotal quality, upholstering of ideas and concepts with real-life stories

All indicators can be attributed to oral expressions only if they are meant as such and not used as fillers. The latter indicator, anecdotal quality, does not represent individual qualities, but rather depicts philosophical qualities in the context of the entire discussion only.

Tetralogue

A measuring instrument was developed: the tetralogue, a standardised philosophical discussion. In each tetralogue its four participants exchange their trains of
thought as they address a philosophical topic. Tetralogues are ignited by key questions that are selected voluntarily by their participants and are chaired by qualified experts, who were bound by predetermined rules concerning interference. So, the tetralogue is a discussion model offering the opportunity to identify, register, and count indicators of philosophical quality.

**Numbers and variables**

Indicators are scored from 14,393 utterances, recorded in 70 tetralogues with 215 participants. Participants were categorized in:

- two age categories: 11 to 13 and 14 to 16 years old
- two educational levels: high (gymnasium level) and low (vocational school level)
- two categories concerning the regularity of life course

Levels of regularity of life course were introduced to search for the influence of exceptional circumstances on the philosophical quality of thinking patterns. An irregular life course in this context includes: 1) living with a physical disability, 2) living in imprisonment, or 3) living without natural parents.

**Objectivity and reliability**

Objectivity and reliability of the indicator assessment and of the scoring method was demonstrated by proving an inter-rater agreement (average Cohen’s Kappa: 0.78), and by good split-half ($r = 0.84^{**}$) and test-retest ($r = 0.53^{**}$) coefficients. These results prove that random factors do not substantially influence the tetralogue’s total indicator score. Moreover, the five assessed indicators judging individual performances appear to be internally consistent with a homogeneity alpha of 0.8.

**Numerical indices of philosophical quality**

Two numerical indices were constructed: pq and PQ, as separate indicator frequencies do not simply reflect philosophical qualities. The pq index expresses the philosophical quality of individually performed thinking patterns and is basically constructed of a balanced ratio of five indicator frequencies. For example, the single presence of an epistemic position, like in “I think the car is green”, is relatively worthless, while some combinations of indicators, showing sensitivity to ambiguity and trying to reason at the same time, signify a higher degree of philosophical quality than the sum of these indicator frequencies only.

The PQ index refers to group performances (tetralogues), measuring the philosophical power of collectively performed thinking patterns exceeding that of individual contributions. In the latter, anecdotal qualities and dialogue events of jointly generated, qualified combinations of indicator frequencies were taken into account as well.

**Testing the validity of pq and PQ indices**

To check the plausibility of the hypothesis that PQ and pq indices really represent a measurement of philosophically qualified thinking patterns, these indices should be proved to be related, empirically, to independently obtained other measures of such quality. This is done in three ways.

- At an early stage, all tetralogues were judged on a [0-5] point-scale by experts based on video registrations only while taking relevant overview criteria into consideration (Rondhuis, 2005). Calculated PQ indices are compared with these earlier obtained rough estimates. A Pearson correlation of $r = 0.54^{**}$ proves convergence between PQ indices and expert estimates of the same tetralogues. This correlation is low enough to show distinctiveness between the two measures, for the PQ index is the result of objective, detailed, theory-based procedures and is expected to out-perform any crude judgement.

- Indices of individual performances (pq) of 25 participants are compared with pq indices of the same participants in different tetralogues resulting in a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.61^{**}$. This correlation demonstrates considerable convergence of individual performances over two tetralogues and supports the hypothesis that pq indices do characterise individual performances. If this observed trans-situational convergence was the result of some constant aspect of the tetralogues, it should also be observed between different co-participants contributing to the same pair of tetralogues. However, no significant correlation could be demonstrated between pq indices of participants in the first tetralogue with pq indices of a random selection of co-participants in the second tetralogue. This provides strong evidence for the pq index to reflect individual characteristics.

- Finally, relationships between calculated philosophical qualities and some characteristics of individual participants were explored. On theoretical grounds, indices for philosophical quality were expected to be related to educational level, openness to experience as a personality trait, and divergent thinking patterns. These expected relationships between pq indices and measured participants’ characteristics appear to be replicated empirically.
Indeed.
Through these findings, the construct validity of the tetralogue as a measuring tool for philosophical quality is further corroborated.

Individual characteristics of tetralogue participants can now be related to measured philosophical qualities (pq indices) of the same participants. The empirically replicated nomological network of the individual philosophical quality is shown below:

**Participant’s characteristics**

The following characteristics were registered to put them on record in relation to individual philosophical qualities:

- Biographical details: age, gender, educational level (= school), the experience of a regular or an irregular life course
- Five different personality traits according to McCrea and Costa: openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, emotional stability
- Convergent intelligence: non verbal intelligence and word fluency.

All tetralogue participants were tested on personality traits by the Neo FFI (McCrea & Costa, 1990) and on non verbal intelligence by the Raven test (Raven, Court & Raven, 1977). They were asked for their Grade Point Average for language performance (GPA) and did complete a questionnaire with biographic details.

The individual philosophical quality (pq) proves to be significantly and positively correlated with openness to experience as a personality trait \( r = 0.27^{**} \), with participant’s educational level \( r = 0.44^{**} \), and with intelligence, but to a limited extent (non verbal: \( r = 0.15^* \), verbal: \( r = 0.20^{**} \)), indicating a difference between philosophical qualified and convergent thinking patterns. At the same time, no relation is found between philosophical quality (pq and PQ) and age, although, age variance was affected by the transition from primary to secondary school. Also, no relation is found between philosophical quality and irregularity in life course. The absence of the latter presupposed relation may be attributed –at least partly, to the apparent impossibility of determining the characteristics of a ‘regular’ life course.

A limited follow-up study offered some indications that individual philosophical quality may be related to habitual environmental circumstances that may hone, feed or discourage this quality. I followed four boys, during two and a half years, moving from primary school to secondary school of the low-edu-
cational level type. Some months after the boys’ transition, their philosophical quality show downward trends, apparently influenced by the new school environment and peers.

**Philosophy for children**

As measurements of philosophical quality were determined for young people, the results of this study may be compared to research on ‘Philosophy for Children’ as developed by Lipman (1985, 1991). Most of the observations in literature address educational goals and the salutary effects of Lipman’s Philosophy for Children (PfC) programme. Some progress in reasoning skills of children following this programme was noticed by the New Jersey Test of Reasoning Skills (NYTRS) (Shipman 1983). However, this effect is limited in scope and dependent on the curriculum. Many evaluation experiments focus on improvement of skills, attitudes, and qualities by philosophical discussions in the classroom and do not always clarify why these external effects are specific to the PfC programme (Santi 1993; Yule and Glaser 1994). They often lack any objective, reliable, and valid base and have not demonstrated effects, internally (Cebas & Moriyon, 2003).

Pointing to the philosophical content of a discussion and commenting on children’s way of participating in these discussions alone does not address the philosophical quality of thinking patterns. Only few researchers noticed the relevance of children’s philosophically qualified thinking patterns in an informal manner. Yule and Glaser (1994) analysed transcripts of philosophical discussions through a list of analytical skills designed by Lipman (1985). They focused on the quality of the dialogue and divergent thinking patterns; they recognised the relevance of the ‘role of imagination, stories, and anecdotes’. Matthews (1994) analysed philosophically qualified thinking patterns of children in primary schools. In a comparable approach Freese (1990) described thinking patterns of children, but he inferred them from literature and his own youth.

**Philosophical quality vis-à-vis psychological criteria**

Matthews (1994) noted the authenticity of children’s thinking patterns which were recognised as philosophically qualified by professional philosophers. He compares these patterns with Piaget’s stages of cognitive development. But, authenticity and inventiveness do not fit presupposition of evaluative judgement to which the concept of childhood is submitted. Philosophically speaking, children’s thinking patterns must be evaluated openly and without any goal orientation, presupposing a stage of maturity mastering cognitive operations (including moral and political correct concepts). Definite answers and definite assessment of the right and wrong do not exist in philosophy. Do colours exist when nobody can see them? From a philosophical point of view, even physical truths are open to alternative interpretations. Children’s thinking patterns may develop beyond well-defined steps, and sometimes they are even ‘successful’ by accident. On the other hand, conventional developmental psychologists consider children’s thinking patterns related to the cognitive human development into correct thinking according to norms assessed for adults. However, neither a development into correct concepts, nor a cognitive development into maturity is taken for granted in order to do justice to a level of cognitive inquietude and of being aware of the tentative and arbitrary nature of philosophically qualified thinking patterns.

**What does philosophical quality mean?**

In conclusion, this study (Rondhuis, 2005) proves that thinking patterns performed by children and adolescents in standardised philosophical discussions contain
a measurable philosophical quality. This quality refers to a complex of cognitive factors, including sensitivity to ambiguities and uncertainty, reasoning and analysing qualities, and the ability to transfer smoothly from concrete to abstract and vice versa. Philosophically qualified thinking patterns do not converge and consequently are not related to traditional measurements of cognitive (including moral) development. Philosophy as mental activity is clarified by identifying this quality as a distinctive domain of cognitive behaviour. The relevance of the objective, reliable, and valid assessment of indices of \( pq \) and \( PQ \) is their discriminative power, identifying different degrees of philosophically qualified performance (thinking patterns) of young people. Such discriminating processes may be extended for evaluation and selection purposes in education and may also be utilized for recruiting candidates for specific professions which demand high abilities of hypothetico-deductive skills, skills of systematic questioning, and of transcending smoothly through the different domains of experience.

**Paradox**

Measuring and assessing supposedly intangible philosophical qualities might be perceived as paradoxical, as philosophy is supposed to be free from any clear, final goal. On the other hand, for describing philosophy, for evaluating philosophical essays or discussions, and for removing of philosophy from interminable thinking patterns, measurements are desirable. Therefore, philosophical thinking patterns would need to be described in terms that allow comparison, subordinate to a measurement tool. However, the empirically achieved results reflect valid approximations to the philosophical quality concept, not pretending to cover the entire concept.

The contribution of this study is that it proves that philosophical quality as a talent exists indeed and can be measured. It also demonstrates how philosophical issues may challenge the brain powers of adolescents and may drive their authentic thinking when dealing with philosophical topics. As to *Philosophy for Children*, this research provides a mechanism to quantify Matthews’ and Freese’s qualitative approach of philosophically qualified thinking patterns of children and adolescents.

** means a significance level of \( p < 0.05 \)

* means a significance level of \( p < 0.01 \)

**References**


Philosophy for Children

The “thinking skills” intervention in this study was an adaptation of Lipman’s (1981) “Philosophy for Children” (P4C). The Philosophy for Children program (Lipman, 1981, 2003; Lipman & Sharp, 1978; Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyon, 1980;) has often been thought of as a separate program (e.g., McGuinness, 1999). However, the methodology of Philosophy for Children (P4C) can be infused into a range of subject domains (as discussed in Fisher, 1999), even though it initially tends to be used with children as a separate and novel activity.

P4C emphasizes the development of critical reasoning skills, as indicated by the ability of students to demonstrate justification of their own views and justification as to why they agree or disagree with views expressed by others. There are no right or wrong answers, and the emphasis on peer dialogue and negotiating consensus leads toward much greater student ownership of the process than does traditional direct instruction by the teacher. Consequently, obtaining the views of the participant children is an important part of any evaluation. Additionally, it is important not to narrow the enquiry to only cognitive questions, since positive social and emotional outcomes might have accrued, intentionally or serendipitously.

Philosophy for Children incorporates features that Adey (2001) has suggested are key for promoting cognitive skills and educational attainment, including the thoughtful dialogue Carnell and Lodge (2002) describe as necessary for promoting rich learning environments. The teacher-student and student-student interaction involved engage with socio-cultural theories of effective learning (Mercer, 2000; Vygotsky, 1962). Black and Wiliam (1998) have also referred to the need for promoting dialogue as part of ‘formative assessment’ practices that contribute to significant learning gains and help to raise educational achievement. Philosophy for Children also encourages children to become more aware of their thinking and learning in ways that are consistent with the strong evidence provided by Watkin (2001) concerning the role of meta-cognitive processes in thinking and learning.

One of the ways that emotional development might be stimulated is through the development of dialogue. One element of dialogue is that it seeks to challenge beliefs and related feelings through discussion, argument and thought. Park (2001) argued the case for the promotion of emotional literacy skills through the development of dialogue skills in the classroom. Weare (2000) commented that well-planned co-operative work in small groups had an essential part to play in developing emotional and social competencies, such as listening, sensitivity, negotiation, conflict resolution and co-operation. Gordon (2003) suggested that the ancient Greek philosophers taught philosophy to encourage a way of life that would enable their students to control (self-regulate) their passions and to armor their souls against adversity so that they would die content and without fear. This seems to be the ancient Greek pedigree for the contemporary concept of emotional resilience.

Trickey and Topping (2004) offered a systematic review of controlled outcome studies of the P4C method in primary (elementary) and secondary (high) schools. Ten studies met the stringent criteria for inclusion, measuring outcomes by norm-referenced tests of reading, reasoning, cognitive ability, and other curriculum-related abilities, by measures of self-esteem and child behavior, and by child and teacher questionnaires. All studies showed some positive outcomes. The mean effect size was 0.43 with low variance, indicating a consistent moderate positive effect for P4C on a wide range of outcome measures.

Intervention: Philosophical Enquiry

Haynes (2002) summarized the process of philosophical enquiry in nine steps:

- Getting started – agreeing on rules of interaction, beginning with relaxation exercise etc.
- Sharing a stimulus to prompt enquiry.
- Pause for thought.
- Questioning – the students think of interesting or puzzling questions.
- Connections – making links between the questions.
Choosing a question to begin an enquiry.
Building on each other’s ideas during which the teacher has to strike a balance between encouraging the children to follow on from each other’s ideas and allowing related lines of enquiry to open up.
Recording discussion - graphic mapping.
Closure and review - summarizing, reflecting on the process itself, whether minds were changed etc.

The present study used contemporary program materials - ‘Thinking through Philosophy’ (Cleghorn, 2002) - which describes the stages in each lesson in similar terms:

- Focusing exercise – this is scripted and aimed at creating an alert but relaxed state in which the children’s attention is more ‘in the present’.
- Linking with the previous week – this reinforces memory of what has taken place the previous week and provides an opportunity to bring forward any new related thinking that has taken place during the previous week.
- Stimulus - the story or poem is read aloud by the teacher.
- Pair/group work – this provides an opportunity to check that the children’s initial understanding of the story.
- Dialogue – this involves the teacher encouraging students to:
  * communicate their views in response to an agreed subject of ‘enquiry’.
  * support their views with reasons.
  * listen respectfully to views being expressed
  * indicate whether they agree or disagree with those views
  * provide alternative viewpoints
  * gradually develop a process of dialogue (over a period of many months) that helps the class construct a deeper understanding (or better solution) than would be possible individually.
- Closures – this involves encouraging children to reflect on the discussion and how their thinking might have progressed during that discussion.
- Thought for the week - this involves highlighting a practical idea drawn from the story to provide ‘homework’ for the rest of the week to help relate that idea to real situations outside that story.

A key element is the emphasis on developing a community approach to ‘enquiry’ in the classroom. The process is characterized by use of open-ended questioning by the teacher. Open-ended Socratic questions challenge the children to think more independently. Such questions are also instrumental in promoting reciprocal dialogue between ‘teacher and student’ and ‘student and student’.

In-service professional development for this project was led and coordinated by Cleghorn, head-teacher of a local elementary school, together with two senior teachers experienced in leading classroom enquiry. During the period of the evaluation, the combined time allocation of these three teachers to the initiative amounted to the equivalent of 0.2 of a full time teacher. Participating teachers from the last two elementary years (aged 10-12 years, no middle schools) received a total of 10-12 hours of professional development during the first year of the initiative. Pre-service, this included a full day input plus observation of expert classroom practitioners and debriefing with that practitioner. Subsequently, each term participant teachers attended a two-hour after-school group session to share progress and talk through issues arising. The teachers thus formed their own “community of enquiry”.

Further support was available from the seconded teachers on a ‘call-out’ basis.

Aim

The project which was the focus of the present study had already shown gains in cognitive ability (Topping & Trickey, 2006a) and in quality of interaction and dialogue (Topping & Trickey, 2006b). The present study investigated what qualitative advantages and disadvantages were subjectively perceived post hoc by student, class teacher and head teacher participants, after seven months of weekly collaborative enquiry, in response to open-ended prompts. It was expected that some participants in each group would report benefits in the cognitive, social and emotional domains. The intervention itself continued beyond the data gathering.

Methodology

Context and Sample

The project was based in a small school district (local education authority) of mixed socio-economic status but including pockets of severe deprivation. The local education authority refused to accept random sampling for this study. All class teachers from the last two years of elementary school were asked to a meeting where the attendees were invited to participate in the first round of the intervention. All schools expressed interest, but existing commitments to school development plans left eight schools that were free to engage with the first round. The eight initial experimental schools were thus to some degree self-selected, but not on the basis of the highest enthusiasm. The evaluation included other assessments in addition to socio-emotional measures. To make workload and curriculum intrusion acceptable, different types of measurement were randomly shared across the 8 schools. The 77 children involved in the present study were randomly selected from participating classes of 11-year-old students in three randomly selected participating schools. Anecdotal feedback was obtained from all head teachers and participating class teachers in all experimental schools.
**Measures**

Data were collected from students, teachers and head-teachers. Students were asked to complete a questionnaire (Appendix 1) that had been designed to elicit their views and experiences of P4C. More open-ended feedback from teachers involved in the P4C lessons came from two sources - verbal comments recorded during group-feedback meetings arranged to support the teachers and written comments in observation diaries that teachers had been asked to maintain as the sessions progressed. Head-teachers also recorded their open-ended observations as the initiative progressed.

A draft student questionnaire was first piloted with a group of 12 students and their teacher, and revised accordingly. Then 77 students completed the final questionnaire anonymously. The questions consisted of one closed (multiple-choice) question and nine open-ended questions (see Appendix 1). Two of the open-ended questions (5 and 6) were preceded by a yes/no choice before an open-ended question. All student responses for each open-ended question were repeatedly sifted for emerging themes, then all assigned to the firm categories so developed. Those responses that did not readily fall into a category were termed ‘Other’.

The reliability of this approach was gauged by obtaining blind inter-rater comparisons. Two raters allocated a sample of the overall student responses to categories. The number of agreed ratings from two independent raters was divided into the total number of student responses and multiplied by 100 to calculate the percentage of occasions that the two raters were in agreement. This yielded inter-rater reliability of 85%. Variability was noted between the reliability of the ten questions. The lowest reliability was recorded in Question 10 (What is thinking?). This question was also the only question that failed to achieve significance in a Chi Square analysis (below). Overall, the inter-rater comparison suggested that the measure was sufficiently reliable for the purpose of this study.

Although 77 students participated in this exercise, the total number of categorizable responses varied for each question because occasionally students would record more than one categorizable response, or occasionally a student would fail to record any response for a particular question.

**Analysis**

Given the categorical (nominal) nature of the data, analysis with the Chi-squared test was considered appropriate.

**Results**

**Student Questionnaire**

The student responses to each question within categories were analyzed to determine whether they differed significantly from random responding. Table 1 indicates for each question the probability of that distribution of categorized responses occurring by chance (with the caveat that response options for questions 2 to 10 are not fully independent or singular). Seven out of the ten questions were significant at the 0.005 level and two questions at 0.04. Thus there is high confidence that students were responding thoughtfully rather than randomly. Only one question (Question 10) was not significant.

Categorical responses to each question are now considered in turn, with some selected verbatim quotations. ‘Question 1’ was a closed question. It was designed to give some indication as to how acceptable the process of enquiry was to the students. Over half of the students (52%) indicated they had enjoyed the experience of participating in the classroom community of enquiry (Figure 1). A small proportion (5%) indicated that they had not enjoyed the experience and a sizable group rated themselves as in between. It would have been interesting to compare these results to another type of lesson. The analysis of ‘Question 1’ does suggest that students generally responded favorably to this process. However, there was evidence of variation in positivity of response between schools. This might have reflected differences in teacher implementation or differences in the students. School B had 22 students responding “very much”, only 2 “in between”, and only 1 “not much”. For School A the numbers were 10, 13 and 1 respectively, and for School C 8, 18 and 2.

Question 2 asked what it was about the enquiry lessons that the students liked. The student responses to ‘Question 2’ were grouped into five categories, the last of which was “Other” and served to ‘mop up’ ‘hard-to-allocate’ responses.
(Table 2). The largest group of responses (49%) was associated with some aspect of the process (e.g. the questions, the discussion, etc) of enquiry. Another large group (29%) of students commented on specific aspects of the content of the program such as the calming exercise or the story. Smaller groups of responses referred to particular philosophical themes (8%) such as ‘fairness’ or emotional factors (7%) that suggested a number of students felt better after a philosophical enquiry (e.g. You can say what you think and nobody will laugh). The ‘Other’ group included references to the fact that this particular lesson did not involve writing.

Other verbatim responses:
- I like solving mysteries and being able to talk about things
- I like some of the discussions because you get to hear what everybody’s ideas are
- It makes you think and it makes you use your head and some of the stories are funny
- There is no yes or no answer.

Table 2
Distribution of Liked Aspects of Enquiry Lessons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Category</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Process</td>
<td>I liked using your brain and having discussions &amp; debate, I like when we sit down and think of questions</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Content</td>
<td>I like the stories the best, I like the exercise and the story</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Philosophical theme</td>
<td>I liked freedom and fairness, I liked each story because it has moral behind it</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Emotional factors</td>
<td>You can say what you think and nobody will laugh, I like it because it is good for relaxing</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Other</td>
<td>I like it because there is no writing involves no writing, You don’t have to write anything</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3
Distribution of Disliked Aspects of Enquiry Lessons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Category</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Content</td>
<td>Some poems are hard to follow because they have hard words in them, I find the calming exercise distracting</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Boring</td>
<td>I find it boring, It can be too long</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Lack of certainty in answers</td>
<td>I don’t like it when you get a story and there is no answer to it in the end, I don’t like the questions much because they don’t tell you answers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Process</td>
<td>I don’t like the discussions, I don’t like the problem solving much</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Nothing not liked</td>
<td>Nothing I like it all, Nothing really</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Other</td>
<td>Because I am tired before we start thinking</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of responses</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 3 asked what it was about collaborative enquiry the students did not like (Table 3). Only 25 students responded to this question and two said they liked, rather than disliked, the lessons. Ten students commented negatively on aspects of the content of the program, such as the poems or the calming exercise. Five students included the word ‘boring’ in their responses. Interestingly, four students commented on the lack of certainty in the issues that were discussed and appeared to be uncomfortable with this change of departure from most classroom activities.

Question 4 sought information about changes that the students had noticed in the philosophical enquiry lessons as these had progressed. The largest response (35%) was in relation to the perception of increased participation as the sessions progressed. In many ways this links with the third largest response category (17%) that was concerned with improvements in confidence as the enquiry lessons progressed. Although the question was designed to elicit information about perceptions of change in the philosophical enquiries themselves, a number of children (22%) commented on more general changes in social behavior beyond the philosophy lesson. A smaller group commented on perceptions of improvements in concentration and listening as the philosophy lessons progressed.

**Table 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Category</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Increased participation</td>
<td>I think people are able to speak out more than they used to,</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have noticed more people taking part</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Changes in social behavior</td>
<td>There is more peace in the school and everyone learns to like one another.</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There are also no bullies in our school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have noticed that other people co-operate more than they used to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Improved confidence</td>
<td>I have noticed that we have all gained more confidence than in the beginning,</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have become very confident and am less shy than I was</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Improved listening &amp; concentration</td>
<td>We concentrate better,</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have noticed that people are listening more</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 None</td>
<td>I don’t think there are any changes at all</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Other</td>
<td>I have thought more about my answers</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Responses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>73</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other verbatim responses:
- We are getting more answers and digging deeper in the story
- Children take part more
- People respect things more
- People answer more
- I have noticed that people are more calm and listen better.
- People communicate more than they used to
- People look at things differently
- I see people a lot more confident than when they used to be shy.
- I think I have become more confident and I am able to speak out more confidently
- Silly behavior and nonsense has decreased and everyone listens
- Before Philosophy I had a short temper and now I can control it
- I’ve seen that people use their brains more and have also become more confident
- I’ve noticed that I’ve been more kind to my friends.

Question 5 explored how the program might have “helped” individual children. These responses fell into five categories, the fifth of which was ‘Other’ and included any responses that could not be categorized under the first four categories. There was also a small sixth category for students who were unable to think of any ways that the program was found helpful to them (Table 5).

The largest group of responses (46%) were associated with aspects of “emotional intelligence” - changes in the ability to self-manage feelings (e.g. better anger management) or increased empathy (e.g. being more sympathetic to others feelings). The second largest group of responses (30%) was associated with the individuals’ perception that they could think better as a result of their involvement. A smaller group
of children (9%) thought the Philosophy lessons helped them to concentrate better. The responses categorized under ‘Other’ included some interesting and pertinent responses such as ‘It has helped me to realize what is important in life’.

Other verbatim responses:
- I think it has helped me because you are thinking about others instead of yourself all the time
- I use the calming exercise at home when I am angry
- Before I do something I think about it a bit more
- I have been able to make better decisions
- I think the philosophy lessons have helped me because I think more and don’t react as quick

An additional analysis was undertaken of one of the categories, i.e. the emotional intelligence category that accounted for 46% of responses to the question. This further analysis of 37 student responses (Figure 2) shows that 43% of emotional intelligence responses were associated with an improved ability to more appropriately manage feelings, 38% with improved relationships and 19% with increased empathy toward the feelings of others.

Question 6 sought an indication of the extent to which the effects of philosophical enquiry transferred to other lessons. 66% of children reported that changes had taken place in other lessons as a result of participating in Philosophy lessons. The largest transfer (29%) was perceived to be that of improving academic performance in different aspects of the curriculum outside philosophy (such as in math or reading). Close behind (24%) was considered to be a general impact on listening and concentration. Another significant group of responses (20%) considered that philosophical enquiry had impacted the quality of their thinking outside the Philosophy lessons. These responses suggested that the students thought that philosophical enquiry had a wide impact beyond the actual lessons themselves.

Other verbatim response:
- We are more serious and mature.

Question 7 aimed to elicit further information about what the students thought they had learned as the program proceeded. All but 5% of students could think of something else they had learned. The largest category (34%) of student responses consisted of comments relating to philosophical themes such as beauty or happiness and suggested deepened thinking about such themes. The next largest categories were those (22%) that thought they had learned increased confidence and those (20%) who had learned to perceive others a little differently as a result of their experience of philosophical enquiry. Referring again to learning how to improve their thinking accounted for a further 14% of responses.

Other verbatim responses:
- I have learned that we are all different and we should be

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Category</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Emotional intelligence</td>
<td>Before Philosophy I had a short temper and now I can control it,</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They have made me think a lot more about my feelings so I can be more</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sympathetic if someone is upset or help them if they’re angry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Improved thinking</td>
<td>I think it has helped me to think more and be more aware,</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It has helped me think better about things and to discuss things better</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Concentration</td>
<td>It has helped me pay attention more,</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It has helped me to concentrate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Changed perceptions</td>
<td>I look at things differently</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Nothing</td>
<td>I don’t think they have helped me</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Other</td>
<td>It has helped me realize what is important in life,</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They have helped me learn about some issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
happy with who we are

- I have learned how to respect other people and the world
- I have learned that you should make the most of your life
- I have learned that beauty is not just on the outside at all
- Man belongs to Earth, Earth does not belong to man

- I’ve learned that there is no right or wrong answer and that in life you have to think very carefully
- It made me become fair
- I have learned not everyone has to be perfect and I have learned to like myself more.

Question 8 enquired whether children felt that their views had changed as result of their involvement in the Thinking

Table 6
Perceptions of Changes in Other Lessons Stemming from the Intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Category</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Improved academic performance</td>
<td>I’ve noticed I’ve become a better writer, reader and better at math, It helps you read better</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Improved listening and concentration</td>
<td>People listen more in other lessons than they used to, In math I concentrate more</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 More considered thinking</td>
<td>If you are doing a math lesson for example it helps you think what you are doing</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Social changes</td>
<td>The changes are that other children participate more in other lessons, In tests instead of being stuck now you think better</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Changes in personal feelings</td>
<td>Sometimes before I do a test I do the calming exercise, I think people tell more how they feel</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 None</td>
<td>I haven’t noticed any changes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Responses</strong></td>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7
Perceptions of Other Learning during Philosophy Lessons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Category</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Deepened thinking about philosophical themes</td>
<td>I have learned that beauty is within us, I didn’t know I had thoughts on happiness and things like that before</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Increased confidence</td>
<td>To concentrate more and be more confident, To defend myself</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Changes in perception or understanding of others</td>
<td>I have learned to respect people just a little bit more, People don’t act the way they look</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 To think</td>
<td>In life you have to think very carefully, That it is better to think before you take action</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Other</td>
<td>I don’t know exactly what I learned but I learned something, I have learned how to say ‘yes’ and ‘no’ easier to people</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
through Philosophy program - 79% said Yes. In terms of detail, this question produced a smaller response (47), but this still represented well over half the students sampled. This may have been in part due to children experiencing ‘questionnaire fatigue’ toward the end of the questionnaire or may have been because they had more difficulty in thinking of how their views had changed as a result of their involvement in philosophical enquiry. Of the children who did respond, 42% suggested that they were more inclined to defer judgments rather than reacting impulsively. Exactly 1/3 of students who responded commented that their involvement in enquiry had impacted their perceptions in some specific way. This was a change of perception either of other people or of philosophical themes such as happiness or beauty. The remainder of responses, with one exception, were grouped under the miscellaneous category of ‘Other’.

Other verbatim responses:
- It has made me look at two sides of an opinion
- I no longer lash out at people who hack me in football
- Before I just thought what my parents said was right, but now I listen to other voices as well.

Question 9 asked for one thing that makes philosophy different from any other subject you have in school - and also followed the trend toward diminishing responses toward the end of the questionnaire. However, over half the sample of 77 students responded. Their responses to this question were of particular interest, given that they provided further clarification of what it is that makes the process of the classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Category</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>More considered view before acting</td>
<td>Before I used to try to get things done quickly as possible but now I spend more time thinking about them, When everybody has tells their thought, that’s when I changed my mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Changed perceptions and thinking</td>
<td>It has made me look at other people differently, It has made me change my views on beauty because it has helped me realize that beauty is within you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>We let everybody have their own opinion now, It has become a lot easier to answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>It hasn’t really</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Responses 47

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Category</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The extent to which you have to think</td>
<td>I use my head more in Philosophy, In Philosophy you use your brain more than in any other subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>More talking, no writing</td>
<td>It is an oral activity, Its different because in Philosophy you only discuss it instead of writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>No right or wrong answers</td>
<td>It never has a wrong answer – anything you say is your opinion, There are no right or wrong answers in Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>More calm and relaxing</td>
<td>In other subjects you don’t do a relaxing exercise first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>It lets you see other views, you can speak openly, Its different when you go into groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Responses 43
‘community of enquiry’ different from other classroom activities. Nearly half (46%) of those who responded commented on the level of cognitive challenge built into this process and contrasted this with other classroom experiences. However the other categories were also illuminating. For 16% of the children, an essential difference between philosophical enquiry and these other categories was that it was a purely oral activity and devoid of any written demands. Similarly, 16% or those who responded noted that there were no wrong answers in this activity.

Other verbatim responses:
- Getting your brain to work overtime
- Philosophy is different from other subjects because you’re using your brain and senses.

Question 10 asked “What does the word ‘thinking’ mean to you?” Perhaps unsurprisingly, given its open-ended nature, this was the only question that failed to achieve significance in the Chi Square analysis. One should therefore be cautious when drawing any wider conclusions from this particular question. It was interesting that most responses referred to the ‘brain’ or the ‘head’ or the ‘mind’ and were generally concerned with these three actually ‘doing’ something purposefully.

Other verbatim responses:
- When you really concentrate on something and open your mind.
- Concentrating on something and deciding what your opinion is.
- Doing things right and choosing what you feel about things.

**Head Teacher and Class Teacher Evaluation**

Head-teachers made written comments as to whether any changes had been noted and, if so, what these changes were. While these can be regarded as anecdotal in nature, they add an additional perspective from outside the classroom. The comments of the head-teachers were consistent with the analysis of the children’s questionnaires. Selected verbatim comments are given below:

- There was an improvement in students’ ability to participate in discussion and listen to each other
- All children in the class developed more confidence. Children who wouldn’t before offer opinions were now doing so
- The thinking skills program impacted on other areas of the curriculum in terms of children’s questioning and respect for the views of others
- Discussions were more interesting because their thinking was focused and they were able to formulate their ideas and opinions
- Children were able to structure an argument better
- Students generally appear more able to be reflective and thoughtful
- I was absolutely astounded by the depth and clarity of students thinking and reasoning
- Listening skills improved, especially in listening to the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Category</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 References to ‘brain’ or ‘head’</td>
<td>When you have a picture in your head of something, Making your brain work</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 References to ‘mind’ or applications of thinking</td>
<td>When you put your mind to something and come up with a suitable answer, When you use your mind to do things and say things</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Other</td>
<td>Concentrating on one thing, Something to do when you’re under stress</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ricular areas. Improvements in behavior and relationships in the class had been observed. One teacher in particular noted that issues of conflict had not only been resolved without teacher input but more successfully than if the teacher had been involved.

**Summary of Results**

Students responded to open-ended questions, with the expectation that any effect of question structure “leading” them toward certain answers would be minimized. The pattern of responses was almost entirely significantly different from random responding. A majority of students “very much” enjoyed collaborative enquiry. There were differences between schools – in one school almost all the children “very much” enjoyed it. The most popular aspect was the enquiry process (questions, discussion, etc), rather than content. Few students expressed dislikes – most of which had to do with content - although some disliked the lack of certainty. A third of students noted wider participation in enquiry lessons as they progressed. Substantial numbers reported positive changes in social behavior beyond lessons and greater self-confidence. Almost half reported enhancement in aspects of “emotional intelligence”, particularly self-management of feelings, relationships with others and empathy with others (in that order of magnitude). Perceived cognitive gains were reported by 30%. Two-thirds of students reported transfer of positive effects across the curriculum, and substantial proportions generalized improvements in listening, concentration and thinking skills. One third reported deeper understanding of philosophical themes, and a substantial proportion increased confidence and understanding of others. Eight percent said enquiry had “changed their views” and many commented on greater reflectivity and reduced impulsivity. Nearly half the students found enquiry more intellectually challenging than other subjects. Several children appreciated the absence of wrong answers and writing.

Head teacher and class teacher evaluation also referred to enhanced:

- participation
- structure, focus, clarity and depth of thinking/reflection
- self-confidence
- concentration
- questioning
- communication
- respect for the views of others
- relationships, behavior and conflict management.

**Discussion**

Obviously this study had imperfections. Sampling was mostly but not wholly random (although there was no obvious evidence of bias in the sample). The student questionnaire might have been somewhat leading in construction and administration, but every attempt was made to minimize these possibilities, and the students were well experienced in expressing their own opinions confidently. The possibility of the Hawthorne Effect must be countenanced, but it seems unlikely this would endure over so many months, and the student responses were highly detailed.

**Conclusion**

This study investigated the advantages and disadvantages that were perceived post hoc by student, class teacher and head teacher participants in weekly collaborative enquiry over seven months, in response to open-ended prompts. It was expected that some participants in each group would report benefits in the cognitive, social and emotional domains, with a minimum of disadvantages. Student responses indicated that a majority very much enjoyed the sessions (liking process more than content), although positivity showed some variation between schools. Few dislikes were reported. Widening participation, cognitive gains and improvement in listening and concentration were commonly reported. Half the students reported gains in “emotional intelligence”, particularly in relationships, social behavior and empathy; self-confidence; and self-regulation of emotion. Two-thirds of students reported generalization of effects outside the enquiry sessions. Student perceptions were largely confirmed by the teachers.

The study suggested that “thinking skills” programs such as collaborative philosophical enquiry for students aged 11 years can not only yield cognitive gains, but also gains in “emotional intelligence” and “social intelligence” in some contexts. Furthermore, such gains can occur in the context of classes of thirty students and with teachers who have little or no previous experience of enquiry based methods. Those delivering such programs should be aware of these possibilities and reflect upon how best to deliver the program to harvest these holistic benefits. However, these wider benefits might not be available in programs with less emphasis upon interactive dialogue and developing a “community of enquiry”.

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*Trickey & Topping, Collaborative Philosophical Enquiry...*
Implications for Future Research, Practice and Policy

It is not known to what extent the gains (particularly the socio-emotional gains) evident in the current investigation would prove sustainable and transferable across school contexts after transition to high school, and from there to post-school. It would therefore be advantageous for future research to investigate this, in order to inform holistic curriculum developments. This is particularly relevant at a time when concerns have been expressed about a drop in the performance of students following their transition from elementary to secondary education (e.g. Galton, Gray and Rudduck, 1999).

The main thrust of the current investigation was the gathering of student perceptions, essential if the student voice is to be heard. However, more thorough-going investigation of class teacher and head teacher subjective perceptions over time is needed. Additionally, studies relating micro-analysis of teacher behaviors in collaborative enquiry sessions are needed. Further research on the relationship between outcomes arising from philosophical enquiry and socio-economic factors, ability factors and gender factors is desirable. More detailed investigation is necessary to thoroughly determine whether there are differences in the way that boys and girls respond to collaborative classroom processes.

If teachers operating collaborative enquiry are to capitalize on the apparently available gains in self-esteem and social skills, there are implications for their perception of the breadth of purposes which leads them to initiate such programs, and consequently for their initial teacher training and their continuing professional development.

References


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**Appendix 1: Pupil Questionnaire**

1. Have you enjoyed the Philosophy discussions?
   a) very much
   b) not much
   c) somewhere in between
   Please tick the one that is you

2. What do you like best about the Philosophy lesson?

3. What do you not like about the philosophy lessons?

4. Can you think of any changes that you have noticed in how you and others do things in the Philosophy lessons as the year has progressed?

5. Do you think Philosophy lessons have helped you in any way? If so, how have they helped you?

6. Can you think of any changes in what happened in any other lessons as a result of what is done in the Philosophy lessons?
   Yes  No
   If you have noticed any changes, what changes have you noticed?

7. Can you think of anything you have learned during the Philosophy lessons?
   (This can be about yourself or other things)
   Yes  No
   If so, what is it that you have learned?

8. Have the Philosophy discussions changed your views on anything? (e.g. your views on fairness, beauty or anything else you have discussed).
   Yes  No
   In what way has your thinking changed?

9. Can you write one thing that makes philosophy different to any other subject you do in school?

10. What does the word “thinking” mean to you? Please complete this sentence.
    Thinking is..................
The First Children’s Philosopher of Japan: Takeji Hayashi

Takara Dobashi

Introduction

In this essay I intend to introduce Takeji Hayashi as Japan’s first children’s philosopher. Based on his maeutic practice, I would argue that he deserves this title, although he never actually associated himself with either the European or American Philosophizing with Children movement. And above all I want to present his clinical pedagogy as a specifically Japanese tradition in philosophizing with children.

Hayashi is known in Japan as an extraordinary educator from the 1970s and 1980s. And yet, due to mannerist tendencies in the education profession, the pedagogical importance of his life work has been all too narrowly understood by teachers. As a result, he has not been appropriately recognized in the history of education except by a few educators from the older generation. In this way, he has been forgotten as a person, in spite of the undeniable fact that up to the present day, no other Japanese public school teacher has successfully developed a concept for teaching philosophy in elementary school. Unfortunately there is generally little interest in philosophizing with children at this level.

Especially today however, Japan ought to look back at its own attempt to help children develop their thinking processes, and at the contribution it made within the international trend toward philosophizing with children. And so I would like to illuminate Hayashi’s clinical pedagogy and didactics as an academic discipline. Hayashi himself interpreted his instructional practice as a type of philosophizing with children oriented toward Socratic dialogue. Thus in his elementary school unit “On Humans”, he took Socrates’ original “What is that?” question as his starting point.

I would like to call attention to Takeji Hayashi as Japan’s first children’s philosopher and attempt a retrospective examination of his theory and practice from a new perspective.

In order to adequately assess the originality of Takeji Hayashi’s philosophizing with archetypical school children and appreciate his achievements in Japan, some background information is required regarding the sociology of education and pedagogy in 1970s Japan, a situation that made Hayashi’s program so radical and historically important.

1) The intellectual situation among Japanese educators in the 70s is significant; teachers in Japan suffered structurally under the great influence of ideological socialism and communism rising up against political conservatism. Teachers found themselves in the middle of a battle over political rights and education policy, which had already begun at the universities as fierce fights among the students and against the system.

Because of national education policy and in view of this contentious situation, Hayashi had to play the role of reformer in Japanese teacher-training at the Miyagi University of Education, and with his new idea - clinical pedagogy - he turned away from the methods of idealistic pedagogy. In his teaching, he developed innovative archetypal learning in which the child—in dialogue with the teacher—frees himself from spurious knowledge and begins to actually think.

In contrast to the other pedagogical and didactic systems in which children are fed a standardized and predetermined curriculum, Hayashi always rejected mindless memorization, a strategy that was especially favored in the teaching of history. Hayashi, who also did research into Japanese history at the end of the Tokugawa era, devised, for example, a presentation in a history text of a deciding moment - the “Opening of the Country” (in which the Americans, with the help of the “Black Ship from the USA,” forced the Japanese in 1853 to open their country to foreigners). He later philosophized with the children about it. The pupils were very happy to learn about the people of that time and their living conditions in such a lively way. For Hayashi this meant that he was giving the children “bread” instead of stones. In this way he criticized stereotypical instruction, in which the teacher, textbook in hand, conveys standard knowledge. It was his intention to promote “clinical skills” in the education of teachers. As in medical training, teachers were supposed to support their students’ desires to learn as a group, to develop and evolve—in other words, they were supposed to give students what they needed to start solving problems cooperatively. For Hayashi,
this was the signal that instruction “is beginning to happen.”

2) At this time a reorganization of teacher education was under way. The goal was to separate the MIYAGI Teachers College from Tohoku University (in the old system, the Imperial University Tohoku). At that time Professor Hayashi was rector of the Tohoku pedagogical faculty in the area of history of education. The professors were divided on this question and argued among themselves; in the end, the ministry’s educational policy prevailed and the separation was carried out. Professor Hayashi and his allies among the professors of teacher education had raised their objections before the Tohoku professors and the ministry and had tried to keep the course in the larger Tohoku University for its own protection, but their efforts had been in vain.

After the teacher training course was moved, many of the professors elected Professor Hayashi as the first rector of the MIYAGI Teacher’s College of Education. Rector Hayashi was given the task of reforming teacher education. He was asked to develop his own didactics, and together with colleagues designed a clinical pedagogy as an alternative to the idealistic pedagogy of the Tohoku faculty (the purely research-oriented academic pedagogy – a scholarly course in pedagogy). Rector Hayashi himself began to expand the teacher training reforms in accordance with his views on social justice, which at this time went hand-in-hand with a radically reformist or progressive view of pedagogy. In this he had the support of many of his colleagues in the field of didactics, most of whom were similarly progressive (“from a socialist and communist point of view.”) To this end he carried out instructional experiments in archetype schools throughout Japan using his unit “On Humans” - with its completely new methodology and content. Up to this time such an approach had never been tried, and certainly not with the intention of promoting reflection in order to elicit autonomous thinking from the children. Hayashi’s first instructional experiment was carried out on February 19, 1971 (meaning that he began his practical work somewhat earlier than Matthew Lipman). Thus, as the representative of his “progressive” colleagues in didactics, he laid the foundation for a new didactics, a practical or clinical pedagogy which became the basis for reform in teacher education. I will try to reconstruct this clinical pedagogy in terms of “philosophizing with children” - seen as a “archetype science.”

3) Along with his tasks as rector at the MIYAGI Teacher’s College of Education, Hayashi continued his research and teaching on the history of education at Tohoku University. There he did work both on the Greek philosophers Socrates and Plato (like the Hamburg professor Ekkehard Martens²) and on the history of Japanese education in the Meiji era. As part of the latter he studied Mori Arinori, a Meiji educational policy-maker. In the context of this research he spent some time in the USA. For his own personal development Hayashi oriented himself toward the life and person of the Christian thinker Shôzô Tanaka, who had also dedicated himself to the “social justice” theme.

Hayashi had already been associated with Christianity from his youth, when he had studied the theological curriculum of the private Christian school at TOHOKUGAKUIN University before entering the philosophy program of Tohoku University. In other words, Hayashi was a Christian scholar who had learned early in his studies about the concept of Taishô, i.e., democracy and education, and through his association with Japanese Christians in the USA had become acquainted with the European culture of philosophy and Christianity. His reverence for the life of the child is not Buddhist, but rather rests on his deep familiarity with Japanese Christian thinkers.

Takeji Hayashi’s philosophy of Bildung: the Socratic idea of education

Like Socrates, Takeji Hayashi considered the active life to be the prototypical origin of philosophy. As everyone knows, Socrates was not one to sit alone carrying on a monologue with himself and associating more with pen and paper than with society. Instead, Socrates was a philo-sophos, one who discussed dialogically in the agora with young men and reflected upon the truths of humanity, upon questions such as “What is arete, or human virtue?”, “Is it possible to teach human virtue?”, or “Who is the one to teach virtue?” Since Hayashi had studied Plato’s “Apologia,” “Protagoras,” and “Menon,” the basic character of reflection in Socrates was clear to him. (GS I, 90ff.) Hayashi knew that for Socrates, a) arete was not something that could be taken for granted, that its definition was mired in aporia, at least in “Menon,” and, b) as political virtue (politeke arete), it was identical with wisdom (phronesis). Following the Platonic dialogue “Gorgias,” Hayashi concluded that the problem of redemption through arete could be reduced to the problem of the soul’s redemption. Thus, concern for “improvement of the soul in wisdom and truth” (Apol. 29E) was at the center of Hayashi’s calling. But wisdom for Socrates was essentially different from specialized knowledge such as politeke sophia or politeke techne (see “Protagoras”). Wisdom joins together with the human essence, the agathos ta politeke, as, for example, in Pericles. But the human being is a zoon politikon, a social being. For this reason virtue typically makes itself felt in the public space. Human virtue (arete) per se is then the capacity to think conjointly with others (symbolouein tê poiê). Wisdom is indispensable for humans in search of the good life; it is the guarantor of human happiness. But since Socrates regarded the human being not only as zoon politikon, but also as zoon logos echon, a creature of reason that follows the logos, Hayashi interprets arete as phronesis. The deed resulting from action in agreement with logos possesses morality. For Takeji Hayashi, the independence of the subject in its actions is the absolute prerequisite of arete. His moral doctrine can be regarded as a pure ethics of subjectivity (GS I, 106).

In Hayashi’s view, the most important of life’s duties, as outlined by Socrates in the “Apologia,” is the exami-
nation that leads to unmasking pseudo-knowledge, or doxa. Through this process of examination, humans should become as good and reasonable as possible (36c); it arises from the methodology of refutation, which makes ignorance manifest. An unexamined life is not worth living (38a). To make examination into an intentional method of education, Hayashi supplements his dialectics with the theory of anamnesis which finds its practical realization in maeutics (GS I, 111), or the art of midwifery, through which the soul is guided back to find its knowledge or true beliefs. To show how he puts his theory into practice, I would like to present some excerpts from his instructional unit “On Human Beings,” carried out in 1971 with 12-year-old sixth graders. Here he follows Socrates closely, who carries the bulk of the conversation; later Hayashi tries to draw the children into more intense participation. Due to this essay’s length limitations, what follows is a very abbreviated dialogue in the (German) translation of Kiichi Shimoyamada:

L (Hayashi): I’ve come so that I can think together with you about something very difficult. It is about the question “What is a human being?” What do you think about this question? It’s very difficult, but you can’t say it’s too difficult, because we are all human beings. So when I ask you what a human being is, what do you answer? Everyone can say what he or she thinks. It is really quite difficult. Kazunori Sakai?

S: I don’t know.

L: Is it all right to say that one doesn’t know this? Please think it over. You could say something.

What is a human being? The answer can be wrong. No one can come up with the right solution all at once. Through many errors we can approach the truth step by step. Miss Kuriyama, what do you think?

S: It is an animal that is developed in its head.

L: An animal, developed in its head. That’s a good answer. It makes two points: that the head develops and that a human is an animal. So now that is clear. What do you think about the head? If you call it the development of the head, then the question is, what does the head contain? Yes, you please!

S: It contains thinking.

L: Thinking. Does that mean the head is the place of thinking? That this capability exists here in the head? Then let’s think a lot more: can you give more answers? Yes, go ahead.

S: Yes, compared to other animals, humans are patient.

L: Patient? Do you all think so? On the one hand, humans are patient compared with other animals. But are they patient when seen from all sides? What about when you compare them with oxen, for example? Then they aren’t patient any more. However, when they are sunk in silent thought one can say that they are patient. So according to your point of view, you might say that they are patient or not patient. So that could not always be right as answer to the question “What is a human being?” What else do you think?

S: The ability to invent, to create culture.

L: Yes, that’s an important point. Are there or aren’t there connections between invention, the creation of culture, and the development of the head?

S: (all) There is one! There is one!

L: There is one. That’s so. Now what do people call the ability to think, when they use a serious word? […]

S: Wisdom.

S: Thoughtfulness.

L: Yes, the words wisdom or thoughtfulness may be used. That is true. Have you ever heard about the word “reason”? Have you heard the words “rational” or “feeling” or “will”? We are capable of thinking because we possess reason. “Reason” is what we call the power to reflect and make judgments. Is there something else? Miss Schuko Abe, please.

S: Their behavior is different.

L: What is the difference? Can you give an example? Schuko Abe, please tell us a little more.

S: Human beings stand and walk on two legs.

L: That is an important difference between humans and animals. […] Is there something else? It seems to me that some of you are purposely not raising your hands, even though you also know something. How about you, for example, Miss Misae Endô?

S: Right now I’m in the middle of thinking.

L: And what do you think, Sakai? Have you already thought about it? Not yet? Miss Mineko Kuriyama, then.

S: Humans can grasp things with their hands.

Now Hayashi summarizes what the children have come up with, talks about the possibilities humans have because they
walk upright and can use their hands for other purposes. So that the children will be able to find out what the “essence” of being human is, he explains:

L: Now we are looking for the special quality that clarifies our statement: “That is a human being.” To use what might seem to be a difficult word, we are asking about the “essence” of the human. Have you ever heard the word? It refers to a thing’s most important distinguishing characteristic, its most basic individuality. Before you were imagining that humans were animals. It’s true that humans are animals. But there are very many animals in nature. Each animal has its own characteristics and its own way of life. Humans also have an individual character that is very different from other animals, and they also have a particular way of living. That is why we are thinking about what distinguishes humans from other animals. So far you have deduced that the human head has “thinking ability” or the capacity to invent or to make things. From that you concluded that humans create culture. That is a quality that separates humans from other animals […] But aren’t there other living beings that can “make” things? Or aren’t there? What do you think? Or maybe the question is difficult? What do I mean? For example, a beaver can build a dam. It gnaws on the trees with its own teeth until they fall and drags them to the stream. To block the water it also makes use of stones and dirt. That is how it builds up a dam. This can be compared with “forming” something. Ants and bees are very skilled in building their “houses.” Would you be able to build a little six-sided room like the bees with no tools? Humans can’t cut down trees with their teeth or, like the bees, form a honeycomb from wax. In spite of that, humans put up buildings and dams. Now I’m asking you to think whether there is a difference between humans and beavers when they build dams. Is it the same thing or not? This is quite a difficult question, but please think about it. Yes, what do you think?

S: I had it in my head.

L: Yes, we have a plan in our heads. Even when we don’t have a blueprint we imagine a design. We have an intention about how we will make something. Because we then think about which materials we want to use and how much we have to have on hand, etc. Humans have the ability to think. It is the power they use to make an orderly plan and at the same time think about which actions one could choose to carry out the plan. Humans work according to a plan. This is a point where humans differentiate themselves from the other animals. To “think” something is a serious matter. Only humans have this ability. There is a variety of words one can use to express this special human quality. One example is the phrase “rational animal.” That signifies that among the many animals it is specifically humans that are rational.

Then Hayashi and the children work through the peculiarities of tool usage. The saw, for example, is compared to the beaver’s teeth; the strength of the eagle with the development of airplanes. Together they discover that humans aren’t able like the other animals to survive with the help of inborn qualities, but that they have the ability to make tools and to improve them. For the class it was a very stimulating and novel experience to struggle with intellectually difficult, philosophical, perplexing questions and to devote all their energies to them, but they experienced deep concentration and joy in learning. As Megumi Kaimori said, “In class today I thought somewhat deeply about human beings. I reconsidered my own point of view and noticed my feelings in the process. I developed, at least slightly.”

According to Ekkehard Martens, Socrates is working toward arete or the good life. Socratic philosophizing can be understood as the art of living. According to Hayashi, Socrates is the “teacher” who is responsible for the entire process of spiritual guidance (GS I, 122).

Ideas about Clinical Pedagogy in Takeji Hayashi

Through educational research, Hayashi wanted to develop a foundation for Clinical Pedagogy in teacher training. In his opinion, it was a flaw in teacher education that there was no “clinical science of education” (N.276, KJ, 179, M.123). In what ways do the clinical ideas of Hayashi that start with the realities of children’s lives differ from previous idealistic pedagogy?

(1) Teaching as Development and Transformation

According to Hayashi, “Education is the work that furthers development” (O, 34). This corresponds to the Japanese terminology. What constitutes teaching and is the basis for education is not “Oshieru” (teaching), but rather “Sodateru”
(allowing to grow). “Sodatsu” means the ability of the individual to grow independently through an inner strength, thereby bringing body and soul into a harmonious relationship. In this sense teaching is nothing more than the activity that helps the child’s body and soul develop humanity (O.36). For this, nourishment is required, as with all living things. The prerequisite is a warm spirit of caring that comes from reverence for life (O. 34f.) or from pious respect for all living things (KS, 8). Teachers can only take on such an attitude if they have already transformed themselves and are able to enter into the perspective of the child. In this sense the only person who can teach children is the one who is able to learn from the child. In other words, the child transforms itself through the self-transformation of the teacher. Here Hayashi goes back to Goethe’s principle, “Gestaltung und Umgestaltung” (formation and transformation) (O. 37)15. For this reason Hayashi called for the self-reform of teachers on the practical level.

(2) The Hunger for Meaning

As was already mentioned, the child requires substantive nourishment. Like other children’s philosophers such as Lipman, for example, Hayashi also believes that the central characteristic of the child is a “hunger for meaning” and “wondering at the world.”16 Therefore Hayashi saw a “hunger for nourishment” in the depths of the child’s being.

Seen anthropologically, in Hayashi’s view the child is not just a fundamentally helpless creature17 (O.35, KJ6f., J.72), but possesses “a hunger for the nourishment that makes its development possible; that is, on the one hand, hunger for the body’s sustenance, but on the other hand, an equally great hunger for the soul’s nourishment (O. 195). Hayashi concluded from impressions received in his instructional practice that children “are hungry for instruction” (O. 195-201). Through this the child has endless capacities for self-transformation. The “Tatakiyô” of the teacher, meaning the taking up of the child’s reality and responsiveness to the child, should correlate with this basic anthropological constant. In summary, we can state that Hayashi discovered “that all children want to study” (O. 38ff.). He was even convinced that “all children are starving for learning that encounters resistance - or effective learning” (O. 40).

Instruction as archetype science (Urwissenschaft)

The original movement toward knowledge, the hunger for learning affects all children irresistibly. When this hunger is satisfied during instruction, an ineffable joy appears in the depths of the soul, resulting in a balanced harmony. Hayashi reached this catharsis through his archetypical practice of “Urwissenschaft” (archetype science) (MK 90). Children’s archetypical “desire to know” was able to unfold in a living way in his teaching through the realization of elemental thinking in the form of philosophizing. Philosophy’s affair was for Hayashi a pragma, an activity, an achievement of understanding that he valued highly in teaching. Epistemologically, his practice of dialogue aimed for a recognition of essences based on reason. Seen theoretically, his methodological paradigm in instruction was Socratic philosophy as the art of life19. He interpreted his philosophizing with children as “Urwissenschaft” with a “cathartic function.” For that reason, Hayashi strove ceaselessly in his elementary school teaching to follow the cultural, elemental learning20 of the children. Basic to this were the following points:

(1) Instruction as cooperative exploration of the higher tasks with children

For Hayashi instruction is the work through which the teacher organizes the learning of the children. The subject, or the “master of learning”, however, is the child, for this is the basic precondition for instruction to take place. The teacher’s role in this is to help the child “reach the heights that could otherwise not be attained; that is the meaning of instruction”21 (O. 130). Teaching is thus high-level work and requires advanced knowledge in order to initiate the learning process, i.e., the children’s exploration process, and keep it moving forward. Thinking together with the children, the teacher tests their opinions.

(2) Testing what one knows and the “refutation” method

According to Hayashi, Socrates determined that refutation22 was the main business of education, since people should be freed through dialogue from preordained knowledge or doxa - for refutation is the method of liberation from the doxa. Thus the main task of the teacher is the struggle to demolish the doxa over and over again. And so negation has a purpose in teaching. Through uncompromising refutation the children experience liberation from their presumptions. When this happens, the eyes of the children shine and they come alive, because they have broken free of baser ideas. In this sense, the moment of refutation plays the greatest role. However, the quality of the negation is decisive. It is important that the children themselves, through their struggle with the teacher, negate their own assumptions, their current opinions or interpretations. An example of an unsuitable refutation would be the authoritarian attitude of a teacher saying things like “that won’t work.” That leads to a mechanical negation, not to the true effect of negation. Cathartic negation, the Socratic refutation, only arises when a person concludes for him or herself, from the soul’s deepest conviction, “that won’t work.” (O. 128) It is the new awareness of appearances and of ignorance that brings great joy to the children.

(3) The process of learning as catharsis – breaking out of ignorance

In his elementary school teaching, Hayashi experienced the Socratic concept of catharsis. For that reason he em-
phrased that instruction leads to catharsis. The children have purified themselves through an unrelenting search for answers (O. 174). According to Hayashi, there is a statement in Socrates’ work in which he equates the process of acquiring knowledge with the process of purifying the soul. I recall that teacher Saitō used the word “cleansing” in this context. In the phrase “The children will be refreshed,” one can find a connection to Socratic purification (kalokagathia) (N. 206). What is important for Saitō is the essential meaning of the word for Hayashi and the quality of experience in his teaching. In any case, Hayashi conceives of Socratic catharsis as purification from ignorance, in which the awareness of ignorance leads to a great inner joy, making redemption in life possible through knowledge. For children it is a joyous event. Metaphorically speaking, “ignorance” also meant for Socrates being stained with dirt and sin (see KD 42). When presumed knowledge is cast aside or overcome through learning, the faces of the children are transformed, according to Hayashi, and they become beautiful. This change in form he took for a change in personality. The children also found the instruction a precious and useful experience that made them happy.

(4) Tenderness in teaching and its healing function

From October 1976 onward, the interpretation of education changed to an education for emancipation. Public school teachers who were disappointed by educational compulsions (KS 16), and who saw the significance of instructional practice as the emancipation of children constricted by the dictates of the schools, desired to distance themselves from this role and joined forces with Hayashi. Their goal was education for emancipation; they wanted “redemption for children through education” (KD 3f.). This gave Hayashi new hope for education. He devoted his attention to those wounded or oppressed by society and dedicated himself to the education of these wounded, yet delicate souls of under-performing children. Here too he found the passionate hunger for learning (KS. iv, OM.83). But he also had to recognize that school compulsions had completely destroyed the tender souls of the children or had driven them into a corner.

(5) Daemonic magic – the fascination of philosophizing with children.

What was the primal motive that caused Hayashi to immerse himself 230 times in instructional experiments in the elementary grades? He called it “Yamitsuki,” the fascination of philosophizing with children (O.11, 79), which leads to a profound encounter with the children’s souls within these 45 minutes (O.80). At the beginning of his teaching experiments he was taken by surprise by the thaumazein, the archaic wondering of the children during instruction, and as a result he began his instructional research with Socratic philosophical conversations.

The mysterious communion of the soul with the child in this deep dimension filled Hayashi with a daemonic, magical power. At any rate, Hayashi already felt the magical power of “instruction through conversation” (O.61) in his first teaching experience in the Shiraiwa elementary school. Perhaps this primal experience could give teachers hope for a release from the hardships of the teaching profession.

Conclusion

Takeji Hayashi (1906-1985) was a theologian, Japanese philosopher, and educator. In his educational theory he unified western and eastern philosophy and culture: Hayashi brought Platonism, Socratic maieutics, and central ethical implications of Christianity together with the convictions of Japanese thinkers of the Meiji restoration. After he became Rector of the Miyagi Teachers College, he reevaluated his educational-philosophical theory in a practical way. In order to do that, he carried out instructional experiments in various Japanese schools. On the one hand he wanted to do basic research into the parameters of successful instruction, such as “instruction as strict organization of learning,” for example. On the other hand he wanted to reconstruct an instructional theory for teacher education growing out of children’s real-world situations. And so Hayashi rejected any methodology that was not tested in practice, such as the methodology of speculative pedagogy that remained on the theoretical level. In contrast, Hayashi wished to develop a clinical pedagogy based on the teaching practice of the researcher. Like Socrates, he tried to help the children through maieutics, or the art of midwifery, to develop their own structures and contents of knowledge. For this reason his teaching theory and practice rest exclusively on the principle of Socratic didactics. Thus Hayashi’s teaching belongs to the type “philoso-
phizing with children,” for the following reasons:

1. In an instructional unit “On Human Beings” that is unusual in a Japanese context, he asks the famous “what is that?”-question.

2. He works through the question together with the children in an academic learning community (see Matthew Lipman) through cooperative inquiry in the form of a “dialogue.”

3. He encourages the children through his maieutic technique of “refutation” (and this is didactically significant) to overcome their ignorance and, on the basis of their experiences with ordinary dimensions of everyday life, break out of their rote understanding of things.

4. He interprets the transformation in the faces of the children while learning as “catharsis emerging from ignorance” and the physical manifestation of kallogagathia.” Naturally this process does not mean for him that the children have acquired the epistheme or concept-formation. Rather it is important for Hayashi that the children’s hunger for fundamental learning (primal drive) is satisfied through their deep experience of primal knowledge in the phenomenon of therapeutic humanization during instruction. Seen from these angles, we can find in his teaching an instruction that does not require memorizing the answers to prescribed questions, but rather strives to develop capacity for thought and to solve the fundamentally difficult riddle of the human through “wondering” and the “What is that?”-question. In conclusion, we can see in Takeji Hayashi the first practical example in Japan of elemental thinking and philosophizing with children at the elementary school level.

Abbreviations

KD = Hayashi, Takeji (1978) /Kyôshitachi tono Deai/ (Tôkyô: Kokudosha)

(Tôkyô: Chikumashô)

N = Hayashi, Takeji (1973) /Jyugyô Ningen ni Tuite/ (Tôkyô: Kokudosha)

KJ = Kihaku Saitô & Hayashi,Takeji(1978) /Kodomo no Jijitsu/ (Tôkyô: Chikumashô).

M = Hayashi, Takeji (1978) /Manabu to Iukoto/ (Tôkyô: Kokudosha)

O = Hayashi, Takeji (1978) /Oshieru to Iukoto/ (Tôkyô: Kokudosha)

KS = Hayashi, Takeji (1977) /Kyoiku no Saisei wo Motomete/ (Tôkyô: Chikumashô)

OM= Haitani, Kenjirô & Hayashi, Takeji (1979) /Oshieru kototo Manabukotoku(Tôkyô:Shôgakukan)

MK= Hayashi, Takeji (1978) /Manabukoto Kawarukoto, die Schrift der Fotographie/ (Conversation between Hayashi Takeji a. Takeuchi,Toshiharu) (Tôkyô:Chikumashô)

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* I’d like to express my deepest appreciation to Dr. Eva Marsal, Pedagogie College Karlsruhe, Germany, for her kind support. (July 7, 2006)
Endnotes

5 Martens, E. 1999.
6 Hayashi explained the further development of Plato’s arete-concept (that is, arete as true doxa and its pedagogical significance) in his essay “Redemption through Knowledge” (GS I, 158-190).
7 The Greeks established reason, or logos - rational thinking and rational deliberation – as the guide for living and the mediator in the life of the state (polis). Thus the Greek citizen became history’s first free individual within the state. The basic character of this citizen is thirst for knowledge, or the inclination to seek knowledge for its own sake (“On Greek Reason,” GS I, 240f., 246).
8 As a side note, the critical examination of a way of life oriented towards worldly goods, mere income or fame is only the precondition but not the content of the happy life. (Martens, E. 1992, 124).
9 In order to answer this question one must have at least a basic knowledge of physical anthropology, for example, Darwin’s theory of descent, the idea of man as a defective being (Mangelwesen) (Gehlen, A.), and as a learning being (Portmann, A.). This question also has a connection with the pedagogical view of man in Kant and Langefeld. Kant defines man in his pedagogical lecture as “the only creature that requires education” (Kant, 1803, Werke, XII, 697).
10 N, 14-17.
11 Compare Scheler, M., 1928. By not interpreting the human in comparison with God, but rather inquiring after the difference between humans and animals, Scheler’s philosophical anthropology took an interesting turn. He said that what made humans human was, in comparison to the most intelligent of animals, neither intelligence nor imagination nor memory. The special human principle determining the essential difference was one that might even be considered opposed to life - which he called spirit (Geist). See Gehlen, A., 1961, 15.
12 See Martens, E. 1992, 119. But it is true that Socrates, as opposed to Plato, emphasizes the necessity of critical examination and refers to arete (Ibid, 137).
14 Hayashi developed a clinical pedagogy that stands in sharp contrast to idealistic pedagogy, which is carried out without any practical connection to educational practice. The occasion for this was the separation of the Miyagi Teachers College from Tôhoku University (N, 233; M, 44f.).
15 Compare Goethe, J. W. v. Faust, Vs. 6287 (Hamburger Ausgabe in 14 Bänden, Vol. III, 193). But in Goethe’s poetry it signifies apprehending in phenomena the prototypes of life. (Ibid. 367). In Hayashi the logic of transfiguration is reinterpreted in practical dimensions. Possibly Hayashi makes reference here to the Christian thinker Shôzô Tanaka’s living model of transfiguration on the way to the vita nuova (T, 211). For the teachers, school is, according to Hayashi, “the training ground of humanity.”
18 Children take great pleasure in mental exercises, riddles, and thought puzzles that require intelligence, imagination and persistence (Freese, H.-L. 1996, 167). Instruction as primal knowledge begins with wondering at the riddle of the world (the riddle-question) and with the “What is that?” question about its origin (arche), as in the natural philosophy of the Greeks.
20 On “elemental thinking” see for example Goethe’s “Anschauende Urteilskraft, HA XIII, 30f. One might say that in the pedagogical area Hayashi tried ceaselessly to penetrate into the primal, typical realm of learning and made of his instructional practice a proto-science. Compare also elemental philosophy as popular philosophy in Albert Schweitzer 1971, 28f, 233. Compare also Günzler, Claus, 1996 and Ekkehard Martens, 2003, 26f.
21 Hayashi sharply distinguished his instruction from a superficial, only briefly independent or active-seeming instruction, and criticized it as an abdication of responsibility on the teacher’s part.
22 Hayashi thought he had found the moment of Socratic examination and refutation in the educational practice of his colleague K. Saitô. Of course Saitô, in his thoughts on education, was no Socrates expert, but rather a poet who interpreted the transformation of the children during instruction as an aesthetic refreshment. Both of them emphasized the real world experience of the children as methodological prerequisite of their pedagogy, and also the logic of teachers reforming themselves as a challenge to other public school teachers. But their interpretive apparatus and their preconceptions about education - seen from the standpoint of hermeneutics – reveal substantial differences.
23 At the meeting of the Education Committee of the Upper House of Parliament on April 14, 1977, where the reform of university examinations was discussed, Hayashi made a short, 15-minute presentation using photos in which he showed the parliamentarians the beautiful transformation of previously suffering student faces (M, 244f., See also O, 266f.).
24 See also Camhy, D. 1991, 15. According to Camhy, philosophizing can help children get along better with others and deal more easily with conflict situations, “since it can be a helpful means…to clarify thoughts, question ideas and opinions and identify possible solutions and various approaches to problem solving. […] This capacity for reflection, for distance, can possibly lead to liberation, to salvation from restlessness.” Camhy, D., 1984, 32.
Developing Communities of Inquiry in the Creative Arts Classroom

Fern-Chantele Carter

Introduction

This paper is a summary of my doctoral thesis, which aims at least begin to demonstrate how thinking skills can be encouraged through creative arts lessons by incorporating a philosophy for children pedagogy. The context of the study which I describe was a series of summer schools over a two year period, involving six secondary schools in a London Borough. The students involved all chose to participate in the project, but were initially selected by the school on the grounds of their lack of ability to cope with strong emotional issues which had occurred in their lives, low self-esteem, behavioral problems, and low school attendance. Their ages ranged from 12-16. The teachers who participated in the project were trained in philosophy for children, and were also specialists in each of the arts subjects.

The aim when teaching thinking skills is to somehow lead students to appreciate the process of reflecting on issues, and to provide them with tools with which to discuss these issues. The objective for children—and for everyone—is to value the process of asking questions, and of seeking out and listening carefully to others’ points of view. Any communal philosophical inquiry is grounded in a Socratic structure, and assumes a process approach to learning in a socially dynamic context, where both internal and external dialogue is modelled and encouraged. In such a context, the teacher acts as a facilitator of inquiry, who aims at encouraging children to discuss, listen, clarify, and justify their thinking. All deep reflective thinking arrives eventually at issues of fairness, freedom, truth, knowledge, and good judgment, with a particular emphasis on discovery and creativity. And of course for children to be able to reach such the state where they can begin to create such thinking skills, they need to feel safe, in a socially democratic environment, which in turn stimulates intellectually and emotionally free expression.

As is generally known by practitioners, Matthew Lipman devised the Philosophy for Children approach in order “to get children to think for themselves, instead of learning by rote or simply accepting the authority of the teacher” (Fisher 1998: xii). Lipman had been disappointed by the levels of thinking undergraduates brought with them from school, and he felt that introducing the discipline of philosophical thinking into the school curriculum would lead to more able citizens, both reasonable, and capable of thinking in a critical way about issues of importance. As such, Philosophy for Children aims to develop children’s abilities to go beyond mere information and achieve a more analytic and conceptual level of cognitive functioning. The program is designed to encourage children to actively think for themselves, and encourages independent and cooperative learning, helping children internalise the skills and habits required for higher order thinking skills (Fisher 1998).

As is also well known, the program is based on a method of organizing classroom discussion within a particular discursive, moral, rational framework called “community of inquiry.” In its most basic form, children and teacher share a stimulus, the children take time to devise their own questions and discuss them, and over time the questions get deeper and more disciplined, focused and reflective. When a community of inquiry is formed there are rules to be considered and a structure to be implemented. Above all, students are given time to deliberate—thus clarifying their thoughts, both through external and internal dialogue. They listen to each other and discuss, building on each others ideas, which involves becoming attentive listeners, and responding to each other appropriately. The community of inquiry affords children opportunities to develop personal qualities such as the disposition to respect others, to build self-confidence, to speak their minds, to challenge others, and to correct themselves. It motivates children and alters future teacher-learner situations, as children become more ready to ask questions, challenge each other, and explain what they mean. It provides a structure and a process of communication for those involved, which allows students to actively judge and form opinions for themselves. As a form of discourse, community of inquiry encourages participants not to rely solely on outside authorities such as the teacher. It enables children to learn to question, speculate, hypothesize and interrogate on their own. It is an excellent vehicle for generating and

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communicating ideas while learning to give reasons, justify beliefs and be critical. The aim is not to “get students to learn the solutions” but to “investigate the problems and engage in inquiry for themselves” (Lipman 1991:15).

**Creative Thinking**

The exercise of creativity helps to develop multiple forms of intelligence, including the emotional (Goleman 1996, Gardner 1993). Creativity involves not just the ability to come up with new solutions to problems, but also to find better solutions, which in turn requires the application of critical judgment. As such, critical and creative thinking are interrelated and complementary, and when we try to solve problems we move back and forth between the two types of thinking. Critical thinking is needed to analyze discussions and arguments, and for decision making. Creative thinking is necessary to enable people to develop alternatives. The two thought processes take different forms in different disciplines and do not develop in a vacuum. Critical thinking is only valuable if integrated with thinking that is both constructive and creative. Creative thinking is only valuable if we apply judgment to what is created—that is by subjecting a creative outcome to critical reflection and review.

My research sought to determine whether arts education is a suitable avenue for improving levels of thinking. There are good reasons to believe that the creative arts could enhance a range of cognitive skills and abilities. In making and appreciating the arts, students develop the skills of applying reason and critical judgment, experiencing creative and positive responses to ambiguity, and understanding the role of value and multiple perspectives. From the point of view of multiple intelligence theory, (Gardner, 1993), the creative arts calls upon and exercises many intelligences and combinations of intelligences. The logical-mathematical function can be improved through the use of rhythm, through analysing music and art, the structure of art works, drama texts, and through composing or acting and directing. Spatial awareness is necessary when a student analyzes the structures of musical or art works, or blocks a scene, as well as when a student reads from notations. Bodily or kinaesthetic intelligence is used for technical skills in those subjects and the movement required within them. The depth of emotional understanding needed within the creative arts to interpret, compose, reinterpret, or create involves intra-personal intelligence. The intra-personal intelligence is also operative when the performer communicates to her audience, or works in collaboration with others. Linguistic intelligence is used to read music, texts, and to analyze critically art works of any form. Thus music can be seen to help with the development of many types of intelligence, and thus be transferred to other areas of learning. The creative arts also offer opportunities for discussions in which students can get involved, not only with art stimuli, but assorted values, cultural issues, historical contexts, interpretations and political dimensions. They also offer students opportunities to express their feelings and ideas using forms other than written language or vocalizing. The arts deal not in absolutes, but in meanings and understandings.

Thus, there is a general consensus that the arts are a rich vehicle for the development of thinking; often the thinking strategies are implicit, locked within the experience itself. Encouraging the strategies to be explicit may enhance students’ own thinking, and enable them to apply their thinking strategies in a range of other situations. Students working in collaboration with each other and the teacher to create imagined worlds through the creative arts, pool their already known knowledge and add to it, thus exploring and experimenting through the art form, using creative and critical thinking skills. Their use of higher order thinking skills enables them better to deal with complexity and ambiguity, to pay attention to exploring alternative goals as much as results, and to consider differing viewpoints.

The creative arts are concerned with understanding, exploring and expressing the qualities of human experiences, such as love, grief, belonging, isolation etc. Through the arts many people experiment with, and try to articulate their deepest feelings and sense of cultural identity and belonging. The arts allow us to explore and develop forms of expression, feeling and involvement; thus stimulating questioning and clarification skills, extending beyond the classroom and into the social fabric of the school, and the outside world.

**Creative Arts and Thinking Skills**

Many people do not associate the arts with “thinking.” They are not aware of the process behind the product. Yet it
is clear that criticism and discussion in the arts involves judgments based on thoughtful analysis and interpretation, which occurs after a process of organized investigation. Although conclusions may be contradictory, each person’s critique is valid if well thought-through. Through this process of criticism and reflection, new ideas are produced, which expand the meanings of works of art, or life itself. We create art to make connections – to connect time and space, experience and event, intellect and emotion - to express the otherwise inexpressible. The arts allow deeper insight, and because they confront us with situations where there is no standard or appointed answer, they encourage us to become acquainted with many perspectives on the meaning of value - thereby developing personal value structures. The abstract concepts found in the creative arts are difficult to grasp since they cannot be defined ostensibly, and have fuzzy boundaries. The fact that the questions they provoke have no answers makes them difficult to deal with in a traditional academic setting—but this is precisely why they are so important.

Teachers need to have more freedom, and to utilize their freedom to optimize their own creative and professional skills. Greater freedom for teachers in the classroom will help to promote creative teaching, which is essential when promoting creative learning. The philosophy for children approach—namely community of inquiry—provides a methodology which helps students examine their personal interpretations, and to understand the interpretations of others. Using the arts as a stimulus and incorporating a philosophy for children approach can enhance skills such as the ability to draw comparisons between personal experience and depiction.

The challenge of the research reported on here was to develop an approach to aesthetic education that both involved children in creative activity and invited critical reflection. Accordingly, I constructed a community of artistic inquiry, with the intention of investigating children’s capacity to engage in aesthetic discussion, the range of thinking skills involved in that discussion, and its effect on their self-esteem. The activities were also designed to help students explore their creative talents, to apply these values to their personal behaviour, to develop an understanding of ethics and values through understanding the principles underpinning a community of inquiry, and to understand cultural and community diversity through a range of aesthetic experience. I expected that, as a result, children would learn to extend their thinking by considering the reasons behind and the implications of their ideas, and that this would be one result of encouraging imagination and curiosity. Above all, I hoped that children would come to understand that to question is important and necessary in learning, and in developing a personal response to aesthetic experience.

Analysis of the discussion I transcribed indicated evidence of progression in students’ discussion techniques and concept formation. By the end of nine sessions taught over a four week period, students were giving each other their full attention, actively listening to one another, and showing increasing levels of engagement. Their questions were increasingly formulated to seek reasons, to ask for evidence, and to develop classifications. They were building on one another’s comments and making connections, raising any objections they had appropriately, and working at defining and clarifying concepts. They gave anecdotes in order to illustrate or ideas, and to extend the inquiry into their own experience. They also started to show tentative evidence that they were developing the capacity to review their discussions.

Students also showed evidence of understanding how to relate to others in a variety of contexts, and of increasing skills and dispositions such as turn-taking, self-correcting and examining issues from a variety of perspectives. They showed evidence of growing confidence, and were more able to take responsibility for their own understanding, learning and behavior, as can be seen from the improvement through the nine chosen extracts. Through participation in the aesthetic community of inquiry, children showed evidence that they were developing a range of techniques for communicating through many different means, and understanding about how and when to use them. They also showed evidence that they developed competence in managing personal and emotional relationships, and understanding how to manage risk and uncertainty. Participating in communities of aesthetic inquiry also enabled the children to celebrate success and manage disappointment, develop a range of techniques for accessing, evaluating, and differentiating information, and learn to synthesize and apply it. They also showed evidence that they understood the importance of reflecting and applying critical judgment.

There was evidence of changes amongst teachers as well. Teachers’ log book entries indicated high motivation, and one claimed that she felt “released” by the opportunity to work together, and to regain some autonomy over course content and teaching methods. Teachers also testified to enjoying “handing over control” to the children, which they thought developed students sense of ownership of the process, and enhanced self-esteem.

In summary, I found qualitative gains in the children’s engagement, reasoning, listening skills, discussion skills, as well as in their confidence and self-esteem. As the project unfolded, they began to direct their own communities of inquiry. This only happened for short periods at a time, and never included the entire group, but the periods became more and more frequent. The questioning techniques modelled by teachers were adopted by the children, and their questions became more analytical, more disciplined, more focused, more imaginative, and more precise. Thus, there was evidence of a shift from teacher to group-controlled inquiry, and even some evidence of students starting to evaluate themselves, their discussions, and their own thinking. Reviewing the discussion is an important aspect of aesthetic inquiry. It is this reviewing which helps develop the meta-cognitive awareness of the process and content/response of the individuals. The evidence for this progressive development of thinking, reasoning and
discussion skills can be seen not just in the transcripts of discussions which I made, but also in their written work - in the form of logbooks in which they responded to the questions “Did you ask or answer any questions, were these good, if so, why?”, “Did you give good reasons for your beliefs?, Why were they good reasons?”, and “Did the group take turns, and help each other to participate?”

**Extracts from Selected Communities of Inquiry**

**Setting I:**

“Black angels” by George Crumb was used as the stimulus for the first community of inquiry in the research. “Black Angels” is a contemporary piece of music which draws on an arsenal of sounds which include shouting, whistling, chatting, whisperings, gongs, maracas, and crystal glasses, electric instruments, amplified stringed instruments, and unusual string effects add to the surreal sound. The piece was chosen as a stimulus for a community of inquiry due to its unusual concepts of instrumentation.

What follows is an analysis of segments of discussions of this piece of music within the community of inquiry. The piece was offered on day one, and the children, despite understanding the concepts of a community of inquiry, were not very forthcoming with questions, so the teacher asked them to simply make comments about the music, and a few tentative observations were offered.

1. Student: It’s not like what I’ve heard before.
2. Teacher: Why is that?
4. Teacher: What is different?
5. Student: It’s just squeaking.
6. Teacher: How is that different from other music… why is it different?

The teacher decided to revisit the piece in another community of inquiry later in the day—after working on discussion skills through involving all the children in a ‘Jerry Springer’ style drama episode. This took the format of the television show, a medium all the children were familiar with, and seemed to enable the teacher to work on the children’s participation, questioning, and start them thinking and considering their thought processes through discussion in a community of inquiry.

1. Student1 (as Jerry Springer): So you think that your daughter should not move in with her boyfriend… why is that?
2. Student2: Because she is too young.
3. Teacher: Why do you think that? What do you mean by too young?
4. Student2: Well at fifteen you don’t know much about life, and like you need to learn more to move in with someone.
5. Teacher: Why is that?... what things do you need to learn?... can you explain yourself a bit more?
7. Student3: I think I can, I agree with a… I think fifteen is too young, you have lived at home, and been looked after and don’t like have any experiences of life or anything, so like you need to get a job, and leave school and stuff first. Do you agree?
8. Student2: Yeah, you need to learn more about life and how to look after yourself, and more about relationships, and be certain that person is right for you, and at fifteen, I don’t think you can know.

**Analysis**

This extract shows the teacher asking the student to explain their thinking, and thus consider their reasons for believing what they do. She is encouraging the students to explain their thought processes (3) thus helping and encouraging the children to begin thinking about how they make their decisions, and start contemplating how they think about their thinking (meta-cognition). When the third student enters the discussion (7) he initially agrees with student one, then extends her initial reasoning, and asks for agreement that they have built on the first student’s ideas correctly. There follows a comment from student two (8), who follows the lead of the example of good thinking skills shown by student two. There is evidence of the student developing the explanation, and extending the reasoning (8). This shows the teacher facilitating the students in the use of more dialogue and discussion (3,5), which is a key pedagogical aspect in leading a community of inquiry. The extract has evidence of aspects of good thinking skills, the children are starting to
The children are actively discussing the music and keeping to the rules of discussion, i.e., they are turn-taking and actively listening to each other. They are becoming aware of a range of opinions about the nature of music, and of different ways of thinking about music. This requires that they clarify for themselves which elements they regard as essential in order that something be called music. Above all they are qualifying their statements and illustrating the reasons behind their beliefs (3,10). The children are also questioning each other (2,6,8) thus seeking reasons for and extending on each others ideas. By asking for others points of view, they show a willingness to amend their viewpoints (7). They give examples (7,12) thus illustrating their point with an account of a situation/experience/idea, to help explain their reasoning and thus how their opinion was formulated. There is much evidence here of good thinking skills. Thus, using a musical stimulus and drama activity, the children have already shown, in one day, growth in how they thought about things, and portrayed the idea that they were beginning to understand the importance of using thinking skills to reason and discuss within an aesthetic community of inquiry.

Log book examples

Day 1
I could have joined in, but preferred to listen to and make up my own mind in my head rather than talk it out loud in front of others.

Day 3
Today I got involved in the talking, so I found it better than yesterday a lot. By the end of the week, we can see from her comments about feeling more able to speak in front of the group that her self-esteem has grown. The student felt that her ideas were important, and would be listened to, and any comments taken seriously.

Day 5
I think our scene was best, because we saw both sides of the story, and the conflict between the characters, we also showed thoughts and feelings. This morning went really well, much better for me than the last discussion, because I did a role-play. I learn that if you make an input you get back what you want, but you must listen to other people’s points of view…has boosted my confidence to speak to others.

Here we see a statement that the student thought that her group gave a good performance, and she gives good reasons for why she felt this. The children were not given any brief for what they were to write, or indeed that they had to write anything at all. Therefore we can see evidence of growth in the children’s thinking skills, from the initial statement of fact, to linking, justifying, clarifying and connecting.

Another student included this entry in her log book:

I didn’t know what I thought before, but the discussion bits make me think more, and in the drama and art, and music. I think I thought about my role. Maybe this will help me in the future, to improve my grades, and I think I can now talk better and discuss better, and will say what I think more, not just agree with other people. So I learnt
everyone has different points of view, everyone has a right to their own point of view, and discussing is better than arguing.

In this extended piece of writing, the student reflects on how she has grown in her self-concept as a thinker, and how she considers her role in classroom activities. There is also mention of how she considers her opinion, and that she does not just concur blindly. This represents a qualitative improvement over the comment at the end of her first day: “I should of said something, but I didn’t have any good opinions.”

Conclusion

My research indicates that using creative arts as a stimulus before and after a community of inquiry discussion extends children’s reasoning and evaluation, strengthens their ability to discuss and think individually, while expanding their imagination. The communities of inquiry involved discussions of philosophical concepts such as “what is art?” and “what is music?” and moral and ethical issues, such as the rights of parents over unborn children, and concepts such as independence. The findings presented here suggest that the creative arts are an ideal vehicle for developing key thinking skills across the curriculum. Both thinking skills and the creative arts are about exploration, imagination, listening to one another and working together. In addition, the concepts discussed here enabled students to think about their creative work in a more in-depth way.

A focus on teaching thinking skills is unusual within the creative arts curriculum, in that, just as throughout the rest of the curriculum, children are typically measured by their ability to produce and perform rather than to reflect on aesthetic experience. Thinking skills are about process, and issue in open-ended answers. The creative arts also emphasize process; any judgments on the product involved are subjective, yet open to inquiry, review and discussion. In this case there was clear evidence that students experienced heightened levels of motivation and increased concentration. As for the improvement in self-esteem, it is not completely clear whether this was a result of engagement in thinking skills and creative arts, or simply in the higher motivation which engagement in group inquiry tends to stimulate.

Thinking well both requires and tends to promote thoughtful and appropriate behavior, and children certainly showed evidence of improvements in self control in a group setting. This was evidenced even outside the circle of inquiry, for example in students taking more care for their surroundings—clearing up their own litter, tidying up after classes, and helping assistants after lunch time. They also took a greater interest in making their displays more professional. They were observed to begin caring for each other in novel ways—for example two children working through an aesthetic problem through discussion, and or clarifying each other’s ideas in the inquiry circle—thus indicating they were becoming more active participants in their own learning process, and more concerned to search out their own meanings through discussion and discovery. However, the most important benefits derived from the community of aesthetic inquiry are not easily quantifiable, such as the shy child who speaks up, or the improvement in behavior, the growth in confidence, or the growth in ability both to articulate and to listen to one another.

The children’s willingness and courage to ask questions, to be active in the discussion, and to support their views with reasons, can be improved through practice. But it is clear that lasting improvement in thinking, talking and listening skills implies many hours of collaborative reflection and deliberation. But it is also clear that these skills, tendencies and dispositions are the most essential for developing the thoughtful and creative citizens on which the future of society depends.

Bibliography


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