Developing Thinking Capacity: The role of Philosophy for Children (P4C)
What is P4C?

NOT:
About facts on the lives of great philosophers
NOT EVEN:
The thoughts of great philosophers
BUT:
The practical process of philosophizing, i.e. thinking
Why P4C?

For teachers, the principal goal is to enhance thinking abilities to raise attainment across the curriculum – which P4C does

BUT.....
Why P4C?

If students can think for themselves:
They can be more adaptable and flexible in their jobs,
Distinguish real from fake news and be better informed citizens,
Feel less confused by a bewildering world,
Etc. ....
Professor Matthew Lipman started the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC) in 1972 in Montclair University, USA. (https://www.montclair.edu/cehs/academics/centers-and-institutes/iapc)

Lipman introduced the Community of Enquiry idea
Philosophy for Children and the Teaching of Thinking

National Conference on Philosophy for Children

Melbourne July 12-16, 1991

Mathew Lipman was there........
Community of Enquiry

A group engaged in **Exploring** ideas through **Dialogue:**

Pupils and teachers **Ask** each other questions

They **Discuss** the different responses

They work towards a **Consensus** – or a **Conflict** – of substantiated views

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What Do You Do?  
(Teachers and Children)

- Ask open and inviting questions
- Seek clarification
- Give examples and evidence
- Make comparisons and contrasts
- Give reasons for your views
- Summarise
- Evaluate

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Facilitative Questions

Can you say more about that?
What makes you say that?
How do you know that?
Do you have any evidence for that?
Why?
Is it possible to know if that is true?
Does anyone else support that view?
Good Questions

NOT Closed, Multiple or Leading

BUT Clarifying, Probing the Superficial, Exploring Alternative Views, Scaffolding, Seeking Evidence, Testing Implications, Evaluating
Teacher Strategies

- Ask ALL pupils – encourage the quietest
- Give Thinking Time – don’t hurry
- Slow the Rate of Questioning
- Listen
- Second-Questioning
- Provide Cues and Assistance
- Withhold Judgement
Daniel Goleman

- Self-Awareness
- Motivation
- Self-Regulation
- Empathy
- Social Skills

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Paul Cleghorn
(www.aude-education.co.uk)
Thinking Through Philosophy

Series of 4 books:
For upper 3 years of primary &
first year of secondary

Eprint Publishing
www.eprint.co.uk

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Lesson Structure

1. Focusing/Calming Exercise
2. Connection with previous session: TFTW
3. Summarise rule(s) for good thinking
4. Present the Stimulus
5. Ask pupils to remember three things
6. Teacher-led Enquiry through Dialogue
7. Pair/Group Work
8. Closure: Think of the most important idea
9. Discuss Thought for the Week

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The Stimulus

Often a Story (e.g. Aesop’s Fables)
But can be:

• Poem
• Picture
• Video (short)
• Activity (e.g. Thinking Map)
• Dance/Drama
Aesop’s Fables

Aesop was a slave who lived in Greece from 620 to 564 BC
(see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aesop%27s_Fables)

Fables used from the Renaissance onward for the education of children

See Library of Congress for examples
(http://read.gov/aesop/001.html) and others
Organizations

• SAPERE (Society for Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education) – UK (https://www.sapere.org.uk)
• SOPHIA Network – Europe (www.sophianetwork.eu)
• The Philosophy Foundation (https://www.philosophy-foundation.org/p4c)
• International Council of Philosophical Inquiry with Children (ICPIC) (http://icpic.org)
Spread of P4C

Now in 60 countries across the world

Including developing and developed countries

Ireland has included it in their national curriculum
But Does it Work?

Research on Effects
Trickey & Topping Review (2004):

10 short term studies
Cohens’s $\delta$ (effect size) = 0.43
low variance

Empirical Studies in Scotland

All primary schools in a school district involved eventually

Some but not all had P4C throughout the school

P4C once per week for 1 hour all year
Measures

Cognitive Abilities Test
(Lohman, Thorndike, Hagen, 2001)
Standardised, norm-referenced
Correlates with examination performance

Pre-post = 12 months
Follow-up - Two years later after secondary transfer
Cognitive Results

Pre-post study:
e gained 6 points ($\delta = 0.46$),
c gained nothing

Follow-up study:
e remained same ($\delta = 0.01$),
c declined further
Video analysis of specimen lessons for analysis of implementation integrity/fidelity:

(1) Reduction in teacher talk,
(2) Increased use of open-ended questions by teacher,
(3) increased participation of pupils in classroom dialogue,
(4) improved pupil reasoning in justification of opinions.
Socio-emotional effects:
On a test of self-esteem as a learner (MALS), experimental pupils (n=119) gained significantly while controls (n=52) did not.
Girls gained more in self-esteem than boys.
Other Results #3

Participant views: Most students enjoyed it. Improvement in listening and concentration commonly reported. Half the students reported gains 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.

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More Recent References


Randomised controlled trial (RCT)
Secondary - 7th/8th grade
Cognitive Abilities test
e=363, c=177
1 hour week; 22-26 vs. 4-10 weeks long was effective; short was not.
Followed up 7th graders (12-13 year old) Three years later without P4C Texas students more ethnically diverse Higher attrition than Scotland e =133/186, c=50/79 Cognitive Abilities Test e Cohen’s δ = 0.68, c δ =0.28
Effect on Traditional Achievements

EEF report:
Primary - Years 4-5
P4C once weekly for a year
Cognitive Abilities test + reading, maths, writing achievement
48 schools across England
Gains

Significant impact in reading and maths

No gain in writing

Biggest impact among disadvantaged pupils

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References


Implications for University Teachers

1. Connect with previous session
2. Reduce teacher talk
3. Ask open questions (not closed, multiple or leading)
4. Model good questions
5. Seek clarification
6. Rephrase question

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Implications for University Teachers #2

7. Give thinking time
8. Slow the rate of questioning
9. Listen
10. Involve all students
11. Engage students in peer work
12. Give examples
Implications for University Teachers #3

13. Give cues and assistance
14. How do you know that?
15. Give reasons for your views
16. Summarise
17. Ask for most important point

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Philosophers in the Schools

Washington University, USA
Students go tutoring P4C in local primary and secondary schools


Graduate and undergraduate students
Not just philosophy students

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Critical Thinking in HE

Many programs
Quite diverse
Some evaluated
No single program like P4C

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Critical Thinking Project

https://critical-thinking.project.uq.edu.au
Coming soon….

Questions
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https://www.dundee.ac.uk/esw/staff/details/toppingkeith-j-.php#tab-bio