

*Critical &  
Creative Thinking:* *the Australasian Journal  
of Philosophy for Children*  
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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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Laurance Splitter - ACER, Melbourne, Victoria  
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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 as

- well as 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 fifth 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 (ASCII text) to:-

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

**NB: to maintain academic credibility, contributions to sections (1) Theory and Research and (2) Philosophical Studies, will be subjected to those processes of peer review normal for scholarly refereed journals.**

### Letters to the Editor

If 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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### **Tasmania sets up a formal P4C Association**

After many years of an informal Philosophy for Children network in Tasmania, the Tasmanian Association of Philosophy for Children was officially launched by Alison Jacob, Director of Planning with the Tasmanian Department of Education on Saturday 1st November at The University of Tasmania. Dr Laurance Splitter, Director of the Centre of Philosophy for Children, presented an outline of Philosophy for Children and conducted a demonstration Community of Inquiry at the launch.

The new association is chaired By Tim Sprod, with Secretary Jenny Morgan and Treasurer Vicki Mackrill. The patrons of TAPC are Professor Jay Garfield of the Department of Philosophy, and Professor David Hogan of the School of Education at the University of Tasmania.

One of the main achievements of TAPC so far has been the offering of a range of training and information courses for teachers and schools in Philosophy for Children.

For further information contact: Tim Sprod, Chair, Tasmanian Association for Philosophy for Children. Phone: 6226 7848, Email: [Tim.Sprod@utas.edu.au](mailto:Tim.Sprod@utas.edu.au).

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## Competence in children: psychological, legal and moral

Freddy Mortier: Ghent University

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Competence is a legal concept: competent persons have decisional authority in a certain domain. Competent patients, for instance, have the right to decide whether to accept or reject proposed medical care.<sup>1</sup> Buchanan and Brock argue rightly that this legal concept of competence is a threshold concept, not a comparative one: persons are judged to be either competent or incompetent to make a certain decision even though the underlying capacities and skills forming the basis of that judgment are possessed in different degrees.<sup>2</sup> Children are one of the categories of people, together with the elderly and the mentally ill, that are commonly denied to have 'competence', even if, depending on the sphere of activity, they acquire some decisional authority over their own lives before the age of legal majority. Being judged 'incompetent' severely restricts children's autonomy to consent to or refuse medical treatment, their ability to purchase contraceptives, to be heard and taken seriously in divorce situations, and so on.

The legal concept of competence is related to what may be called the psychological concept of competence. The legal concept relates to the psychological in the presumptive mode: whenever *x* is legally competent, *x* is presumed to be psychologically competent. Presumptions may be interpreted as assigners of the burden of proof. A person who is legally competent, is presumed to be psychologically competent, until proof of the contrary. It might be asked whether the proof of psychological competence lifts the presumption of legal incompetence. Judges and physicians tend to think that it does not. There is, however, a general and rough empirical relationship between the two kinds of competence. People belonging to categories who are generally thought to be psychologically competent are individually presumed to be legally competent. Evidence about the real psychological competencies of groups have a bearing on presumptive standards, even if similar evidence about individual people perhaps has not the same force.

In this paper I want to argue that children from a certain age on - that is lower than is actually presumed - generally have the psychological competencies that forces us to lower the age of legal competence (other things equal). In the literature several psychological abilities have been listed that are implied by the presumptive standard of 'competence'. Appelbaum and Grisso, for instance, analyse the presumptive standard into the ability to communicate choices, the ability to understand relevant information, the ability to appreciate a particular situation and its consequences, and finally the ability to use logical processes to compare the benefits and risks of various options.<sup>3</sup> Buchanan and Brock list several abilities related to understanding and communication, certain capacities for reasoning and deliberation, and the possession of an at least minimally consistent, stable, and personally examined set of values or conception of what is good.<sup>4</sup> Pepper-Smith and his co-authors divide practical judgment into several assessable abilities groupwise related to four components: belief, deliberation and judgement, preferences and intentions.<sup>5</sup> I shall not be concerned here with asking whether children match up to the requirements of any of these concepts. For my purposes, it is sufficient to show that children perform as well or as badly as adults on the criteria of psychological competence. For remember that the latter concept, in contrast to the concept of legal competence, admits of degrees and is a

comparative one. My argument will not just show that children are rather competent thinkers but also that adults are less competent than they are generally supposed to be.

First, however, we have to examine more closely why the question of 'competence' is relevant at all. This question leads us into the province of moral theory. Most authors, when referring to the origins of the concept of competence, trace it back to John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*. At one point, when discussing the natural equality of all, Locke writes that children are not born in a full state of equality, though they are born to it. The explanation offered runs something like this: exercising one's rights presupposes freedom. Freedom, in turn, depends on reason directing a free and intelligent agent to his proper interest. For, Locke claims, one cannot really be free if one is restrained by and subject to the violence of others. The hallmark of freedom then consists in the ability to follow one's own will while disposing of one's own person, actions, possessions, and whole property, and this within the limits of self-given laws (Chapter VI: Of paternal power).

The assumption that free agency is a fundamental trait of rights-bearers is found in many guises in rule-based ethics and political philosophy. A strong and particularly enlightening version is found in Kant. People, it says, cannot have rights unless they are both (1) not determined by external forces and (2) capable of acting on the basis of reasons. Although Kant and Locke emphasize different aspects of the capability to act on the basis of reasons, the main idea is the same. Only people capable of revising their natural inclinations or spontaneous desires and of consciously endorsing them may be said to possess the capacity to exercise their rights. The ability to reason, to deliberate, to choose between alternatives and to let one's actions be motivated by reasons bestows the moral status of an autonomous rights bearer.

This point of view has also been accepted in goal-based moral theories, like John Stuart Mill's. The values of respect for persons, their rationality and autonomy can be derived from for instance utilitarian end-values rather than taken as primitive. The realm of autonomy, in those theories, is restricted to rational persons capable of assessing, revising, assuming, and hierarchically ordering their needs or preferences. In these so-called consequentialist theories, rationality consists in the clarification and correction of one's needs and preferences rather than in the finding of the right rules and principles and in being motivated by them.

Measured by these standards, children are considered to be 'unfree'. They, the story goes, "lack an adequate conception of their own present and future interests".<sup>6</sup> They would not have the kind of rationality that enables them to take a conscious stand against their own preferences and to work out a valid personal conception of the good. The argument from incompetence, in short, says that children do not have the same moral status as adults because they are incapable of deciding on the basis of 'rational' (in the sense here of 'good') reasons what to believe or do.

Of course this point of view does not imply that unfree beings do not have any rights. It only follows that their rights have to be taken care of by others. The ascription, then, of incompetence to a person implies that that person's viewpoints or decisions will not be accepted as binding.

An important preliminary remark is that one might question the very relevance of inquiring into the concept of competence. The concept refers to standards of rationality.<sup>7</sup> It leads us into the tricky business of defining what exactly cognitive, and more generally practical, rationality are. The approaches of Locke, Kant and Mill to rationality are either implicit (in the cases of Locke and Mill) or too far removed from empirical rationality (in the case of Kant) to be of much use. In fact, with these founding fathers the assumption of free agency is more a matter of ideology than of philosophy: the liberal thinkers were anxious to set limits to state paternalism. They were not involved in the practical casuistry of making decisions about real-life competence in legal or medical contexts. It is, of course, true that the moral perspective on competence as a prerequisite for autonomy still heavily informs current views on competence in real-life exchanges. But in an important way, current practice is in contradiction with this silent assumption: although many professional practitioners perhaps continue to believe that the obtaining of informed consent presupposes rational competence, they act as if it were the other way around. Let me explain this. The conditions in which informed consent has to be obtained assure that rationality requirements are met. Precisely because of the relative irrationality of e.g. patients even in making decisions about their literally vital interests, the norms by which the obtaining of informed consent is to be measured are constantly being clarified. Some American courts have judged that the obligation to inform the patient is to be measured by a reasonable person or even a subjective standard, rather than the professional standard. The professional standard holds that the doctor has met the obligation to inform the patient when he has done so in a way that would be intelligible to a doctor. The reasonable person standard holds that the doctor has to inform his patient while taking into account what a 'reasonable person', not a professional, would need to understand the medical procedures. The subjective standard holds that the doctor is obliged to explain until the particular patient he is dealing with understands well enough. These normative conceptions of informed consent represent different ways in which the patient may be protected against his own ignorance of medical issues. Rather than simply assuming that the patient is autonomous and rational, the doctors have to make sure that the conditions of autonomy are realized for the patient by respecting standards of information disclosure. In other words, in practical contexts autonomy is not treated as a thing given, but as an evolving one - one that moreover can be supported by using special educational means (like representations of balances in which the pro's and contra's are to be weighed against one another).<sup>8</sup>

Where does this leave children? As far as they are concerned, most people and even professional practitioners dealing with them, simply assume that they are incapable of autonomous choice. They do not even try to cure that defect in children. In this way a double standard has come to reign: irrationality in adults is mostly (but not always) compensated for by institutional and legal arrangements, while irrationality in children is simply assumed to be what distinguishes them from adults and is taken to justify the exclusion of children from opportunities of self-government. The concept of competence functions as a gate-keeper. In practical contexts "Judgments of competence and incompetence determine from whom consent rightly should be solicited ...".<sup>9</sup>

It separates not as much those who are autonomous from those who are not, as it separates those whose deficiencies qua rationality will be

cured for from those whose deficiencies qua rationality will not be cured for. That is why inquiry into the hard requirements set by the argument from incompetence remains relevant. It is of course true that many children are more manipulable and can be influenced more easily than many adults. It is, of course, true that they are in need of a lot of information that many adults have access to. It is also true that they tend to attach even greater weight to the present and the near future than most adults do. It is true that they do not have the life experience that many adults have. But all of these things are not arguments against the recognition of the cognitive and practical capabilities that children do have. They are arguments in favor of protecting them against abuse and manipulation, against power inequality. They are arguments in favor of restoring the balance to their advantage.

One way to tackle the argument from incompetence is to point out that it relies on a dubious philosophy of childhood. The argument derives from a very problematic theory on "what *kind* of difference the difference between children and adult human beings is".<sup>10</sup> The capability to decide on the basis of rational reasons what to believe or to do is not a satisfying answer to the question what exactly distinguishes children from adults. On the one hand, reasoning capabilities and the attendant practical capabilities that are lacking in children on closer inspection are also lacking in adults. On the other hand, recent findings in several disciplines either show that in fact children have at least some of the capabilities that they were thought not to have, or that they acquire them significantly earlier than thought.

Children, the argument from incompetence says, do not have the same moral status as adults because they are incapable of deciding on the basis of rational (good) reasons what to believe or do. The first question here is, of course, what is "capability of deciding on the basis of good reasons what to do". What are the standards that define competence? For, I repeat, 'competence' in the psychological sense is a comparative concept, presupposing standards of judgment, rather than a 'purely' descriptive one (supposing 'pure' descriptions even exist). Moreover, comparisons between children and adults will have to refer to the same standards.

Just how complex the assessment of psychological competence may be, appears when one realizes that the definition of 'critical thinking' by Ennis grossly corresponds to 'competence'. His taxonomy of goals for a critical reasoning curriculum may correspondingly be interpreted as a list of the abilities that define psychological competence.<sup>11</sup> It immediately stands out that 'competence' is a multidimensional concept. It comprehends so many dimensions (like syllogistic abilities, the abilities to judge the credibility of a source, the abilities to generalize, or to seek and evaluate examples, the ability to infer people's beliefs and intended meanings, and so on) that even a very strongly reduced list immediately raises the question how psychological 'competence' can be assessed reliably. The problem settles at least one thing in favor of the classical approach to legal competence: if competence is going to be used as a criterion for the attribution of decisional rights, it will have to be a presumptive criterion for specific age groups in specific contexts. Any evidential competence test, that requires the demonstration of individual over-all competence in particular cases, will have serious drawbacks. This even holds for the minimal four-item-or-so lists that are used to assess 'competence' in medical contexts: proving that a given individual is 'competent' on all

the relevant dimensions may be very difficult, or, in other words, may in legal contexts contain a strong bias in favor of a judgment of legal incompetence. Proving that an individual fails to live up to certain minimum requirements, however, may be the more neutral and fair approach, even if, as I am sure, it contains a certain bias in favor of competence: it presumes that people are just more 'competent' (in the psychological sense) than they really are. I will turn to this last point now. If it is true that evidence on the real psychological abilities of groups of people has a bearing on the definition of presumptive standards, it would be important to show that 'normal' adults are generally thought to be psychologically more competent than they really are.

A brief look at the list suggests that it is highly questionable that all or even most adults perform better on critical thinking than children. In fact, a lot of literature in social psychology shows that most adults are very poor reasoners, even by much less demanding standards than Ennis's. For instance, people love to generalize from atypical cases (personal acquaintances) even when that information is counterbalanced by more reliable information.<sup>12</sup> There are few reasons to boast about the practical rationality of adults. People tend to assign responsibility (e.g. for car accidents) by reasoning back from consequences.<sup>13</sup> When facing blatant injustices, people tend to blame the victim, even when victims cannot help it.<sup>14</sup> When making real important choices (e.g. about their studies and future career) most people who already are attracted by a specific choice prefer casual information, like anecdotes and narratives of personal experiences, to objective information (statistical, for instance). Objective information is considered more seriously if one is not committed to the option corresponding to that information.<sup>15</sup> Strong moral reasons to take a certain course of action are almost systematically defeated when personal involvement points in the direction of not taking that course of action.<sup>16</sup>

If practical rationality consists - among others things - in *acting* on good reasons, it appears that adults are not as rational as is commonly supposed. According to one author, research in experimental situations indicates that about 10% of the actual behavior of people can be predicted from what they believe on prior reflection to be the right course of action.<sup>17</sup> This leaves an "irrationality margin" of about 90%. Review articles covering tens of studies on the same subject are consonant with this estimate.<sup>18</sup> In certain extreme conditions, adults can just as well be manipulated as children to think and do things that run against their deepest personal inclinations.<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, the deliberation process by which people arrive at their moral judgment has some weird features. By using a standard moral judgment test, the DIT, Thoma was able to explore the relationships between reasons for acting and action choices. It appeared that the relationship between the reasons people have for believing a certain course of action to be the right one and the belief itself that a certain course of action is the right one, is rather loose. For a certain series of moral dilemma situations, Steven Thoma found an algorithm (a mathematical formula) that improved the ability to predict action choices from the reasons advanced for those action choices.<sup>20</sup> But, the ability to predict action choices from the algorithm was normally distributed, "suggesting that algorithm scores can predict action choices for most of the people some of the time".<sup>21</sup> In other words: as far as

detached thinking about hypothetical dilemma's is concerned most people are rational in the sense intended by the competence criterion only some of the time.

As far as practical rationality in the non-moral sphere is concerned, recent advances in rational choice theory show that if children "lack an adequate conception of their own present and future interests", much the same is true of many or even most adults. The pervasive phenomena of adaptive preferences (people adapting their preferences and expectations to their actual standards of living) and erroneous preferences (preferences formed on the basis of insufficient, though perhaps available information), indicate that adults also frequently "lack an adequate conception of their own present and future interests".<sup>22</sup>

Even in clearly defined medical settings adults do not appear to behave according to the presumption of autonomy and rationality. One study on family-planning patients has shown that although 93% of the patients surveyed believed they benefited from the information disclosed, only 12 % actually used the information in their decision to consent. Other studies indicate that 86% of patients would agree to a procedure without any discussion of risks.<sup>23</sup>

Now I am certainly not going to argue that whereas adults are poor reasoners and behave rather irrationally<sup>24</sup> children are excellent thinkers and little Aristotle's. They are not. But they are *better* thinkers than is mostly assumed. Because adults' attitudes toward children are marked by romanticism, the Child-with-a-capital C has been historically deintellectualized.<sup>25</sup>

So it is worthwhile to repeat some things everyone knows but forgets as soon as children are involved. Cognitive capabilities (like imagining, and thinking) and practical reasoning abilities (like being able to plan and manage one's own life, and being able to choose and evaluate, and to function accordingly) are to be seen as things developing rather than given. The concept of competence, as used in the liberal approach to rights, assumes that intellectual and practical rationality are relatively simple and static whereas the abilities involved are interrelated, complex and dynamic. They have to be seen as evolving and developing, and of being capable of being taught and trained in children as well as adults. Age and social-environmental differences between children of course make a large difference as far as rationality is concerned.

I am not a psychologist, but I believe that some kind of Piagetianism can be defended, if by 'Piagetianism' one understands a theory that takes genetic epistemology for a starting point. Thinking presupposes the construction by the knower of domain-related and perhaps of global structures that define the relations between what I will call the 'elements' of thinking. Moreover, these structures are constantly evolving and developing. That is almost all I need to defend my point of view. I don't need a stage theory, nor a theory about what exactly (contradiction and tension<sup>26</sup> or rest and relative achievement<sup>27</sup>) causes the structures to change. The other element I need, is the well-grounded assumption that the ability to take the point of view of others, i.e. of taking the other person's point of view, is crucial for the development of rationality.<sup>28</sup> These assumptions allow us to see competence as largely a matter of disposing of a facilitating environment - whatever else may be the variables influencing the development of competence.

Paradoxically, one of the main obstacles in recent psychology against the recognition of children's intellectual abilities has been Piaget's work itself. This must be attributed to his theory of childish egocentrism, the initial difficulty the child has in decentering. The concept of egocentrism explains why children are *not* capable of taking an 'objective' point of view, why they do not or insufficiently take the point of view of others, and do not or insufficiently take account of the motives, desires and beliefs of others. It offers, in other words, an explanation for the child's incompetence to reason and act rationally. Egocentrism is also thought to explain what Piaget called childhood realism, the absence of understanding of the difference between mental and physical entities :

"Let us imagine a being, knowing nothing of the distinction between mind and body ... His notions of self would undoubtedly be much less clear than ours. Compared with us he would experience much less the sensation of a being independent of the external world ... We shall try to prove that such is the case with the child"<sup>29</sup>

If Piaget were right, the child would be a very strange creature with an alien world view. Wellman has remarked that ubiquitous concepts such as illusions, interpretations, mistakes, deceptions, impressions, beliefs, guesses, hopes and wishes would be missing in this alien's repertoire, because these concepts involve an understanding of the distinction between mental states and physical events.<sup>30</sup> Children would indeed be 'incompetent' then in a strong sense.

Happily, several objections have been raised against this idea of childish egocentrism, as far as competence is concerned. It can be argued that Piaget in fact had a very restricted concept of thinking when doing research on children's abilities in this domain. Reasoning, for Piaget, is the recognition of the necessary relationship between premises and the conclusion of a deductive argument.<sup>31</sup> But, one author argues, thinking is more than that: besides formal logic à la Piaget, with rules governing sentence structure and connections between sentences, 'logic' also stands for giving reasons. According to Lipman and co-authors this includes the seeking and evaluating of reasons for something said or done. It also means acting rationally, and concerns standards for reasonable behavior.<sup>32</sup>

It is true that Piaget equates logic with the 'laws of thinking' and that for him logic is "the formal theory of thinking operations".<sup>33</sup> This definition may be said to miss largely the sense in which one has to be 'logical' to have the competence that makes one an autonomous rights bearer. That sense is better captured by the other two senses of 'logic' mentioned by Lipman and his co-authors (giving reasons and acting rationally).

Further, some authors have found rather complex forms of proof - like modus ponens/tollens, reductio ad absurdum, and hypothetical reasoning - in children of 9. According to Gareth Matthews an orthodox piagetian would expect them to show up later, at the age of 11 or 12.<sup>34</sup>

Research with the New Jersey Test of Reasoning Skills - a test based on a wide range of reasoning skills characteristic of 'logic' in the first two senses distinguished by Lipman and his co-authors - suggests that from the age of 10-11 years on children dispose of about the same reasoning skills as adults. This finding, however, may also be due to inherent weaknesses in the test itself<sup>35</sup>. But from the results with this test it is

also clear that the training in meta-cognitive analysis and in thinking about the procedures of thinking stimulates children to reach the plateau between one or two years earlier. In the Philosophy for Children programme, children are trained from the first grade on in the analysis of concepts, hypothetical reasoning, giving reasons for decisions and beliefs, classifying and relating, and so on - and this with success. Harry Stottlemeier, the logic component of the P4C-program, is worked through with children aged 10 and older: the novel helps children to discover for themselves the principles of syllogistic logic, of proposition logic and of quantified predicate and relation logic.

Others have argued that Piaget's hypothesis of egocentrism in children has been based on very rough empirical indicators. Even very young children are quite capable of decentering in experimental situations when the tasks they have to perform are meaningful to them. Children reason when they are motivated to do so. Adults also tend to make more reasoning errors when the tasks they have to perform are cut loose from meaningful contexts.<sup>36</sup> William Damon has argued that moral perspective taking occurs much earlier than piagetian research in moral psychology supposes. The assessment methods used (e.g. commenting on dilemmatic stories) are not fitted for the study of perspective taking in young children.<sup>37</sup>

Finally, the idea of children's egocentrism has also been revised in recent research on children's 'theories of mind'. Grasping the distinction between what philosophers call 'propositional attitudes', like believing, wanting, thinking, knowing, pretending, and 'propositional contents', i.e. what one believes, wants, knows, ... is a very crucial cognitive ability. What Piaget calls 'decentering' is somehow closely linked to knowing how to handle propositional attitudes (knowing that 'supposing' is different from 'knowing' or 'believing' is, for instance, required for hypothetical reasoning, because such reasoning presupposes the awareness that a supposition differs from a putative truth). There is some debate about when children exactly acquire this ability, but many authors agree that it is present though not wholly developed in pre-schoolers.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, the ability to handle propositional attitudes can be greatly improved by training. In *Kio and Gus*, for instance, the first and second grade component of the P4C-programme, 21 propositional attitudes are used and explicitly discussed by the children - without their having many problems with this.<sup>39</sup>

Research in this area with three-year-old children has led some to put into doubt the very concept of egocentrism:

"Young children's difficulty is more general than one of confusing their own with others' beliefs, since they even seem ignorant of the representational quality of their own mental states."<sup>40</sup>

In other words: these young children are perhaps not egocentric; they have the wrong theory, or rather, no theory at all about mental states. It is not that this predicament is in itself more recommendable than egocentrism. It is not. The point is that the no-mental-states-theory disappears much earlier than egocentrism is believed to.

To conclude: as far as I see, in decontextualized settings children have all the cognitive capabilities of adults from at least the age of 10-12 years on. This conclusion is, moreover, not that different from what Piaget expected.

But what about the ability of children to use these skills in applied

contexts? Weithorn and Campbell studied the hypothetical reasoning of children about medical decisions. They distinguished four age classes (9, 14, 18 and 21 years old) and used four criteria to assess 'competency': ability to choose, reasonableness of choice, quality of the reasons given for choosing, and comprehension of issue. On no count did they find significant differences between adults and 14-years-old children. Nine-years-old children choose as reasonably as adults, but showed less comprehension of the situation, and less rationality in the reasons advanced for choosing. In other words, even these nine-year-old children would pass some version of the 'reasonable person standard'; fourteen-years-old would pass all versions actually used.<sup>41</sup> Buchanan and Brock, although relying heavily on Piaget, conclude their review of developmental evidence as follows: "As a very broad generalization, the developmental evidence briefly summarized here supports the conclusion that children by age fourteen or fifteen usually have developed the various capacities necessary for competence in health care decision making to a level roughly comparable to that attained by most adults."<sup>42</sup>

All that has been said is about cognitive rationality and about ability to choose. What about specifically moral rationality? Piaget himself thought that an autonomous morality can be arrived at pretty early. He gives an example of a three-year-old girl who, in his opinion, was morally autonomous.<sup>43</sup> Achieving moral autonomy, he adds, is largely a matter of personality and education received. Gareth Matthews and Michael Pritchard have argued that six-year-old children even have the rudiments of rule-based and goal-based moral theory and that 8 to 11-years-old children are perfectly capable of arguing reasonably about euthanasia.<sup>44</sup>

William Damon as well as Elliott Turiel have shown that children acquire very early rather complicated systems of rules for several domains of social interaction. According to Turiel, children of four to six understand on a non-reflective level the difference between moral rules (prescriptive, universalizable and overriding) and conventional rules (more or less arbitrary rules of the social game).<sup>45</sup>

Children's capacity for practical rationality has, however, been put in doubt from the point of view of Aristotelian virtue theory (the third way, besides value- and rule-based approaches, to moral theory). Rosalind Ekman Ladd, for instance, has argued that children cannot be rational on the terms of that model.<sup>46</sup> Practical rationality, she argues, involves more than moral cognition: it is a question of commitment. It is further a question of self-knowledge, that can only be acquired by the exercise of judgment on many practical occasions. The broad vision of the world, the comprehension of others' motivations and sensibilities, the ability to learn from one's errors, suppose a long term of experience. Finally, practical rationality is a matter of character, not of knowing the rules and certainly not of knowing theories about the rules. These three things, Ekman Ladd argues, can only be acquired after a long term of guidance by more experienced and consequently older people.

What to think about this? Well, I wonder how many adults would pass Ekman Ladd's test of commitment, self-knowledge and strength of character. Again, one should avoid asking of children what is not asked of adults. The criteria she advances are certainly worth striving for, like those in other models of cognitive and practical rationality. But the point is that where these criteria are not met, an effort is to be

made to enable people (adults and children) to meet them. Keeping children under close guidance will certainly not offer them the opportunities to initiate the process of trial and error by which firm self-knowledge is acquired. If a period of moral apprenticeship is needed, it makes no point to postpone it until an advanced age is reached.

Let me, finally, make some remarks on the relationship between the rights to choose which are grounded in competence and other rights that children also have. In the classical approach, rights are grounded in the idea of the equal worth of autonomous human beings. This characteristic explains why competence is seen then as a condition for full rights-bearership. The argument that children have (depending on age and situation) the competence of full autonomous persons can easily be mistaken for an argument saying that adults and children have to be treated equally. Equal treatment in this sense would also comprize equality before let's say the criminal law. I do not think that this conclusion follows from what I have said. Put very briefly, I think that my refusal to draw that conclusion may be defended in the following way.

The classical approach in a way invites us to focus on the wrong things. Although intellectual and practical competence are of great value because they are necessary for self-government, they are not sufficient for 'directing an agent to his proper interest'. I prefer to think about freedom not as a prerequisite of rights but as their product. Freedom is a matter of disposing of the means that enlarge one's scope of action, enable one to set ends and realize them, and finally to achieve well-being or welfare or self-realization or whatever may be one's candidate for an end-value. Among those means are intellectual and practical abilities, but also all kinds of other resources, like being in good health, being adequately nourished and sheltered, having opportunities for sexual satisfaction, being the object and subject of loving and caring relationships, being able to participate in communities, being protected against abuse, exploitation and illegitimate sexual needs of others, having several kinds of liberties (like religious freedom and liberty of expression, ..), and so on.<sup>47</sup> As Amartya Sen puts it: "If our concern is with freedom as such, then there is no escape from looking for a characterization of freedom in the form of alternative sets of accomplishments that we have the power to achieve".<sup>48</sup> On this view, rights are something like socially recognized ways of accessing sources of empowerment.

Moreover, ensuring access to these sources of empowerment (and thus the long term aim of self-government) may justify the overruling of a person's decisional authority in a given domain (the short term aims of self-government). The point that Culver and Gert make about the role of the competence to make medical decisions can be paraphrased in a more general way: competence to make a decision is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for determining when it is morally justified to overrule a person's decisions.<sup>49</sup> I will not, however, go deeper into this controversial matter. That 'rationality', then, is a bad candidate for the central concept on which to hang a reliable philosophy of childhood, does not imply that there are no significant differences at all between children and adults. There are differences, of course. They are related to children's special needs, their greater vulnerability and their dependency on others, and also to some positive capabilities they seem to have to a greater extent than most adults. Whoever philos-

ophizes with children learns to appreciate their imaginativeness, their freshness, their capacity for compassion, and also some of their intellectual abilities, like their willingness to examine critically their own ideas and their curiosity. Children also have some negative traits (I will not list them here). Criticizing the argument from incompetence must not be taken to imply that there really is no difference between children and adults, that both are just as free as is necessary to equalize them, and that the same standards of responsibility should apply to both. Rather, children should be offered the opportunities to develop their own special needs and abilities, to learn also the capabilities that are characteristic of adults (whatever these may be), to develop their cognitive and practical capabilities, and generally to be liberated from any constraints that impede growth. Adults, on the other hand, will also sometimes have to be forced to take care of their own good in a more rational way by supplying the conditions under which such rationality can indeed be achieved.

Some differences between children and adults are morally significant. Children have less power, are more vulnerable, are emotionally and economically dependent, and so on. Depending further on age and situation they may need support as far as their intellectual and practical capabilities are concerned (just like adults, I hasten to add). But the idea that what makes the difference is competence versus incompetence is for the greatest part and perhaps even simply a myth. It is a bad philosophy of childhood.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See P.S. Appelbaum, T. Grisso, "Assessing patients capacities to consent to treatment", *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 319 (1988), pp. 1635-38.

<sup>2</sup> A.E. Buchanan, D.W. Brock, *Deciding for others: the ethics of surrogate decision making*. Cambridge, University Press, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Appelbaum, Grisso, op. cit.

<sup>4</sup> Buchanan, Brock, op. cit., pp. 23-25.

<sup>5</sup> R. Pepper-Smith, W.R.C. Harvey, M. Silberfeld, "Competency and practical judgment", *Theoretical Medicine*, 17 (1996), pp. 135-150.

<sup>6</sup> V. Worsfold, "A Philosophical Justification for Children's Rights", *Harvard Educational Review*, 44, 1974, 1, pp. 142-157, p. 142.

<sup>7</sup> cfr. Beauchamp's and Childress' definition of competence: "A person is competent if and only if that person can make decisions based on rational reasons". T. Beauchamp, J. Childress, *Principles of bio-medical ethics*. Oxford, University Press, 1983, p. 72. There is some debate, however, about the requirement of 'rationality' for competence. Checkland and Silberfeld, for instance, think that competent acts may be irrational, i.e. go against the grain of a person's considered preferences and values and still be competent. Cfr. D. Checkland, M. Silberfeld, "Mental competence and the question of beneficent intervention", *Theoretical Medicine*, 17 (1996), pp. 121-134. Consider the case of rational people deciding consciously to act foolish. These

authors, however, do not distinguish between irrationality of outcome and irrationality of process. The decision of a person to act in a certain way may be unexpected and deviating and in this sense 'irrational', although the reasoning process leading to it may be sound. Furthermore, persons may be 'rational' and consequently 'competent', but their acts in specific situations may not be rational yet competent, because done by a 'rational' person. Finally, the decision to act foolish may itself be viewed as a second order decision (a decision to take a certain kind of decision) that is itself both rational and competent, making the first order decision both irrational and competent. Perhaps the latter distinction catches better what Checkland and Silberfeld are saying.

<sup>8</sup> See for instance H. A. Llewellyn-Thomas, E.C. Thiel, F.W.C. Sem, D.E. Harrison Woermke, "Presenting clinical trial information: a comparison of methods", *Patient Education and Counseling*, 25 (1995), pp. 97-107 and, for the elderly, R.A.C. Opdycke, F.J. Ascione, L.A. Shimp, R.I. Rosen, "A systematic approach to educating elderly patients about their medications", *Patient Education and Counseling*, 19 (1992), 43-60.

<sup>9</sup> T.L. Beauchamp, "Informed Consent", in : R.M. Veatch (ed.), *Medical Ethics*. Boston, Jones and Bartlett, 1989, p173-200, p. 194.

<sup>10</sup> The phrase between quotes comes from G. Matthews, *The Philosophy of Childhood*. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard Uni Press, 1994, 8.

<sup>11</sup> R. H. Ennis, "A Taxonomy of Critical Thinking Dispositions and Abilities", in: J.B. Baron, R.J. Sternberg, *Teaching Thinking Skills: Theory and Practice*. New York, Freeman, 1987, 9-26.

<sup>12</sup> R. Hamill, T. Wilson, R. Nisbett, "Insensitivity to sample bias: Generalizing from atypical cases", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1980, 39, pp. 578-589. See also S. Shavitt, T.C. Brock, *Persuasion: Psychological Insights and Perspectives*. Allyn & Bacon, 1994.

<sup>13</sup> E. Walster, "Assignment of responsibility for an accident", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1966, 3, pp. 73-79.

<sup>14</sup> M. J. Lerner, *The Belief in a Just World. A Fundamental Delusion*. New York, Plenum Press, 1980.

<sup>15</sup> R. Nisbett, E. Bordiga, R. Crandall, H. Reed, "Popular induction: information is not necessarily informative", in: J.S. Carroll, J.W. Payne (eds.), *Cognition and social behavior*. Hillsdale, Erlbaum, 1976.

<sup>16</sup> See for instance R. Petty, J. Cacioppo, R. Goldman, "Personal involvement as a determinant of argumentation-based persuasion", *JPSP*, 41, 1981, pp. 847-55; an explanation for the problems caused by the co-existence in any single person of different social and personal orientations is given in E. Turiel, M. Killen, Ch. Helwig, "Morality: Its Structure, Functions, and Vagaries", in: J. Kagan, Sh. Lamb (eds.), *The Emergence of Morality in Young Children*. Chicago, University Press, 1987, pp. 245-306.

<sup>17</sup> W. Mischel, H. Mischel, 'A Cognitive Social-Learning Approach to Morality and Self-Regulation', in Th. Lickona, *Moral Development and Behavior. Theory, Research and Social Issues*. New York, Holt,

Rinehart and Winston, 1976, pp. 84-107, p.101.

<sup>18</sup> A. Blasi, 'Bridging Moral Cognition and Moral Action : A Critical Review of the Literature', in : *Psychological Bulletin*, 88 (1980, 1), pp. 1-45, p. 37; S.J. Thoma, J. Rest, 'Moral Judgment, Behavior, Decision Making and Attitudes', in : J. Rest, *Moral Development. Advances in Research and Theory*. New York, Praeger, 1986, pp. 133-175.

<sup>19</sup> E. Staub, 'Psychological & Cultural Origins of Extreme Destructiveness and Extreme Altruism', in : W. Kurtines, J. Gewirtz, *Handbook of Moral Behavior and Development. Vol. 1 : Theory*. Hillsdale, Lawrence Erlbaum, 1991, pp. 425-446; see also, for a particularly striking illustration of this point, Chr. Browning, *Ordinary Men. Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. Harper & Collins, 1992.

<sup>20</sup> S.J. Thoma, *On Improving the Relationship between Moral Judgment and External Criteria : the Utilizer and Nonutilizer Dimension*. Unpub. Ph.D.-diss., University of Minnesota, 1985, p. 123.

<sup>21</sup> S.J. Thoma, J. Rest, "Moral Judgment, Behavior, Decision Making, and Attitudes", in: J. Rest (ed.), *Moral Development. Advances in Research and Theory*. New York, Praeger, 1986, pp. 133-175, p. 171.

<sup>22</sup> The main reference here is J. Elster, *Sour grapes. Studies in the subversion of rationality*. Cambridge, University Press, 1983; further D. Kahneman, P. Slovic, A. Tversky, *Judgment under uncertainty: heuristics and biases*. Cambridge, University Press, 1982. An excellent introduction to rational choice theory is B. Barry, R. Hardin (eds.), *Rational Man and Irrational Society. An introduction and source book*. Beverly Hills, Sage, 1982. Several articles relevant to the topic of competence, rights, and personhood in: J. Nida-Rümelin (Hrsg.), *Praktische Rationalität. Grundlagenprobleme und ethische Anwendungen des rational choice paradigmas*. Berlin, De Gruyter, 1994.

<sup>23</sup> See Beauchamp, Childress, op. cit., p. 77.

<sup>24</sup> Although the rational choice and economics of law approaches have also unexpectedly shown rationality where irrationality was commonly assumed.

<sup>25</sup> See H.-L. Freese, *Kinder sind Philosophen*. Berlin, Beltz-Quadriga, 1992, chapter III for a short review of the sometimes naive philosophy of childhood of great philosophers.

<sup>26</sup> This is the position of Piaget himself, e.g. in: *Les formes élémentaires de la dialectique*. Paris, Gallimard, 1980.

<sup>27</sup> This is the position taken by A. Karmiloff-Smith, *Beyond Modularity. A Developmental Perspective on Cognitive Science*. Cambridge, Mass., MIT-Press, 1992.

<sup>28</sup> The seminal work on social perspective taking is R.L. Selman, *The Growth of Interpersonal Understanding. Developmental and Clinical Analyses*. New York, 1980.

<sup>29</sup> J. Piaget, *The Child's Conception of the World*. London, Routledge

and Kegan Paul, 1929, p. 37.

- <sup>30</sup> H.M. Wellman, *The Child's Theory of Mind*. Cambridge, Mass., MIT-Press, 1990, p. 4.
- <sup>31</sup> J.C. Thomas, 'The Development of Reasoning in Children through Community of Inquiry', in: A.M. Sharp, R.F. Reed, *Studies in Philosophy for Children. Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery*. Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1992, pp. 96-104.
- <sup>32</sup> See M. Lipman, A.M. Sharp, F.S. Oscanyan, *Philosophy in the Classroom* (2d ed. Philadelphia, Temple Uni Press, 1980, p. 131.
- <sup>33</sup> See J. Piaget, *Essai de logique opératoire*. Paris, Dunod, 1972, p. 9.
- <sup>34</sup> G. Matthews, *Philosophy and the Young Child*. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1980, chapter 4 (Piaget).
- <sup>35</sup> V.C. Shipman, *New Jersey Test of Reasoning Skills. Background Information*. Unpublished Report from the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children, Montclair, N.J., 1983.
- <sup>36</sup> M. Donaldson, *Children's Minds*. New York, Norton, 1979.
- <sup>37</sup> W. Damon, *The Moral Child. Nurturing Children's Natural Moral Growth*. New York, Free Press, 1988.
- <sup>38</sup> See for instance J. Perner, *Understanding the Representational Mind*. Cambridge, Mass., MIT-Press, 1991, ch5 (The Child as a Psychologist) in Karmiloff-Smith, op. cit.; H. Wellman, op. cit.
- <sup>39</sup> M. Lipman, A.M. Sharp, *Wondering at the World. Instructional Manual to Accompany Kio and Gus*. Montclair, N.J., IAPC, 1986.
- <sup>40</sup> P. Mitchell, Ch. Lewis, "Critical Issues in Children's Early Understanding of Mind", in: Ch. Lewis, P. Mitchell, *Children's Early Understanding of Mind: Origins and Development*. Hillsdale, Lawrence Erlbaum, 1994, pp. 1-16, p. 3.
- <sup>41</sup> L.A. Weithorn, S.B. Campbell, "The competency of children to make informed treatment decisions", *Child Development*, 53 (1982), pp. 1589-98; G.B. Melton, G.P. Koocher, M.J. Saks (ed.), *Children's Competence to Consent*. New York, Plenum Press, 1983; S. Elliston, "If You Know What's Good for You: Refusal of Consent to Medical Treatment by Children", in: S. A.M. McLean (ed.), *Contemporary Issues in Law, Medicine and Ethics*. Aldershot, Dartmouth, 1996, pp. 29-56.
- <sup>42</sup> A. Buchanan, D.W. Brock, *Deciding for others. The ethics of surrogate decision making*. Cambridge, University Press, 1989, 222
- <sup>43</sup> J. Piaget, *Le jugement moral chez l'enfant*. Paris, PUF, 1932, p. 226.
- <sup>44</sup> G. Matthews, *Dialogues with Children*. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard Uni Press, 1984, pp. 92-95; M. Pritchard, Moral education: from Aristotle to Harry Stottlemeier", in: A. Sharp, R. Reed, op. cit., 15-31.
- <sup>45</sup> E. Turiel, *The development of social knowledge. Morality and*

*convention*. Cambridge, University Press, 1986; W. Damon, *The social world of the child*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 1979.

<sup>46</sup> R. Ekman Ladd, "Paternalism and the Rationality of the Child", in: M. Lipman, *Thinking Children and Education*. Dubuque, Iowa, Kendall-Hunt, 1993, pp. 59-64.

<sup>47</sup> For a list, see D. Crocker, "Functioning and Capability: The Foundations of Sen's and Nussbaum's Development Ethic", in: M. Nussbaum, J. Glover (eds), *Women, culture, and development. A Study of human capabilities*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1995, 153-198; 174-76.

<sup>48</sup> A. Sen, *Inequality reexamined*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992, p. 34.

<sup>49</sup> C.M. Culver, B. Gert, "The inadequacy of incompetence", *Milbank Quarterly*, 64 (1990, 4).

## The Power of Narrative in a Community of Philosophical Inquiry

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Narrative as a salient factor in a community of philosophical inquiry must not be underestimated. This paper examines three applications of narrative which affect the community of inquiry and its members: the narrative text, self narrative, and the community narrative. Each form of narrative provides the community with different kinds of opportunities for positive growth, especially with regard to becoming persons. Narrative is one key element fostering moral awareness, and thus promotes this facet of reflection necessary for good judgment. Narrative, too, is something which the members of the community can relate to in several ways: 1. as individuals with feelings, thoughts, conflicts, and so on that others share, 2. as persons on their own paths creating their own stories, and 3. as a community which has its own story to tell.

### The text

The idea of modeling is not new to education. The teacher is taught that her actions, words, and creations (her judgments), constitute a model for her students. But models can take other forms and a crucial form in a community of inquiry is that of the text. The text itself can take several forms and for our purposes in philosophical dialogue, it should be either a text specifically created with philosophical inquiry in mind, or literature that is of high quality and substance and which offers a model of the well-lived life. If one is attentive to the criteria, one discovers literature at many levels which will serve the needs of the community of philosophical inquiry. Matthew Lipman argues that the texts used must embody (and therefore model) both rationality and creativity.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, it may be the case that the texts must be morally exemplary as well. Through experimentation in my own classroom I have discovered the value of the text as the thing-held-in-common by the members of the classroom community. Following is an example of the kind of experimentation which led me to this conclusion.

One day while struggling to teach history to a rambunctious group of thirteen year olds, ninety percent of whom were boys, I looked at their eager but inattentive faces and sighed, knowing that they were certainly not interested in history as I was presenting it. In an attempt to make this class something that mattered to them, I decided to try to find out what they were interested in. I told them that they could submit questions in a box on my desk throughout the week and on Friday we would discuss the questions. The positive outcome was that Fridays were eagerly awaited and our discussions were lively. Negatively, since the questions were submitted clandestinely, they had to be screened for the sometimes ridiculous or lewd or otherwise inappropriate queries. Many questions dealt with sexuality, understandable for this age group. Cautiously, I introduced their questions, not knowing what kind of discussion would ensue. To my surprise the students took the subject matter seriously, glad to be taking some responsibility for the learning in the class. The primary focus of our discussions of sexuality had to do with the moral issues which surround these matters. They wanted to explore and inquire into what

was right. They were clearly searching for guidelines which would aid them in their deliberations. They wanted to know how to think about these matters rather than what to think. These students taught me a fundamental precept: young people are interested in learning, but the traditional teaching methods frequently bury the interest under tons of information, facts, and busy work; and teachers fail to comprehend what matters to the students in meaningful, apprehendable terms. In other words, a teacher might say that she is fully aware that her students are interested in sexuality, or friendship, or honesty but fails to see that within that interest there is a dimension of thinking that is both important and relevant to education itself. Inherent in the students' interests is the motivation for the students to participate in their own meaning-making; and the only way to find out what they are interested in is to involve them in the process of their own education. This example represents an attempt to do this.

While this activity did demonstrate the potential of student directed activity, there were salient elements missing, not the least of which was the candid asking of questions. It was clearly not a community of inquiry in this respect. Also, we had no common object with which to pull our attention together.<sup>2</sup> This is one of the main purposes of the philosophical texts or literature used in a community of philosophical inquiry. Iris Murdoch asserts that it is this common object which is crucial to understanding each other and for defining concepts in a way which all can comprehend. It also binds the community in the act of making the meaning. Murdoch states, "Uses of words by persons grouped round a common object is a central and vital human activity . . . Progress in understanding of a scheme of concepts often takes place as we listen to normative-descriptive talk in the presence of a common object."<sup>3</sup> She stresses the importance of this understanding that comes with the common object and that lacking this common object, "communication may break down and the same words may occasion different results in different hearers . . . Human beings are obscure to each other in certain respects which are particularly relevant to morality, unless they are mutual objects of attention or have common objects of attention."<sup>4</sup> It is the text in a community of inquiry which provides the common object and the members of the community which are mutual objects of attention.

What else does the text offer? Among many others, Robert Coles and Martha Nussbaum have studied the use of literature as a means for gaining important kinds of understanding about our lives. Literature provides a manner of viewing characters in life situations, hearing their conflicts, feeling their pain, traveling with them in their journey to resolve their problems. Coles tells of a student who was especially moved by a novel that they had been studying and says that "he was reminding me really, of the wonderful mimetic power a story or a novel can have--its capacity to work its way well into one's thinking life, yes, but also one's reveries or idle thoughts, even one's moods and dreams." He further states, "So it goes, this immediacy that a story can possess as it connects so persuasively with human experience."<sup>5</sup> This connection with human experience is what gives the relevance to the students as they read and question the content of the text. It has direct meaning for their own lives as it connects with their own experience.

The struggle to live life well, as is depicted in the well-written novel, is bound to be a result of the moral imagination of the novelist. Those who read and are given an opportunity, not only to reflect alone, but

also to reflect and question and engage in dialogue in community, are given a gift which will aid them in their own personal deliberations. Through critical, creative, and compassionate dialogue centered around the shared reading, the common object, the student then realizes the abilities of examination for her own life story. She holds the experience of the text in common with her fellow members of the community. In dialogue, the members are able to critically discuss this experience that they all share and thus strive together for understanding. They make sense of the text as they concurrently struggle to make sense of their own lives. The people in the novel provide models of narrative, models of the well-lived life, to which the students can relate. When one of his students reports on the affect that a novel had had on his life, Robert Coles asserts "All in all, not a bad start for someone trying to find a good way to live this life: a person's moral conduct responding to the moral imagination of writers."<sup>6</sup> When the members of the community of inquiry begin to internalize some of these habits of deliberation, they begin to gain control over the path to personhood. Not only are they learning to reflect critically, but they are given the model of creative, imaginative deliberation which is crucial for good judgment.

Martha Nussbaum emphasizes the salience of the moral imagination as an additional ingredient which is not just helpful but is necessary for augmenting the critical deliberation for good judgment. Principles alone cannot give us what we need for comprehensive (wise) decision-making. "A person armed only with the standing terms--armed only with general principles and rules--would, even if she managed to apply them to the concrete case, be insufficiently equipped by them to act rightly in it. It's not just that the standing terms need to be rendered more precise in their application to a concrete context. It's that, all by themselves, they might get it all wrong, they don't suffice to make the difference between right and wrong . . . Obtuseness is a moral failing; its opposite can be cultivated."<sup>7</sup> As she discusses Henry James' novel, *The Golden Bowl*, she brings to the forefront the manner in which moral decisions should come about. For moral judgment to be a solution "it has to be offered in the right way at the right time in the right tone, in such a way that she can take it..."<sup>8</sup> The novel gives us a particular context with particular characters in particular situations. We are compelled to pay attention to this particularity when discussing the questions raised by the text. Thus, it models the complexity of life. The members of the community, in discussing these questions, take account of these details that make up the context. They have engaged in a vicarious experience with these complexities which are considered in moral deliberation. The example is an important model.

Robert Coles, in discussing Anton Chekov, tells us that Chekov speaks of the need of the author to prick the conscious of the reader, to give what he termed, 'hammer knocks.'<sup>9</sup> These so called 'hammer knocks' spur the reader to question, to doubt. It is precisely these doubts that emerge as questions in the community for subsequent dialogue. In this way, the dialogue also belongs to the students. It is their interest which is at the foundation of the inquiry; it is an interest stemming from a shared narrative text which was judiciously chosen for its value, its worthiness as a model for these particular students in this particular context. Although he was not engaging in the intentional dialogue of a community of inquiry, Coles relates a what happened in his classroom after the reading of a Tillie Olsen story chosen for its relevance to the current issues of racism in a Southern town:

I decided to be less the teacher than usual. I asked the kids to say what they thought about the story, and one after the other, they did. Then I was ready to move on--but they wouldn't let me. They kept talking. I wasn't even refereeing. They stopped raising their hands. They talked to each other. At one point I was going to say something, but I decided no: keep quiet, I told myself. Be glad they're talking to each other, and to Tillie Olsen. That's what it was--a conversation between twenty-six Atlanta kids, all white, except for three blacks, and Tillie Olsen, wherever in the world she is!<sup>10</sup>

From this example, we can also look at the words "less the teacher than usual." This is an insightful move on Coles' part in that by 'moving out of the way,' he facilitated the inquiry by allowing the dialogue to go where it led. He trusted the dialogue to the students with the result that they were able to have a 'conversation,' as he calls it, which was no doubt critical and creative; and the experience quite likely had a positive affect on the way in which the students related to each other subsequently.

The students exposed to good literature or narrative texts have an opportunity to assimilate the stories into their own lives. The 'lessons' presented are open-ended rather than factual. The students are not only obligated, but also inspired to think about what was represented. The narrative text compels them to discuss the doubts which were raised as opposed to the expository text (the textbook) which tells them to accept the facts presented therein, and even implies how they should think about that knowledge. With the narrative text and literature as the stimulus, students are impelled to think for themselves, to examine and evaluate and to create their own meaning, and to use the narratives as models for the narratives of their own lives. This has repercussions for the child-as-person-in-the-making, especially for cultivation of the perception necessary for grasping a situation in its entirety, in all its complexity, in order that she may act in the most morally responsible manner. Moral response is what defines a person's character. In conversing with Robert Coles one afternoon, William Carlos Williams insisted that while students soon to become doctors, lawyers, architects, businessmen, teachers, or engineers are understandably preoccupied with their performing selves, with matters of technique, of knowledge, "it is your response to the ethical questions that will make you what you are." And further Williams states that, "the ultimate test of a person's worth as a doctor or teacher or lawyer has to do not only with what he or she knows, but with how he or she behaves with another person, the patient or student or client."<sup>11</sup> The becoming self is incontrovertibly assisted by the narrative text model. Referring to Williams again, he tells us, "Look, these novels or short stories aren't meant to save the world. But a story can engage a reader--not every reader, and some readers only somewhat, but plenty of readers a lot, a whole lot. I mean, art reaches the mind and the heart, and in a way that it doesn't easily get shaken off."<sup>12</sup> Why? Because of its direct applicability and relationship to the real lives of real people.

Henry James agreed and thus felt that the literary artist had a moral responsibility to create a novel which was nothing less than a work of art with the appropriate attention to the details required. His moral ideal was "a respect for the irreducibly particular character of a concrete moral context and the agents who are its components; a

determination to scrutinize all aspects of this particular with intensely focused perception; a determination to care for it as a whole."<sup>13</sup> Martha Nussbaum sees the novel as a means of presenting these contexts and images qualitatively so that the moral imagination is modeled as "subtle and high, rather than simple and coarse; precise rather than gross; richly colored rather than monochromatic; exuberant, rather than reluctant, generous rather than stingy, stuffed with loving emotion rather than mixed in depression. To this moral assessment the full specificity of the image is relevant."<sup>14</sup> As literature enriches, expands, and informs the morality of a culture, it is a "moral achievement on behalf of our community."<sup>15</sup> Iris Murdoch concurs and states that "the most essential and fundamental aspect of culture is the study of literature, since this is an education in how to picture and understand human situations."<sup>16</sup> The depth of awareness and cultivation of perception provided by the narrative text and literature should not be ignored in education. Because this awareness and profound understanding is necessary for good judgment and wisdom, the narrative text (and not the textbook) should serve as the common object from which students inquire together in community.

### Self narrative

Not only is narrative valuable as a tool or impetus for inquiry, the creating of our own narratives serves as a tool for understanding ourselves and how we came to be the way we are. It is a tool for examining our lives and thus for realizing who we are and who we are becoming and further, why this is so. As a way of expressing the process of becoming, it also provides a means of processing the evolution of our judgments on the path we have trod. By doing so we begin to understand ourselves, not as static beings but as persons in process, persons who are gaining control over our own destiny, over the kinds of persons we wish to become-- persons who cannot be exploited by media, culture, or determined by impulses. It is the story of how I as the evolving person, practice self discipline, critical reflection, and become full in realizing my potential.

Using the narrative text as a model, we become aware of our own stories as an on-going narrative. "Each of us is living out a developing story over which we have a measure of control, however small, in forming our character."<sup>17</sup> Gaining an awareness of this story is the first step to realizing some control over the direction it takes. Certainly, throughout our lives, either knowingly or by default, we are selves who take on many different roles. Like actors in a play, our actions or ways of being to a great extent are defined by the parameters of these roles, (the parameters, themselves, being defined by the cultural, social, political, religious, familial and other contexts of the role). Our "character" is thus a synthesis of many characters which form our selves.

How we appropriate our roles can be up to us. I say can be because certain criteria must be met before it is in our power to take control. First, we must be aware of the roles we take on. If we fail to recognize our role as a daughter, for example, we cannot expect to take responsibility for controlling or changing it or making of it what we wish. The narrative text that we use in the community of inquiry gives us a model for thinking about our own narratives and to discover ourselves in the process. Narrative gives understanding to our lives. Second, once we take the first step in recognizing the roles we have taken on through the telling of our stories, we must begin to unravel

them in order to understand and gain knowledge of their contexts. This examination requires critical reflection as well as sensitivity to the nuances of the contexts of each given role. Third, with this understanding comes the power to explore the possibilities of changing the roles or even creating new ones.

We practice narrative from a very young age. Even though we are seldom aware of it we ordinary humans understand, deliberate, and evaluate within narrative contexts.<sup>18</sup> We must tell our stories when our parents ask us where we have been or how did this happen. Even the very young are capable of creating stories which are decidedly theirs. They interpret their experiences and filter them through their own contexts creating a narrative with which to explain circumstances. This explanation is construed so as to allow for the continuance of the narrative. By nature we take into account "the ways in which we can continue our narrative construction of our situation."<sup>19</sup> In other words, there is a narrative context that surrounds our actions, creations, and even what we say. It is in our best interest to be aware of this and consider these contexts as we reflect on how we should act in any given situation. Construction of our own narratives helps us to do this by giving us a context not only for synthesizing our own experience but for experimenting with various scenarios in order to "see" how they would work. In story form, our imaginative creations allow us to examine the various possible narratives for problems, to contextualize the solutions, and decide upon the viability of each. The creative imagination works with the narrative form to allow this kind of exploration necessary for reflective deliberation. Critical reflection involves imagining possibilities. Narrative provides an invaluable testing ground for our deliberative options.

As we journey through life, (and a journey is much like a story) we strive for some kind of unity or purpose to give meaning to our lives. As a story, our own personal narrative provides an environment and means for this synthesis. Additionally, implicit in this existence are historical and temporal contexts which must be accounted for. Mark Johnson explains, "Narrative supplies and reveals the themes by which we seek to unify the temporal, historical dimension of our existence, and without which our lives would be a meaningless jumble of disconnected events . . . Narrative can illuminate purposes, plans, and goals, which are the forms by which our lives have some direction, motivation, and significance for us. . . . Only narrative encompasses both the temporality and the purposive organization at the general level at which we pursue overarching unity and meaning for our lives."<sup>20</sup> This "purposive organization" is essential to self understanding. With self understanding comes the possibility of extending this sympathetically to others in their particular narrative contexts. With the critical tools for examining our lives as we tell our stories, the creativity to imagine the possibilities through narrative, along with the sympathy necessary for deliberation, narrative benefits our quest for good judgment. Ultimately, that which issues from this powerful trinity of thinking capacities is the very thing we are seeking to educate for and that is wisdom. It is this wise thinking which brings the self to a point at which transformation is possible; for it is the fully informed self which has the necessary knowledge, creative spirit, and compassionate stance for perceiving not only what is and what can be but also, how the changes can come about.

### Community narrative

The narrative that the community creates provides a rich model for achieving wisdom. The community of inquiry practices all those skills and abilities which contribute to good thinking. It thinks about thinking. As an entity, it nurtures the habits and dispositions for caring about the other, for sympathetic understanding which is intelligently utilized in deliberation. Moral imagination is fostered as the students are exposed to possibilities and potentials of all the other members of the community. It is a model of equity in that all are engaging in the dialogue as respected members with a common purpose: to inquire together and follow the dialogue where it leads. With a common interest in the making of meaning, the mature community transcends the pettiness and cruelty of prejudice in order to achieve the coherence and unity required for the task.

The narrative of the community of inquiry is a story of how it is to respect and trust; it is the story of how it feels to be considerate and kind to the others in the community. As participants in this narrative, the students enjoy the feeling of intellectual safety as they critically examine ideas. They experience the striving toward an ideal community with others who share this ideal. As a reference, the community narrative is a synthesis of our journey: where we began, what we did, and how we did it, and where we ended up. This story then can be alluded to time and again for assistance and guidance within our personal journeys. Our community narrative becomes an example as we expand and reenact our experience in other communities and out into society. It is the story of how we practiced together becoming better persons.

Community narrative is a tool for fostering wisdom. The story brings to awareness the necessary components of good judgment and wise decision-making. The processes of deliberation are contained in the narrative and therefore continue to be accessible to the members of the community. The meaningful pursuit of knowledge through inquiry required of the students certain skills, abilities, dispositions, and perceptions. These, too, are embraced by the story. Telling the story requires each member to recall within her own personal context, the details of the journey. Story telling is and has been for eons a way of remembering. This remembering of the community narrative is a recollection of the ingredients for wisdom. In this way it serves to foster and maintain the requisites for good judgment.

### NOTES

- 1 Matthew Lipman, (1991), *Thinking in Education*, p. 216.
- 2 It may be argued that "sexuality" is, in fact, something we all hold in common. However, the fact that the questions were coming from individuals, privately submitted for the teacher to present, eliminates the idea of a common object which is of and for the community. Of course, when prompted by the text shared by the community and thus, prompted by a common object, questions of morality do arise and they are of and for the community.
- 3 Iris Mürdoch, (1970), *The Sovereignty of Good*, p. 32.
- 4 Ibid, p.33.
- 5 Robert Coles, (1989), *The Call of Stories*, p. 204.
- 6 Ibid, p. 205.

- 7 Martha Nussbaum, (1985), "Finely Aware and Richly Responsible: Moral Attention and the Moral Task of Literature," in *The Journal of Philosophy* p. 525.
- 8 Ibid, p. 519.
- 9 Robert Coles, op.cit., p. 156.
- 10 Ibid, p. 56. The voice is that of a school teacher in Georgia at the time of desegregation of the schools in the U.S. His students had read Tillie Olsen's "O Yes" the night before and were discussing what they thought of the story.
- 11 Ibid, p. 118.
- 12 Ibid, p. 120.
- 13 Nussbaum, op.cit., p. 526.
- 14 Ibid, p. 521.
- 15 Ibid, p. 529.
- 16 Iris Murdoch, op.cit., p. 34.
- 17 Mark Johnson, (1993), *Moral Imagination*, p. 151. 18 Ibid, p. 160.
- 19 Ibid, p. 116.
- 20 Ibid, p.170-171

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## **An Interactionist-Constructivist Mode of Accompaniment for the Practical Education of Preservice Teachers in Physical Education: Some Results.**

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### **Abstract**

According to the supporters of the interactionist-constructivist epistemology, the education of preservice teachers should be oriented toward the development of autonomous, critical and responsible thinkers. Indeed, teaching should not be limited to the efficient management of the classroom, but rather be considered as a social responsibility. Inspired by Lipman and Sharp's program, we have experimented with a mode of accompaniment of the trainees which abides by the criteria of an interactionist-constructivist paradigm. In this paper, we will present the principles inherent to this paradigm, along with the exploratory research we have conducted in this perspective during the academic year 1995-1996 and, finally, some the results which have been observed.

### **Introduction**

The dominant model for teacher training is the following: the university supplies the theories, methods and skills; schools, on the other hand, supply the classrooms, programs and pupils; the student teacher puts in the individual effort. This model of training, however, does not take into account the role of the social and political context of teacher training while focusing on individual effort. The social problem that constitutes the fact of becoming a teacher is therefore confined to individual combat (Britzman 1986, p.442 quoted by Bauersfeld, 1994.)

Practical education should not be used exclusively to introduce teaching techniques nor to develop professional skills, as is the case in traditional settings (Gore, 1990). Its principal role should instead be to develop a framework of personal, social and political reflections related to education and to the specific field towards which the teachers-to-be are steering themselves (Tinning, 1988, 1991). Indeed, teacher education programs cannot prepare teachers for every situation they may encounter. In this case it is preferable to help them become thoughtful decision makers (Hellison and Templin, 1991; McNamara, 1990; Zeichner, 1987). This conception of teacher education is rooted in sound tradition. Already in *How we think* (1933), John Dewey distinguished between two types of teacher action: the 'routine' and the 'reflective' action. Routine action is guided by impulse, tradition, and authority, whereas reflective action aims at 'active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends.' (p. 9)

In this paper, we argue with many scholars (McKay, Gore and Kirk, 1990; Tinning, 1991; Hellison and Templin, 1991): 1) that the development of reflective thinking is fundamental in the education of future teachers in physical education; 2) that reflective thinking presupposes higher-order thinking (Daniel and Bergman, in press) such as reasoning, conceptualization, the capacity to conduct research, and the ability to transfer from one discipline to another (Lipman, 1991).

Our research problem was to determine whether Lipman and Sharp's philosophical program which we have studied in various contexts (Daniel, 1992a, 1992b, 1995; Daniel et al., 1994, 1995) is applicable and appropriate to foster such thinking about preservice teachers in physical education. In the following pages, we will present the exploratory research that we conducted in 1995-1996. We will describe the theoretical framework that guided our processes, the objectives pursued, the method of experimentation, along with some results.

### **Theoretical framework**

#### **a) Constructivism**

Many philosophers have studied the ideas brought forward by Vico. But it was John Dewey and Jean Piaget who participated the most in the development of constructivism and its application to education and to development of the person.

To Dewey, education is interrelated with action. Its purpose is to improve the quality of individual and social experience. Knowledge emerges solely from situations in which the learners have to refer to their personal experiences and to create relations with their peers.

To Piaget, the foundations of learning are found in the reconstruction of knowledge by the learner. He asserts that comprehension of knowledge is built by the individual who learns through personal motivation and an active commitment. Thus, instead of believing that knowledge represents a reality that exists independently of individual experience, Piaget considers that knowledge is a tool that contributes to the adaptation of an individual to the world.<sup>1</sup>

In other words, language is not a tool to 'transport' information from one person to another, and students are not 'discoverers' but 'inventors'. When they are discoverers, they observe the world through "a key hole"; when they are inventors, they participate in an enterprise in which they continually have to invent the rules, the standards and the traditions (Larochelle and Bednarz, 1994, p. 7-10). In this sense, knowledge must result from personal experience and interpretation (Larochelle and Desautels, 1992, p.18-33).

In brief, constructivism is an epistemology which does not find its foundation in individual performance nor in the transmission of information, but rather in the elaboration of meanings by the learning person.<sup>2</sup> For constructivism, 1) knowledge does not exist as a unique and objective truth awaiting to be discovered. It cannot be transmitted from one person to another. It is always constructed and contingent; 2) the role of cognition is essentially adaptive: it allows the organization of the world around oneself, instead of the discovery of reality (Bauersfeld, 1994; Larochelle and Bednarz, 1994; von Glasersfeld, 1994; Pepin, 1994).

#### **b) Interactionism-constructivism**

Based mainly on Vygotsky's works, some constructivists consider that an individual will have difficulty in reviewing her/his interpretations and perspectives unless she/he is confronted with the questions, doubts or criticisms of others. We call them socioconstructivists or interactionist-constructivists.<sup>3</sup> According to the latter, social interactions play a crucial role in the construction of knowledge. They maintain that the evolution of a person occurs, on one hand, through personal inquiries and cognitive conflicts, and that, on

the other hand, these kinds of conflicts are favored by social interactions.<sup>4</sup>

In short, in accordance with socioconstructivist epistemology, the developmental process occurs by means of inquiry and cognitive conflicts; personal evolution is favored by social interactions; and the main purpose of education consists in developing autonomous, critical and responsible subjects rather than standardized pupils. In a previous article (Daniel, 1996), we argued that Mathew Lipman and Ann Margaret Sharp's program corresponds to this paradigm.

#### c) Lipman and Sharp's program

Many studies have verified the impact of communities of philosophical inquiry on the cognitive development of learners (Lane and Lane, 1986; Nowell, 1995; Schleifer et al., 1987, 1990, 1995; Slade, 1992).

For over 12 years, Anita Caron and Michael Schleifer have conducted, in Quebec, research in which we also have participated, at CIRADE<sup>5</sup> of the Université du Québec † Montreal. Their work developed within the framework of a model of ongoing supervision (Caron, 1990; Daniel, 1992 c, 1994 b; Lebuis et al., 1993; Schleifer et al., 1990, 1995). Inspired by Lipman and Sharp's program, the means recommended by Caron and Schleifer was philosophical dialogue among peers on the pedagogical, epistemological and social dimensions of their teaching practices. Caron and Schleifer's research has revealed that a teacher's education based on philosophical reflection had favored: 1) the widening and deepening of teachers' knowledge; 2) the development of their thinking skills; 3) the personal and critical reappropriation of their teaching experience; 4) the development of self-esteem.

In their work, Caron and Schleifer have concentrated on experienced classroom teachers. To our knowledge, no application of the Lipmanian program has been applied to the practical education of preservice teachers. There is a significant difference between expert and novice teachers (Berliner, 1988; Brooks and Hawke, 1987; Griffey and Housner, 1991). The first ones consider the classroom context in a more global manner. They can establish connections between events. Their knowledge structures are more complex and more elaborate, in that they detect similarities and relations between facts or bits of information that are conceptually separated. These similarities and relations are integrated into the knowledge structure automatically and unconsciously (Sebren, 1995, p. 264). Also, expert teachers interpret and recognize classroom events with greater speed and accuracy. They actively plan and teach routines early in the school year (van der Mars, Darst, Vogler, Cusimano, 1995).

Moreover, there has been no application of Lipman and Sharp's program in the field of physical education. Yet, the relationship between philosophy and physical education is not new.<sup>6</sup> In 1984, Donna Miller had already written that:

Philosophy is not merely a field of study but, as an act of rational conjecture, it is everybody's business and, consequently, the physical educator's business. It is useful in sharpening the tools of critical thinking, stimulating self-examination, helping resolve professional issues, providing a means for better understanding of physical education and elevating the wholeness of physical

educator's common enterprise. Moreover, students armed with philosophical tools are eminently marketable. (p.26)

In this research,<sup>7</sup> we have explored the possibility of adapting Lipman and Sharp's program to preservice teachers in physical education in order to foster their higher-order thinking.

### **Methodology**

This qualitative research was exploratory. Thus, a trial of the intervention plan and some adjustments were planned. Some modifications actually took place during the trial. The purpose of the research was not to yield final results, but rather to explore possibilities to lead to more definite hypotheses that could be used in subsequent research.<sup>8</sup>

### **Purpose and objectives**

The research aimed at fostering future teachers' autonomous, critical and responsible thinking within their practical education in physical education. Three objectives come out of this purpose: 1) to develop a plan of intervention stemming from the interactionist-constructivist paradigm; 2) to try out this intervention plan with preservice teachers in physical education; 3) to analyze preservice teachers' thinking through their discourse.

### **Sample and context of the study**

The original sample consisted of five volunteer preservice teachers. Following the first meeting, one of them withdrew from the research project.<sup>9</sup> Thus, the experiment was carried out with four subjects, two men and two women. Three of them were working in a high school, and one in an elementary school. All four preservice teachers were in the last year of their Bachelor's degree; at UdeM, the training period is in the last semester. The bachelor's degree in physical education is similar to the one in education. It includes classes related to the humanities (philosophy, psychology, sociology, history) and to pedagogy and didactics. It adds introductory classes in science (anatomy, physiology, biomechanics, motivity, etc.). Also, all students have the opportunity to experiment in on-campus teaching or micro-teaching, where they teach approximately ten students under the supervision of a university professor. This teaching takes place in the university's gymnasiums.

The training period (in schools) represents, for all of them, their first real teaching experience. During this period, the students have to teach full time at school (five days a week, five hours a day). It is the first time they are responsible for whole groups of students and the first time they teach outside the university. Most of the time, they have the opportunity to choose the school where their training will take place. Beforehand, they meet and discuss with the expert teacher who will supervise them (local supervisor).

In accordance with UdeM requirements, the preservice teachers have to fill out a log book every day. Stover (1986) argued that writing 'encourages future teachers to synthesize the contents of their professional preparation programs' (p. 20), and 'provides a place in which students can test out ideas, can wrestle with solutions, and can feel safe about risking failure as they struggle to form structures and schemes for their future classroom performance.' (p. 21) Yet, the log book in use at UdeM is highly structured. Although fostering some

introspection (at the end of the training period, the preservice teachers are asked to analyze the strong and weak points of their teaching, to look for the causes and consequences of the strong and weak points, etc.), it is mainly asking for factual descriptions (of the school where the training period is taking place, of the groups of pupils the trainees teach, of the elements of their daily lesson plans, etc.).

According to Richert (1990), there are many means, other than writing in a log book, of fostering preservice teachers' reflection. Partner reflection is one of the means that is particularly helpful. In the scope of this research, we investigated the effects of peer discussion. Almost every week, there was a group meeting of the four preservice teachers, the researcher<sup>10</sup> and the assistant researcher. There were nine two-hours meetings, from mid-September 1995 to mid-December 1995. The group meetings were conducted by the researcher.<sup>11</sup> They were aimed at stimulating individual and group reflection in order to foster autonomous, critical and responsible thinking in the trainees.

Each of the nine meetings was recorded on videotape by the assistant researcher. Verbatim notes were written by this person for further analysis by the researcher. The data was analyzed weekly, after each meeting, with the help of an observation grid. The coding was verified by a trained observer.

#### **Intervention plan**

The initial intervention plan was inspired by the program introduced by Lipman and Sharp, but has been adapted to the context of practical education of the trainees in physical education. We did not want the starting point for the discussion to be one of the philosophical novels written by Lipman because: 1) the content is not adapted to the preservice teachers' age group; 2) it is too far from their interests and immediate needs (success in teaching physical education). With Dewey, we believe that motivation is a fundamental criterion that has to be respected in order to guide the students towards success in learning. In this perspective, our hypothesis was that the best starting point for the philosophical discussion among preservice teachers could be their own teaching experience. Thus, our initial intervention plan involved five steps:

- 1) Awareness. Each subject was asked to be aware of the problematic and ambiguous situations that arise during the teaching week and to note them in a journal or in their log book.
- 2) Sharing. At the weekly meetings, everyone was asked to share with the group the problematic situations noted in her/his log. This is the initial step in building reciprocal confidence and in creating what Lipman and Sharp call a community of inquiry.
- 3) Formulating a philosophical question. The group was invited to formulate a philosophical question directly related to the problems raised by the subjects in the previous step. From the philosophical dimension of the question, the third step attempted to establish the conditions of objectivization of the problematic and ambiguous situations encountered during the week.
- 4) Engaging in a philosophico-pedagogical dialogue among peers. In this step, trainees would attempt to rise above personal anecdotes in order to try to discuss philosophically the pedagogical problems experienced in the gymnasium (e.g., understand the nature of the problem, its causes, consequences, alternatives, and so on).

5) Readjusting the teaching. The last step was aimed at improving pedagogical action and presupposed the trainees' capacity to make the transfer from reflection to the reality of the gymnasium.

#### Data collection

We have developed an observation grid to verify the subjects' thinking skills when involved in the discussions. The validity of the observation grid relies on attempts made by the researcher to link each item to the objective. Also, the whole grid is representative with respect to what has to be evaluated.

The observation grid is based on the five steps of Dewey's Reflective experience described in *Democracy and Education* (1916/1983, chap. XI). Dewey's steps imply the entire scale of thinking skills, from the simplest (doubt, observation, definition) to the most complex (reasoning, research, application to practice), and including hypothesis, suggestion, argumentation, criticism.<sup>12</sup> Here are Dewey's five steps of reflective experience:

- 1) Doubt or perplexity. It supposes a cognitive conflict and corresponds to a fundamental questioning or to the acknowledgment of a difficulty. According to Dewey, it is uncertainty that leads to reflection.
- 2) Definition of a problem. It consists of researching the meaning of the problem. It supposes observation.
- 3) Conjectural anticipation. It supposes the interpretation of trials on given elements. It is the research of the solution hypotheses which remain a proposition that is accepted temporarily to stimulate the reflective process and start research.
- 4) Careful examination (inspection, exploration, analysis) of all the consideration available to clarify or resolve the problem. The verification of hypotheses through reasoning is the capacity to make deductions, inductions, critical argumentation; to discover subtleties and distinctions; to provide examples, counter-examples, ideas of solutions; to find relations, to justify one's opinions, etc.
- 5) Application of hypothesis of solutions to a concrete situation. It implies the capacity to carry out the transfer between theory and practice. According to Dewey, the conclusions of thinking, as long as they are not confirmed by events, are more or less temporary and hypothetical. We cannot state that they have a definite character as long as we do not know the outcome.

The observation grid that we have conceived puts more emphasis on some steps in such a way that it contains nine items that correspond to Dewey's five steps. We include here an example of each item to guide the reader:

- | ITEMS  | CORRESPONDENCE WITH DEWEY'S STEPS | Example   |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Questioning, doubt  | Step 1                            | I am not sure I am a good PE teacher. What does it mean to be a 'good' teacher?   |
| 2. Interpretation of a problem (explanation and description) | Step 2                            | I question the quality of my teaching, because this week I was faced with two problems: a) the students refused to participate in the development of new rules for yoga practice and b) they did not stop talking during the relaxation period. These are two behaviors they do not have with their classroom teacher. So, the problem is not theirs, but mine. |
| 3. Definition of a problem                                   | Step 2                            | By 'good' teacher, I mean a teacher whose pedagogical strategies are oriented towards reflection, awareness and self-improvement.   |

4. Development of hypotheses Step 3 To improve one's teaching, one should take time, every day, to reflect on her/his strategies, activities, routines, etc.
5. Analysis of the hypothesis Step 4 To reflect on one's teaching implies being self-critical, which means being open-minded, creative, sensitive to contexts and ready to change habits which is not easy to do.
6. Critical argumentation Step 4 Critical reflection also involves curiosity, honesty, courage and self-esteem. Without these predispositions, it could barely happen.
7. Development of consequences Step 4 To improve one's own teaching, one has to be critical towards her/his own teaching and to possess character dispositions. During the training period, we have the opportunity to reflect on our teaching in a critical manner, and to develop our character dispositions. Thus, during the training period, we should to a certain degree improve our teaching.
8. Creation of relationships Step 4 If I am being self-critical, honest, courageous and self-confident in practicing sports, I should be able to be so in my teaching.
9. Application to daily practice Step 5 Yesterday, I took one hour to reflect in a critical fashion on my teaching activities. Today, I intend to improve some of the weaknesses that were noted.

Let us note that in this study we were not concerned by the preservice teachers' concerns and thoughts. Contents of discussions were of marginal interest. It was instead the **form** of the dialogue and the thinking skills involved in the peer exchanges that was studied.

Also studied along with the cognitive dimension was the social dimension or, in other words, the mode of communication used by the subjects. Our experience in teacher training allowed us to distinguish three modes of communication: anecdotal, monological and dialogical. We define each one in the following manner: 1) the anecdotal communication is based on the elaboration of anecdotes or personal experiences, experienced by the subjects. 2) In the monological communication, the students pursue a monologue from a common topic. They don't listen much to each other. Each individual pursues her/his own idea without letting her/his peers influence her/his points of view. 3) The dialogical communication is a type of communication based on interrelations. It emphasizes the construction of ideas from peer points of view to find a solution to a common problem or reach a common goal. It is this last mode of communication that we aim to investigate in this research.

#### **Data accuracy**

Extracts from three videotapes were randomly selected to determine data accuracy. Data accuracy was checked by having a trained observer compare the data on the observation grid with the thinking skills on the videotape records. Instances where the two coders (researcher and trained observer) did not match were discussed and coded again by the two people until they reached final agreement.

#### **Results and Discussions**

##### **1. RESULTS OF THE FIRST SIX WEEKS**

At the first meeting, as anticipated in the intervention plan, the discussion was developed from a question asked by each of the subjects and reflecting the content of their log book. The questions asked by them were factual. The content of the discussion evolved around what

the subjects had "felt" while observing the teaching of their supervisor.<sup>13</sup>

For example, a subject mentions that she has experienced some frustrations during the week, because she did not approve of the attitude of her supervisor who seemed to her to be too rigid with the pupils. She describes how she approached the principal of the school in this regard.<sup>14</sup>

E1. I am definitely outraged by his way of working. The children cannot be "drilled". And even the principal... I went to talk to him. But the secretary did not want to let me in. I told her: "Listen, I will introduce myself and then I will have a discussion with him, I have certain things to tell him and my contract to be signed... If you want me to wait an hour and a half, I will wait an hour and a half." (...) Then I spoke with the principal, and he told me: " There is something you will have to understand. Here the physical education course is just a place like another course, it is not a place to unwind." The Principal is aware that my educational methods are different from those of Mister X.

Another trainee expresses annoyance or surprise at the number of groups of pupils she will eventually have to teach:

E2. And also something quite disturbing is the rotation of the classes. It is amazing the classes lasting half an hour or forty-five minutes; I am deafened at the end of the day.(...) The pupils line up in the gymnasium as soon as they are ready, we let them out and their teacher comes to get them. But already, the following group arrives in such a way that for the rotation of equipment and all, it is almost impossible. The new group enters in the gymnasium, the pupils go to sit in a circle...

And so everyone shares the experiences experienced during the first week. The compilation (using the observation grid) of the thinking developed during this meeting reveals that description has been the mental skill used most by the four subjects.

The viewing of the videotapes shows that the comments of all the subjects were addressed to the leader of the discussion group (the researcher). There were few interactions between the subjects. We could say that the type of discussion that took place was anecdotal.

At the second meeting, the following week, each subject was invited to share, always according to the initial plan of intervention, a problematic situation experienced during the week and to ask a question about it. Each subject formulated a question of a pedagogical nature and of common interest. The group was unanimous in working on the following question: "What contributes the most in teaching efficiency: the ability to motivate the pupils or a firm control of the class?"

The study of the videotape reveals the monological quality of the discussion. On the one hand, the points of view expressed by the subjects converged on a common topic (the question they had put on the week's agenda). On the other hand, the subjects were not really listening to each other and no discussion developed. Each one was explaining her/his point of view, interfering little or not at all with the perspective of the peers.

For example, a subject explains why she chooses not to be very strict with her pupils:

E1. Because when I am too authoritarian, (...) I don't have as much fun explaining what I have to explain, and therefore to teach. Then I have to find (...) a way to laugh, to feel good, to be happy, to teach them something, without having the pupils say: "She is cool, with her we (can do anything we want)".

A second subject goes on with the same idea:

E2. I also try to find (that equilibrium) because already during the warm-ups, while they are running around the gymnasium or outside, sometimes, they laugh or they talk, but they do their run just the same. But once, I overheard one of them being called "Juju". Then, I tried to call him "Juju" (...) It is difficult to know why we do that... I think we do it so that the pupils become attached to us (...) We want to express ourselves but at the same time we should not go too much beyond a certain limit in order to have the pupils accept our authority as teachers.

After everyone had explained herself/himself, E1 speaks again and continues with her initial idea. She explains why we should not give the pupils a reason to believe that they can do anything with a teacher in training:

E1. If you are too friendly with the pupils, (...) they take advantage of it. Before, I had many negative leaders in my groups. This type of pupil pretends to be friends with you in order to take advantage of you later.

The compilation of thinking skills, using the observation grid, reveals that explanation was the skill used most by the subjects during this discussion.

At the third meeting, the discussion centered on the topic of program planning of their teaching. Everyone was checking with the others about how much leeway they would have with their supervisor. Questioning was the mental skill that has appeared most often on the observation grid. The questions asked were factual. Here is an example. When E1 said that he had completed his programming until the end of the semester:

E2. Who gave it to you?

E1. No one, but I have remembered all of my LS programming. During the observation period, at the beginning of the training period, I saw what he was doing and I have remembered everything.

E2. But the programming of the activities that you have not yet started, is it he who will give it to you?

During that meeting, there were many interactions between the subjects. However, those interactions were not argumentative nor dialogical. It was more of an informal exchange than a structured dialogue. According to us, this type of exchange was finding its justification in the need of every subject to know about the situation of her/his peers in order to be able to compare and be secure with her or his own situation.

At the fourth meeting, the discussion of the trainees began with a question concerning the effective management of the class, which prompted them to talk about various teaching strategies. The thinking skill used most was, once again, description. But the descriptions were complex and came from the analysis:

E2. I feel free. Apart from my Friday group, which is really disruptive (...), we don't have much to do (discipline-wise). Therefore, I used the pedagogy of my LS because it works well! But the pedagogy he uses is different with every group. With the older

pupils, he mostly used the task strategy because they are autonomous. With the younger ones, guided discovery and also strategy-by-command were used. He mixes the two (strategies) but he more often uses guided discovery. In guided discovery, there is a lot of cognitive work involved. He works a lot on the cognitive aspect with the younger ones so they develop a habit of thinking (...), and learn to investigate by themselves. At the same time, he often gives them things to do, for example (...) for the race, the pupils have to make their own predictions. They have to compute their lap time to find out whether they are constant. (...)

The two subsequent meetings put simple thinking skills belonging to similar categories (description, explanation) to work. We will not provide other examples of these mental skills here.

## 2. DISCUSSION - part one

Through the first part of experimentation, we observed three main characteristics within the peers discussions.

- 1) The subject raised questions that were essentially factual.
- 2) Over the weeks, the community of inquiry started to form and the communication went from anecdotal to monological. In fact, the discussion developed increasingly from a common topic and the subjects listened more often to the comments of their peers. However, everyone carried on with her or his own idea without letting oneself be influenced by that of anyone else. There was no construction of ideas from points of view expressed by the peers, nor dialogue as such. The exchanges were informal.
- 3) The thinking skills used during the discussions were mostly description and explanation, which corresponds to the second step in the observation grid. Within the same category of thinking skills, differences of degrees were detected. Thus, for example, the descriptions developed from the fourth meeting presupposed more cognitive work (observation, analysis and knowledge assimilation) than those developed in the first meetings.

Although we did not do a quantitative study of the discussions, our observations seem to meet Zeichner and Liston's conclusions (1985). They investigated the student teachers' substance of discourse during supervisory conferences. Data analysis suggested that four types of practical discourse occurred during the conferences: factual, prudential, justificatory and critical, and that the factual type was predominant (63.2%) while the critical one was marginal (0.6%). The prudential (24.9%) and justificatory (11.3%) types also appeared, but to a lesser degree.

However, the works of Richert (1990), Rovegno (1992, 1995), Sebren (1992, 1995) and Tsangarodou and O'Sullivan (1994) clearly indicate that the teachers-to-be possess the cognitive skills needed to think in a structured manner; that it is possible to improve the quality of their reflections if the teachers-to-be invest themselves in this direction; that it is fundamental that they learn to value the role of reflection in education.

As recommended by Bullough and Gitlin (1991), we agree that preservice teachers need a locus to exchange in the anecdotal and monological types. These forms of communication are mainly necessary at the beginning of practical education, since at the moment, the trainees are in a situation where, for the first time in their lives, they

are not part of the group of those who are learning, but of those who are teaching. The awareness of their new role brings them to focus on the inherent difficulties of their teaching practice. The description of anecdotes and their personal experiences in the gymnasium then becomes essential to release some of the stress and the emotionalism that they are feeling at that moment.

However, we argue that the weekly meetings could have been more significant and useful if they had been extended with an objective and structured discussion to bring out the criteria, justifications, causes, the consequences, etc., of the pedagogical problems encountered, or to search for alternatives to these problems, to proposing hypotheses, analyze these hypothesis, argue, etc. (Dewey, 1897/1972; Lipman, 1988; Lipman et al., 1980).

In other words, we concluded that the monological and anecdotal exchanges that were taking place during the practical education were necessary but not sufficient to develop the trainees' autonomous, critical and responsible thinking. Indeed, higher-order thinking (conceptualization, reasoning, research, transfer) is rarely developed from particular concrete examples (Lipman, 1991).

As we are in an exploratory study, we are modifying our procedures and replacing the log book by another kind of text. Texts should serve as 'models' for critical reflection. More and more scholars (Lipman, 1984, 1985a, 1985b, 1991; Matthews, 1980; Pritchard, 1985; Reed, 1983, 1985, 1992; Splitter and Sharp, 1995) promote the use of philosophical texts, rather than the didactical one that is in use in schools and universities. Indeed, philosophical texts do not transmit a unilateral message, but reflect various perspectives; they question and create doubt. We can find a rational explanation in Dewey and in the interactionists-constructivists. Dewey contends that it is when doubt and ambiguity occur that questions are asked by the individual and the process of reflection starts (1916/1983, chap XI). As for the interactionists-constructivists, they maintain that exchanges that reflect different perspectives favor the cognitive imbalances in one's mind, leading to a deeper reflection about problematic situations (see Vygotsky, 1985).

Although we were aware of the position of Lipman, Sharp and the interactionists-constructivists on this subject before starting the experimentation, it did not appear essential to us to apply these principles. We intended, above all, to rely on the subjects' teaching experiences and interests, believing that intrinsic motivation for critical reflection would be felt spontaneously.

Our reluctance to impose philosophical texts on preservice teachers is also justified by many studies. As especially outlined by Bullough and Gitlin (1991), preservice or novice teachers have neither the time nor the interest in reflection. The training period is intense for them; they are almost in a state of survival. They are overworked by a new type of work they have to master, by many pupils whose names and psychological characteristics they do not know, by a new environment having an implicit culture that is sometimes ruled by an inaccessible and heavy bureaucratic organization, by a supervisor demanding a lot but not always available to discuss with the trainees, and by a supervisor who is sometimes herself/himself resistant to reflection and self-criticism (pp. 44-45).

In this respect, we have not submitted philosophical texts to the subjects as recommended by Lipman and Sharp. We have instead presented pedagogical texts related to physical education teaching to them. Nevertheless, as we really wanted to apply the pragmatist and constructivist principles, we looked for texts provocative enough to launch a cognitive disequilibrium with the subjects, and generate as a result, a discussion using higher-order thinking.

The starting point of the discussion was no longer the trainees' log book, but an exterior support. The initial plan of intervention was adjusted. For the last three meetings, it included these steps (instead of the original five steps):

- 1) reading of the text, by the trainees, taking turns;
- 2) collecting the questions that the reading of the texts prompted in the trainees;
- 3) philosophical discussion on one or more questions.

### 3. RESULTS - PART TWO: The final three weeks

At the seventh meeting, the text that was used was a section of a document of reflection proposed by the Confederation of physical educators of Quebec (CEEPQ) in 1994 (3 pages). The content was neither philosophical nor ambiguous, but it proposed to the subjects a concept of physical education that was significantly different from what had been taught up to that time. This text was interesting in that it was likely to bring out something that could create cognitive conflicts with the trainees and to promote higher-order thinking.

Following Lipman and Sharp's method, the subjects read the text aloud, taking turns. Then, they proceeded to ask the questions that the text had suggested to them. All the questions asked by the subjects that week, following the reading of the text by CEEPQ, concerned the professionalism of physical educators in Quebec. These questions created the meeting agenda and were used for discussion.

The discussion started with the history of physical education. The subjects tried to explain why the reputation of physical educators was not better than it actually was. Here is an extract:

E1. When physical education entered the schools, society was not taking this subject seriously (...). For many physical educators, it was a secondary task about which they had no knowledge. I think that this is how a lack of professionalism started.

E2. At the beginning, in the military schools, (...) it was boring, always the same repetitions.

E3. During the sixties, the Parent report came out.

E2. I think that there already was a lack of professionalism at the beginning, because the first type of physical education that we had, was boring. The Parent report brought out solutions, that's all.

E1. Physical education started in the army. It did not start on solid foundations. At the beginning, we didn't take it seriously. We were not aware of its benefits.

E2. Before, physical education was not as well structured as it is today. Now, we learn how to structure ourselves. Even if there was a training before, I don't know if there were all the teaching strategies that exist today. It has been less than 30 years since physical education was integrated into the curriculum.

This verbatim extract shows, on the one hand, that E1, E2 and E3 have developed an opinion that they enriched, later on, with certain

elements brought by their peers. There was not any dialogical and argumentative construction as such. But many subjects, for the first time, were taking into consideration the comments of the others and were integrating them, to some degree, into their point of view.

With the thinking skills used during this meeting, we have noted a wider range of skills, as well as a greater complexity among them. Thus, observations, hypotheses, suggestions, arguments and criticisms came out of the discourse of the group of subjects. Here are a few examples taken from what was said:

Observation:

One subject made an observation that he relates to professionalism:

E1 Yesterday, I was talking to one of the teachers at my school and he told me: "I am still learning today". He must be 40 years old. Then at that moment, I told myself: That's good. That's what is needed.

Hypothesis:

Answering the question: Why is PE not a subject that is valued by our society? One person proposes as a possible answer:

E1 These days, I think we value the intellectual aspect more than the physical.

Suggestion:

At the question: "What should be done in order to have PE valued more by society?", a student suggests:

E3 The organisms related to PE should be stronger, more talkative, and also more seminars, symposiums and physical educators' meetings should take place to facilitate exchanges (...) and allow them to receive information.

Criticism:

To the suggestion of E3, E2 makes the following criticism: The valorization of PE should not only be done by physical educators, but also by institutions such as universities which have a role to play in that they should inform the students more about existing publications and events taking place.

Arguments:

Even if E2 makes a criticism regarding the suggestion made by E3, he also supplies an argument to back up the suggestion of the latter:

The tricks that are exchanged during the symposiums and workshop are those that have been tried by the physical educators and that have worked. They are not just suggestions without foundations. We have just completed our BA degree and we don't even have much experience; some don't even have any. We have to try to manage all the problems encountered in our teaching. (...) We proceed by trial and error, while in the seminars, symposiums and workshops, expert teachers share with everyone, facts that have been tried and have worked.

In short, these few extracts show that the dialogue was not yet well structured and the argumentation, not very developed, but that the subjects were communicating with each other and that the thinking skills used were more complex and diversified than at the previous meetings.

The following week, to foster dialogue among the subjects, we used another kind of support, namely a videotape (20 minutes) showing an application of the teaching strategy called "guided discovery" (as named by Mosston and Ashworth) in a swimming class. There again, the structure of the recording was neither philosophical nor ambiguous.

But the strategy of guided discovery is barely touched on during the initial training of future teachers at UdeM and it is not used much in French schools in Quebec. Even if it is not new in itself, for preservice teachers trained according to tradition, it was likely to stimulate questioning and to lead to reflections and interesting argumentation.

During the discussion, the mental skills that came out varied from one subject to another. On one subject in particular, cognitive disequilibrium is expressed by means of questioning, wonderment and awareness. The mental actions of this subject did not however pass through this stage during the discussion:

E1. How can a person have so many ideas and then progress so nicely? That's work!

E1. That is an incredible process! (...) Imagine how much preparation the teacher has to do before teaching his courses.

E1. The problem is to find all those ideas! You may want to teach a good swimming class but (...)

E1. It is worthwhile (to try this teaching strategy) because I find that behind each preparatory activity, there is an objective. The teacher could go through thirty preparatory activities and each one has its purpose (...). We also aim at objectives, but it seems that sometimes we don't look far enough, that we repeat the same ones.

E1. What I want is to achieve a progression like that one. Now, all I ask of the pupils, really, is to get organized. Yes, I have progressed, but I would like to progress even more (...) That is what I would like to do.

Two other subjects used explanation and description most often to try to place themselves in relation to the viewing. A third subject, whose worst fear, according to her, was the lack of discipline of the pupils and whose major problem, still according to her, was her inability to control her groups, was very critical of the viewing. She formulated structured and supported criticisms:

E2. What I have found surprising is that every pupil was at the same level. At the beginning nobody could swim, whereas normally in such groups of children aged eight and nine, many already know how to swim (...) If there had been a few pupils who already knew how to swim, I think that the strategy could not have been applied so easily. (...)

Then, addressing the group, the subject continues:

E2 Have we ever seen, during our training, a completely homogeneous group of pupils? (...). In a group, there are always some pupils who are very good and some others who are not really capable.

E2. I continue to think that it is not necessarily feasible for all activities and all levels. If all levels are too different in the group, we can say that we will use the stronger ones to help the weaker ones but at that moment what should the average ones be doing? And then if we adapt the course to the average ones, there are two parts of the group that will be doing nothing (...). Then at a given time there will be a disequilibrium and some pupils will waste their time.

This week, E2 has been equally capable of formulating a self-criticism:

E2. However, on the other hand, with more homogeneous groups of pupils or with a really new discipline to teach, whatever the level, at that moment, I think that this strategy would be very interesting to use. It is original, it is full of ideas, it leaves more room for the

pupils' initiative and imagination, to let them find different ways to fulfill the tasks that we propose to them.

In short, we could say that, following the viewing of the videotape: the type of communication used by a few subjects was semi-dialogical, sometimes leaning towards dialogical; questioning and awareness were clearly visible in one subject; one subject had higher-order thinking skills related to the argumentation (critical or self-critical); two other subjects used the same mental skills (mainly explanation and description) as in the previous meetings.

At the ninth and last meeting we distributed a three-page text to the subjects, taken from a special file of *Vie p dagogique* (1992) on Physical education. This text reflected the mixed points of view of the pupils from different high schools concerning their PE classes. Our hypothesis was that such a text (illustrating many points of view) would serve as a model to the subjects and encourage them in a critical argumentation.

The analysis of the comments, (still using the observation grid) shows us that it is from this text that the argumentation between the subjects was most developed and most supported and that the thinking skills at work were the most complex.

Talking about pedagogy, the question arose whether the concern to adapt the content of the courses to reach the greatest number of pupils was specific to the physical educator or whether it involved all teachers:

E1. I think it is part of physical education and not of teaching in general.

E2. No, I think that it is part of the role of each teacher (...) because for the math or language arts classes, the teacher who notices a pupil with difficulties considers that it is her or his work to motivate this pupil.

E3. I think that in physical education we pay more attention to the pedagogical dimension because (...) if a pupil does not like math, she or he does not like math, although she or he has to understand that it is compulsory. And then the pupil does not have a choice about passing his exams. And if a pupil does not understand that two and two is four, it is difficult to find an alternative to make her or him understand that.

E2. There are alternatives (for the teacher) to help the pupil to understand. If she or he does not succeed with the book, you use objects...

E4. I think that it is mainly the contact with the pupils that can make a difference. I would agree with E2 that basically, it is the pedagogy of any teacher that is affected by that. But the fact that our pupils in physical education are not sitting at a desk, the class is a lot less masterful. When we propose one educative activity, we see each pupil and at that moment we can have direct contact with the pupil who has difficulties(...) I don't exactly know how to define it, but it is the contact that we have with the pupils, the fact that we are, I don't know, that we are on the ground with them, we are not anymore, I don't know, I will think about it.

E3. Yes, the teacher-pupil distance is less important than in...

E4. That's it! It is less important and often ... let's take the example of throwing a ball- we can do it with them. Whereas asking them a mathematical formula, we might tell them, explain to them, we can

write it, but we cannot really demonstrate it as well as we could with physical education.

E2. I am not a professional in math, but I am sure that (...) if a pupil has problems, the math teacher must have a list of pedagogical means to help her or him. It is certain that they won't just say: "Well then, get it into your mind that two and two makes four". They won't just tell the pupil, they will show pictures, show cubes, I don't know...

We notice that in this extract the subjects answer each other and argue among themselves. Everyone listens to the comments made by the others and take them into consideration before developing her or his own comments. For the first time, a dialogical discussion is initiated. Arguments, counter-arguments, criticisms, examples and counter-examples are present.

#### 4. FINAL DISCUSSION

In this final discussion, we will return to: 1) the higher order thinking skills that were used by the preservice teachers during the discussions; 2) the importance of developing higher order thinking in teachers' practical education in physical education; 3) the appropriateness of Lipman and Sharp's program for preservice teachers in physical education.

With the observation grid, we identified that the thinking most frequently at work in all of the nine meetings of the four subjects involved lower order thinking. The most simple mental skills such as description and explanation (item 2 of the observation grid) came out of the discussions in greater numbers when the log book, based on the experience of the subjects, was used as a pretext or an initiation mechanism for discussion.

Even if these thinking skills remained throughout the nine meetings, more complex skills such as questioning, argumentation, criticism, self-criticism (items 1 and 6 of the observation grid) emerged from a few subjects when a text outside the log book was used for discussion and this text, although linear in its structure, had the function of making the subjects unstable in their cognitive structure.

Thinking skills such as the definition of a concept or a problem, the analysis of a hypothesis, the search for causes and consequences, the creation of relations between two concepts or two situations (items 3-4-5-7-8 of the observation grid) emerged little or not at all in the discussions. As for the possibility of transferring or applying a suggestion to the class reality, we cannot affirm anything since we could not verify its presence or its absence through the commentaries of the subjects which were conveyed during their formal and informal exchanges with the researcher, nor through the notes in their log book.

The fact that one of the five preservice teachers who had at first agreed to participate in the research had considered, later, that the proposed intervention plan was too radical, demonstrates the insecurity that practical education centered on autonomous, critical and responsible thinking can cause. Using Gore's categories, we could say that this one student was 'recalcitrant,' for he rejected the need to reflect on teaching and failed to see the relevance of keeping a reflective log.. (1990, p. 119) In this exploratory research, interviews were not conducted to systematically verify the subjects' perception of

the goals of the research and Lipman and Sharp's methodology that was used to achieve them. Nevertheless, three of the four remaining subjects expressed explicitly their appreciation of the short texts and the following discussions. This leads us to continue our research within the interactionist-constructivist paradigm.

Although it is a long-term apprenticeship and it is repulsive to some students, the development of higher order thinking is fundamental in order to help future teachers to enter into a process of continuous education and consider teaching not as a technical routine to be learned, but instead as a reflective habit to develop. As stated by L. Bain:

Education is a dynamic process in which students are active agents in the creation of the social conditions of their lives. The actions they choose have the potential to modify the constraints. That is, people, individually or collectively, can reinterpret experience in order to change their circumstances and possibilities. The goal of education is to encourage critical reflection and self-awareness, thus empowering students to create a better, more just society. (1988, p. 133)

This presupposes that the main objective of education is to think rather than to learn. It is no longer possible to disregard the generative role of education for better thinking or the contributions made by the student to the process and products of inquiry (Lipman, 1988, chap. 11). Actually, this implies that education is intended to initiate reflection and questioning amongst the learners. Education should involve a dialectical relationship between reflection and action. As a corollary, it forms active subjects who are given the ability to construct their system of interpretation and representation of the world in order to create, in turn, the conditions for cooperation, emancipation and democratization. Social goals, social reconstruction and social responsibility are emphasized.

Although reflective education has been promoted for many years in physical education, there is little evidence that we are currently doing a good job in this area. In 1994, a Quebec organization, the Fédération des Éducateurs et Éducatrices physiques en enseignement de l'école au Québec (FEEPEQ), published a substantial document critical of the way physical education is currently practiced in Quebec. The authors stated:

To the detriment of the individual's needs, excessive importance has been attached to technical skills in sports and to the components of physical fitness. Our interventions have been so focused on the 'biological machine' that other aspects of the individual were forgotten. Trained to become technicians of human motion, almost exclusively preoccupied by the development of technical and physical skills, we have hardly, or not at all, used physical activity to contribute efficiently to the development of all the various dimensions of the individual. (p. 7)

In the same fashion, in a study where their data was collected in two different states of the U.S., Placek and Locke (1986) reported that teaching is predominantly related to the transmission of technical information and the acquisition of a wide repertoire of strategies.

According to McKay, Gore and Kirk (1990), technocratic physical education is also predominant in Australia, Canada, Britain and the United States. They emphasized that physical educators'

preoccupation rests almost exclusively on the understanding of technical phenomena, that they value and practice what they call 'technocratic physical education' instead of 'critical pedagogy' and 'reflective teaching.'

Thus, it appears that the development of higher order thinking is an educational goal which is not sufficiently present in teacher education in physical education and should be emphasized. Yet, as Lipman contends, the passage from ordinary thinking (guessing, preferring, believing, grouping) to critical thinking requires practice and appropriate educational surroundings (Lipman, 1988b, 1991). Paul explains that humans 'need extensive practice to develop a dislike for inconsistency, a love of clarity, a passion to seek for reasons and evidence and to be fair to points of view other than their own.' (1987, p. 130)

One may believe that the learning of mathematics and language skills in high school contributes directly to the development of complex thinking. These subjects are helpful in developing abstract and symbolic thinking, but to believe that they are sufficient for developing and maintaining higher order thinking would be deluding ourselves (Lipman, 1988). And if we want the young generations to be thoughtful citizens, their teachers and professors should themselves be autonomous, critical and creative.

With Miller (1984), Bergman-Drewe(1995), we argue that philosophy has a role to play in the fostering of higher order thinking, as well as in the reform of teacher education in physical education. Indeed, as written by Miller: "philosophy has the capacity to educate rather than merely train." (1984, p.27) Philosophy, here, should not be understood in its didactic and traditional meaning (Daniel and Bergman-Drewe, in press). Instead, it means a method of personal and social research, since it helps organize knowledge for the purpose of evaluation and comprehension. It questions, formulates hypotheses, analyzes, criticizes, evaluates, synthesizes,.. (Dewey, 1933). In this fashion, philosophy is a dialectical process guided by principles, not by procedures (Dewey, 1916/1983; 1908/1980). It is both a higher order thinking process and its resulting product.

Lipman and Sharp's philosophical program, which finds its application in the 'community of inquiry', reflects this pragmatic conception of philosophy (Daniel, 1994a). Within the community of philosophical inquiry, critical research is required. In this program, philosophy becomes a quest for meaning, a 'hermeneutics' in the sense used by Gadamer:

The hermeneutics is not [...] a methodology of human sciences but rather an attempt at understanding beyond their consciousness of methodological self what they truly are and what links them to our global experience of the universe (Gadamer, 1976, p. 20).

Philosophical dialogue can contribute to the emergence of preservice teachers' own definition of physical education, underlying premises, opinions or decisions in a more precise manner; it can help to formulate and validate reasons, to examine the causes and consequences of intentions or actions, to evaluate their results, to find answers to fundamental questions such as: Why do people practice team sports? What does success mean in sports? What is failure? What is cooperation? Can competition include cooperation? What is the meaning of having fun together? What are the criteria for justice and

fair-play in sport? What is the relationship between the components of team play and real-life situations? What are the ethical values inherent in hockey (or baseball, football, basketball, etc.)? And so forth (Daniel and Bergman-Drewe, in press).

Moreover, the task of the physical educator implies that she/he has to observe behaviors and attitudes in pupils, make judgments, make ethical decisions, examine ethical implications of her/his teaching, identify inherent hypotheses to questions that youngsters will have, and so on. These are classroom problems that the future educator will encounter daily. Philosophy can help by integrating observations, experiences and knowledge into abstract ideas, namely, principles.

The philosophical and epistemological principles inherent in the Lipman and Sharp's program apply to preservice teachers in physical education, although their material is inadequate for the education of the latter.

### Conclusion

This one-year of research, constituting the exploratory step of a three-year study beginning in September 1996, has made us aware of various fundamental elements:

- 1) the distance separating the experienced teachers from the trainees;
- 2) the importance of the text-releasing mechanism to foster a reflective process in the subjects;
- 3) the difficulty of linking up, in practical education, the know-how and the know-why. In other words, the difficulty in establishing a significant relationship between the long-term objective of the students, namely the development of their higher-order thinking skills, and their immediate objective, the efficient management of their groups of pupils.

This research has also raised at least two sets of questions:

- 1) concerning the log book: Does the nature of the log make a significant difference in the practical education of the trainees' teacher? Could a log with different aims, namely with requirements linked to the development of autonomous, critical and responsible thinking, have had an impact on the evolution of the thinking of the subjects? We are presently studying such an alternative.
- 2) Does the evolution in the thinking that was observed from the first to the ninth meetings essentially result from the nature of the triggering texts or is it due to the fact that:
  - a) the subjects learned, over the weeks, to know each other and communicate more among themselves?
  - b) the subjects mastered, over the weeks, the teaching situation that was triggering so much stress at the beginning of the practical education, so that they gradually got energy and become interested in getting involved in more autonomous, critical and responsible thinking? or
  - c) the quality of the philosophical leadership increased along with the meetings?

We intend to provide follow-up on these questions and to continue to explore the possibility of applying the interactionist-constructivist paradigm to the practical education of preservice teachers in physical education.

## NOTES

1. Adaptation, here, involves two levels: biological (where the purpose is survival) and conceptual (aimed at developing precise cognitive structures).
2. It is to be noted that, according to various studies, the perspective of "constructed knowledge" corresponds to the most complex stages of thinking. See, for instance, Roubtsov (1991).
3. Zeichner and Tabachnick (1991) refer to it as to the 'social reconstructionist tradition' where schooling and teacher education are viewed as agencies for a more just and humane society.
4. A cognitive (structured) conflict is a disequilibrium causing changes and progress in the structures of knowledge. Read: Blaye (1989); Gilly (1989); Giroto (1989); Lefebvre-Pinard (1989).
5. Centre interdisciplinaire de recherche sur l'apprentissage et le développement en Éducation (Interdisciplinary Center of Research on Learning and Development in Education).
6. Concerning the relationships between philosophy and physical education, see also Bergman-Drewe, S., 1995.
7. This research (1995-1996) was subsidized by the Comité d'attribution des fonds internes de recherche (CAFIR) of the Université de Montréal.
8. A three-year study subsidized by FCAR funds, starting September 1996.
9. He claimed that our conception of practical training was, according to his own words, revolutionary, that the purpose and methodology used were too radical, and it was attempting to misrepresent physical education.
10. The researcher was also working as their university supervisor.
11. It is to be noted that the researcher has expertise in this kind of work, based on many years of experience.
12. The cognitive process referred to here is monistic, in that it makes use not only of the mind, but of the senses as well, particularly sight and hearing. In fact, it gives prime importance to the relationship between perceptions and judgments since judgments come after perceptions in order to compare them.
13. Let us remember that, for the subjects, the first weeks of their practical education were boiling down to the observation of their LS.
14. The subjects are identified by E1, E2, E3, E4. From one verbatim to another, the numbers refer to different subjects.

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## **Be Reasonable, Kids!**

A Review of *Reasonable Children: Moral education and moral learning*  
by Michael S. Pritchard (1996, University Press of Kansas: Lawrence)

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One of the interesting statistics in Mike Pritchard's new book shows that 80% of Americans think that morals should be taught in public schools. "So what's the problem?" we might think. Let's just get out there and teach morals. Unfortunately, it is not as easy as that. This seemingly strong consensus on moral education masks a considerable degree of disagreement and complexity. One of the prime virtues of Pritchard's book is that he is able to lead us through these difficult contested areas in such clear and reasonable prose.

Agreement that morals should be taught in schools does not tell us much about what morals should be taught, or about what methods should be used to do so. If we teach substantive moral beliefs, we are likely to find that some will accuse us of teaching immorality or irrelevancies rather than morality. If we try to avoid mention of specific beliefs, we will be accused of abdicating from moral education at all, or of encouraging relativism. If we only mention beliefs with widespread support, we will not only still run the risk of offending some small minorities, but also of being too wishy-washy. If we teach only critical thinking skills about morality, we may be accused of producing smart operators, who can argue to justify any decision, moral or not. If we preach, we are accused of indoctrination, or of failing to be effective. If we place moral education in the 'too-hard' basket and eschew it, we end up with an unconsidered and implicit moral education anyway, for even the standard behavioural expectations of a school have moral implications.

These and other dangers are all dealt with in the book. Pritchard does not pretend that there are easy answers to these problems. It is not surprising that he advances the claims for Philosophy for Children in dealing with them, but he avoids the glib claim that Philosophy for Children has all the answers.

As the title of the book indicates, Pritchard's chief claim is that moral education should be aimed at producing reasonable children. "Reasonableness alone," he says, "cannot ensure that children will successfully negotiate their way through the moral challenges they face now and will encounter later. But it surely should help" (p xi). It might be somewhat surprising, then, to find that he does not offer a definition for reasonableness. The first chapter, however, is devoted to mapping out the territory - and it soon becomes obvious why no definition is attempted. Reasonableness is a notion that has been addressed by many over the centuries, and it presents many faces - most of which are covered here. Reasonableness is not rationality, he avers, but is a form of rationality.

Of course, rationality itself is a contentious notion. Yet to me, it seems that reasonableness is a wider notion than rationality. It takes into account many factors that are non-rational (note: not 'irrational'), such as aspects of the emotions, creativity and the contextual situatedness of humans. Each of these goes beyond the rational, and hence I would claim that rationality is a form, or (better) an aspect of reasonableness.

Of course, my characterization of the rational itself can be open to question - for many, rationality takes in these much wider considerations. This having been said, Pritchard's discussion of reasonableness does highlight many of its important features: its social aspect, its link to action, its reciprocity, its capacity for disinterestedness and openness, its accountability and so on.

In this, he critiques the rather simpler, but highly influential, answer of Lawrence Kohlberg, who equated morality with the solving of moral dilemmas, and moral education with assisting the child to progress through six moral stages of methods of arriving at such solutions.

Pritchard's critique of this work is telling. He draws on Gareth Matthews' work (whose recent *Philosophy of Childhood* is also excellent) to point out that Kohlberg's work implies that children (and up to 80% of adults) never enter the moral domain. The first four Kohlbergian stages are based on either self-regarding avoidance of punishment or mere compliance to social expectations. Yet Pritchard quotes Schweder, Turiel & Much, who showed that children are quite capable of recognising rules as moral, separating them from prudential and conventional rules at ages as young as four. Even quite young children tend to make the same broad moral distinctions that adults do, though they are not so skilled nor so subtle. He comments, "To fail to respect these capacities in children is to fail to respect children as the moral agents they are" (p 52).

The more complex view of moral development that Pritchard advances allows a place for thinking about moral dilemmas, but only as one facet. He quotes with approval four additional facets in moral development identified by Matthews: the development of a stock of moral paradigms, the refining of the meanings of moral terms (such as blame and lie), an increasing ability to judge a range of cases, and the development of moral imagination.

In the above, I have concentrated on only a small part of the contents of this book. Pritchard provides a thorough survey of moral education, enriched by practical analyses of philosophical conversations he has had with groups of children. The early chapters deal with the concept of reasonableness, the aims and goals of moral education, and an outline of what Philosophy for Children is and what it has to offer in the ethical field.

Chapters 4 and 5 contain a very enlightening discussion of critical thinking, its assessment and its place in schools, though Australian readers will probably wonder why such a lengthy critique of the use of multiple choice questions in assessing critical thinking is necessary. I guess it reflects the dominance of this testing techniques in the US; a dominance that we have wisely avoided in Australia.

In Chapter 6, the important role of parents or guardians in early on instilling moral attitudes and habits is given full recognition, but the distinctive contributions that the school can make is also highlighted - for example, the school can often provide a much better experience of the diversity of moral views than can the family. In his perceptive account of the place of habit building in moral education, Pritchard approvingly quotes Martha Nussbaum to the effect that habits are not merely mindless conditioning, but patterns of increasingly intelligent choice guided by attachment and love. Schools, especially though the sort of respectful yet rigorous discussion characteristic of a well run community

of inquiry, can play an important role in developing such intelligent choice.

For my money, the most valuable part of the book is the discussion of moral diversity, moral confidence and case-by-case reasoning contained in Chapters 7, 8 and 9. Pritchard's careful excursion into the boggy and difficult terrain of the moral objectivism versus moral relativism debate is exemplary, and he develops a concept of reasonable disagreement that, while unsurprisingly not solving the philosophical problem, certainly maps a route for schools to follow. In view of this (at least provisional) acceptance of some diversity of moral positions, it is apposite that Pritchard goes on to look at the question of providing some moral confidence to children, avoiding the traps of skepticism and uncertainty, and he points out that those who differ in overarching moral theories can often reach much greater agreement in paradigm concrete cases. From this it is but a short distance to the claim that the primary mode of moral education in schools should be the consideration of moral cases, to learn and refine a moral vocabulary, learn the tools of evaluation, proceed by analogy and build solid moral paradigms. Unlike Kohlberg's account of moral development as a process of replacing non-moral imperatives with moral ones, this process sees development as enlargement and refinement, not displacement. While acknowledging that they are not yet very sophisticated, it does not deny that children are moral and reasonable.

So, is there a case for schools to promote reasonableness in children? Is this what we should be doing in moral education? I believe it is. Any teacher or educator who remains unconvinced, or who is uncertain as to what such a claim might mean, or who agrees in general terms, but would like further guidance, should read this book. In clear and careful prose, Pritchard deals with the considerable complexities of this contested area and builds a compelling case.

**Moral Education** - a review of *Thinking Stories 3* by Philip Cam (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1997)  
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*Thinking Stories 3* is a collection of seven short stories with an accompanying Teacher Resource/Activity Book designed to promote philosophical inquiry with children about moral and social themes. The stories are aimed at 9-14 year olds and feature stories about children in an urban Australian neighbourhood. Written in an easy to read style told to us by child narrator as the 'voice' of each incident, they raise issues such as friendship, racism, violence, justice, truth, lies, trust and respect. What is not clear though, is whether the stories are intended as a program in moral education or as supplementary material to accompany such a program. As a program, they lack important features (see below); as supplementary material, then the program it supplements needs to be made clear for adequate appraisal of their suitability. If neither of these is the case, then they constitute material to be used to fill time in between breaks in the ongoing classroom program. And used as such, they have other unfortunate (moral) consequences besides sending the message that such issues are not of central concern, only side issues which can be dealt with in passing

*Thinking Stories 3* though does illustrate the challenges facing writers of curriculum material for moral education programs. These revolve around questions of the most appropriate form and mode for raising moral issues; how best to reveal what moral inquiry involves and how best to model the process in action without patronising students or dictating values they are to obey.

In using stories as his vehicle for directing attention to issues of importance to us all rather than didactic text Cam is proceeding on the plausible assumption that stories are more likely to be appealing to children and more likely to engage them in reflecting on the issues. This is especially so, I agree, in the stories where the mode is dialogical exchange rather than narration of events. Such stories follow in the tradition of Plato who featured Socrates in dialogical exchange with others about matters of importance to all. Plato's purpose was to break from the traditional didactic instruction of ancestral authority in order to encourage rational autonomy as a way of deciding what the right course of action might be in any given situation. So he wrote his dialogues as heuristic texts for his own students in the hope that they would be more likely to become involved in discussing the same matters amongst themselves. Given Cam's stated aim of encouraging children to think for themselves, the dialogical exchange is an appropriate form to use, and he is to be congratulated for attempting it. I, for one, would not find it easy to write such stories or make them as interesting.

In using a child narrator we readers enter into a particular point of view of the incidents and conversation with other characters. This device would help classroom discussion because the teacher can always ask whether the children agree with the character's assessment of the situation and underlying issue. However, this personal narrative mode has its dangers: if taken as a model, it suggests that the means of deciding what to do is personal introspection. I say this is dangerous

because personal reflection can be very limited, closed to alternative perspectives and considered argument for alternative courses of action. In the absence of reasoned argument, characters come to rely on their intuition and feelings, confusing emotion with morality. The end result is to promote relativism as moral fact.

Now while different characters would illustrate different sorts of human idiosyncracies, temperments, personalities, at least one or more would presumably be proposed somewhat as a model of an ideal (though not perfect) moral agent. Joshua, the nearest candidate for such a role, only because he appears more frequently than any other, is hardly a good role model. Nor is his preferred way of proceeding entirely compatible with the aim of philosophy *with* children, which is to promote dialogical inquiry with peers about matters of (moral) importance. Joshua tends to operate intuitively on the basis of gut feelings about what is right or wrong. He shows doubt only when admitting to feeling confused. Now while there is nothing wrong, in itself, in admitting to being confused, it would be appropriate for moral development to recognise that there might be better criteria than feelings for judging right from wrong. But this does not happen. There is little or no indication of how to go about evaluating the *moral* merit of such feelings. This lack is compounded by the occasional amateur psychological explanations offered for the beliefs and behaviour of some characters (eg Neil probably lacks loving attention at home, Barry may be wanting some one to look after him). This gives the impression, in the lack of clear philosophical ways of proceeding, that psychology has the answers - a popular, but erroneous, view hardly congruent with the aims of a program in *philosophical inquiry*. Philosophy is not so much the study of why people behave as they do (an erroneous impression left by *The Fight, Winged, The Troll*, for instance) but more an inquiry into the logical geography of our concepts, beliefs and reasoning about ourselves and the world. *Thinking Stories 3*, as a program in philosophical inquiry, could have done more to make this clear.

If the community of philosophical inquiry, as Philosophy for Children proponents call it, is the effective way of reasoning about moral issues, then this needs to be modelled as such in the stories. And if no character or group of characters is to appear as a model, one or more might be hinting that there are more appropriate ways of forming moral judgments if only we knew what they were. Not that answers be provided, only that the way in which to proceed in finding answers be illustrated. Nor need the individual characters be portrayed as fluent or happily engaged in such activity; rather, they can be as diverse and awkward as real children to show that all can contribute to inquiry and get better at it. But overall, the stories should portray both the beginning or neophyte community at work, with all its imperfections, and development of (or at least indications of) the characteristics of a mature, functional community. Cam does say, in his Teacher Resource Book accompanying the *Thinking Stories 3* collection, that the stories should be taken together as a whole rather than treated separately as unconnected short stories. The stories are to be regarded as chapters in a continuing story, so the collection as a whole should be modelling the ideal to be aspired, showing that believable characters can engage, and get better at engaging, in such a community. The collection is only partially successful in this regard. *Bizzy Road*, the story which comes closest to a functioning community is an adult community, not a

childrens' community at work. Maybe in future stories we will see what a functioning childrens' philosophical community looks like.

The suggestion that the stories be regarded as a whole, suggest that they form a moral education program. I have trouble accepting this suggestion. Moral education programs, to my mind, ought to be just that - programs. By this I mean that they have a definite aim and a deliberate structure to the curriculum material for achieving this end. And a moral education program that is philosophical (rather than psychological) in mode would be structured in philosophical terms. What would be expected of such a program would be systematic philosophical examination of right and wrong, systematic revelation not only of the relevant criteria that *anyone* may use for judging right from wrong in any situation but also revelation of appropriate and fruitful procedure(s) that *anyone* can use for uncovering the criteria and guidance in using them properly. It is important that this be suitable for *anyone* to ensure that the procedures and criteria are impartial, not tainted by the view(s) of someone (or group) in particular.

Furthermore, if the program is to be presented in story form, then the story would, in a clear sense, be a story of moral philosophy in action. The story of the revelation of appropriate and relevant procedures and criteria as well as the justifications for both. Not that the 'story' be a chronological history of the development of moral philosophy, but that the various insights, arguments and procedures contributed by past and present philosophers be somehow represented in the story. One of the ways this might be done (which also appears to be Cam's preference) is to feature characters who individually or as a couple or trio, say, personify particular philosophical positions - not only the conclusions but also the reasons and reasoning on which the various positions are based. From this point of view the program offered in *Thinking Stories 3* is disappointing. The character Neil portrays the 'might is right' approach to social interaction, but no structured argument for that position is available for scrutiny. In the story *The Sleepover*, the consequentialist position is raised but again, not argued for (or against).

One might expect the Teacher Resource Book to offer these arguments but it does not. The conclusions of various positions are mentioned (eg: that Hume claimed that moral judgment finds its basis in human sympathy or fellow feeling; that Mill argued that an action is good insofar as it promotes the greatest happiness; that Kant made the fulfilment of duty the primary aim of moral life) but not the strengths and weaknesses of these positions or their justifications. So unless teachers are already familiar with these they are hardly likely to contribute to promoting or leading a fruitful *philosophical* inquiry. For the philosophically prepared teacher, the *Teacher Resource Book* does contain some good philosophical exercises and activities. But for the philosophically untrained or unprepared, many exercises will culminate in the mere exchange of opinions and promotion of relativism. In this respect *Thinking Stories 3* and the accompanying *Teacher Resource Book* share the defects of values clarification and moral dilemmas programs, but at least they do not claim to be *philosophy* programs.

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Please direct all enquiries and requests for application forms to Ross Phillips in the School of Philosophy at La Trobe University, Bundoora, Victoria, 3083. Telephone (03) 9479 2141, FAX (03) 9479 3639 or e-mail: [Ross.Phillips@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:Ross.Phillips@latrobe.edu.au).

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