

# *Critical & Creative Thinking:*

*the Australasian Journal  
of Philosophy for Children  
Vol 2 No 2 Oct 1994*

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Seventh International Conference Melbourne, Australia, July 10-15, 1995

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The Australasian Journal of Philosophy for Children  
and  
The Federation of Australian Philosophy for Children Associations (FAPCA)

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### Aim and scope

To provide a vehicle for the communication of ideas and a forum for discussion and debate of issues concerning the practice of philosophical inquiry with children.

To foster continuing development of the theory and practice of engaging children in philosophical inquiry;

more specifically:-

- (1) to promote better teaching and curricular design for the development of critical and creative thinking amongst children through increased understanding and use of philosophical inquiry in the classroom
- (2) to enrich the understanding of philosophy and philosophical inquiry

and its role in the development of good thinking and good judgment.

(3) to increase interaction and collaboration between the academic community of scholars in universities and teachers in schools on matters of logic, epistemology, creativity, metaphysics, ethics, aesthetics, inquiry, philosophy of science, mind, person-hood, community, understanding, learning, thinking, dialogue, discussion

(4) to promote discussion of the place of philosophy in the national and school curriculum and its infusion into the present curriculum; the place and contribution of philosophy to the intellectual, creative, moral and social development of individuals.

### Structure

The journal will carry a range of articles reporting on all aspects of the practice of engaging in philosophical inquiry and developing critical and creative thinking. To this end it will be organised into four main Sections or Departments as follows:-

#### (1) Theory and Applied Research

- a. Contributions concerning the more theoretical aspects of philosophy and inquiry such as:-
  - the nature and purpose, of philosophy, inquiry, community, conversation, dialogue, critical thinking, creative thinking, reasoning, etc.
  - the nature of childhood, adolescence, mind; the philosophy of childhood and development, etc.
  - epistemological, social, political and ethical dimensions of the practice of engaging children in philosophical inquiry.
  - policy and planning, future studies and directions; implications of recent Government Reports
- b. Research studies of classroom practice:
  - the impact of philosophy for children on classroom interaction, classroom discourse and dialogue; pupil participation, thinking and learning; teacher thinking and behaviour; classroom climate, etc.

#### (2) Philosophical studies

discussion and clarification of key philosophical concepts, topics and issues embedded in and raised by classroom readers and other materials; exegeses of the philosophical literature on such matters.

#### (3) Reports from the field:

- a. Reports from practising teachers on their experience of engaging children in philosophical inquiry; discussion of practical problems and possible solutions; innovative ways of using classroom materials, arranging classrooms, grouping, interacting with pupils.
  - Children's reactions and views new materials or exercises.
  - This section may well stimulate other research projects.
- b. Children's work - writings, illustrations, etc.

#### (4) Resources & Reviews (R&R)

Reports from inservice or workshop experiences and challenges. News and reports from national and international conferences. Discussion of different approaches, new materials, exercises and such. New philosophical stories, teacher manuals and other materials. Reviews of books and other materials.

### Welcome to Critical & Creative Thinking

Welcome to the second volume of Critical and Creative Thinking - the Journal for the Federation of Australian Philosophy for Children Associations. This Journal is dedicated to improving the teaching and research of critical and creative thinking by providing a forum for discussion and debate on all aspects, theoretical and practical, of the practice of engaging children in activities intended to develop and improve their thinking. We encourage classroom teachers as well as academics to send in their contributions for publication. Critical & Creative Thinking is intended to be a teachers' professional journal featuring a combination of theoretical and research articles with articles from teachers on their classroom experience and practical strategies for engaging children in critical and creative thinking activities. Whatever program you are trying with your class, please write in and let us know about it and its impact on your students as well as its influence on your own teaching practice. There are many others who are interested in what you are doing, together we can help each other become even better teachers and educators.

Clive Lindop  
Deakin University-Warrnambool

### Notes for contributors

All contributions are welcome. Manuscripts should be typed and doubled spaced on A4 letter or US letter paper and accompanied with a disc copy, preferably 3.5 in Macintosh disc in Word 5 format (though IBM MS DOS is acceptable). Alternatively, to save time and avoid damage or loss in the mail, contributors may send their articles by E-mail to:-

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Please use the Author - Date system with endnotes and bibliography for your articles

### Letters to the Editor

It often happens that one reads an article and wants to respond, but not in the form of a lengthy article. Such responses, which might simply add to a point made by the author either in agreement or disagreement, or offer an alternative view, etc. could appear as a 'Letter to the Editor.' The idea here is to encourage dialogue between readers and authors- in effect using the Journal to create a community of inquiry!

Send all postal contributions to Clive Lindop  
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### Subscriptions

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*Critical & Creative Thinking*

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## Vol 2 No 2: Preview

**Ann Sharp** peruses assumptions underlying Philosophy for Children to realise that it is linked with a view of religious experience which Dewey describes as "a quality of experience .... that brings about a better, deeper and enduring adjustment to life." Her paper is an attempt to ferret out this religious dimension within the feminist philosophy and theology that has been developed in the last twenty years. Her journey explores the adequacy of metaphors for capturing the religious dimension of experience and raises problems of objectivity and community. As it is a long journey her paper appears in two parts, the first in the previous of the Journal and the second in this issue.

**Phil Camm** argues that since democratic ideals demand educational practices that avoid indoctrination and promote the ability of people to judge for themselves, we should avoid moral instruction and instead concentrate on developing children's reflective moral judgment. This requires both an environment and a program through which children can come to think critically and responsibly for themselves in the moral domain. Philosophy in the form of the classroom community of inquiry is the ideal way of promoting such reflective habits.

**Roger Cresswell** and **Peter Hobson** are critical of social and cultural studies programs which place little emphasis on the different religious, moral or political beliefs and practices of migrant and ethnic communities, especially where they conflict with the values of a liberal, democratic society. This could have dire consequences for the future survival of a pluralist, liberal democracy. They argue that perhaps the most fertile field for promoting inter-cultural understanding and avoiding relativism when it comes to matters of value is to be found in Philosophy for Children.

**Irene de Puig** argues that the practical field of moral and political education involves more than the accumulation of speculative knowledge, it must involve practice. Classroom programs which emphasise moral thought are insufficient, as are programs which develop models of conduct without reflection. Irene argues that the only suitable alternative is the practise of the reflective classroom community of inquiry and its grounding in philosophy which has as its aim, not merely knowledge, but the getting of wisdom.

**Sue Wilks** has spent many years trialling ways of assisting teachers to introduce philosophical inquiry in their classrooms. She offers a range of activities, adapted from the Philosophy for Children Teacher Manuals, which encourage participation in creative and critical thinking. Her work confirms that for those wishing to introduce a specific philosophy program into their classroom, taking time to establish an effective community of inquiry is worthwhile.

**Chris Durham** shares some of the classroom activities based around a newspaper article on the discovery of a fossil elephant bird egg which she uses to provoke reflective and critical engagement with issues of social and moral importance.

**Greg Smith** reports on his experience as part of a team of two in inducting a group of teachers into using the program, *Lisa*, during a Philosophy for Children summer school this year. The experience gave him confidence to continue in the role of teacher educator and encourages others to 'have a go.'

**Tock Keng Lim** reports on the results of a trial project implementing Philosophy for Children in Singapore schools and the results of the planned formative evaluation. She notes that the programs have added a new dimension to the ways the students approach thinking. They are developing skills of thinking for themselves and making good judgments based on consideration of many possibilities. Teachers who worked with these students in other subjects report evidence of transfer of learning in the students' written assignments, as well as their being more ready to discuss a wider range of topics than students in other classes.

A Letter from the Treasurer of ICPIC:  
Laurance Splitter, Australia.

Dear colleague

As the new treasurer of ICPIC, I would urge you to consider joining, or rejoining ICPIC; or, if you are currently a financial member, persuading friends and colleagues to join.

The simple fact is that ICPIC needs more members. We have lots of ideas about bringing philosophy and better thinking to children around the world, but many of these ideas cost money. A bigger ICPIC means a more powerful and more influential ICPIC, and hence a better chance of achieving some of our goals over the next few years.

Also, we should try to increase our own national membership of ICPIC. Already, philosophy for children is as strong in Australia as it is anywhere, and there are mutual benefits to be gained from being part of an international philosophy for children network.

ICPIC goals include:

- Bringing philosophy for children to new countries not involved so far, through the creation of new centers
- Expanding philosophy for children in all countries, by encouraging training, research, curriculum planning, promotion and publication of philosophy materials for children, teachers and parents and, of course, more school involvement
- Coordinating international projects, including Philosophy for Children and Environmental Education, an International Children's Philosophy Camp, bringing philosophy to under-privileged children, organising regular conferences and international workshops
- Building a sense of community through regular contact and dialogue (especially appropriate for countries which are relatively more isolated – like Oz)

The 1994 ICPIC Membership Directory will soon be forwarded to all members. Also, we will write to people as their membership expiry date draws near.

The new ICPIC membership form for 1994-5 is included with this edition of the Journal. I would ask you to read it carefully, as there are some significant changes. The main changes are:

- A new category of "discounted" membership for students and others without regular income
- No more associate membership
- Inclusion of *Critical and Creative Thinking*, along with *Thinking and Analytic Teaching* (and *Aprender a Pensar* for Spanish) as membership options at special ICPIC rates
- A small increase in membership dues for regular members (making it possible for us to offer discounted membership)

The form itself has been redesigned so that it should be easier to fill in from now on. Please note that "discounted" members receive all the same privileges as regular members. The only difference is the joining fee.

Payment by credit card is preferred but a cheque is ok, but it should be in Australian \$ (see membership form for details of costs).

ICPIC membership currently stands at around 340, which is not that many when you consider that more than 40 countries are involved in Philosophy for Children. There are currently 21 Australian members (and some are not in good financial standing!) which, again, is not that many when you think about it.

All subscriptions, renewals and membership inquiries should be sent to Laurance Splitter  
c/- ACER, Private Bag 55, Camberwell,

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or

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**International Council for Philosophical Inquiry with Children  
ICPIC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION  
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Please circle your choices and insert totals. Prices are in Australian dollars  
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Type of Member-ship	Thinking (USA)	Analytic Teaching (USA)	Critical & Creative Thinking	Aprender a Pensar (Spain)	Subtotal x	Number of years required	TOTAL
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\*Discounted Membership available only to students and other not earning a regular income. Proof of eligibility required

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All members will receive the ICPIC Bulletin twice a year, plus a copy of the ICPIC Membership Directory (updated annually). All members in good financial standing are entitled to vote at official ICPIC meetings. ICPIC members receive any of four additional journals at a special ICPIC rate. *Thinking* is published quarterly. *Analytic Teaching*, *Critical & Creative Thinking*, *Aprender a Pensar* are published twice a year. Mailing costs are included in the subscription fee

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## The Religious Dimension of Philosophy for Children

Ann Margaret Sharp: Montclair State, NJ, USA.

### PART II

This continues on from Part I of the article which appeared in the March issue of the Journal earlier this year.

#### **A Global Community of Philosophical Inquiry**

How can a fallible, contextual, human conception of knowledge be subject to global awareness and be held accountable? For the most part elementary school philosophy in the world today has as its locus the classroom community of inquiry. These classrooms exist in individual nations that often are characterized by a narrow, nationalistic vision of the world. Children tend to form world-views similar to the people around them and tend to accept as truth what people tell them of the nature of the world as they listen to them during their formative years. Most individuals operate from a very narrow frame of reference, a frame that must be broadened if they are to grow constructively and come to understand the world in which we live.

Philosophy for Children envisions a time to come when, through the use of a shared philosophical curriculum and modern technology, children from different nations could discuss issues such as identity, freedom, fairness, mind and children's rights in an open dialogical forum. For the first time in modern history, children would have the opportunity to formally develop a transcultural consciousness. Although at a geographical distance from one another, the members of this community of inquiry could come to think of themselves as peers, adherents of a common activity and participants in a conversation that has been going on for over 2,500 years.

We need to remind ourselves that if we do not have a global community of philosophical inquiry in education today, such a limitation is historical and technological, not ontological. Peirce reminds us that "our minds are not shut up in a box of flesh and blood." They are not confined to any particular location. Like words, minds have the capacity to communicate throughout the world. He further asserts that "two minds can communicate only by becoming in so far one mind" (MS 498). Distinct minds never completely fuse into identical minds; nonetheless, there are moments when the barrier that blocks the understanding of one another collapse. Thus, not insularity but interpenetrability is what ought to govern the relationship between minds.

If we are European, we are likely to have a very different world view from a person born in Japan or South Africa. If one is an American born and raised in Michigan, one is more likely to become a Christian than a Buddhist and to possess a somewhat more optimistic world view. To develop a world-view that is realistic that is, conforms to the reality of the cosmos and our role in it, as best we can know that reality - we must constantly revise and extend our understanding to include new knowledge of the larger world. We must be always willing to reconstruct our world-view to take into account different cultures and perspectives. As our experience and knowledge broadens, it is likely that our ability to understand other people will also deepen. With this understanding, wisdom becomes an epistemic possibility.

Most individuals operate from a far narrower frame of reference than that of which they are capable, failing to transcend the influence of their particular culture, their particular set of parents and their particular childhood experience that has formed their view of the world. It is no wonder, then, that the world of humanity is so full of conflict. We have a situation in which persons, who must deal with each other, have vastly different views as to the nature of reality, yet each one believe his or her own view to be the correct one since it is based on the microcosm of personal experience. And to make matters worse, most of us are not even fully aware of our own world-views, much less the uniqueness of the experience from which they are derived.

We are now at a moment in history that we have good reason to think that persons can transcend cultural influence. Since 1984, the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children has invited philosophers and educators from all over the world to form such communities for 14-day periods in Mendham, New Jersey. Thirty people arrive from sometimes as many as 16 nations and six languages. Within this relatively short time period, it has been the experience of many of the participants that they do come to understand the world-views of others and take different perspectives into account. Instead of serving as a barrier, language differences with the help of translation, offer a richness to the texture of the dialogue. Different cultural perspectives force participants to realize that most of us are indeed like the three proverbial blind men, each in touch with only his particular piece of the elephant, yet each claiming to know the nature of the whole beast. Friendships are formed that often are more meaningful than friendships the persons had at home.

Lorraine Code argues that certain features of the practice of friendship and ecology would serve as a paradigm in setting up global communities of inquiry. Friends care for the welfare of each other. They accept each other as they are and do all that is possible to help each other grow: friends do not try to manipulate or control each other. Their interaction is actually a transaction; that is, as they interact they knowingly affect how each views the world, how each aims to grow in the near future. Friends can distinguish between the self and its needs and one's friend and her needs. One's friend is not a projection of oneself and one's desires. Rather, one's friend's growth and happiness means as much to us as our own.

Such features can be extended, by analogy, to construct a regulative ideal for communal inquiry. The proposal would work to the extent that such inquiry would be simultaneous with the development of *ecological* strategies for creating social environments where a politics of democracy, pluralism and tolerance is explicitly promoted. The trust, respect and caring interaction that is essential to good friendship and the interdependence that is characteristic of balanced ecosystems are the characteristic features of a working community of inquiry. Such individuals would be committed to deliberate and reflective conversation rather than aggressive confrontations. The community would aim to promote a supportive and non-oppressive atmosphere that would nurture each participant's growth as their collaborative inquiry leads them toward a broader frame of reference.

Seyla Benhabib contends that it is essential to know other people as concrete, not merely as 'generalized others' for moral action. As for Mead, Dewey and Peirce, Benhabib contends that "the self only

becomes an I in a community of other selves who are also I's. Every act of self-reference expresses simultaneously the uniqueness and difference of the self as well as the commonality among selves" (Benhabib, *Generalized and Concrete Other*, p. 94). Benhabib acknowledges that there is a certain commonality among all people and this commonality might be discussed in community. However, there is also a difference between persons and this difference needs also to be taken into account. Like Luce Irigaray, she stresses the importance of this uniqueness in the building of a better world. Good philosophical thinking is thinking that is always sensitive to particularities and uniqueness. It is the very opposite of that kind of thinking which forces general rules upon individual cases, whether such rules are appropriate or not. It follows that good philosophical thinking is always hostile to stereotyping. To belong to a classroom community of inquiry is to come to recognize not only the commonality but the uniqueness and the preciousness of each person in the community.

There is a close alliance between good philosophical thinking in a community of inquiry and informal logic, inasmuch as the latter is concerned with context, inferential reasoning that does not have certain conclusions but merely probable ones, and does not claim the universality that is claimed by deduction. Children familiar with informal logic will be concerned to identify the many fallacies to which thinking is prone and to identify as well those individual cases which it may be fallacious to identify as fallacies. Children sensitive to informal logic will examine the many varieties of inductive reasoning, but will also give thought to the logical basis of figurative language, as for instance in simile and metaphor (Lipman 1993a).

In order for the community of inquiry to proceed, three basic values must be internalized by the students: civility, willingness to take risks and an appreciation of diversity. Civility, courtesy in working with one's peers and teachers is a simple but very powerful virtue. Politeness, respect and care set a tone of cooperation and encourage the openness and trust that lets people help one another by sharing experiences and insights. Willingness to take risks, both individual and collective, not only helps children understand the topic under discussion, but stimulates originality and demands courage. Finally, an appreciation of diversity - diversity in backgrounds, personalities, languages, questions posed, learning styles, frames of reference and spectrums of interpretation - ensure that the community will avoid a myopic framework and will feel free to venture into new intellectual territory where explorers need one another's help and support. The combined totality of these virtues can determine the tone of discussion and its collective impact creates an ethos that can enrich the dialogue and bring about new understandings. (Lipman, 1993a.)

An aim of such a community is to develop in children an *ecological* sense of one's place in relationship to other people on the globe and well as to all of nature. Such an *ecological* consciousness is committed to the creation of communities that depend on and foster the flourishing of their members. For this reason, they are more promising, than atomistic, individualistic views that focus on autonomy, self-realization and self-reliance. Such an ecological model can shift communal inquiry away from an obsession with self-autonomy towards a recognition that every cognitive act takes place at a point of intersection of innumerable relations, events, circumstances, and his-

tories that make the knower and the known what they are, at that time. Perspectivism and fallibilism are assumed (Lorraine Code, 295.)

Participation in a community of inquiry is not only a journey in self-discovery but in self-creation and world-creation. Children learn how to ask themselves what kind of persons they would like to be or what kinds of worlds they would like to live in before making judgments. Self-scrutiny becomes habitual. "Do I really see things clearly or am I operating on murky assumptions? Do I really understand what this person is saying? Could it not be that the path this other person is taking is quite wise and my perception of it as unwise is the result of limited vision on my part? Am I being self-serving in believing that other people need re-direction?" In the beginning of the process, most discover that they have strong biases in favor of their own way of looking at things and are quite reluctant to admit that there might be equally good, alternative ways of looking at the same things. Helping children to think philosophically can not only change views and expand alternatives, but can actually bring new descriptions of experience into existence. When one participates in an international community of philosophical inquiry, one learns to put one's perspective into an even larger framework. To the extent that such a community is global, children have the opportunity to construct broader self-concepts, broader visions, broader purposes that take into account the lives and sufferings of others, as well as the consequences of their actions on the world. As children expand their horizons within the context of doing philosophy with children from other nations, it is reasonable to expect that new values will be constructed to cohere with the world they would like to bring into existence.

The community of philosophical inquiry aims at *transformation* of persons, changing perceptions of how one relates to the world and to other people. Communal inquirers are characterized by selfdiscipline. They know how to delay gratification and assume responsibility for their actions. They have a commitment to inquiry, to find out how things are and how they could be made better. They are judicious people who are flexible. Extraordinary flexibility is required for successful living in all spheres of activity. Judicious change is viewed as positive rather than negative. New perceptions take the form of new behaviors, new visions and new vocabularies to make sense of the ever-changing world we live in and the world each of us would like to bring about. Thus the aim of the community of inquiry is much more than self-scrutiny and careful analysis of the given. The aim is always to create something better - that is, more just, more reasonable, more beautiful, than what we have had before. Such work is experimental.

The process of creation is experimental and continuous. The artist, scientific man, or good citizen, depends upon what others have done before him and are doing around him. The sense of new values that become ends to be realized arises first in dim and uncertain form. As the values are dwelt upon and carried forward in action, they grow in definiteness and coherence. Interaction between aim and existent conditions improves and tests the ideal and conditions are at the same time modified. Ideals change as they are applied in existent conditions. The process endures and advances with the life of humanity. (Dewey, *The Common Faith*, 50)

Children's realization that knowledge is a construction that is dependent on the perspective of the individual claiming to know is not the same as thinking that knowledge is determined by this perspective. Rather these factors constitute the stuff out of which knowers, as creators of meaning and as agents, must construct their meanings, purposes and actions. Perspectives limit the constructive process, but they also give it shape. Ecologically rather than individually positioned, human beings recognize that they are *interdependent*. Children who come to realize that they must rely on one another as much in knowledge construction as they do for other things, will be in a better position to engage in inquiry toward the building of a better world, to assume responsibility for developing standards of responsible cognitive practice if members are to be able to make better judgments and construct environments where they can live in empowering rather than oppressive environments (Code, 1991, 270)

Such communities of inquiry might concern themselves with questions as "Do we use more than our share of resources? For example, is our use of automobiles, air conditioners and refrigerators justified? Do we fail to replenish those we use?" "How concerned are we with distributing the resources among all people on the globe?" "Do rivers and mountains and trees have rights?" "Why do we have babies?" "Do we have an obligation to help those who do not have the natural resources that we have?" Such ecological questions provides an evaluative framework sensitive to the interconnectedness of lives and processes, both local and global.

To take another example, often children from the first world are ignorant of the suffering of children in the third world. Some don't even seem to be interested in the deprivation suffered by these children when told about it. Through participation in an international community of inquiry, children in the first world might begin to rethink their preoccupations with themselves and materialistic desires and move from a narrow vision of themselves in relationship to others to a more global perspective. Such children might be willing to lower their own standard of living to help children in other parts of the world who are barely surviving. They could begin to realize that in a shrinking world, a self-involved, individualistic focus can be immoral. They could even find themselves developing a sense of democratic solidarity with the less fortunate children in the world and a realization that to be a full person is to share in all of human experience, which means allowing oneself to share in the suffering of others (Kolenda, p181). Such a shift in perspective, should it occur on a global level, will not happen overnight. But given the classroom community of inquiry, it is more than possible. Once it should become a reality in parts of the world, this new global perspective would open up other opportunities, mobilizing unknown resources. No one knows what would be possible should such consciousness come about in millions of classrooms over the globe.

#### The Role of Hope in the Global Community of Inquiry

Psalm 23 says "in the word is my hope." Word has usually been translated "logos" or meaning. Could it be that it is through the "word" that we will engender and sustain hope in a better world? A number of years ago, I wrote a paper entitled 'Women and Hope.' In that I wrote:

There is faith, hope and love.

St. Paul tells us that the greatest of these is love.

But he could be wrong!  
For woman, the greatest of these is hope.

Hope is the courage to commit oneself  
in thought and deed to the future.  
It is the courage to take one step at a time to transform the world  
into a more just and beautiful place.  
It is a thrust away from self rather than towards the self.  
It is a thrust towards the world.

Hoping is not wishing.  
So don't confuse the two.  
We learn about wishing when we are children.  
Hopes are rooted in reality.  
The conditions that exist.  
They form the context for her emerging identity.  
They form the context for her hope as action.

Women is given to herself in her doings.  
Creating an idea and putting it into practice. The doing reveals  
herself to herself.  
To conceive idea and wish them into action is empty.  
Only woman can project the person she would like to be.  
Only she can project the world she thinks should exist.

Hope illuminates woman's present.  
Hope enables her to commit herself to the future.  
It helps her understand the meaning of the now.  
Hope is expectation of what is to come.  
It is the disposition to act to bring about the ideal.  
Yet it is present in woman now.

Women need hope for embarking.  
Moving into the unknown.  
Changing social structures which are empty or unjust.  
Hope is a virtue that grows as woman acts.

Hope enables her to have power to direct her actions.  
Doing what she thinks best to create a better world.  
Woman must consciously impress hope  
upon the framework of her life.

Paulo Freire wrote of the importance of hope in the educational process in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. He stressed its role in fostering dispositions to voice one's needs and concerns, to question the dominant world-view, to inquire, and create new world-views that have the possibility of becoming more just and reasonable. He envisioned a world where *all* children have access to the intellectual, social and material tools that they need to become liberated. Women belong to the category of the oppressed.

For Freire, as for Dewey, education is always the frontier of democracy. One of its tasks is to keep alive for all persons, girls, as well as boys, the idea that freedom can make room for the growth of the self for all people, as well as the possibility of a more just world in which the oppressed can be liberated. Freedom is important because its absence translates into constraints on the effort to become all that each person can potentially become. Similarly the absence of tolerance ex-

poses the struggling oppressed individual to the controlling and manipulative power of others. As an ally of democracy, education must not only model a non-sexist democratic procedure in the classroom, but help children of both sexes to inquire into the meaning of democracy as a possible human experiment, within a global context. A democratic education implies giving *all* children the tools they need that will equip them to choose forms of life that would result in the highest degree of individual, social, and spiritual fulfillment. (Konstantin Kolenda, 1990.).

Classroom communities of inquiry engender dispositions that make participation in a non-sexist democracy possible. They constitute a spirit of egalitarian, voluntary cooperation for the sake of personal and social growth. Participation in such cooperative inquiry can provide a convincing answer to the questions, Who am I? What ought I to do? Why? Because it is through such communal inquiry that the place of the self in the whole scheme of things starts to become clearer to both girl and boy children. Both sexes can come to understand that they are responsible for themselves, for one another, and for the planet itself. As the community continues with its work, an *ecological* sense of relationship emerging out of communal inquiry is created; it is a work of human minds, and actions, *a new consciousness*, that makes a difference in how the participants think and live. School children need to be given practice in living in accordance with democratic values. They need to learn how to apply these values to the social situations in which they find themselves. The skills needed to apply democratic criteria to social situations include the following:

- the capacity to deliberate among alternatives
- the capacity to compare opposing arguments
- readiness to see the other side of the question
- willingness to listen to other points of view
- sensitivity to context
- ability to detect underlying assumptions
- respect for cultural differences
- readiness to engage in self-correction
- respect for others in the community
- fairness with respect to the rights of others
- preparedness to make judgments based on the findings of inquiry

The Philosophy for Children curriculum offers children opportunities to discover these values in their own classroom communities of inquiry. In such communities they can also clarify for themselves some of the classic concepts of civics education such as freedom, rights, personhood, truth, common good, community, friendship, solidarity, justice. Since Philosophy for Children promotes this sort of deliberation upon democratic values, it represents an important contribution to the teaching of civics.

There is good reason to be hopeful. Today there are over 35 nations, on every continent, where children do philosophy in an egalitarian manner, within the context of the formal educational establishment. These nations are represented in the International Council of Philosophical Inquiry with Children that was created in 1985. For the past three years, Brazilian children have requested a three day national philosophical congress so that they might inquire together regarding issues in environmental ethics. A number of Icelandic children have collaborated with their teacher in writing a philosophical novel dealing with ethical inquiry, while a number of children from

Zimbabwe have requested more courses in *doing* philosophy from their teachers. It is only a matter of time until children's philosophical inquiry will turn its attention to the spiritual dimension of experience.

Hope is indispensable for the continuance of a non-sexist community of inquiry. No one would subject oneself to such discipline and hard work if one had no hope in its outcome. For girls as well as boys, the object of hope is twofold: (1) to become exposed to worthwhile funded experience of the human race and (2) to witness and participate in the extension of that experience in new worthwhile directions. One's hopes are likely to include events, activities, discoveries and inventions that appear to have special significance, to meet important challenges and to reach higher standards of excellence. The goodness of a person's life is conditioned by the realization of at least some of these hopes. (Kolenda's book on Rorty.)

Hope is created and then nourished in the classroom community of inquiry. Girls and boys who at one time found their daily experience meaningless come to take on a new view of themselves in relation to the other. Each time fresh options are perceived, conflicts are thought to be solved by mutual accommodation, and problems, crises and perceived dangers are transformed into opportunities, girls and boys both begin to develop a trust in each other and a confidence that deliberation and reason coupled with care for one another can make a real difference in the world they will bring into reality.

What if, within the structure of the United Nations (in particular, UNESCO), we could create the means to bring about a global community of philosophical inquiry in which all girls and boys could gain the tools that they need to (a) appropriate the tradition of the past that they have rightfully inherited in such a way to (b) deliberate and think for themselves about matters of importance within the context of a global community. Such children might begin to perceive themselves as part of a non-sexist, global community with shared meanings, rituals and practices, as well as responsibilities to and within that global community.

In creating *The Dolls Hospital*, a philosophical curriculum for three and four year olds, there was an explicit attempt, through the use of dolls from many nations, to sensitize very young children to different cultures, races, languages and different manifestations of beauty, while at the same time fostering an environment in which very young persons, in the process of acquiring language, could learn to talk together in a non-sexist environment about their experience in a responsible fashion, while at the same time reflecting upon the procedures that they use to do so. Such procedures involve taking turns, listening and building on one another's ideas. It is reflective philosophical practice within the context of a community of inquiry that enables even these very young children to learn how to inquire together about concepts that are essential in children's on-going attempt to make sense of their world. Notions such as maleness, femaleness, equality, goodness, fairness, choice, person, and reality form the building-blocks of their daily experience while at the same time become cornerstones of their view of the world.

We adults must realize that the results of communal inquiry are not predetermined. As moral agents, children have to try to understand the world for themselves and thereby construct their own views. In

the end, these views might be different from adult views. However, it is important for adults to equally remember that children in communities of inquiry have the potential to be reasonable, discerning, caring and judicious persons. As they inquire, cannot avoid choices, they have to set up at least the forms of a distinction between what is real and what is not. Inconsiderate conduct, destructive conduct, has its cognate illusions, fantasies and consequences that can be pointed out by one's peers. Children acquire language in a communal context where their vocabulary is increased and refined in the everyday process of interacting and inquiring together. As they inquire, they become exposed to moral concepts. Not only 'good' and 'bad,' but 'responsible,' 'caring,' 'gentle' and 'kind.' These are concepts which throw light on other concepts as when we distinguish between communal self-correction and trying to prove another person's world-view wrong.

Morality ought to be connected with our every action. It ought to characterize how we live our lives. Children are always using and directing their energy, refining or blunting it, purifying or corrupting it. It is in this sense that the classroom community of inquiry aims to harness the energy of children and help them to inquire and reflect together on important rather than trivial matters, to come to see how aesthetic and moral insight connects, how respect for things connects with respect for animals, rivers, mountains and persons. Such moral growth is dependent on whether we afford children the opportunity to do ethical inquiry in a nonsexist international setting as a constitutive part of their early formal education.

#### What is Children's Philosophy?

Philosophy for Children is an attempt to take the discipline of philosophy and reconstruct it for children in such a way that they can appropriate the concepts and methods and come to think for themselves about matters of importance and care about doing so. With its curriculum that ranges from day care center age to 18 years of age, its aims to acquaint children with the tools that are required to think well about their own thinking while at the same time discussing philosophical issues that arise in their own experience. The focus is on the *doing* of philosophy rather than learning about philosophical systems or specific philosophers of the past. One will find most of the ideas of the major philosophers of the West, and some of the East (hardly enough) presented in a dialogical mode that encourages children to think for themselves about the meaning of these ideas.

What are these virtues or strengths of philosophy - both practice and content - that carry over from the traditional academic, higher education version of philosophy to children's philosophy?

1. Ethical inquiry. Engaging children in investigation of problems dealing with the role of moral values and norms in human conduct.
2. Aesthetic inquiry. Engaging children in exploring problematic issues that involve the relationships between artistic creation, aesthetic appreciation and aesthetic criticism.
3. Metaphysical inquiry. Encouraging children to reach for greater and greater generality in their understanding of the world and its ways of working.
4. Logical Inquiry. Engaging children in reflection on the rules of inquiry, and into whatever principles are appealed to when thinking about thinking.

5. Epistemological inquiry. Having children seek to answer such questions as "What counts for true?" and "What is the relationship between truth and meaning?" (Lipman, 1993)

Philosophy also provides children with a rigorous methodology of linguistic and logical analysis which will stand them in good stead as they assume more responsibility in society. However, doing philosophy well involves more than conceptual clarity. It also involves oral imagination and insight. It requires a sharpened eye to distinguish what *is* from what *ought* to be. *Doing* philosophy within the context of a community of inquiry acquaints children with a repertoire of distinctively philosophical concepts that are important to children, but not dealt with specifically by other disciplines in the existing elementary school curriculum. Examples of such concepts are justice, personhood, freedom, democracy, friendship, self and identity. These concepts are used over and over again in textbooks, but rarely are children prepared or encouraged to ferret out for themselves the underlying assumptions of the author with regard to such concepts. In most cases, authorial presence is disregarded in favor of information for children to memorize.

It is in this sense that philosophy is liberating; it liberates the child from the possibility of being no more than an unaware 'pawn' in the system of the written, printed and spoken word. Philosophy allows them to recognize when anyone in authority is using an unexamined philosophical concept and to question assumptions that are being made with regard to its meaning.

Until today, the curriculum has been the creation of one man aided by one woman. But this is changing. We now have the beginnings of alternative curriculums in Australia, Germany, Taiwan, The Netherlands, Iceland and Hawaii, with many signs that still other philosophical curriculums will be developed shortly. All that is needed is for existing philosophers to turn their attention to the enterprise.

If one were to study the existing curriculum of elementary school philosophy, one would find little mention of God. Even what we mean by truth is open to inquiry. Yet Philosophy for Children, to use Dewey's words, aims at the *celebration* of the Forms in the doing of philosophy. Children are not only invited to consider the ideas and ideals of major philosophers presented in a dialogical mode, but are encouraged to dramatize creation myths of the pre-Socratics and Plato. These myths are attempts to represent the redemption of all particular things which, although contingent, are touched by the spiritual. Such myths serve as a reminder for children that the most ordinary things of everyday life can become spiritually significant. The classroom community of inquiry itself with its procedures and themes is a *celebration, of cooperative, attentive and reflective minding*, a manifestation of mind in nature in all of its *wonderfulness*.

The eternal Forms of Plato are presented in the philosophical novels for children as ideals: ideals of goodness, beauty, truth, fairness and freedom. They are there for children to think about in relation to their daily experience. Philosophy for Children does not attempt to invent a narrative version of the history of philosophy. Instead, it depicts fictional children together engaged in dialogical inquiry with regard to the philosophical puzzlements they find themselves encountering in

experience. In this sense, the novels provide the actual children in classrooms with models of thinking children who readily lend themselves to emulation. The fictional children offer models of good thinking, thinking characterized as critical, creative and caring, while at the same time, encouraging actual children to reflect upon the adequacy of these tools in light of the philosophical issues under discussion.

If identifying conceptual puzzles represents one of the first steps involved in doing philosophy, formulating philosophical questions is an additional step. Here, teachers need help, and the instructional manuals of the Philosophy for Children curriculum contain a wealth of questions of the kind philosophers have asked or might ask. These questions are organized into discussion plans, exercises, games and activities so as to make them easily available for classroom use. Further, they are constructed in such a way as to foster classroom dialogue. For one must remember that children's doing of philosophy occurs within the context of a classroom community of inquiry, a community that celebrates the communal enterprise of making sense of one's world and one's place in it. The activity is characterized by caring, collaborative deliberation, self-correction, inquisitiveness, open-mindedness, tentativeness, attention to criteria and context, commitment to reasonableness and progress towards a solution. Communities of inquiry display a sense that mere process, mere discussion is not enough: Children want to feel that they achieved something, if only a new understanding of the complexity of the issue under discussion.

Communities of inquiry are also marked by a certain magic that manifests itself in speculative playfulness. This playfulness shows itself in children's delight in attending to ideas that help to make sense of experience, while at the same time encouraging each other to be imaginative, creative while at the same time attentive to the possible consequences of their ideas. Children are as interested in the questions as in the answers. Philosophical questions (except those to do with logic) are usually not thought of as having one right answer. Indeed, philosophers are often content if they can improve a question's formulation. This lack of accepted answers gives children in the community the courage to tread where no one has authoritative knowledge and where their own opinions, as well as refined thinking after deliberation, count as judgments of practice. (Lipman, 1993b). It is for this reason that the practice of *doing* philosophy well is not only liberating, but the cultivation of intelligence at its highest manifestation.

When the community is working at its most effective, the religious dimension of the experience is apparent for many. Something very special is happening. It is as if, at times, the group is working as one and one can discern a communal mind in operation, not in any Hegelian sense, but in a pluralistic and yet unified procedure. It was William James who thought that God requires human aid if injustice and oppression are ever to be overcome. Such aid is the communal deliberation of human intelligence.

Such intelligence must be distinguished from mere rationality. Dewey makes the point that intelligence is inherently involved in action and characterized by passion and *love*, that is:

as ardor in behalf of light shining into the murky places of social existence, as a zeal for its refreshing and purifying effect. The passion and desire for justice and freedom are realities in human

nature. So are the emotions that arise from living in conditions of oppression. A combination of the two kinds of emotion has more than once produced changes that go by the name of revolution. (*The Common Faith*, p. 79-80).

From an educational point of view, the classroom community of philosophical inquiry is the most efficient way of bringing about dialogue with others and with the self about matters of importance while at the same time strengthening reasoning and fostering collaborative inquiry and good judgment. If philosophy is as the ancient Greeks told us "a love of wisdom," and if one thinks of the doing of philosophy as a *conversation* in which all voices *ought* to be heard, such a practice would embody a respect for the dignity of each individual in the world, while at the same time serve the end of liberating children to think for themselves about matters of importance.

Philosophy for Children is a social enterprise that enables children with different backgrounds to make their voices heard. In a word, it is pluralistic: it encourages a plurality of perspectives and interests instead of the monopoly of one. But it does not encourage the view that one opinion is as good as another. The challenge of communal inquiry is to embrace a wide range of disparate and often conflicting views and forge out of them new perspectives and horizons.

To be a participant in a community of philosophical inquiry is to learn to see oneself in relation to the other and to reflect on thoughts that are other - to that which is not oneself. The different, the foreign, the unique is to be sought out, appraised and understood. Participants in the community learn how to draw out silent members of the group, refrain from speaking at a time when a less verbal person has chosen to speak, and who take into account the feelings and world-view of the speaker as a means of coming to understand the significance of her words and the significance of her speaking those words, claiming a public voice. Such students have the disposition and ability to understand the meaning of what is being said and can relate that meaning to others. This assumes the ability to see the world from the other's point of view. Such collaborative deliberation opens the child up to the pull of ideals: love, goodness, beauty, freedom, and justice.

In a classroom community of inquiry the religious is expressed as ideals, ideals that ultimately require our inquiry, our understanding, our self-control, and eventually our reconciliation. The pedagogy of Philosophy for Children conceives of the teacher as a fosterer of inquiry, a facilitator of philosophical dialogue and an instigator of thinking for oneself about these ideals. Teachers are expected to be pedagogically strong, so as to safeguard the relevance of the discussion and the civility of the participants, while at the same time to be philosophically self-effacing, so as not to overwhelm or indoctrinate students. Students in a community of inquiry engage in distributed mental acts such as wondering, surmising, inferring, assuming, deciding in a self-conscious manner among all the participants. Freedom and justice as qualities of experience come to concern the inquirers. Friendship, truth and beauty take on a deeper meaning in their everyday lives. Goodness becomes manifest in their thoughtful and caring behavior with each other and with all of nature. Thinking about the quality of one's thinking as one investigates such concepts becomes second-nature. In time such inquirers may begin to per-

ceive themselves as agents through which the ideals can become actual.

In the redesign of philosophy for the elementary and middle school, a redesign represented by Philosophy for Children, the idea of teaching children abstract ethical theory is rejected. Children have little taste for ethical theories such as Kantianism and Utilitarianism. Instead, in Philosophy for Children classes, children are encouraged to consider problems of everyday life and the reasons that underlie their everyday conduct. In this way, they learn what it takes to justify what they do. The emphasis is on the strengthening of their moral practice and moral judgment.

To this end, children need to be taught to use the tools of ethical inquiry by involving them in the discussion of ethical issues that require them to use such tools. Here are some examples of ethical tools or procedures:

- citing reasons for opinions or actions
- utilizing criteria and standards
- considering alternative consequences
- forming ethical hypotheses
- investigating underlying ethical assumptions
- universalizing "what would it be like if everyone were to do this?"
- relating ends to means
- defining terms
- seeking comprehensiveness e.g. taking everything into account
- demanding coherence and consistency
- grasping relationships (e.g. part-whole, figure-ground, etc.)
- contextualization (taking the relevant features of a situation into account)
- developing an understanding of the relevance of ideals (asking yourself what kind of a world you want to live in and what kind of a person you want to be.)

These tools are not self-sufficient. They require being supplemented with virtuous dispositions on the part of the students, dispositions that are cultivated as the communal inquiry proceeds. On the other hand, such dispositions, by themselves, are inadequate and need to be supplemented with the strengthened judgment that comes about with the use of the above mentioned tools.

The Philosophy for Children classroom is converted into a community that is both cognitive and affective. On the one hand, it cultivates the improvement of cognitive skills, such as critical and creative thinking skills, on the other hand, it encourages the formation of community feelings, which develop the pro-social virtuous dispositions (such as sincerity, courage, care, honesty, considerateness, compassion, sensitivity, integrity, etc.) and character structures of the children in the class. Thus, the community of inquiry provides a social dimension in which the bonds that connect students can be strengthened and their understanding of moral responsibility can be clarified.

The Philosophy for Children curriculum is comprised of seven sub-programs, one of which, the one targeted for ages 13-15, is specifically concerned with the strengthening of moral judgment. However, all the other six programs deal with moral themes and in every sub-program children are taught the use of ethical tools and procedures.

Philosophy for Children also contributes to the teaching of environmental ethics. Throughout the entire curriculum there is a strand of environmental concern. Children are given many opportunities to discuss the ethical conflicts that emerge with regard to such issues as smoking, the eating of meat, environmental pollution, factory farming, deforestation, species endangerment, population control and care and respect for nature.

### Conclusion

Many have looked at Philosophy for Children as an instantiation of John Dewey's educational philosophy. But to my knowledge, few have looked at it as an example of his religious philosophy, his attempt to reconstruct religion for modern society. What is the crux of this reconstruction? Viewed from a moral perspective,

the moral life finds its completion in a religious faith, that is, in being possessed in the center of one's being by a great unifying ideal. The moral life is perfected by choice and action guided by sympathy and intelligence but what makes this possible is a faith that is religious in function, that is, unifying. Only a religious faith that possesses the deeper active center of personality - the organic plenitude of our being - can generate the love, the interest, the devotion, to the values of democracy and intelligence that will ensure the control of intelligent sympathy over conduct. (Rockefeller, p. 483.)

In the above words of Dewey's, how are we to interpret the term "possessed" and in the center of one's being? Does he mean that all of us are somehow caught up in the grip of some preestablished ideals? Or does he mean that our faith in "unity" is some kind of Hegelian faith in the power of intelligence to unify the real discrepancies, and problems that occur in the process of human experience? I don't think so.

Traditional religion takes the position that experience is not really problematic, that there is an underlying reality, God, or Plato's eternal forms, reason working itself out in history, that can be demonstrated to exist, or at least, is the proper object of faith. In ethical theory, this denial of the problematic takes the form of assertions that our lives are to be guided by fixed moral rules or principles such as the Ten Commandments or the categorical imperative.

By contrast, Dewey stresses the reality of the social or human problematic, the need for human intervention, intelligent reflection, intellectual improvisation and subsequent formation of effective hypotheses in action. He utilizes religious experience to animate his faith in democracy and his vision of the moral life. Philosophy for Children manifest in the deliberative community of philosophical inquiry is an educational mode par excellence to prepare the future generation for this intelligent reflection and hypothesis formation. It is philosophical thinking in action.

In *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle says:

to respond at the right time, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with the right aim, and in the right way, is what is appropriate and best. And this is the characteristic of human excellence.

Continual participation in a community of philosophical inquiry in children's formative years aims at this cultivation of good judgment. It is critical to remember that children's philosophy aims not only to strengthen children's reasoning, (critical, and creative thinking) but to cultivate *virtue*. The development of critical and creative thinking is important not as an end in itself but as a necessary condition to enabling the individual to engage in correct moral judgment. One could see with Wittgenstein that

"what one acquires here is not a technique: one learns correct judgment. There are also rules but they do not form a system and only experienced people can apply them right."

If children of the world could learn to do philosophy well in their formative years, they could acquire the skills that they need not only to shape their lives in a harmonious fashion, but to judge and act well with regard to the good of all. Iris Murdoch makes the point that the journey in the direction of the ideal is not only experienced in verbal inquiry. It is also experienced in our most intimate relationships with our world, wherein our perceptions of the smallest things (rocks, leaves, water, paper cups, trees, scrap paper, meat, bottles, cigarettes and flies) are also capable of becoming deeper, more considerate, more wise. If Aristotle was correct that ultimately all moral judgments are related to the adequacy of our perceptions, then it follows that the education of perception is essential. Doing philosophy within the context of the community of inquiry encourages students to cultivate their perception, that is, to become better at discerning acutely and responsively the salient features of their particular situation before making a moral judgment. It is this ability that is at the core of practical wisdom.

Philosophy for Children views ethics itself as an on-going, developmental communal inquiry rather than a rule-guided or principle-guided endeavor. Implicit in this view is the recognition that in an evolving universe there are no such things as static moral truths. The truth of moral principles is ultimately a function of their ability to give rise to a better universe. It follows that moral integrity is not so much an issue of permanent convictions but rests on our commitment to care effectively for other persons and species in nature as well as on continual inquiry itself. As William James expressed it, in its effort to care, practical reason must always wait on facts:

Practical reason must bide its time, and be ready to revise its conclusions from day to day. the individual knows that (s)he must vote always for the richer universe, for the good which seems most organizable, most fit to enter into complex combinations, most apt to be a member of a more inclusive whole. But which particular universe this is, (s)he cannot know for certain in advance.

Such inquiry attends to ordinary conversation with its informality, its particularity and its uniqueness. There is an emphasis on *perception* and a realization of the need for a development of an ethics of finer responsiveness to the concrete. The metaphor of improvisation is used by both Aristotle and lately Martha Nussbaum to make this point. Children must be encouraged to cultivate their perception so as to see the context-embeddedness of relevant features. Aristotle suggested that to see any single feature of a situation appropriately, it is necessary to see it in its *relations of connectedness to many other features of its complex and concrete context*. This is the way in which the unexpected enters the ethical scene and general moral rules prove far

too crude. The child must be ready to think well on her feet and do what is demanded of the situation in which she finds herself.

Nothing helps us to develop this acute perception than the reading and communal analysis of novels. The novel is committed in its very structure and in the structure of its relationship with the reader to the pursuit of the uncertainties and vulnerabilities, the particularity and the emotional richness of the human form of life. It is an underlying assumption in Philosophy for Children that the narrative, coupled with the emotional structure of the novel, is itself, a description of ethical thinking. It is for this reason that the narrative is used as the principle instrument in children's philosophy. Philosophical novels give the readers a broadening of experience while at the same time encourage a deepening of experience, a rendering of daily experience that is more careful, more precise than our common daily living and in this sense they can help us to see. Novels depict ethics as a way of being human speaking humanly about the matter of living life with meaning.

This is not to say that any novel will be appropriate for ethical education. Such a story must possess certain characteristics if one is interested in moral education: (a) it should be philosophical in nature, encouraging children to question the meaning of certain philosophical concepts and procedures of reasoning that occur in their own daily experience (b) it should depict the complexity of moral action in everyday life (c) it should depict the connection between individual emotion and judgment and (d) it should encourage the children to engage in a *reading of a situation*, singling out what is relevant in the context that explains the particular actions that follow.

Philosophy for Children aims at the *transformation* of persons into more reasonable, and caring individuals committed to the creation of a just and ecologically balanced world. Another way of expressing this is to say that Philosophy for Children aims at the cultivation of wisdom - strengthening children's abilities to make better quality judgments, based on a global understanding of themselves in relationship to all of nature.

The view of ethics implicit in Philosophy for Children might well be called *an ethics of care*, that is an ethics of discernment and appreciation. The procedures of the community of inquiry root caring action in children's ability to perceive and respond to the needs and interests arising in the community. A major stumbling block to the moral life of caring is the individual's failure to perceive and appreciate adequately the needs of other people and species. This blindness is something we all must overcome through a development of empathy and a sensitivity to the needs of others by means of philosophical dialogue - the process of sharing moral beliefs, perspectives and commitments and inquiring together into the way we think we all *ought to live*.

Plato told us that philosophy (love of learning, wisdom and virtue) is the greatest gift the gods have given us. To do philosophy well with others is to practice not only intellectual, but spiritual virtue. It involves not only thinking about thinking but thinking about ideals and how they can play a role in our daily lives. The participant in a community of philosophical inquiry is a person who is not only able to move back and forth between one's own world and that of others, but

can envision norms by which to evaluate present societies in terms of the ideal. Such an individual might describe herself correctly as religious, whether she believed in a personal God or not, whether she belonged to a formal institutional religion or not.

Near the end of his life, Charles Peirce spoke of the relationship between philosophy and the religious dimension of experience.

Much have I learned of life and the world, throwing strong light upon philosophy in these years. Undoubtedly, its tendency is to make one value the spiritual more, but not an abstract spirituality ... (It has) led me to rate higher than ever the individual deed as the only real meaning there is in the Concept, and yet at the same time to see more sharply than ever that it is not the mere arbitrary force in the deed but the life it gives to the idea that is valuable. (*Charles Peirce to William James, March 13, 1897*).

For Peirce, as for many feminists, it is important that we not forget the continuity and reciprocity that exists between mind and matter, ideals and actions. Regardless of the metaphors we use to describe the religious, the important thing is that the next generation be educated to bring their conception of the ideal into existence in a world where the eternal is lodged in the temporal and the spirit is lodged in the material.

The existence of Philosophy for Children in over thirty five nations has shown us that we don't have to wait until children have become adults for them to do philosophy well. Humanity can no longer afford this postponement. We know that for many children, as the socialization process takes hold, they tend to lose interest in the relation of ideals to daily existence. Philosophy *can* take hold in the early years, just as language and mathematics do. Children are naturally curious. They think all the time; in a sense, thinking is their work. Often when you ask the young children what she is thinking about, you discover that her thinking revolves around philosophical issues of her own experience. Children afforded an opportunity to do philosophy well would have the chance to experience that deep delight that comes in participating in an exciting adventure among ideas, while at the same time becoming a more caring and just person in relation to the others. Continual participation in a community of inquiry would equip children with the tools they need to eventually take leadership roles in a global community. Since Philosophy for Children is ultimately committed to the creation of a world in which the oppression of all of nature is overcome, it takes its place as one of the liberating movements of civilization, as significant as the liberation of women and slaves. Such liberating movements are always religious in nature because they promise a qualitatively different life.

Although children have not yet created a new metaphor to replace the notion of "God," nor have they yet created a new vocabulary to talk about the religious dimension of their experience, they have begun acquiring the intellectual, creative and social skills that they will need to do so. In the last twenty years, elementary school philosophy has brought the ideals to the attention of children for their reflection. It is out of such reflection that new metaphors for the religious dimension of experience will grow.

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## A philosophical approach to moral education

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### Introduction

I am going to argue in favour of M Lipman's approach to moral education, which is first and foremost education through moral inquiry within a program of Philosophy for Children<sup>1</sup>. Lipman's stress on thinking in education, his vision of the classroom as a community of inquiry, and his insistence that children should be introduced to philosophy, are not just directed at moral education. Yet they provide a rich context for it--a context in which the more traditional concerns with building character can be fruitfully combined with an emphasis on moral reasoning.

I will begin by placing Lipman in the broader spectrum of approaches to moral education, go on to sketch some major features of the theoretical background, and then present an argument for moral education through philosophical discussion in a community of inquiry.

### Approaches to moral education

Lipman favours a direct approach to moral education, which is to say that it should be on the curriculum. Since it will take me some time to make it clear what kind of moral education Lipman has in mind and present a case for including it on the curriculum, I hasten to point out that one thing he doesn't have in mind is moral instruction. Many of us received our only direct moral education in school through religious instruction, and so we are inclined to think of moral education in those terms. People who oppose having moral instruction on the curriculum do so for various reasons. Some parents oppose moral instruction simply because they don't want boards of education to dictate what values their children are taught, while others are wary because they fear that it will allow the teacher's own values to be imposed on their children. Lipman too would oppose classes in moral instruction, and largely for the same reason that others of us oppose classes in religious instruction, because they imply indoctrination.

Yet even though moral instruction is not on offer, it will still be hard to convince some people that moral education should be added to the curriculum. They may argue that the school's most effective contribution to moral development lies in providing children with general intellectual skills together with the kinds of understanding that come from existing subject areas, such as social studies and the humanities. As Purpel and Ryan (1976) point out, the presumption of such a view seems to be that there are no specifically *moral* intellectual skills that need to be taught. If children can only learn to reason well, and gain some understanding of self and society from the study of literature, social studies and history, then they should be able to apply what they have learnt to their moral life. Provided that the school and classroom culture are also supportive, the school will have fulfilled its responsibilities toward the children's moral education.

If we confine ourselves to logical inference, then I agree that moral reasoning differs from other reasoning only in its content, so that there are no specifically moral forms of reasoning to be taught. All the same, if we want moral reasoning to permeate children's lives,

we need to get them into the habit of thinking in specifically moral terms. And since strengthening such habits requires practice, we need to make provision for it. Nor should one think that developing children's reasoning skills will necessarily result in better moral judgment, without a great deal of practice in applying them to the field. For one thing, judgments appeal to criteria, and criteria belong to one or another domain in which decisions are made. The doctor who proposes a treatment for some ailment or the jeweller who selects diamonds for a setting both make judgments based on experience and knowledge in their fields. Good judgment requires knowledge and experience of the area, and good moral judgment is no exception.

Given that strengthening habits and developing judgment are matters of specifically moral *praxis*, the obvious question hanging over the indirect approach is whether the school which takes this approach will thereby have done all that it can profitably do in this department. For once we admit that our schools have a responsibility for moral education, we need to consider how they might most effectively discharge it. Does the most effective means involve no direct intervention? That's what the indirect approach comes to; and for the reasons I've given, it is hard to believe that's right.<sup>2</sup>

Even those who advocate a direct approach, however, need not opt for specialized programs in moral education. They may favour its integration into the existing disciplines. There are many issues here. For example, trained specialists in moral education delivering specially developed programs would presumably do a very professional job, but perhaps a more likely prospect is that the moral education class would actually draw upon a pool of largely untrained teachers. Under integration, by the same token, while teachers in other disciplines may be good teachers, they may remain ill-prepared or rather unwilling to take on formal moral education. Again, by working within appropriate disciplinary contexts, the moral dimension of various traditional subject materials would be addressed. Yet the fear is that such treatment may too readily become scattered and shallow.

Lipman himself can seem ambivalent on this issue. In discussing the fragmentation of the curriculum into relatively isolated disciplines, he says:

When a discipline attempts to divest itself of its ethical, logical, aesthetic, and epistemological presuppositions and ramifications because these are "contestable" or "controversial," it removes the very features that enabled students to see it as a piece with all other academic disciplines. This is why the introduction of philosophy into the school curriculum tends to reduce rather than to intensify the student's sense of fragmentation. Philosophy is, so to speak, at right angles to the other disciplines, so that together like warp and woof, they interpenetrate and interweave until they produce a seamless texture. Education cannot recover itself without eliminating the suppression of the philosophical concerns indigenous to each and every one of the disciplines.

(Lipman 1988, 24-25)

If as Lipman contends, the fabric of education tends to fragment without the discipline of philosophy, then that discipline is

clearly needed. But it is one thing to demand that the disciplines not divest themselves of their general philosophical and specifically moral concerns, and quite another to claim that philosophy, or ethics in particular, should occupy a separate place on the curriculum. We see this tension clearly when Lipman returns to the theme a little later:

It is when a discipline conceives its integrity to lie in ridding itself of its epistemological, metaphysical, aesthetic, ethical, and logical considerations that it succeeds in becoming merely a body of alienated knowledge and procedures. Nevertheless, it cannot be forgotten that the disciplines of philosophy just alluded to - epistemology, metaphysics, aesthetics, ethics, logic, and the like - are equally vulnerable to becoming alienated if they are taught independently of the parent discipline of philosophy . . . (Lipman 1988, 33-34)

The tension may be relieved, I believe, by noting that Lipman sees two places for the moral to enter the curriculum. Like other branches of philosophy, ethics needs to be taught within "the parent discipline of philosophy," but its presence needs to be maintained within the other disciplines as well. Perhaps, then, Lipman is not so much ambivalent over the issue of separate programs versus integration, as suggesting that we need to integrate in two ways. First, ethics needs to be integrated into a philosophy curriculum, as an additional subject beginning in the elementary school; and secondly, it needs to be an active ingredient in the way that the other disciplines are taught.<sup>3</sup>

#### **The philosophy of the philosophical approach**

I would like to briefly explore some of the theoretical background to Lipman's approach that is particularly significant when we come to moral education. This background includes assumptions about the child as a rational agent, and about how children's conduct is shaped by social templates. It includes Dewey's insistence that education should be centred on the development of thinking, and his linking of reflective education with the ideals of a democratic society. And finally, it involves the claim that there is a special role for philosophy to play in promoting thinking in education.

One cannot conduct moral education through ethical inquiry without treating children as rational beings. It must be assumed not only that they have reasons for what they do, but that they are capable of reasoning about conduct. Yet the presumption of rationality is even more basic, because unless we presume that an agent is rational we cannot regard that agent as a moral being. Applying this to moral education, Lipman, Sharp and Oscanyan conclude:

The presumption that the child is incapable of reasoned, principled behaviour rules out the possibility of treating that child as a moral being, and therefore destroys any possibility that such treatment can be either moral or educational (Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyan 1980,154)<sup>4</sup>

This is not to say that given a capacity for reasoned and principled conduct, children's natural propensities drive them instinctively towards the good. Rather, following Dewey, Lipman sees children as having conflicting natural tendencies. It is society which shapes children's moral conduct by strengthening or weakening their native dispositions:

... children are born with countless pairs of opposed tendencies: to be generous and to be selfish, to be competitive and to be co-operative, to love and to hate, and so on. All of these together constitute the child's diffuse fund of impulsive energies. It is the social structure of the given society into which the child is born that screens out this alternative and filters in the other, which rewards and encourages this but punishes and discourages that. Consequently, the child learns to pour his or her energies into the pattern of conduct of which society approves. (Lipman 1988, 75)

Lipman's view that society or community shapes conduct through moulding inborn tendencies to its form, rather than the other way about, bears directly on the character of our educational institutions and practices. The point is most often made in terms of rationality:

Rational social institutions are our best assurance that individual citizens will be reasonable. . . We cannot wait for individual citizens to become rational before providing them with an environment of rational institutions and procedures, since it is only the prior existence of such an environment that sets the stage for procedures and reasonableness of the individual. . . On no institution does the responsibility for rational procedures fall more heavily than the school, since it is the institution through which all members of society flow, as sand through the neck of an hourglass. Therefore, a society that wants thoughtful and reasonable persons to emerge from the schools must see to it that the school environment is itself thoughtful and reasonable.

(Lipman 1988, 60-61)

The same point applies to classroom practice, and explains the pivotal role in Lipman's scheme of the classroom as a community of inquiry. For, given the above, children who engage in the community of inquiry will acquire habits which reflect that community. And since a community of inquiry embodies the social forms of reason, children who engage in it will tend to become more rational. Since the community of inquiry looks for reasons, the children will become reason seekers; since it is self-correcting, the children will tend to become self-correcting; and since the community tries to take all relevant considerations into account, the children will come to appeal to them too. So far as moral education is concerned, no less important is the fact that the community of inquiry also demands such things as trust, tolerance and fair-mindedness. For children also internalise these features, and this helps them to cultivate the social habits required for good moral conduct.

The community of inquiry is also seen as a means by which children can learn to steer between the Scylla of unquestioning submission to existing social values and the Charbydis of rugged individualism. In a community of inquiry children learn to think for themselves, and through this process they become more capable of arriving at an objective appraisal of established social values, and of available alternatives.

Turning now to the ideals of a democratic society, Lipman reminds us that "(o)ne of the presuppositions of the idea of democracy, at least since the time of John Locke, has been that the members of such a society should not merely be informed but reflective. . ." (Lipman 1988, 110). One reason for this is that a democratic society is participatory by its very nature, and that effective participation

requires a critical, reflective citizenry; another is that a democratic society respects a plurality of views and values, amongst which citizens are free to choose. But then (by our earlier line of reasoning) we need to provide our citizens with an education system committed to reflective education if we are to forward our democratic ideals. As Lipman says:

An educational system that does not encourage children to reflect - to think thoroughly and systematically about matters of importance to them - fails to prepare them to satisfy the one criterion that must be satisfied if one is to be not merely a citizen of a society, but a good citizen of a democracy. In a word, education for responsible citizenship is reflective education. (Lipman 1988, 113)

As elsewhere, we see here that Dewey's philosophy of education lies at the centre of Lipman's thinking. Commenting on the emergence of the concept of reflective education, Lipman says:

... John Dewey's contribution, it must be acknowledged, dwarfs those of all the others ... For surely it was Dewey who, in modern times, foresaw that education had to be redefined as the fostering of thinking rather than as the transmission of knowledge; that there could be no difference in the method by which teachers were taught and the method by which they would be expected to teach; that the logic of a discipline must not be confused with the sequence of discoveries that would constitute its understanding; that student reflection is best stimulated by living experience, rather than by a formally organised, desiccated text; that reasoning is sharpened and perfected by disciplined discussion as by nothing else and that reasoning skills are essential for successful reading and writing; and that the alternative to indoctrinating students with values is to help them reflect effectively on the values that are constantly being urged on them.

(Lipman 1988, 4)

To the initiated, these Deweyan claims read like a list of the basic features of Lipman's work. For Lipman, education in general, and values education in particular, should not be looked upon as the transmission of knowledge and the inculcation of conventional values. Instead it should develop children's capacities to reason reflectively and to think for themselves. In order to do this the classroom is to be converted into a community of inquiry in which dialogue among the children has pride of place. In Lipman's programs, the didactic text is replaced with carefully constructed story materials that build upon children's experience and offer a cornucopia of ideas, issues, and problems that children can discover for themselves. We also see here Lipman's insistence that teacher education in *Philosophy for Children* should be based on modelling classroom activity, where the teachers do together what they will later do with their classes.

So Lipman's alternative to moral instruction lies in developing children's reflective moral judgment, and this is quite naturally of a piece with what Lipman sees as the broader needs of education for democracy. As Lipman sees it, the educational path that guides us between authoritarianism and anarchy is the one by which we also find our way between mindless conformity and non-conformity to existing moral values. It is the path pointed out by Dewey, of reflective education through which children come to think critically and responsibly for themselves.

This brings us to the role that Lipman sees for philosophy in promoting thinking in education.<sup>5</sup> Given that we do want to promote thinking in the classroom, why should we turn to philosophy? In responding to this challenge, Lipman notes that philosophy is a discipline that deals with "essentially contestable concepts," and is "attracted by . . . the conceptual difficulties that lurk in the cracks and interstices of our conceptual schemes". (Lipman 1988, 33). Moreover, some branches of philosophy deal *explicitly* with the problematic and contestable aspects of the other disciplines. And so philosophy can provide a stimulus to thinking in those disciplines, by drawing attention to their epistemological, metaphysical, logical, and ethical aspects, setting them within the context of living inquiry, and thus counteracting the tendency for them to be delivered as cut-and-dried products merely to be handed down to students - those bodies of "alienated knowledge and procedures" that are so often presented in the classroom:

The significance of this quest for the problematic is that it *generates* thinking. And so when we encounter those prefixes, "*philosophy* of science," "*philosophy* of history," and so on, we are grappling with the problematic aspects of those disciplines. For insofar as academic disciplines take themselves to be non-problematic, the instructional approach they favour is that their students must learn what they are taught, whereas the more problematic the image these disciplines have of themselves, the more they will favour an instructional approach of point shared inquiry by teachers and students alike. For a discipline to stay alive, it must reanimate the thinking that went into it at its inception and subsequent formation. (Lipman 1988, 33)

While Lipman points out that we discard a most valuable classroom stimulus toward thinking in the various disciplines when we divest the disciplines of their philosophical aspects, he also once again stresses the need to include philosophy as a separate school subject if we want to emphasise thinking skills in school education. For philosophy is not only a preparation for thinking in the other disciplines, but it is a reflective discipline which pays close attention to conceptual exploration, to reasoning and argument, and a wide array of other thinking skills, in their own right. It is the discipline where these things find their natural home. And this provides a powerful argument for adding philosophy to the curriculum, if we are serious about placing thinking skills on the list of "the basics" in education. Once we see that thinking is among the fundamentals that need to be taught, we can readily appreciate the comparison with teaching literacy skills or mathematics:

We recognise reading and writing as fundamental to education, and we know that these skills should be utilisable within each and every discipline in the curriculum. Yet we do not entrust the study of reading and writing to the various disciplines. . .

Similarly, the cultivation of thinking should take place within that discipline, philosophy, which is best prepared to improve the child's thinking and to provide pathways by means of which it can cross over to the other disciplines.

(Lipman 1988, 143)

It is this last claim of Lipman's - that philosophy is needed if we are to make adequate provision for thinking in education - that is most likely to meet with a luke-warm response. Naturally, people associate philosophy with the university rather than the

elementary school, but that doesn't constitute an argument against its introduction. Perhaps too, the term 'philosophy' conjures up the image of an esoteric and technical discipline, suitable only for the bookish adult or late adolescent. Of course, no one who was familiar with Lipman's stories, or had experienced a primary school philosophy class in full swing, would confuse philosophy for children with this stereotype of academic philosophy. Devotees of the Lipman approach would no doubt argue that the best counter to scepticism here is simply to see it for yourself. 'This appeal needs to be tempered, however, with continuing research into the actual benefits gained in terms of thinking skills and dispositions by introducing philosophy into the classroom.'<sup>6</sup>

#### **An argument for moral education through philosophical inquiry**

It is now time to fashion these themes into an argument for moral education through philosophical inquiry. What follows should not be equated with Lipman's case, but rather, I trust, it is a line of reasoning that can be drawn from his rich vision of educational reform. Here, then, is the argument:

1. Democratic ideals demand educational practices that avoid indoctrination and promote the ability of people to judge for themselves.
2. Therefore, in the field of moral education, we should avoid moral instruction and concentrate on developing children's reflective moral judgment.
3. Developing children's reflective moral judgment requires a program of moral education through which children can come to think critically and responsibly for themselves in the moral domain.
4. Philosophy in the form of a community of inquiry is the discipline *par excellence* for promoting thinking in education.
5. Therefore, moral education should take the form of a classroom community of philosophical inquiry.

While the complex fabric of Lipman's educational thought does not lend itself to such threadbare mechanics, the effort may still help us to see with what force his claims drive us to the educational conclusion. If the argument is obviously sound, then Lipman's case will be unassailable. If not, then it should at least make clear just what is contestable for those who demur.

#### **Notes**

- 1 The approach is set out in Lipman, Sharp and Oscanyan (1980), especially in Chapters 9 and 10, and Lipman (1988) argues the case in Section III of the book. Lipman's novel *Lisa* (1983) together with the accompanying instruction manual on *Ethical Inquiry* by Lipman and Sharp (1985) form the core program for moral education among the Philosophy for Children classroom materials, although the ethical dimension makes its appearance throughout the corpus.
- 2 Even so, I am willing to admit that we cannot dismiss the indirect approach a priori. The issue is an empirical one. At the end of

- the day, both the indirect approach and interventionist proposals must stand on their own observable merits.
- 3 Other people favouring a direct approach have also seen the need for integration. Lawrence Kohlberg, for instance, equates moral education with "civic education"--that is, with such subjects as social science and history insofar as they aim at promoting good citizenship through "the stimulation of development of more advanced patterns of reasoning about political and social decisions and their implementation in action." (Kohlberg 1976, 187) Such patterns, he tells us, are nothing other than patterns of moral reasoning. This should not be confused with an indirect approach, of which it is a damning indictment. For Kohlberg is saying, in effect, that without an *explicit* moral component, these disciplines are not being properly taught. Kohlberg also wants us to go beyond the indirect approach's usual idea of a "supportive environment". His ideal is a school founded upon principles of justice, and democratic governance. So Kohlberg, like Lipman, also aims at a double integration in moral education: one involving the principles upon which schools run, and thereby the conditions under which students live; the other conceding a prominent role to moral discussion in those subjects, such as literature and social studies, that lend themselves to civic education.
  - 4 There is an important distinction to be made here between *being* a rational and moral agent and *having the capacity to be* a rational and moral agent. If we see childhood as a period during which the individual comes to reason, and the very young child as therefore merely potentially rational, we can regard that child as yet having only the capacity to become a moral agent. On theories such as Piaget's and Kohlberg's those potentials are realised as children pass through a well-defined sequence of developmental stages. Lipman, Sharp and Oscanyan seem to think that such a view is incompatible with the philosophical approach. But that isn't so clear. One can make some concessions to stage theories of intellectual and moral development and still maintain that the best way to develop those potentials is to treat children as rational agents.
  - 5 For an extended argument that philosophy should be used to revamp education around thinking, see Lipman (1991).
  - 6 For the results of earlier experimental studies see the pamphlet produced by the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children, entitled 'Philosophy for Children: Where We Are Now.'

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**BODY, BRAIN & MY AUNT JANE**

My mum told me the other day  
That when my aunt had passed away  
Forever, or to be with God  
A bit lived on (how very odd!)

Her kidney was, or so I'm told,  
In quite "good nick", though she was old.  
So it went into someone (Rick)  
and's part of him (his own was sick).

This made me think: what would it be  
Were Aunt Jane's brain the transplantee?  
Would she be puzzled; would she shout  
At unknown image staring out  
Of mirror, 'That's not me!'

And were she right, whom would she be?

Perhaps Rick's body's changed its mind  
(If mind and brain are of a kind).  
But could it still be Rick again  
If all his thoughts were by Aunt Jane?

It's all too hard for me to sort  
I'll ask my teacher - that's a thought!

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## FIRST NOTICE



The International Council for Philosophical Inquiry with Children (ICPIC) and the Federation of Australian Philosophy for Children Associations (FAPCA) announce

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## Contested values and Philosophy for Children in a pluralist democratic state

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Over the past twenty years there has been growing awareness of the increasingly pluralist nature of Australian society. Discussion and debate over the changing structure of the society have impacted considerably on education. Multi-cultural education is widely referred to in school contexts, with pupils encouraged to learn of, compare and share in aspects of the lives of people from backgrounds which are dissimilar to their own. After all, harmonious living in a society where a variety of life styles exist requires not only tolerance but some appreciation of diverse customs and values which shape the meanings people give to their lives.

Contemporary Australian schools, particularly in inner city areas where there are large migrant populations, doubtless make genuine attempts to promote knowledge of the ways of others through engaging in activities and experiences which reflect different home environments. A criticism sometimes levelled at these schools is that the kinds of experiences they provide are generally restricted to what might be termed "concrete" expressions of cultural diversity. Teachers are likely to focus their energy on the various customs of migrant or ethnic communities with attention to matters such as dress, eating habits, cultural pursuits, and so on, in conjunction with traditional studies about life in other lands. Less emphasis is likely to be placed on peoples' different religious, moral or political beliefs or practices, especially where they conflict with the values of a liberal, democratic society. Female circumcision for example, is unlikely to be a topic for class discussion. Problematic or controversial practices however need to be confronted at some appropriate stage if public education is to develop fully frank and open cultural interaction and understanding.

While traditional areas of the curriculum, especially those concerned with social and cultural studies, religious studies, personal development and so forth may seek to promote helpful discussion of controversial issues, perhaps the most fertile field for promoting inter-cultural understanding when it comes to questions of value may be found in philosophy for children. What Ron Reed calls the pre-conditions for philosophy for children, amply demonstrate the supportive nature of a climate attuned to discussion and debate:

democratic and egalitarian conditions are non-negotiable prerequisites for philosophy in the classroom. That is, children have rights to have and express their opinions, children should be encouraged to think and to think for themselves, we ought to respect other people as persons, children should be encouraged to give reasons for what they say.<sup>1</sup>

One consequence of reason-giving is opening oneself to the possibility of error or at least the possibility of having to revise one's opinions or beliefs. Jen Glaser rightly points out that the "notion of being reasonable ...requires us to remain open to the possibility of changing our minds while engaging in the process of reasoning something out."<sup>2</sup>

Dialogue between people with diverse opinions is a desirable, if not necessary, feature of the pluralist society.

It is inevitable that matters of value will be raised from time to time in classes pursuing philosophy for children and that some pupils, if not the majority, will be willing to espouse opinions which reflect their own familial backgrounds. Children are encouraged to express their views because the attitude is generally fostered that, on the face of it, one person's opinion is no less worthy of expression than anyone else's. Indeed, a strength of philosophy in the classroom is that children's ideas are, in the first instance, accepted as legitimate contributions to dialogue. It would seem inevitable that, on occasions, children will come up with conflicting value judgements: "in our family we do x, y and z", "when we are with our friends we do x1, y1 and z1", "in our church we know that x2, y2 and z2 are true" and so on. Where there is divergence of opinion over contested matters of value teachers may encounter problems in structuring discussion or reaching any satisfactory conclusion, a problem for teachers at the best of times, as one teacher expressed it:

Sometimes not only did I feel that I'd lost the track but the children did too. I couldn't figure out what exactly I was trying to achieve. I felt lots of sessions were left up in the air - there was no conclusion.<sup>3</sup>

A consequence of apparent lack of closure may mean that children will blithely maintain attitudes, beliefs or opinions they held prior to discussion without any thought of further examination. An equally possible consequence is that children will show interest in others' views but dismiss them as merely different: "we are all entitled to; our own opinions". Finally there may be children who are sufficiently challenged by such discussions to feel the need to revise previously uncontested beliefs.

The involvement of children in discussion over matters of value poses potential problems. Children who have been subject to unambiguous moral, religious, ethnic or racial beliefs may find difficulty reconciling aspects of their upbringing with the expressions of children from diverse home environments. Young people who identify with cultural and ethnic minorities are especially likely to experience confusion where there is obvious conflict between the traditional values of their own community and those of the wider society. It is an undeniable feature of life in a pluralist, multi-faith society, that people holding diverse beliefs come in contact with others who maintain different and perhaps conflicting beliefs and schools are no exception.

People who claim membership of a pluralist society based on the political assumptions of liberal democracy generally appreciate the strength found in diversity and the manner in which diversity can enrich society. At the same time in the interests of social cohesion, members of different communities are bound to accept some degree of common outlook and purpose between various groups is necessary. It is therefore appropriate that people should canvas the benefit of dialogue in explicating common values, attitudes or aspirations. After all, even within the pluralist, liberal state people are members of one society, despite their differences. They live under the same laws, have the same political rights and are part of the one economic system. And although people may strongly identify with a

minority community, in many cases their aspirations and patterns of life will be shared with members of the majority culture and other ethnic minority groups. Without recognition of the virtues of dialogue, support is implied for the preservation of traditional, small-scale communities, with particular communities perhaps maintaining themselves in virtual isolation from the wider society.

In order to promote dialogue between people from various communities, White offers an outline of the kind of values which might be considered necessary for establishing a common framework within a pluralist society. In the first instance it is necessary for people to identify the main "value-orientations" in the society, not just in terms of formal values but also covert, taken-for-granted, values. Secondly, there needs to be willingness on the part of all to seek understanding of such values in the context of historical perspectives. People need to understand how values have been arrived at and how they have been maintained or modified for present use. Thirdly, there has to be preparedness to examine the logical similarities between apparently diverse values and to separate out logically different values which have become conflated together. Fourthly, people have to engage in the enterprise of searching back to the fundamental assumptions and presuppositions on which different value-positions rest, including metaphysical assumptions about such things as human nature and the cosmos. Fifthly, people need to examine the cogency of the grounds given for different value-positions and try to penetrate beneath conscious or unconscious forms of rationalization or mystification. Finally, people need to sort out the unintended consequences of mass adherence to a particular set of values.<sup>4</sup>

A potential problem with White's outline is that any proposal for a pluralist society which emphasizes dialogue and discussion rests on the assumption people think and debate issues within a framework of similar logical structures. Difficulties occur, for example, where people enter public debates with arguments they think are reasonable, and are seen as such within their community frameworks, but the "culturally-vouched-for styles" they work from are based on different "foundational prejudgements" than those of others.<sup>5</sup> Culturally-different participants to a debate often fail to be persuaded by, or in turn persuade, others.

In his article on "Judgement and the Art of Compromise", Martin Benjamin expresses the view that seeking, accepting or maintaining moral compromises is a matter of judgement. Expectations of a universally accepted decision procedure or set of necessary and sufficient conditions for moral compromise reflect an "idealization of method" and are doomed to failure; compromise in ethics is more a matter of practical rather than technical reasoning and more the outcome of reflective judgement rather than of a rationalistic decision procedure<sup>6</sup>

We learn to make good judgements in various contexts first by emulating others who are regarded as having sound judgement, and then responding to their evaluations and guidance. The external dialogue we undertake both with those to whom we must justify our initial judgements and with our mentors is eventually internalized and we learn to 'fly solo'.<sup>7</sup>

Before extolling the benefits of preparedness to compromise over matters of value and arguing for its relevance to discussions pertain-

ing to philosophy for children it is appropriate to raise the serious concern that compromise may well lead to a dubious form of moral relativism. Moral relativism assumes ethical theories cannot be compared for correctness. Relativism holds that cognitive, moral, or aesthetic claims relating to values such as truth, meaningfulness, rightness, reasonableness, appropriateness, aptness, or the like, are relative to the contexts in which they appear.<sup>8</sup> Such contexts may be limited to individual conceptual frameworks or they may relate to communities.

However any charge that philosophy for children seeks to promote naive moral relativism is ill-founded. Philosophy for children is quite unlike the "values clarification" methodology in that it does not discourage pupils evaluating and criticising other pupils' views. It makes the important distinction between equally respecting each person's right to state their opinion and be listened to and respecting all opinions equally. Part of respecting a person is to acknowledge their right to have their opinions taken seriously and evaluated by rules of reason that apply impartially to all. One valuable lesson philosophy for children teaches is that just because we may disagree over some issue, it does not mean we think anything the less of each other as persons.

Teaching children to think for themselves does not involve teaching them that whatever they think is therefore right. As Lipman and Sharp point out:

Children immersed in communities devoted to rational inquiry are most likely to be rational when they think for themselves because they have had the opportunity to internalise the rationality of the group whereas children who are never permitted to think for themselves are frequently prey to irrational ideologies and prejudices.<sup>9</sup>

The following extract from *Getting our thoughts together*, the manual for *Elfie* (one of the novels in the philosophy for children program) provides a helpful guide for teachers and parents

to say that children exposed to the Philosophy for Children program are given practice in providing reasons is only part of the story. They are also helped to distinguish better from worse reasons, strong reasons from weak reasons. And they begin to learn that reasons have to be relevant an "irrelevant reason" is no reason at all. Even more, they are confronted in the novel with words like "good," "bad," and "wrong", so that, in the ensuing discussions, they can begin to learn how rich in meanings these terms are, and how powerful they are on our language. In other words, children are exposed not only to a variety of classroom situations in which reason-giving is in order, but they are also given an opportunity to understand the logical and ethical considerations that have to be taken into account if such reason-giving is to be satisfactory.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, discussions in the various manuals advocate the view that wisdom, acquired over time and as the result of practice, is prerequisite to people's abilities to make substantive judgements over moral concerns, reflecting Kekes view that wisdom entails a combination of breadth and depth

unless breadth is accompanied by depth, it remains a superficial relativism that tolerates everything because it can justify no-

thing. Depth comes from understanding that underlying the manifold differences among human beings, there are fundamental similarities of basic assumptions. The differences perceived through breadth are variations on the fundamental themes of which depth inform us.<sup>11</sup>

In recognising the benefit philosophy for children has for discussions over matters of value and acknowledging that the material seeks to avoid naive relativism it is pertinent to emphasize a note of caution. John Wilson has warned of the superficiality in regard to serious issues that enthusiastic but ill-disciplined teaching of philosophy in the classroom may unintentionally promote. He points out that if we are to encourage children to do philosophy we must have a clear idea of what philosophy is and how it is to be done.

Philosophy, whatever else it is, is certainly a subject that requires dialogue: not much can be learned by heart or parroted to any effect. In that sense its aims are liberal, to do with authenticity and autonomy and critical thinking. But we must take two points to heart. First, as I have said, not just any critical thinking is philosophical, and we have to spell out our aims more clearly. Secondly, it does not at all follow that because our aims are 'liberal' or 'non-authoritarian,' therefore our methods must be too. Indeed, it may well be that a much more stringent discipline is required.<sup>12</sup>

Teachers of philosophy for children must adopt a considered role when engaged in important work over moral issues in a pluralist, liberal community. While philosophy for children can and does promote dialogue over, amongst other things, matters of value, its objective is not the fostering of a laissez-faire, relativistic view of morality. Indeed such a view would be contrary to the aspirations of the concept. Rather philosophy for children, in promoting dialogue, emphasizes the importance of rationality and objectivity in morality, while accepting that soundly based moral judgements require a maturity which develops with skilled practice. Lipman presses home the point with a timely warning for an exercise in *Elfie* pertaining to distinctions between right/wrong and good/bad:

Needless to say, these value concepts are of great importance to the child. But they are very complex, and it will take a long period of ethical inquiry to sort them out, so don't expect miracles overnight.<sup>13</sup>

In order to avoid leaving the impression that philosophy for children provides fertile ground for naive moral relativism teachers need to themselves be clear about the possible implications of discussions which may expose children to the diversity of moral opinion within society. In addition to a general duty of care mentioned from time to time in the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IPAC) material, teachers might therefore be advised to include lessons specifically directed at redressing the inadvertent promotion of naive relativism. To do this, recurring discussions might be held with children over the following kind of issues:

Rules: what are rules?  
 why do we have rules?  
 what should we do if we don't like a rule?  
 why do we need to agree to abide by rules?  
 what are the consequences for transgressors?

**Ideas:** who owns ideas?  
can ideas be private?  
what should we do about private ideas we have that other people ask about?  
is it right or good to have ideas we do not want anyone to challenge?

**Beliefs:** are beliefs the same as ideas?  
should we respond to the above questions in the same way if we are referring to beliefs?  
should we change our beliefs if we think they are unfashionable?  
what are the consequences of having unfashionable beliefs?

Material from Lipman's IAPC program could well be used in conjunction with these lessons. For example

- (a) Discussion plan for lesson on "Waiting to see what other people do"  
"Are there times when it's best to wait and see what other people do before you do something?"  
"Are there other times when it's best not to wait for others to show you, but to go ahead and do something for yourself first?"<sup>14</sup>

These examples would be useful in showing children they can maintain and act on their own ideas.

**Exercise: What does right mean?**

I borrowed money from Edward, and it wouldn't be right not to pay him back<sup>15</sup>

- (b) Discussion Plan: When is something false?  
(eg) Is there any difference between being false and being wrong?  
Is there any difference between being false and being incorrect<sup>16</sup>

In using examples such as these systematically, perhaps through regular class lessons, it should be possible to counter some of the less desirable attitudes (such as naive relativism) that philosophy for children may inadvertently encourage when it comes to important and necessary discussions over matters of value. Then the concept of being educated can be properly seen as "one in which the educated child is conceived of as knowing, understanding, reasonable and judicious"<sup>17</sup> and thus equipped to play a full and active part in the pluralist, democratic state.

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## **Beyond knowledge: moral & political education**

(a revindication of the practical character of philosophy)

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### **Education.**

We understand education to be the harmonious social and intellectual development of an individual. Because of this, moral and political education are fundamental in a person's integral education and should not be at the mercy of variable curriculum - or the catholic church. Ethical and political education form part of what we consider as the global education of students, each stage of which should have a focal point and a practice which adapt themselves to the psycho-social conditions of the students. Let us justify these imperatives.

Humans apart from being knowledgeable and capable of science are complex beings who love, decide, act, produce and cohabit; as a result knowledge presents them with problems that go beyond speculation, problems which refer to their practical lives. Practical knowledge, then, is concerned with the actions of humans and very closely related to action one finds the intentions, feelings, values and ideals which prompt action .

'In order for a scientific civilisation to be a good civilisation it is necessary that increases in knowledge are accompanied by increases in wisdom. I understand wisdom to be a just concept of the goal of life. It is something that science in itself does not in itself provide.'

B. Russell

### **Philosophy**

Paying attention to the Kantian concept that, "one cannot learn philosophy, one can only learn to philosophise," it becomes clear that philosophy is more than just a body of doctrine, it is above all an attitude. And this characteristic is what differentiates it from other sciences and disciplines, because practising it implies and commits the individual.

'There is an element of reasoning in moral education, as there is an element of character-building, and as there is an element of emotional liberation and sensitivity training. The problem is not to devise a program that would do any of these things but to do all of them.'

M. Lipman (1980)*Philosophy in the Classroom*

Because of this the teaching of philosophy goes beyond a didactic system or a methodology, the objective of philosophy is not to accumulate knowledge, it is to aspire to wisdom. To know means to have a dominion over a sector of reality, a dominion of the tools which make this knowledge possible. One can learn through pure information transfer. Wisdom, in addition to opinionated knowledge, implies a reflexive spirit, it is more personal, it cannot be taught, it must be learnt. The knowledgeable person is a specialist, a technician; the wise person has a broader, more global learning, and above all a knowledge arrived at through practical life.

The wise man is he who is able to respond in an intelligible way, trying to satisfy the questions resulting from his actions and responding in such a way that the whole of the answers form a coherent whole.

Kojève.

Philosophy is born out of the necessity to understand the world and tries to justify our way of installing ourselves in it.

'Certain men -the philosophers-, apart from living, have tried to think about life, which is also another way of living.' E.LLedó

Let us, then, propose that the teaching of philosophy has wisdom as its final goal- the ability to reason- and not just knowledge. This proposal, as contemplated in the Philosophy for Children project, means the breaking of the classic dualism between theory and practice and favours the integration of action and reflection in such a way that the active element of this ethico-political relationship is consolidated in schools as the central turning point of the education system which radiates out to other academic practices and disciplines. Ethics and politics imply knowledge, reflection and feeling, but also demand action: take decisions and carry them out.

**Moral and political education should consist of the following: .**

That the students discover and specify what they expect of society (*responsibility*).

That the students develop the capacities which they need to be active and critical (*abilities*).

That the students learn to think for themselves in a creative way (*independence*).

Individual happiness is not independent of collective happiness in the same way that solidarity is not independent of justice. Political life is a consequence and continuity of moral life, for this reason ethics and politics have a common objective which is to achieve happiness. It is possible to be happy, but this satisfaction is not found in the results of the action, but moral or political practice: the satisfaction derived from doing something well.

It is necessary that moral education is converted into practice, that it does not remain a discourse, although this discourse can be a shared dialogue. To reflect on ethics and politics is to mark directions, to conceive for oneself and for others. The traditional role of criticism and doubt in philosophy should not impede the action of volition, the decision. In ethics and politics cognitive and volitive factors are central.

**Criticism of some proposals for ethical and political education.**

The programs of ethics which accentuate moral *thought* are insufficient, as are programs which develop models of conduct without reflection. One must propose to oneself the preparation of the students for a moral practice which is a symbiosis of reflection and action. From this perspective we are in opposition with some of the proposals for ethical and political education which are currently fashionable, such as the clarification of values, the treatment of dilemmas etc.

'Moral education is not just helping children to know what to do; they have to be shown what to do, and be given practice in doing the things they may choose to do in a moral situation.'

M. Lipman (1980) *Philosophy in the Classroom*

The clarification of values appears to accept that one can separate values from facts. It sustains that facts are objective and values subjective. If we do not start with facts we end up in pure relativism;

that which is good for me, is not for you. Value and fact are the same thing seen from different perspectives and through analysis.

Analytically we can isolate them, but things interest us because of the combination of the two. There are no separated facts, there are things which are facts and values at the same time. We can not work with students in such a way that they talk about values as if they were independent of facts. From our point of view we will change education in values for education for evaluating. We will pass from speculating to doing.

With relation to work with dilemmas, we believe that it is not viable because of its being intransferable as it lacks the context of daily life just as much so if they are hypothetical moral dilemmas, real dilemmas (other peoples), or historical dilemmas. Can we really believe that one can educate ethically if a discussion about the dropping of the Bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki is settled without taking into account the historical context, the ambience of war, the emotional states, and the situation of conventional weapons arsenals of that epoch? In moral education through dilemmas the skills which presuppose the decision are taken for granted, and these are indispensable for deliberation: an interpretation of the global situation, distinction, definition, clarification, listing, analysis of terminology, conflict of values etc. The reduction of moral education to the resolution of (supposed) conflicts is inoperable, because it does not appear to have any possibility of being transferred to real life, one works as one does when doing mental calculations, as in a game of problem solving, but neither the principals are brought into question, nor the critical valuations and their consequences. What are the pertinent resources in ethics and political reflection? What resources do we as adults use to deal with our own decisions? - argue about the rules, about the consequences of their application, try to see the pros and cons, look for examples and use personal and acquired experience, base ourselves in universal ethics, distinguish, generalise, analyse, try to see the question from different points of view, put oneself in the place of others,- When these instruments are converted into habits and are applied to real life, we have many possibilities of achieving reasonable ethical and political attitudes.

#### **The position of 'Filosofia 6/18' in moral and political education**

The position of Philosophy for Children is its practicality, because it joins two complementary areas: the theoretical and the practical, that is to say, it intervenes in the aspects of content and instrumentality.

Specifications of the Philosophy for Children project:

1. Beyond content and the acquisition of certain knowledge of philosophy in general, and consequently ethics and politics as disciplines committed to action, it proposes in its concrete application in schools a qualitative leap which opposes the well intentioned classical daily dialogues of our classrooms. Let take a schematic view of what is proposed and how what happens in our classrooms has little to do with it.

<u>Discourse</u>	<u>Reality</u>
Equality	Inequality
Cooperation and solidarity	Competition and success
Personal development of the student	Hierarchy and authoritarianism

Preparation for life  
Education in diversity  
Responsibility

School-world divorce  
Single control  
Obedience

And I could continue, but the list is sufficient to illustrate the duality between the typical educational discourse and teaching practice. We do not want this disassociation to be reproduced in ethical and political education and because of it we run away from discourse whether it be ethical or political and we give ourselves the opportunity, to students and educators, to directly show our attitudes with regard to respect and tolerance. But we are not going to *talk* about equality, we are going to practice it and progress successively in this way.

2. The open critical attitude, being at the same time both theoretical and practical, which I demanded, could break this disassociation between principles and reality. It leads us to a model activity capable of transforming the good intentions of ethics and politics into reasonable and reasoned activities. For this reason we will put the accent not on teaching, but on learning. If I were to be asked if ethics could be *taught* I would answer, no. But on the other hand, I am convinced that, yes, you can *learn* ethics, from the attitudes of others, from the positive and negative attitudes of others, and from the analysis of one's own behaviour. But I do not think that it can be transmitted as the subject matter/contents of other subjects are transmitted.

The best technique for learning ethics and politics is modelling: the repetition of gestures, the maintaining of determined ideological positions, to be exemplary in behaviour and impeccable in interventions. This is the luggage which we transmit by osmosis to students. Certainly to acquire these habits one has to practice. How could we learn to ride a bike or drive a car with just the explanations of even the best of teachers to go by? The teacher is a mediator, not an arbitrator. Teachers should not have as their goal the adjusting of the child to society, but of initiating the student into society in such a way that he/she is able to transform it.

3. Last of all this education should take place within the framework of cooperative education and through the community of inquiry, as it is a communicative environment which has shown itself to be efficient in potentiating the ethical and political life of students. Cooperative education is a model of educational relations which opposes the individual and the competitive model, and which in itself provides a large number of ethical and political values. In the first place it helps the participants to be consistent in their beliefs and ideology, and to realise that their values are not unique. Secondly it mixes distinctive proposals and new alternatives. In this sense potentiating mutual respect passes for the better understanding of the points of view of others. Thirdly in this community one provokes and accepts the conversion of error into virtue as being normal, in the sense that the self-correction of notions and opinions is a value in itself. Fourthly the participants are encouraged to use reasonability as a habitual tool. Thanks to these considerations we can see more clearly how the community of investigation is also an ethical and political community which contributes to open, integral practical educa-

tion and which completely rejects any temptation to the dogmatic indoctrination of some privately held beliefs.

**Conclusion.**

Philosophy is a constant investigation and a critical activity which proposes and repropose the most radical of questions. We said at the beginning that it is more an attitude than something learnt, just as its etymology indicates, and although the Platonic tradition (Teetetto 1 74a) has given us the tender image of a Thales who falls into the well because he is contemplating the stars, we must not forget that, as Aristotle tells us (Politics I, 11, 1259) the very same Thales made use of the study of the stars to predict a great harvest of olives which enriched him. Following then the Kantian theme we revindicate for the teaching of philosophy - and especially for ethics and politics - its practical character. Trying then to give an opportunity to the students to think about life as a way of living.

## ACER and The Centre of Philosophy for Children

### One Day Workshop (Presenter: Laurance Splitter)

#### The Classroom as a "Community of Inquiry" Teaching for Better Thinking

The workshop will explore a range of topics and teaching strategies concerned with improving the quality of thinking in the classroom. Topics and strategies to be covered include:

- Establishing criteria for "better thinking"
- The techniques and procedures of collaborative inquiry
- Stimulating reflective dialogue in the classroom
- Developing better listening and questioning skills
- The link between thinking and self-esteem
- Values education and the strengthening of judgement
- How to discuss violence, sexuality and other "sensitive" topics
- The connection between thinking and philosophy
- Transfer: the litmus test of teaching for better thinking

#### The Workshop Presenter

Laurance Splitter has been conducting workshops and other inservice activities since 1982 when he formally introduced Philosophy for Children to Australian schools. He has published on topics relating to the teaching of thinking, dialogue and questioning strategies, and personal development.

The present series of workshops will incorporate material from Dr. Splitter's new book *The Classroom as a Community of Inquiry: Teaching for Better Thinking*, to be published by ACER in 1995.

The workshop will model the concept of a "community of inquiry", and will utilise a range of stories designed to provide students with a cognitive and affective experience which then becomes the springboard for inquiry. These stories give rise to questions and issues like the following:

Can things be exactly the same?

*(sameness and difference)*

Are thoughts and dreams real? *(mind; reality and fantasy, possibilities)*

Why should we treat other persons with respect? *(on being a person: friends and strangers, pride, care and dignity)*

How should we relate to non-persons – animals, plants, wilderness areas? *(environmental ethics: our place in the world)*

Is it important always to tell the truth? *(honesty, lying, intentions and outcomes)*

Should we always follow the majority? *(peer pressure, making good judgements)*

What counts as a "good reason"? *(logic, reasons and feelings, criteria)*

How can I know what another person is really thinking or feeling? *(knowledge of oneself and others, empathy)*

How is meaning expressed in art and literature *(writing poetry and prose, aesthetics, truth versus beauty).*

#### Dates and Times

Sunday 20 November 1994 [9.30-4.00]

[focus on early-mid primary]

Tuesday 29 November 1994 [9.00-4.00]

[focus on upper primary-early secondary]

Tuesday 24 January 1995 [9.00-4.00]

[focus on early-mid primary, repeat session]

Sunday 19 February 1995 [9.30-4.00]

[focus on upper primary-early secondary, repeat session]

Venue: ACER, 19 Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell, 3124

Day Cost: \$65 (including morning tea, lunch and a certificate of attendance)

*As places are limited to 25 participants per session, early enrolment is advised.*

TO BOOK,  
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- Tuesday 24 January 1995 [9.00-4.00]**  
[focus on early-mid primary]
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## Encouraging pupil participation: practical ways of establishing a community of enquiry

Susan Wilks: Institute of Education, University of Melbourne,  
Victoria, Australia

The creation of a community of enquiry, with dialogue at the centre of its methodology and tolerance of other's opinions as a central aim, provides an environment which aids thinking about, and discussion of, social and ethical issues. The skills encompassed include:

- participants viewing each other as rational and reasoning persons who value the process of the enquiry,
- reasons for views being expected and respected, and
- participants being self-critical and self-corrective.

These skills develop with practice, and enrich programs which foster philosophical inquiry.

After nearly a decade of trialling ways of assisting teachers to introduce philosophical inquiry into primary and secondary classrooms, I have found the activities and exercises outlined below introduce teachers and their students to a range of activities which encourage participation in creative and critical thinking. Many of the exercises are adapted from Matthew Lipman's manuals. They are designed to be used in conjunction with his stories as tools to aid student enquiry. Classroom experience has shown that they are valuable for introducing distinctions that are helpful in making sense of basic philosophic questions during the establishment of the community of enquiry.

The following exercise helps teachers focus on the important aspects of a discussion with their classes, as well as being thought-provoking.

### **Features of a community of enquiry**

Decide whether the statements below are features of a community of inquiry.

1. Criticising the person who makes a remark, rather than what the person said.
2. Giving reasons for opinions.
3. Ignoring other people's opinions when they are not the same as our own.
4. Offering to drop one's views if they are not the same as everyone else's.

(Adapted from Matthew Lipman's *'Ethical Inquiry - Lisa 1985, 2.'*)

It is important to think carefully about each of the points. For instance, the first point deals with an essential discussion skill; the ability to confine one's reaction to what has been said, rather than the person who said it. Also, addressing the second point, are there times when a person should not be required to give a reason for an opinion? This could be explored. The third encourages students to think about when it might be all right to ignore another's opinion.

One would hope that there would come a time when any student would be confident enough to hold on to their opinion, even if they were a lone voice. Point number four provides the opportunity for

this point to be discussed. This could lead to the identification of when students would be prepared to change their opinion, e.g. when more evidence is presented, further reading is done, or when someone is able to successfully convince them of the strengths of a counter-view.

Teachers of students in Kindergarten to Year 2 could use the following exercise. Apart from being entertaining, it raises important issues about behaviours for participants in a community of enquiry.

**How are we going to talk about the story?**

1. Raise our hands if we have something to say.
2. All talk at once.
3. Walk around the room.
4. Scream at the teacher.
5. Talk about what we find interesting in the story.
6. Talk about words we're not sure how to use.
7. Stand on our hands.
8. Ask each other questions.
9. Give reasons for thinking about things the way we do.
10. Wash the blackboard.

(Adapted from Matthew Lipman's *Wondering about the World - Kio & Gus* 1986,11)

Experience in many classrooms has shown the benefits of spending a few weeks immersed in a variety of creative and rigorous exercises similar to those they will encounter once using specially written philosophical materials. It assists the students to practice 'thinking about thinking'.

**Thinking about thinking**

1. What happened to you a year ago that you can remember right now?
2. What is the earliest thing in your life you can remember?
3. Do you have a special memory? What is it?
4. At this moment (right now) what are you thinking of?
5. Are your thoughts in colour or black and white?
6. Can you stop thinking completely right now?
7. When is it easier to think, when you're taking a test or having a shower?

(Adapted from Matthew Lipman's *Philosophical Inquiry - Harry Stottlemeir's Discovery* 1974, 9.)

Any one of these questions may result in a discussion which lasts for quite some time if contributions and disagreements from class members are invited. The exercise encourages students to be reflective about the thinking process. They become accustomed to discussing abstract concepts and therefore prepared for later sessions using literature with a specifically philosophical focus.

**Words that describe thinking**

Ask students to brainstorm words which describe different ways of thinking. Write them on the board. (Perhaps sketch a head and write the words around it.) Students may at first not think of many words, but given time, words like 'remember', 'calculate', 'imagine', 'infer' and 'wonder', will surface. Try asking a question like: 'Which do you prefer, imagining or remembering?' and discover the kind of discussion that results. You could follow with a further question: 'Is it possible to imagine without relying on your memory?'

Teachers commonly ask :

- What do we do if the students don't attempt to answer questions or do not become involved in discussions?
- Should we ask shy students and those who are slow to respond?
- How do we assist the skills of asking questions? and,
- What makes a question (or an idea) philosophical?

A technique that has been employed to involve reluctant participants is merely to wait for an answer much longer than is 'normal'. In a supportive community of enquiry environment, where students have come to know that what they say will be valued, this relatively simple strategy is most successful. A skilful teacher will build on any effort at all, so that if the offering is a little 'thin', it can be embellished and incorporated into the discussion. It doesn't take long for that individual to soon participate more frequently.

A vital aspect of the community of inquiry method is the benefit to the self esteem of individuals. They become aware that their opinions are listened to and respected. Members of the group are willing to wait for the slower contributors to formulate their ideas, and will help if requested.

The following exercise encourages reluctant participants in classroom discussions to express an opinion. Answers can't be judged by others as right or wrong, because a preference is asked for.

#### **On thoughts**

Describe an event like the Bell's Beach Surfing Contest which would involve memory, experience, and interpretation. Have the class consider the following three features surrounding the event:

1. The reality of the beach and contest,
2. Photographs taken,
3. One's memory of the event.

(Adapted from Matthew Lipman's *Philosophical Inquiry* - Harry 1974, 45.)

Ask students which they believe would be the most valuable aspect for them. They should be able to provide reasons for their opinion. Encourage them to agree or disagree with other people's points of view. Check whether anyone changed their opinion after having heard another's reasons for a particular preference.

#### **Thinking questions**

Another method which encourages participation, is to give shy children a piece of card with a question/statement written on it, for example 'How do you know that?', 'What are you assuming?', 'What is your reason for saying that?' or 'Could you please say that again in another way?'. Encourage them to try to use the question-statements during the discussion. Of course there is usually nothing wrong with simply asking Sam and Kim what they think about a certain topic. Just remember to wait a little longer for the answer! This activity also encourages students to track the discussion by listening to what is being said because they are looking for an opportunity to ask their question at an appropriate time.

In an attempt to guide the teachers wanting to build a community of enquiry with their class, Laurance Splitter (1987) formulated questions for teachers to use to encourage student participation in discussions. Teachers may like to try using some of those listed below:

- Does anyone else find that strange?
- Can someone ask that in a different way?
- Are you happy with that way of asking your questions?
- How can we go about answering that?
- Are Sam and Lee saying the same thing?
- Do you agree with their reasons?
- Are those two points of view consistent?
- Do you think that's always true?
- Let's see what would happen if...
- See if you two can sort it out and we'll listen.
- Can you and your partner try and formulate some questions?
- Have we made any progress?
- Does that explain it?
- Is that the solution?
- Who's still confused?
- Can someone summarize that part of the discussion?

These questions focus on practical and specific ways that would help teachers pose and respond to questions raised during discussion. They also help the teacher move on if they feel that they are hearing too many anecdotes or they are stuck on one issue and want to move on.

The extent to which one can be sure a fruitful discussion is occurring when students talk in a group is often a concern of teachers. The next exercise stimulates students to remain on task because it is challenging and requires definitions and clarifications.

Debate which of the following statements is most applicable to each of the statements below:

*Things that can be thought and can happen*

*Things that can be thought but can't happen*

*Things that can't be thought but can happen*

*Things that can't be thought and can't happen*

1. A circle with corners.
2. A mountain that is half on the earth and half on the moon.
3. A person who becomes the same age as whoever they talk to.
4. A loaf of bread that stays the same size no matter how many slices are cut from it.
5. Two numbers that are equal to each other and not equal to each other at the same time.
6. A machine that produces sounds that can be heard everywhere in the universe.
7. Tomorrow and yesterday turn out to be the same day.
8. Someone is taller than you and shorter than you at the same time.
9. A mouse that can swallow an elephant.
10. A river that runs uphill.

(Source, Matthew Lipman's *Pixie - Looking for Meaning* 1980, 5)

Each group need only be given one sentence to discuss. Most students try to define the statements in ways that they claim can be thought and can happen. The necessity to define terms like 'become', 'mountain' and 'circle' in order to deal with the statements gives some idea of the strength of this exercise. Students enjoy discussing this type of question. The benefits of such an activity are that:

- challenging questions are being asked,
- listening skills are being developed,
- thinking skills are being developed, and

- dialogue skills are being developed.

One group of Year 8's wrote the following comments after being involved in exercises like those above:

- The point of it all was to try to use our minds and to think about difficult questions.
- The 'big' questions were interesting because we tried to think of a solution to the problems set.
- We have never done this kind of work before.
- The point was to try and get us to stretch our minds and our way of thinking. It will help us in life because we will be able to look at issues from different points of view.
- We had large group discussions followed by time for personal reflections. This was a good way to approach thinking about issues.

Teachers find that through the development of a community of enquiry and involvement in a range of thinking activities, their teaching styles change. They are claiming that questioning and inquiry are being promoted, logic and thinking skills are being emphasised, and questions like 'What if ...?', 'Is that a generalisation?', or 'Can you predict ...?' are common in their discussions. The community of enquiry, with its challenging and encouraging mode, is a different way of operating, which both students and teachers enjoy.

One classroom teacher's observations of her students during sessions which aimed to develop a community of enquiry in her classroom included the following comments.

The students:

- were eager (sometimes almost too much so) to participate, the forest of hands presenting a welcome problem,
- were disappointed when they missed out on being able to comment,
- were able to recognize when a discussion had moved on, rendering further anecdotes inappropriate,
- seemed proud of their ability to discuss important and difficult issues maturely,
- were more prepared to listen to each other and value others' comments,
- value ideas more, moving well beyond the provision of examples or anecdotes.

She also noted that there was more evidence of students making comments such as 'John said ... but I think there is more to it than that'. She felt they were trying to understand each other's meanings, sort out the various ideas they had heard, then make a contribution. Another point made about the students valuing discussion for its own sake. The teacher could not remember a case where a student was ridiculed for a comment they had offered.

Work with teachers wishing to introduce a specific philosophy program into their classroom has demonstrated that taking the time to establish an effective community of enquiry is worthwhile. A co-operative and confident group can fruitfully undertake many curriculum endeavours.

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## A philosophical fortune hunt

Christine Durham: Ivanhoe Girls Grammar School,  
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One day I decided that for each of the classes I taught for the week (girls from grade one to grade six) I would use as a springboard for discussion a recent newspaper article entitled, 'Metal spade nearly foils fortune hunt!'. What follows is an outline of the activities we engaged in to uncover some of the issues buried in the article.

### **Metal Spade Nearly Foils Fortune Hunt** By Duncan Graham, Perth

The Andrich family didn't take a plastic shovel when they drove to Cervantes, 180 kilometres north of Perth on Thursday night to find their Madagascan elephant bird egg buried by their son Jamie.

That was almost a disastrous error of judgment, which could have cost them dearly. For when they started digging at the spot marked X with a couple of dead branches, the metal shovel hit the 2000-year old egg.

"It's OK, it's in good condition," said Darryl Andrich, father of the egg concealer.

Although the rediscovery was witnessed only by journalist, camera crews and curious bystanders, their emotion would have been shared by the Western Australian Government, which is desperate to rescue some credit from this week's public relations disaster.

For this is the Government that decided that because the egg had been found in January on vacant Crown land, it belonged to the state.

That legal interpretation, which took more than seven

months to hatch, threatened to deprive Jamie, 9, and his cousin Kelly Rew, 8, and her sister Michelle Rew, 6, of \$150,000 said to have been offered by a private collector.

Following the uproar the Government decided to set up the "EGG Fund" to keep the seven-litre fossil in WA.

A big event was planned in Perth for Monday. This has Mr Peter Foss, the minister in charge of the WA Museum, dashing out of Cabinet to receive the egg, hand over a cheque for \$25,000 and kick off a public appeal for \$200,000, with the finders getting \$160,000.

Once told of the Government's intentions, Jamie and his dad set off on the three-hour drive to the egg spot, camped on the beach, and at first light went looking for the right dune.

Then the egg was taken to the Ronsard Bay Tavern in Cervantes. "This is exactly what we want," Mr Andrich said before taking the egg to show children at the local school. "We never wanted it stuck in a vault."

### **Being there/getting there**

Questions raised by the children included, How did the egg get there? We looked at Madagascar on the map and tried to use our imagination to come up with a reason for the egg being there. This also raised the question of the difference between a reason and an excuse and an explanation. Some ideas included:

- the egg was washed across the ocean by the tides
- a bird was carried across then it laid the egg

- a sailor was shipwrecked and buried his precious good luck egg
- pirates buried it there
- there are lots of eggs in the dunes

### It's mine! (ownership)

Who owns the egg?

- the children
- the Australian government
- the Madagascan government
- the elephant bird?
- we do?
- is reward and payment to do with ownership?
- what does it mean to own something?
- what do we own?
- how do we know we own it?
- do we own our stories and ideas?

### Eggstraordinary yet eggsactly an egg!

We read the passage then discussed it using the De Bono "Six Thinking hats" and the De Durham's 7th hat.

We wore our -

1. **White Hat**....and looked for facts....we made a list of facts, each student in turn around the table told of a fact which we listed on butcher's paper.
2. **Red Hat**...and used our emotions - how would we feel if we were the children, their parents and the collector and the government Why? Role play helps here!
3. **Yellow hat**....good things to come out of the finding, we listed these, too.
4. **Black hat**....bad things that might come out of the finding - interpersonal relationships, relationships with the law, government, etc.
5. **Blue hat**...summary of all the issues.
6. **Green hat**...growing new ideas (Mum says you will grow potatoes out of your ears-this is growing ideas like vines out of your head!)
7. **The De Durham 'Invisible Hat'**...looking at 'invisible issues,' eg jealousy, competition, right, wrong, etc.

This activity provoked a fascinating discussion.

Role playing too stimulates much thought:

eg; The egg-keepers

Role Playing...We have just found the egg....

"It's mine...I found it!!" "But it was my idea to dig for treasure"

"But you're all staying at my house...you would never even be here if it was not for me!" "I want to sell it to get lots of money...." "I want to keep it to hand down to my kids." "But what if some one steals it or the house burns down?" etc

We then stopped and tried to work out some *rules* that would help us work as-a-team of "Egg keepers". To stick in their ideas trap along with the newspaper cutting I had a photocopy of the 'Three Wise Monkeys' ...this introduced a lively discussion about the merits of the various monkeys...and whether there was a most important

monkey.

After a fascinating discussion some of the rules they decided on were:

- Don't put people down
- Don't say mean things
- Treat everyone equally...don't boss. We had a long discussion about whether it would be better to elect a manager, treasurer, etc...the plus and minus of having a formal set up
- Don't brag
- Don't get jealous
- Give everyone a go
- Treat everyone as yourself
- Don't spread rumours
- Keep secrets
- Have mutual respect
- Don't gang up on one person

I then explained that we were using the role play as an example; that I really wanted them to think of their competitive attitude to the other corresponding grade at school. We now had a list of suggestions to go through to see if they could make life smoother!!

We then tried to classify the remarks and refine all the suggestions down to one...They decided that "treat others as if they were you" would solve all problems.

#### **Reward me!**

Using the De Bono thinking strategy: PMI

What are all the good things (plus) bad things (minus), interesting things (neutral) to come out of the article?

Questions the girls asked in the "Interesting" Column included:

- Who owns the egg?
- What is the difference between PAYMENT AND REWARD?
- What is a reward?
- Does a reward mean that someone owns something?
- Is 'finders keepers'?
- Does the money value determine if you can keep it if you find it?
- What about sentimental value?
- If we say we can keep five cents if we find it, would the rule apply in a country where five cents is a lot of money?
- Why do we have money?
- Who invented money?
- What is a bribe?
- What is stealing?
- Who owns what is in the ground?
- Would it be different if the children found the egg in their own backyard?
- Do we treat children and adults differently?
- Do we show more support because they are children?
- Were the children clever to find the egg?
- How do we know it's a real egg and not a fake?
- Would we have buried the egg?
- Would it have been better if they had not found the egg?

**Unreal! Unreally real!**

Reality/Unreality: is seeing believing or believing seeing?

Grade 3 discussed whether an elephant bird was real or unreal

- Was it imagination?
- someone's dream?
- what is the difference between a dream and a day dream?
- what is wishful thinking?
- is it just pretend?
- what is 'pretend'?
- Is 'pretend' a lie?
- what is a lie?
- what about the things that seem real but are not real?
- what about the things that seem false but are real? etc

**Draw -, Write -, an Elephant bird**

Metacognition...trying to find out how we think.

First we divided into three groups and each group had a description of an elephant bird. The girls read their passage silently.

1. The tiny elephant bird was a constant companion to the elephants of Madagascar. Its feathers were brightly coloured so that it was well camouflaged against the vivid multi-coloured head gear and mounting frames the Madagascan put on their elephants.
2. The elephant bird flew about during the time of the dinosaurs on the island of Madagascar. This gigantic birds were the size of a small African elephant, they were grey in colour and were capable of flying vast distances with their strong leather-like wings.
3. The elephant bird was domesticated and was like a dog to the inhabitants of Madagascar. It would live in the huts of the people in a large box in their compounds and the Madagascan would often place the birds in cases or trunks for long journeys.

I asked the girls to write or draw what an elephant bird would look like.

They shared their notions with the other groups.

Then I read each passage aloud to the girls. We discussed whether it made more sense if we heard it as well as read it....so we discussed whether some people find it easier to learn if we hear things...to keep this in mind when we're trying to learn things.

We shared what we thought it would be and tried to see what influenced our ideas...did we simply 'see' an elephant bird or did we put together ideas from the combination of clues...elephant and bird?

Did we find it easier to draw an idea or write an idea?

We tried to determine if we were right or left brain dominant

I placed a mandarin on my head and then split it into half, connecting sides or hemispheres with tendrils of pith...and we discussed the different functions of the hemispheres...the analogy of doctors and specialists worked well here...if we have a sore throat mum takes us to the doctors. If we constantly keep getting sore throats the doctor may refer us to a specialist...who knows lots more about sore throats

as that's all he sees walking through his surgery door...sore throats on two legs. Both doctor and specialist know about our bodies, like both hemispheres know how to make the opposite hand wave or leg bend, but each hemisphere is also a 'specialist' in certain things eg the left in logic and planning in steps and the right in visualisation and seeing as a whole etc.

#### How do they know it's an elephant bird egg?

How would the children have found out what it was they'd found? We discussed the steps that would have been taken. It was suggested that a person from the museum would have investigated the egg and told and shown them what it was.

#### What do we want to see? Why?

- What is a museum for?
- What should museums contain?
- What is important to keep?
- Why?
- Why are things from the past important?
- How are things looked after in a museum?
- Would it be interesting or boring to work in a museum?
- What is work?
- What makes things boring?
- Is work boring?
- What makes work boring?

Role play different jobs done in a museum.

Then the workers do a PMI about their jobs.

#### Should we believe everything adults tell us?

A PMI suggested the following:-

- | <u>plus</u>   | <u>minus</u>  |
|---|---|
| • they know things  | • sometimes they try to trick us  |
| • they may be wiser as they may have learnt from their own mistakes | • they might have bad things in mind  |
| • they might know the truth   | • they sometimes exaggerate (so kids get the message? To make kids feel guilty? So kids won't do it again?) |
| • it is easier  |   |
| • you feel more comfortable   |   |

#### Scrambled eggs (Are there degrees of blame?)

For this role-play and discussion I have three eggs coloured gold with a texta pen to make them look special.

The girls form into groups to act out their 'play' After rehearsing a couple of times they present it to the whole class

##### Group 1

Jamie, Kelly, Michelle and their friends Sean and Adele are having a snack after school. Jamie makes fun of Sean's new haircut. Sean gets angry and hostile and says things like..."you and your stupid egg!! You think you're so great just because of that stupid egg!! 'Egg this ...' and 'Egg that ...' I'm sick of it!" So saying, he picks up the egg and smashes it on the floor.

##### Group 2

Jamie, Kelly, Michelle and their friends Sean and Adele are having a snack after school. EVERYONE is happy when Adele suddenly bursts into tears and sobs and sobs. When they can get a word out of her, she tells them that her Grandpa had died that morning and that she had been bottling it up all day. They all try to cheer her

up. Kelly gives her a hug and her favourite little pony doll to hold. Jamie gets her a coke to drink and Michelle remembers that her Mum had some special chocolates in the sitting room. In her dash to get one for her sad friend, she knocks over the egg and smashes it.

### Group 3

The children start mucking around and Adele throws her can of drink in the air. It knocks the egg onto the floor and smashes it.

Some of the questions these 'plays' raised included:

Was it the Mum's fault?

Was it the children's fault?... should they have known their friends better?

When there's an accident does that mean that no one's to blame?

Can things be the fault of more than one person?

If you are dared, does that make it OK?

If you don't think, are you more or less to blame?

If you do something deliberately is that worse than an accident?

If you mean to hurt/upset someone, are you more to blame?

Are there some accidents that are worse than others?

If you do something for a good reason Are you as guilty?

Did someone deserve to get into trouble?

What is punishment?

What is responsibility?

Does responsibility depend on age?

Here we ended up drawing a line and discussed responsibility and blame ... the girls, after much excited discussion decided that:-

Baby	Adult	Old person
no control/ no responsibility	control and responsibility	no control/no responsibility

Other readers may also like to send in examples of classroom activities which stimulate thoughtful discussion. We can learn much from sharing with each other! (ed).

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## An experience of introducing Mat Lipman's *Lisa* to secondary teachers likely to use it

Gregory Smith: Ivanhoe Grammar School, Melbourne, Australia.

This paper falls into three parts: aims and situation, progress, and review. It reports on the writer's experience of inducting a group of teachers into using the Matthew Lipman materials at the University of Melbourne, January 1993, during a Philosophy for Children summer school. The subjects were drawn from two parallel summer school streams, the "train the trainers" group (Philosophy for Teacher Educators) and the "Ethical Inquiry in the Secondary Classroom" group.

### **Aims and situation**

It was previously decided that a male and female team would be more appealing and effective and the writer is one of such a two. Neither of us had taught *Lisa* to children beforehand; however we were used to Harry, my colleague having taken children through it for two years in Hobart. So the team was somewhat experienced with Philosophy for Children materials and had formed a good working relationship over some days together.

We chose the first chapter of *Lisa* as a suitable starting point and by perusing the Leading Ideas in the manual, Ethical Inquiry, decided upon the target topics: "Is there a difference between animals and humans?" and "Do animals have rights?" as likely ones to offer convenient focus and so promote deep discussion. These topics were quite central to that chapter as a whole and also typical of the ethical issues raised in *Lisa*. Its purpose is summed up in the promotional brochure:

*Lisa* (subtitled: Ethical Inquiry) is a secondary school program which examines some of the fundamental concepts ("good", "right", "true", "free", . . .) required for autonomous thinking about moral issues, together with the basic prerequisites of reasoning which accompany them. This program provides opportunities for students to examine the ethical dimensions of behaviour, as well as the rules, criteria and principles (such as universalisation, consistency and empathy) which underlie it.

The story focuses on a range of moral predicaments, raised by such questions as: Can we both love animals and eat them?, What is the difference between a right and a privilege?, and How should we balance a person's intentions with the consequences of their actions? (Splitter, 1992).

The seminar was arranged in almost circular formation so as to best represent the Community of Inquiry, basic to the process of doing Philosophy for Children. Thus every participant would be able to read the whiteboard easily when it came to reading the questions the group posed in the second stage. Individuals had copies of the text for the reading aloud and pertinent supporting materials were at hand for distribution at the right time (whenever and if ever it occurred. But more of that below).

A digression here on one pedagogical decision in preparation for this seminar. It should be noted that half the participants were being introduced to the Lipman materials for the first time and so intro-

duction and discussion of the essential social and intellectual framework called the Community of Inquiry was deliberately deferred. We presumed that a few introductory comments about it to such an interested and established tertiary group would be sufficient and in retrospect they were. (A subsequent session was planned to take up the foundation and maintenance of the Community of Inquiry in more dramatic detail.)

Our aim and emphasis was on "jumping in" or "biting the apple somewhere, anywhere" so as to get started and give the initiates the experience of doing philosophy in this Lipman way rather than offering a prolonged and descriptive survey at second hand. (In the subsequent review, it was remarked that this is but one of two usual ways to introduce new curriculum materials; the "talking about it" way was deemed often less successful than the "doing it yourself" method, so favoured in this era of "hands-on" learning.)

So our aims were twofold: to provide an experience of doing *Lisa* as the children would, and at the same time to continue a meta-discussion of its pedagogical applications as they occurred. Our team-of-two approach was devised to sustain these simultaneous goals. Within the time available (an hour and a half), we believed we could meet these goals sufficiently well to present the materials fairly and to convince the participants that they offered a plentiful resource for doing philosophy.

#### Progress

To begin, the session proceeded according to plan and our expectations. The reading of the chosen episode was clear, confident and uninterrupted. After thanks and a discreet pause of silence, I arose to invite questions arising. They offered an abundance of some seventeen thoughtful and relevant questions for group consideration. Samples of the Questions posed by the group in response to the reading aloud of the first three pages of *Lisa* occur below:

Does everything have a purpose? How do we learn the purpose of things? (line 9 page 12)

Why are there so many views on the appropriate treatment of animals?

Why are so many simple things in reality so complex? And so how can we attempt to live simply in a complicated world?

What is the difference between animals and humans?

What does *Lisa* mean when she says "I am a dog"?

How do we differentiate beauty from ugliness?

How do we know we have known the whole of a thing?

Do animals have rights?

Do animals feel pain too?

Is the intention to kill more typical of a male rather than of a female?

Do we have the right to kill? To kill animals? To kill people?

When we have stopped killing animals, will we go on to kill humans?

So the questions were diverse and insightful. They covered mainly the major areas in the ethics of killing; differences between animals and humans; the concept of beauty; and animals' rights. We had recorded them faithfully word for word on the whiteboard with very little rephrasing and some initial grouping at the questioners' suggestions.

This anticipated our Second Step well - to group and even prioritise them with a view to choosing one to begin with. Some discussion about grouping began without invitation and we took this up by means of a key below. We were thrilled; they were already beginning the activity of "doing philosophy" as people began on definitions of the natures of animals and humans. Luckily this topic was the one we had beforehand targeted as a likely central issue. This was our cue to introduce the Manual's clarification exercise (attached). We did so with skeletal explanations on the existence and role of the Manual, its Leading Ideas and supplementary supporting exercises. The seminar settled down to complete the quiz silently with a view to experiencing the exercise for themselves. Once completed, the discussion favourably reviewed the worth of this exercise and its appropriateness to the Question posed on the board.

Discussion soon centred on whether animals cry; some offered observations that pets fretted and that tears could be discerned in possums and dogs. Others posited interim conclusions they gained from the quiz. So it was soon seen that the materials were able to elicit further information and act as stimulus to carry on discussion with a view to forming an ethical inquiry. Meaningful discussion of Lisa's concern about eating "dead chicken" was becoming a proximate possibility!

The later parts of the session were taken up with methodological questions and a group review reproduced in note form below. Points on our progress are also touched on in the Review section below. Our active directing of discussion was minimal; the issue thus raised was sufficiently powerful and complex to sustain it. I was reminded enough of Lipman's advice on this point to let it roll on:

"The teacher should possess an understanding of when it is appropriate to intervene in the discussion and when not to do so. There are times when the best thing one can do to guide a discussion is to say nothing and let things happen. In fact, the goal towards which a philosophical discussion should move is one in which there is maximum student-student interchange, as opposed to the start of a discussion in which teacher-student interchange is at a maximum."  
(Lipman et al. 1980, 113)

It was at this point too that we realised that we would not be discussing Lisa's predicament to any great extent; people were tantalised and pleased with the discovery of the friendliness of the Lipman materials.

#### The Review

An oral review of the session was undertaken soon after delivery and in private. Our senior lecturer and we two team members participated. Supportive oral comments had already been sought and given by seminar members and others in the teacher educators group.

Co-leading the session was itself an innovative experience for me. I have not been involved in team teaching in formal situations before. It was reported to be most effective in presentation as we both supported one another and were seen to be working as a team. I found that my partner took up and led on where I looked for reinforcement, and I offered support and elaboration whenever I felt it was useful.

The cooperative teaching was very satisfactory from my point of view.

Our debriefing review was very encouraging too. Hunches I held about the general success of the session were confirmed in discussion with our lecturer and my partner. Our beginning, support of the reading, careful writing up of the group's questions-arising and our pedagogical interpolations were praised. Areas that were less well covered appeared to be the depth of discussion of individual philosophical issues achieved in the circumstances and that the end-of-session review did not really get off the ground. Multiple factors for these not occurring were agreed on as sufficiently explanatory.

Our strategy of employing one of the Manual's exercises (attached) was also praised for its timeliness and relevance. We introduced it when discussion arrived at the point about the difference between animals and humans in the context of our having any right to kill. By artificially but not awkwardly introducing it so at that point, we were able to introduce the Manual (physically) to display its usefulness in using the program. We had prepared handouts of other similar exercises on the same topic with the same intention. At this point too we alluded to the possible eventuality of not using such prepared materials at all if discussion had taken a different course. Carrying out this pedagogical preparation seemed to appeal to the teachers and was noted.

In this review too, I voiced my uncertainty about announcing our limited qualifications for leading the group. I had felt it would or may weaken our own standing in the group. Yet in retrospect my partner's honesty and forthrightness in offering it was duly received and appreciated. I guess it saved any embarrassment about the need to paper over any omissions in our presentation or on points of ignorance about the Lipman materials.

The debriefing review also highlighted other strengths: our team work, our preparation, our coping with constantly moving from the activity itself to the metacognition on that activity; how very pertinent and practical our pedagogical insights were; the situational difficulties of running such an inservice session within the many layered chain of command structure existing in the room (Head of Department, Course lecturer, and finally ourselves as sessional leaders when these others claimed their right to speak to points as they were raised. Incidentally, these "clarifications" were sometimes extended and complex at times; in which event actually returning to the task in hand was made just that much more mentally demanding).

What follows are comments reviewing the exercise by all session members. They report on the experience of doing the session:

- the experience of deeper thinking was satisfying;
- gave me helpful linguistic clarifications;
- gave us opportunity for values clarification;
- was an experience of complexity and frustration about the unresolved issues; a questioning "Now what?";
- I feel more skilled in dealing with the program in the future; . . . increased skilling;
- a 'thinking journal' which measures progress now seems practicable;

- expanded my notions about things;
- showed the power of group activity over individual work;
- an opportunity to reflect on our everyday language;
- I experienced process more than outcome; but in fact contrary to my expectations this is a reasonable outcome in the context;
- this was alright for us adults but teenagers feel emotions much more than us; they are in the thick of it; with them we may need to use emotions as communication;
- it was more discourse than creative work;
- my thoughts were expanded;
- it was an effective session employing all the desirable traits of one;
- it led me to applications;
- an illustration of the Community of Inquiry;
- I feel enjoyment, satisfaction and enthused.

So in general the reports were positive and supportive of our efforts. The participants felt stretched and involved. The reservations mainly related to implementation of the program with children.

Overall the Practicum was not so daunting and indeed turned out to be illuminating. It enabled me to implement techniques learned earlier in the course and encouraged me to proceed with surety and support in the teaching of philosophy in the classroom in future. Despite being new to *Lisa*, new to teaching philosophy to adults and new to team teaching, I believe I acquitted myself well. I felt satisfied and confirmed in the experience.

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## Formative evaluation of the Philosophy for Children project in Singapore

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### Abstract

The Philosophy for Children program is currently being used in four schools in Singapore; two primary schools are using *Pixie* (Lipman 1981), while two secondary schools are using *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery* (Lipman, 1974). As this is an experimental project, formative evaluation had been carefully planned during the early stages. Classroom sessions were observed to see how students were responding to the lessons. Lessons were also recorded and transcribed. At the end of the second term, students also gave feedback on what they felt about the lessons. Teachers continuously gave their feedback through out the program. Both teachers and students were interviewed on their experiences in the program. This paper reports the results of the formative evaluation of the project.

### Introduction

If one learns from others but does not think, one will be bewildered. If, on the other hand, one thinks but does not learn from others, one will be in peril. (Confucian Analects II.15)

A community of inquiry in a classroom will enable students in a philosophy for children program to think as well as learn to discuss philosophical issues for which there may be no right or wrong answers (Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyon, 1980; Lipman, 1991). The above quote from Confucius (Lau, 1979), who lived more than two thousand years ago, illustrated the necessity of having a community of inquiry for learning. The Philosophy for Children (P4C) program is currently being used in four schools in Singapore; two primary schools are using *Pixie* (Lipman 1981; Lipman and Sharp 1982) while two secondary schools are using *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery* (Lipman, 1974; Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyon, 1980)

The P4C project started in Singapore in January 1992 with a Primary 5 class (N = 40) in Pandan Primary using *Pixie* and a Secondary 2 class (N = 35) in Bedok South Secondary using *Harry*. As the classes were large and the teachers were not confident with the teaching methodology, co-teaching with two teachers for each class was carried out to facilitate the discussion. This year, the philosophy lessons classes in Henry Park Primary, Bedok South Secondary and Raffles Girls Secondary are conducted with one teacher for about 15 to 20 pupils; essentially each class was split in two groups. The teachers are currently more confident as they have received training from Dr Ann Margaret Sharp and Dr Laurence Splitter. The four schools in the P4C project differ somewhat in the academic ability of the students. Both Henry Park Primary and Raffles Secondary take in high ability students while Pandan Primary and Bedok South Secondary take in average ability students.

### Formative Evaluation

At the initiation of the program in January 1992, a carefully controlled, broadly conceived evaluation study was planned to find out whether the program will improve the thinking of the students. Evaluation was to be both formative and summative: formative evaluation at the early stages to improve the program and summa-

tive evaluation at the end of the year to determine the net effectiveness of the program. During the program, the formative evaluation was one of process evaluation. Classroom sessions were observed to see how students were responding to the lessons. Lessons from the four schools were recorded and transcribed. At the end of the second term in Pandan Primary and Bedok South Secondary, students also gave feedback on what they felt about the lessons. Both teachers and students were interviewed on their experiences in the program.

#### Classroom Observations and Transcripts

As would be expected, at the beginning, only a small group of students in both classes were animated and enthusiastic during discussion; the rest of the class had to be probed to participate. Classes in Singapore follow a usual pattern of the teacher asking a question and then selecting a child out of several children (who have their hands raised) to answer a question. What we have then is a series of disconnected answers, and with teachers repeating the students' answers. This was illustrated by the transcripts of the first few lessons where the typical response-answer patterns would be teacher-pupil-teacher-pupil. Students tended to give monosyllabic answers and the two teachers in the class were talking more than the students. The Pandan teachers felt "lost" and frustrated after the first few lessons. Likewise, the Bedok South Secondary teachers were struggling too; they did not know how long they should keep at a topic.

Students found it difficult to take turns in discussion during the lesson. It was hard trying to get a "real dialogue" going, to persuade the students to follow a line of argument through and to listen to the ideas of others. The success of a discussion depended very much on the teacher's skill in facilitating dialogue. As the program was very experimental, it was decided to have co-facilitators, two teachers to each class. Sessions were conducted by the author with the two teachers from each school, every three weeks or so, to try and develop discussion skills in children. This proved to be a slow and gradual process. The students needed to learn to listen to each other and the teachers needed to become sympathetic listeners and to be facilitators. Gradually the situation did improve and the teachers gradually found it quite "natural" to guide the students. They could encourage children to build on one another's ideas and to see the implications of what they say. The transcripts of the lessons proved to be valuable guiding tools for the teachers.

Table 1 illustrates an excerpt from a transcript from Bedok South Secondary from a lesson using *Harry* where the students are discussing stereotypes. The students were discussing "kiasuism" a typical Singaporean phenomenon, which could be translated as "afraid to lose" (Lim, 1989). It was interesting to observe how the philosophical issues discussed in the P4C novels transcended borders. In Singapore, students could discuss examples from their own experiences on the issue considered.

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TABLE 1 Excerpt of a Transcript from a Lesson using *Harry* from Bedok South Secondary

Pupil : Maybe Singaporeans are stingy too. Some Singaporeans are stingy, some Malaysians are stingy. So you cannot say that Jim is stingy so he must be a Jew, you see.

Teacher1: He can also be...

Pupil : Be a Singaporean or any other ...

Teacher1: Any other race, right? Okay, let's go on to the second statement, right. Now, Ahmad is a Singaporean. We know that all Singaporeans, that Singaporeans are kiasu people. So Ahmad must be a kiasu. Is there anything wrong in making that kind of conclusion. Okay, (Name) you say it's wrong? Why do you say it's wrong?

Pupil : It's wrong because other countries also got kiasu people. Have you ever encounter a sale where people don't ..., which is deserted? I mean, not crowded? That means other country, say in Japan there's one...

Teacher1: We're talking about Number 2.

Pupil : I know. I'm just giving an example. Let's say in Japan there's a shopping centre with a sale. The sale surely got a lot of people going there, shopping around there. That's why, not only Singaporeans are kiasu. Also Japanese are also kiasu.

Pupil : But you cannot conclude that they're kiasu. They may just want to go to buy cheaper things for their daily use.

Pupil : Then what do you think about, then can you define what's the meaning of kiasu. Isn't taking cheap things kiasu?

Pupil : You mean you don't want cheap things. That means other things are quite expensive you go and buy?

Pupil : It's not that.

Pupil : Not everybody can afford expensive stuff. So when there's a sale, then people rather go, 'cos it's cheaper. So you cannot say people who go to sales are kiasu.

Teacher2: Anybody else wants to add on to that statement?

Pupil : Maybe Singaporeans are kiasu people. I don't quite agree. Because not all Singaporeans are kiasu people. Some people may be kiasu at times but not kiasu at all times, just like the sale. The sale, they may contain people who are kiasu and those who want to get cheap things because they cannot afford expensive things. So Ahmad, cannot say, to be kiasu because there is no evidence.

Teacher1: No evidence, right! Okay, we examine the statement again. It says: Ahmad is a Singaporean. It is known that Singaporeans are kiasu people. So we conclude that Ahmad must be a kiasu. Is it correct?

Pupil : No.

Teacher1: Can't be the conclusion that Ahmad is a kiasu just because he is a Singaporean? (Name), would you say that I would be correct if I said that Ahmad must be a kiasu just because he is a Singaporean?

Pupil : I don't think all Singaporeans are kiasu. Ahmad can be kiasu, he can also be not kiasu.

Raffles Girls Secondary began the program this year. As the Secondary 1 students in Raffles were above average the teachers have been able to discuss somewhat deeper issues. Table 2 gives an illustration of a lesson on dreaming; the teacher was able to bring in the chinese philosopher, Lao Zi.

TABLE 2 Excerpt of a Transcript from a Lesson using *Harry* from Raffles Girls

- Pupil : Sometimes when after a very long time like, after a very long day in school and I'm really sick of all the lessons and when the bell rings and I'm walking home, I'll think, am I dreaming or am I going to wake up and find that I'm back in class again.
- Teacher: Like is it possible there was once this teacher who dreamt that he was teaching his class, and then he woke up, and found he was. Is it possible? That there was this teacher who dreamt that he was teaching his class, and woke up and found that he was teaching.
- Pupil : Yah, it's possible.
- Teacher: Suddenly, your thought goes out and you're dreaming and you come back and realise that you are in class actually conducting the lesson. Is it possible, you have this experience?
- Pupil : I always find that in the morning, that brushing my,... No, I woke up and I already laid my toothpaste in front of me and then suddenly, I just, I was thinking, oh I'm brushing my teeth. And it was so real, you know, I was really brushing my teeth. Then suddenly, someone called me. "What are you doing string in the air like that?" And I looked. The toothbrush and everything was still laid out in front of me, you know.
- Teacher: When you talk about you know, dreams being very real, can you have a situation whereby when all of us are at home now having the same dream? Dreaming that we are having a philosophy class. I'm at home dreaming that I'm having this lesson with you, and you all are dreaming that you are here, having this lesson. Is it possible?
- Pupil : No.
- Teacher: Because dreams can be quite real in that sense. Why not?
- Pupil : 'cos our minds are all different.
- Pupil : There's a one in a zillion chance.
- Teacher: One in a zillion chance?
- Pupil : No chance at all.
- Teacher: There was this Chinese philosopher Lao Zi. I don't know how many of you know. He said, "Am I Lao Zi thinking that I am a butterfly, or am I a butterfly thinking that I'm Lao Zi."
- Pupil : I'm Lao Zi thinking that I'm a butterfly.
- Teacher: Why can't it be the other way around, I mean a butterfly thinking that you know.
- Pupil : Because he's not, because a butterfly wouldn't have time to think of such things.
- Pupil : But how, how do you know whether a butterfly would think like that or not?
- Pupil : Because butterflies, I'm sure they've other things to do like eating and sleeping. They don't ...
- Pupil : Like humans have other things to do.
- Pupil : Yah, humans have other things but he is civilised. He can, he can make use of his time properly. A butterfly, I don't know what a butterfly does but I'm sure it doesn't think about such things.
- Pupil : But the butterfly doesn't even know who Lao Zi is.
-

Going through the transcripts of lessons and teachers' reactions and comments helped the teachers to be more confident in handling the discussion and to be better facilitators in the classroom. Both teachers and students enjoyed their lesson.

#### Feedback from Students and Teachers

In June last year, four months after the commencement of the program, students from Pandan Primary and Bedok South Secondary gave their feedback on what they felt about the lessons. Out of the 30 respondents in the Primary 5 students' evaluation form, 28 students (93%) indicated that they enjoyed the lessons with *Pixie*. In the lessons with *Harry*, 23 Secondary 2 students (70%) indicated their enjoyment of the lessons. Both the primary and secondary students found the lessons to be interesting, fun and relaxing. Reasons for enjoying the lesson given by the students were revealing, as shown in Tables 3 and 4; students do want to be given opportunities to discuss at the same level with their teachers.

A small proportion of students discussed what they have done in class with *Pixie*/*Harry*: 15% of the Primary 5 pupils and 24% of the Secondary 2 pupils. However the remarks (presented in table 3) given by those who did, showed that they continued to reflect on what they have absorbed during the lesson. A larger proportion of students used the skills that they have learnt in other ways: 79% of the Primary 5 students and 67% of the Secondary 2 students. As shown in Tables 3 and 4, it was gratifying to realise that the students were able to transfer the thinking skills to their other school subjects, and to solving their own problems and with their family.

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TABLE 3 Students' Evaluation on the Thinking Skills Lessons using *Pixie*

#### Reasons for enjoying/not enjoying the lessons with *Pixie*:

- It is because we can say whatever we feel is right.
- It teaches you to think and answer with a reason.
- The story on *Pixie* is interesting and we can discuss about it.
- It does not have a logical ending.

#### Discussions with classmates after the lesson with *Pixie*:

- We discuss about *Pixie*'s friends.
- We discuss about what kinds of friends we like to have.
- I discuss the things that I am not sure with my friends.

#### Other ways of using the skills discussed in *Pixie*:

- I had used the thinking skills to think, "Am I what I really am".
- I used the talking skills.
- Like imagine things.
- When we write jokes.

---

TABLE 4 Students' Evaluation on the Thinking Skills Lessons using *Harry*

#### Reasons for enjoying/not enjoying the lessons with *Harry*:

- 'It is because everyone has a chance to speak what a person thinks of and what a person wants to tell. The lessons on *Harry* also built up courage in speaking whatever I wished to say.'

'The lessons on *Harry* are not like other lessons where the teacher talks and we just listen. The *Harry* lessons gave us opportunity to talk and debate about what others said and we learn to think deeply.'

'It is fun, enjoyable and interesting. It is also the only lesson we got to express our ideas.'

'I think it is excellent to relax the mind as I can feel free to talk but at the same time learning what I am suppose to learn.'

'Most of the students just keep quiet instead of asking questions.'

'I think that pupils are too shy to talk freely. I also am very shy. This makes the lessons on *Harry* not interesting.'

**Discussions with classmates after the lesson with *Harry*:**

'We will argue about what we have done in class and will see who's right and who's wrong.'

'When we learnt about reversing sentences starting with "all", most of us agreed that some of the sentences of that kind cannot be reversed but some of them disagreed. We actually made up our own sentences to prove them that we (agree) are right.'

**Other ways of using the skills discussed in *Harry*:**

'I've learned more skills of giving comments in front of people.'

'I used this skill in thinking me a way to a solution if I had a problem.'

'I used one of the skills to find out that in Maths trial and error, there are other ways to find out the answer without using either  $X = 0$  or  $Y = 0$ , etc.'

'I used the skill to argue with my brother.'

'When I do a test and if I get it wrong, I'll think back on what mistake I did.'

'I actually taught my brother, sisters and even my father what I have learnt about philosophy e.g. what are your dreams like, either in colours or black and white. We are having quite a fun time.'

'Nothing because I don't think about anything.'

---

At the start of the P4C program (January 1992), the teacher were a little apprehensive at doing the program. The feedback given in Tables 5 and 6, from interviews held with the teachers in November 1992, indicated that the Pandan teachers felt lost and frustrated and the Bedok South teachers did not know when they should stop discussing each of the topics. They tended to keep on discussing the points so as to make the students be aware of them. Gradually after several discussion sessions, the teachers gained confidence and were able to guide the students. The teachers found that students could give counter examples and could question each other. They also ran into a typical problem in Singapore: many of our students, who act-

ually knew what was going on in class and could make fruitful contributions, opted to keep quiet because they were either shy or afraid of speaking up in case they were wrong (the kiasu syndrome discussed above). Tables 5 and 6 gives many illustrations of all these points.

---

TABLE 5 Feedback from Teachers on Lessons with *Pixie*

I think at the beginning we were a bit lost and at times, we were a bit frustrated after the lesson. We wondered why we were telling them and asking them so many questions and why they were not responding. Now it's not such a conscious effort - it is quite natural for us to just ask them about their feelings and guide them on from them although not as a facilitator but guide them on from there.

They can offer counter examples or something opposite, sometimes but they don't challenge. They can offer counter examples spontaneously.

But another child said, I disagreed with you. There were about one to three or four of them, speaking. In fact five different children spoke. They could piggyback on each other's comments

I have a few in my class, you know they are very sharp and from their facial expressions, I know that they grasp it. When you ask them they cannot explain it properly because they are not very fluent in their spoken English. Basically, they are just afraid of being laughed at by others. It is very important to them at this stage.

They can ask relevant questions, they can ask sequential questions. They still find it difficult to ask people to justify what they say. They find it difficult to ask people to clarify what they say.

---

TABLE 6 Feedback from Teachers on Lessons on Harry

Sometimes we are at a loss we ourselves, we do not know. It's tough. We let them wander around and sometimes when we do that the point all is forgotten. We do not know whether we need to change to another topic.

You can find them, you know, you can see it's ticking. When you bring up a topic you can see them ticking away, they are sort of absorbed in what you are going to bring up like: Oh, I've never thought of it before, for example, this is about what makes you, you one idea just grow out from another. The student will prompt this, and another will prompt that.

The thing is that some people just don't contribute, but they could be benefitting. They may be silent listeners, for example, Benny absorbs a lot, only he does not contribute. When you talk to him, you realise that the boy thinks a lot..... These are people who can be slowly encouraged to contribute and share with the others.

Some students can challenge one another for reasons and examples. Students can offer counter examples, they can offer counter instances, they also can offer counter arguments. They still can't piggyback on other's comments, that is, they can't build up.

They can tell the person outright: we don't understand what you are saying so we ask them, Oh hey please explain again, still don't understand or we don't agree, we end up by saying.

---

### Conclusion

Experiences indicated that the philosophy for children in both Pandan Primary, Bedok South and Raffles Girls Secondary have added a new dimension to the ways the students approach thinking. A community of inquiry such as the setting we have required the group to develop trust in each other, to co-operate by working out answers with each other and to respect views and suggestions that are offered. Through such experiences, students are more ready to ask questions, to challenge one another and to explain themselves. In this way, they developed skills to think for themselves and to make good judgement on issues based on having looked at all possibilities and drawing acceptable conclusions. Teachers who worked with this group of students in other subjects have found evidence of transfer of learning in the students' written assignments. Students were also noticeably more ready to discuss a wider range of subjects in their other classes.

Different assignments

Other classes

Qualitatively, the project seemed to be doing well. Summative evaluation is currently going on. A quasi-experimental design of an experimental class and a control class (both intact classes) was used for the summative evaluation. For 1992, three instruments were selected for the pre- and post-tests: an intelligence test, the AH2 group test of general reasoning (Heim, Watts & Simmonds, 1974), the Classroom Environment Scale (CES) developed by Moos and Trickett (1974) and CooperSmith's (1981) Self Esteem Inventory (SEI). For 1993, the tests selected for pre- and post-tests were the New Jersey Test of Reasoning (Shipman, 1983), the Classroom Environment Scales and the Self-Description Questionnaire I (Marsh, 1988).

The learning environment and self-esteem instruments were included as it was felt that the program would provide a better learning environment and one that would enhance the students' self esteem. Anderson and Walberg (1974) found that differences among curricula are often reflected first and most strongly in changes in the learning environment. Baron (1987) proposed that program goals for teaching thinking should include references to changes to students' attitudes and dispositions such as enhancement in self esteem. In this program, the evaluative comments of the students, given in Tables 3 and 4, confirmed that it was appropriate to include the instruments on learning environment and self esteem. The results of the summative evaluation would be reported in future papers.

PTO

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- Thinking and Living in a Global Community

We are inviting presentations on one or more of these themes. Presentations should take the form of workshops/demonstrations or short papers followed by general discussion.

The conference should appeal to anyone interested in improving children's thinking through philosophical inquiry. It will bring together teachers, philosophers and scholars from around the world.

The conference will offer introductory sessions, as well as more advanced sessions on the theory and practice of philosophical inquiry with children.

A special feature of the conference will be a plenary session entitled "Teacher Education: Models from around the World". This session will be held on Saturday July 15, to be followed by the Annual General Meetings of ICPIC and FAPCA.

Further information, including "Conference Registration Form" and "Conference Presenters' Form" may be obtained from:

"1995 ICPIC Conference"  
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