

Critical & Creative Thinking:

*the Australasian Journal
of Philosophy for Children*
Vol 9 No 1 March 2001

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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 philo-sophical 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 philo-sophical 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, aesthetics, ethics, inquiry, philosophy of science, mind, personhood, community, understanding, learning, think-ing, 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, argument, conversation, dialogue, reasoning, critical thinking, creative thinking, community, 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, think-ing and learning; teacher thinking and behaviour; classroom climate, etc.

(2) Philosophical studies

discussion and clarification of key philo-sophical concepts, topics and issues embed

ded 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 in-service 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 ninth 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.

Editor

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, are subject 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

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Aristotle, Children and Morality I: habit and reason

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There is a strong tradition that maintains neither Plato nor Aristotle believed children could (or should) do philosophy. In an excellent recent paper in *Thinking*, Hannu Juuso (1999) discussed Platonic and Aristotelian theory, and their relevance to Philosophy for Children. In the first section of his paper, he looked at the texts from Plato that are alleged to support the conclusion that children can't philosophise, before turning to Aristotle. Juuso outlines Aristotle's account of the development of both intellectual and character virtues, in which the concept of *phronesis* (practical reason or practical wisdom) plays a central role. Finally, he turns to the question of how Aristotle's ideas intersect with Matthew Lipman's account of the development of judgement.

Like Juuso, I also think that Aristotle's work - particularly in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (Aristotle 1980)¹ - has much to say to the Philosophy for Children movement, and to present-day education in general. Indeed, recent scholarship has reawakened interest in virtue ethics as a more inclusive and realistic meta-ethical position (see, for example, Baier, 1985; Sherman, 1989; Taylor, 1989). This article is the first of two which will explore the view that children ought not to study philosophy, both in the context of what Aristotle had to say on the matter, and in a present day context.

In this first article, I will start by briefly outlining some of the reasons why there has been a turn away from what I will here call algorithmic meta-ethical theories towards (again, in my terminology) multi-dimensional meta-ethical theories. Secondly, I will explore the reasons why Aristotle's virtue ethics can be considered to be a multi-dimensional theory. Since, as Juuso states, Aristotle has been interpreted as saying that children should be excluded from both philosophy and practical wisdom, I shall then take a close look at just what Aristotle does have to say, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, about children, particularly in relation to habituation into the virtues and the role of practical wisdom. I will argue that Aristotle can be understood in a way that denies that children should be mindlessly habituated into the virtues before they can start to develop practical wisdom.

In the second article, to be published in the next issue of *Critical & Creative Thinking*, I will approach more directly the claim that children cannot engage in philosophical ethical inquiry. I will argue that Aristotle does not rule out such inquiry at all. Even if this reading of Aristotle does not stand up, I both show that philosophical inquiry is possible for children, and outline a version of virtue ethics that gives such inquiry an important place.

Meta-ethical theories: algorithmic vs multi-dimensional

Until fairly recently, the dominant meta-ethical theories have met a criterion set forward by John Stuart Mill (1965, 278), that:

there ought either to be some one fundamental principle or law, at the root of all morality, or if there be several, there should be a determinate order of precedence among them; and the one principle, or the rule for deciding between the various principles when they conflict, ought to be self-evident.

This type of theory I will call an algorithmic one, as being moral merely requires one to know the fundamental principle(s), and to derive from it (or them) the morally right action in any given circumstances. Mill's Utilitarianism is a prime example, as is Kant's Moral Law (1991). Lawrence Kohlberg's highly influential account of the development of moral stages draws heavily on Kant (see Kohlberg, 1983; Power, 1989).

As I stated above, such theories have come in for a lot of criticism recently, both at the theoretical and the empirical levels. Carol Gilligan (1982) has advanced empirical evidence that Kohlberg's assertion of the primacy of justice calculations needs, at the very least, to be supplemented by a parallel principle of care, with no clear algorithm to decide their relative importance. From the theoretical side, I will instance the arguments put forward by Annette Baier (1985), particularly in the essays *Theory and Reflective Practices* and *Doing without Moral Theory?*: in the former she claims that:

A significant fact about moral conscience is that its deliverances need not come in verbal form, that it is often a difficult task to articulate what it is that we are certain is wrong in an action, let alone what universal rule it breaks. In moral philosophy courses we insist that students make their moral intuitions articulate, that they represent them and 'defend' them by subsuming them under some universal rule that coheres in some system, and we make them feel that they must have been muddled if their moral intuitions are inarticulate or resist tidy codification. But it may be we the intellectualises who are muddled... (213)

Baier reminds us that any account of what it is to be moral must take into account the phenomenology of moral thinking; it needs to be sensitive to our everyday experience of moral action. While it could be true that such inarticulate moral experience merely betrays a lack of sufficiently explicit consideration of the moral domain, it could also be the case that moral intuitions are not capturable in explicit formula-tions. A multi-dimensional account is consistent with this moral phe-nomenology, as it allows for various diverse sources of moral input. Due to the nature of their source, some of these may not be easily articulable.

Gareth Matthews (1994, Chapter 5), for example, identifies five dimensions of moral development, acknowledging that these may not exhaust the field. Matthews' elements are:

- a situated, experiential stock (or knowledge) of moral paradigms, which is gradually enriched with further experience, that forms part of the base for moral intuitions, against which the other dimensions may be measured;
- an increasing ability to be able to offer defining characteristics for moral terms that take account of their complexity;
- an increasing ability to judge whether a range of cases fall under a particular moral term, especially borderline cases;
- a growing sophistication in the adjudication of apparently conflicting claims, when moral intuitions collide;
- a heightening of the moral imagination, based in part on increasing understanding of the world and how it works.

By concentrating solely on the fourth, claims Matthews, Kohlberg implies most people do not act morally. Pre-conventional (Kohlberg's Stages 1 and 2) moral reasoning is purely prudential, and conventional (Stage 3 and 4) moral reasoning is merely conformist, so only Stage 5 or 6 reasoning is moral. Similarly, Mark Johnson's (1993) account of moral

imagination points to 'the crucial role in our moral understanding that is played by our bodily experience, our emotions, our imagination and our interpersonal and cultural relations' (245).

Baier, Matthews, Johnson, even Gilligan, are advancing meta-ethical theories that call on a number of sources for morality - theories that I will label multi-dimensional. Let's consider Aristotle's virtue ethics as an example of a multi-dimensional meta-ethical theory.

Aristotle's virtue ethics as a multi-dimensional meta-ethical theory

For Aristotle, what is most important to morality is neither following an obligation nor bringing about the best consequences, but being a good or virtuous person. Being a good or a virtuous person is an important aspect of achieving the inherent aim of human life - *eudaimonia* (I.7, translated by Ross as happiness, but more commonly now rendered as well-being or human flourishing). Aristotle writes (I.13) that there are two groups of virtues: intellectual (eg. theoretical wisdom, understanding, practical wisdom) and moral (eg. temperance, liberality). Thus there are a variety of virtues, and the question arises as to how the virtues are coordinated in specific moral situations. Before I consider this, however, there is a need for a closer look at what the virtues are and how they are acquired. Here, then, is Aristotle's definition:

Virtue... is a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean, ie. the mean relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle, and by that principle by which the man of practical wisdom would determine it. (II.6, 1006b36)

In this definition, there are several key points to note. Firstly, virtue is about character, a relatively stable propensity to choose to act in certain ways. Secondly, virtue chooses a middle way, and since the determination of that middle way is relative to us, the mean is not something that can be decided solely by reference to principles. Elsewhere, Aristotle emphasises the situatedness and lack of deductive precision of ethical decisions as follows:

The whole accounts of matters of conduct must be given in outline and not precisely... accounts we demand must be in accordance with the subject matter; matters concerned with conduct and questions of what is good for us have no fixity... the agents themselves must in each case consider what is appropriate to the occasion. (II.2, 1104a1)

Thirdly, Aristotle's account of virtue involves rational principles as determined by practical wisdom: the latter is clearly embodied in a person. We need an account of rationality (or, better, a multi-aspectual reasonableness²) that will underlie the virtues.

As to how the virtues are acquired, there is a certain tension in Aristotle's account. I shall explore this tension by means of a commentary on several quotations:

Neither by nature, then, nor contrary to nature do the virtues arise in us; rather we are adapted by nature to receive them, and are made perfect by habit. (II.1, 1103a25)

From this, it is clear that the virtues are not fixed in us at birth - they are not merely natural reactions. Nevertheless, at birth, we do have an ability to be able to develop them. Humans are in some way adapted so as to be likely to become virtuous, although in the absence of the formation of habits, they will not develop. Note that in this quote, Aristotle claims that the virtues are *made perfect* by habit. This would

seem to imply that it is habit alone that develops the virtues. The next quotation expands on what it is to form a habit:

Thus, in one word, states of character arise out of like activities. This is why the activities that we exhibit must be of a certain kind; it is because the states of character correspond to the differences between these. It makes no small difference, then, whether we form habits of one kind or another from our very youth; it makes a very great difference, or rather *all* the difference. (II.1, 1103b19)

The formation of habits, then, takes place through repeated activities that are in conformity with the virtues. We must again and again act as the virtue would require if we are to form the habit. Again, the claim is made that this is an important process - it makes *all* the difference as to whether we can become virtuous or not. So far, the account that seems to be building is one that claims virtue depends solely on habit. What is not yet clear is where the decision to form one habit rather than another comes from.

Given that Aristotle is referring to habit forming 'from our very youth', it might seem that the sole source of these habits must be their imposition on us from the outside, by our parents, perhaps or (as Aristotle also argues) the law. I shall refer to this view as mechanical habituation. What it requires (and this has been a common interpretation of Aristotle³) is that parents, or society, tell children how to act in certain morally charged situations, and children just do as they are told, until eventually the moral action is 'second nature'. Only when a person has been trained to act in a virtuous manner unflinchingly is it possible to build true virtue through the study of moral philosophy.

If this is the whole story, then the sorts of habits we form will be beyond our control. Yet, there are other passages in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that cast doubt on this interpretation. Two further quotations help us to see that this is not Aristotle's meaning.

All who are not maimed as regards their potentiality for virtue may win it by a certain kind of study and care. (I.9, 1099b20)

But perhaps a man is the kind of man not to take care. Still they are themselves by their slack lives responsible for becoming men of that kind, and men are themselves responsible for being unjust or self-indulgent, in that they cheat or spend their time in drinking-bouts and the like; for it is activities exercised on particular objects that make the corresponding character.... Now not to know that it is from the exercise of activities on particular objects that states of character are produced is the mark of a thoroughly senseless person. Again, it is irrational to suppose that a man who acts unjustly does not wish to become an unjust man... But if *without* being ignorant a man does the things that will make him unjust, he will be unjust voluntarily. Yet it does not follow that if he wishes he will cease to be unjust. (III.5, 1114a3)

These passages make it clear that the development of habits is under a certain degree of voluntary control. Virtue can be attained by 'a certain kind of study and care'. Just what kind, is identified in the second quotation. We make the choice to engage in certain activities. If these activities are the sort that are 'unjust or self-indulgent', then we reinforce our unvirtuous habits. Nevertheless, we can, by taking care, provided that we are not ignorant, recognize this and choose to act differently. Aristotle is not naive enough to suggest that a single choice

of this nature is enough to reverse an unvirtuous habit: ceasing to be unjust requires the training of a new virtuous habit, and this implied that we must continue to make the explicit choice to act virtuously until it becomes a habitual reaction. How are these choices to be made?

Since moral virtue is a state of character concerned with choice, and choice is deliberate desire, therefore both the reasoning must be true and the desire right, if the choice is to be good, and the latter must pursue just what the former asserts. (VI.2, 1139a22)

Deliberation, using practical reasoning, is the key to such choice. When we are not acting habitually, we deliberate about what the right choice would be. It seems that this is where Aristotle sees the need for care entering. If we care about what sort of person we are, then we monitor our habitual reactions, as they are formed at the moment. If we suspect that these habits are unvirtuous, then we need to invoke practical wisdom so as to deliberate about whether to change our habitual reactions.

Now, these reactions have been formed by our actions in the past, and many of these actions could well have been those that others (our parents, to a large degree) have required of us. We are situated in the world in a way that depends on our past. But we do not escape responsibility for our reasoning and our desires on this account. Our moral character is never a finished product: we are always 'becoming men of that kind'. The kind we are becoming is under our control - not an easy control, but a control nevertheless, and one which depends critically on deliberation and reflection using practical wisdom.

But this is not to exhaust the role of practical wisdom. It also plays an important role in regulating the application of the virtues, which are general dispositions to act, in specific ethical situations.

But to feel [the virtues] at the right time, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with the right motive, and in the right way, is what is both intermediate and best, and this is the character of virtue. (II.6, 1106b24)

The work of man is achieved only in accordance with practical wisdom as well as with moral virtue; for virtue makes us aim at the right mark, and practical wisdom makes us take the right means. (VI.12, 1144a6)

Judging the right means of achieving the right mark is highly dependent on the details of the situation in which we are immersed. Aristotle makes it clear that such decision making is not a matter of deriving specific instructions for action by deduction from absolutely true general principles, for:

fine and just actions... exhibit much variety and fluctuation... We must be content, then, in speaking of such subjects and with such premises to indicate the truth roughly and in outline, and in speaking about things which are only for the most part true, and with premises of the same kind, to reach conclusions that are no better. (I.3, 1094b14)

Ethical judgement is an art, deriving conclusions that are imprecise and contestable from maxims which are likewise. This is not to claim that there is no ethical truth, that all is relative, because we can address the truth 'roughly and in outline'. Rather, it is to acknowledge the fuzziness and fallibility of ethical judgements, the continually open possibility that although we can often distinguish worse from better, we might

always be able to do better still. In short, Aristotle's virtue ethics exhibits the major features of a multi-dimensional meta-ethical theory.

Children and Aristotle's virtue ethics

In this survey of Aristotle's ethics, there remains one question of great import: what is the position of children in Aristotle's scheme? What, according to him, ought we to do so as to best equip them to be ethical persons? In particular, what is Aristotle's position on when and to what degree children ought to be included in practical reasoning about the virtues? He gives us several clues. Early on, he claims that:

a young man is not a proper hearer of lectures on political science; for he is inexperienced in the actions that occur in life, but its discussions start from these and are about these; and, further, since he tends to follow his passions, his study will be vain and unprofitable, because the end aimed at is not knowledge but action. And it makes no difference whether he is young in years or youthful in character; the defect does not depend on time, but on his living and pursuing each successive object, as passion directs. (I.3, 1095a2)

As it stands, this passage is somewhat ambiguous. A 'hearer of lectures on political science' could be a child being told what is right and wrong, but (more plausibly) is likely to be a scholar of the more abstract theories of politics. Nancy Sherman (1989), referring to the same passage (also I.4, 1095b3 - quoted below), concurs with this judgement:

But to postpone inquiry into the ultimate origins of a discipline is obviously not to postpone all inquiry relevant to learning the facts.... Nothing Aristotle says precludes the educational path being marked by stages of inquiry and explanation or there being an explanatory dimension to the acquiring of adequate habits. (194)

These passages from Aristotle therefore do not provide good reasons for thinking that children ought not to be involved in practical reasoning. They do, however, point out a necessary condition for engagement in practical discourse: experience in the actions that occur in life. Since even the youngest child capable of speech is already 'living and pursuing' objects under the direction of passion, it seems that at least one of Aristotle's conditions for benefiting from practical reasoning is already met by such a child.

A later passage offers some clarification on what we can expect from children with respect to the virtues:

For both children and brutes have the natural disposition to [virtues], but without reason these are evidentially hurtful.... Therefore... in the moral part there are two types, natural virtue and virtue in the strict sense, and of these the latter involves practical wisdom. (VI.13, 1144b7)

We again find support, therefore, for the view that there are inbuilt 'proto-virtues' available to children from birth. Natural virtue presumably includes such things as empathy, which is, at least in its roots, genetic (Damon 1996, 200). The second point to note from this quotation is that these natural virtues are 'hurtful' without reason. Hence, it would seem, to avoid the hurt that would follow from allowing children to act solely on the natural virtues without any influence of reason, we ought to apply reason to childish virtue as soon as possible.

I note also that Aristotle distinguishes natural virtue from virtue in the strict sense, which necessarily involves practical wisdom. Yet, if in the

first part of life we are not to apply practical reason to childish virtue, but merely to habituate it mechanically, there must be another, intermediate kind of virtue: the virtue of children which is inculcated during the stage that comes *before* the time at which children can benefit from any involvement in practical reason. Such habituated childish virtues are clearly more than the natural virtues, for they come about through repeated experience. Yet, if children are not capable of, nor ought they to be subjected to, practical reason, then their virtues are less than 'virtue in the strict sense'. That Aristotle does not suggest such a middle type implies that practical wisdom must enter, in some way, into all virtue beyond the natural.

Furthermore, practical wisdom is always contextualised, so that habits will not suffice for virtue: we always need to reflect upon which of our habitual virtues needs to be exercised, and in precisely which manner. In what is possibly the most famous sentence of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle makes it abundantly clear that judgements of rightness in context are central to the virtues:

But to feel them at the right time, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with the right motive, and in the right way, is what is both intermediate and best, and this is the character of virtue. (II.6, 1106b24)

Given the power of mechanical habituation to produce knee-jerk reactions that take no account of context, we can see that reactions that give proper consideration to the circumstances are not only essential to moral action, but are also difficult:

So, too, anyone can get angry - that is easy - ... but to do this to the right person, to the right extent, at the right time, with the right motive and in the right way, *that* is not for everybody, nor is it easy; whereof goodness is both rare and laudable and noble. (II.9, 1109a26)

Hence, mere mechanical habituation, because it lacks the element of contextual modification that Aristotle sees as central to goodness, is liable to lead, in many cases, to bad action. To allow children to believe that certain actions are good no matter what the circumstances is to lead them away from ethical behaviour. If we are to bring children up to be ethical, we must begin to introduce practical reasoning as soon as they have some habitual responses to build upon.

Nancy Sherman (1989), in her interpretation of Aristotle on this very point, offers a illuminating analysis of the idea of repetition of a process as a way of habituating it. Taking much more simple skills, such as a physical action skill, she notes that even the habituation of such actions cannot be merely a matter of repeating them over and over. This is because the first attempts at an unlearned action are bound to be clumsy and inaccurate. To merely repeat such an action without critiquing and improving it ensures no progress. Consequently, the learner must make trials which are aimed at an ideal, and this requires awareness of the goal and continued judgements about the closeness of the learner's approach to it. Indeed, Sherman's analysis can be extended here. Every sports coach knows that coaching a raw beginner is easier than coaching someone who has developed bad skill habits. The tyro can be taught properly from the start, whereas the poor skill habits of the experienced player need to be broken and remade. Aristotle, as we shall see in the next paragraph, makes a similar observation with respect to moral habits.

The longest discussion by Aristotle of the development of virtue occurs in Book X, section 9. Although the primary aim of this discussion is to establish the role of political laws in making people virtuous, it also has much to say about the role of upbringing. Aristotle asserts that arguments are not enough, in themselves, to make men good (X.9, 1179b3). Although arguments can be sufficient for those who are naturally 'generous-minded' or already of good character, the fear of punishment must also be used for the many.

It is hard, if not impossible, to remove by argument the traits that have long since been incorporated in the character, and perhaps we must be content if, when all the influences by which we are thought to become good are present, we get some tincture of virtue. (X.9, 1179b16)

This passage implies that it is easier for argument to be involved in moulding the traits of character while they are still in the process of being incorporated, presumably provided that the child is capable of comprehending the reasoning. The discussion of the instillation of sports skills above led us to a similar conclusion. Additionally, this conclusion is certainly supported by modern research that indicates that the moral training of young children is more effective if the demand for moral behaviour is accompanied by reasons and discussion (this has been labelled 'authoritative parenting'), than if it is imposed in an authoritarian manner (see Damon 1988, Chapter 4, for an excellent summary). Children raised in authoritarian households, through mechanical habituation, lack precisely the initiative and inner responsibility that Aristotle alluded to when he discussed the 'man who takes care' in moral matters (III.5, 1114a3, quoted above). We can note that the same research also indicates that reasoning, in the absence of the enforcement of behavioural expectations (ie. 'permissiveness'), is also ineffective, thus supporting Aristotle's arguments for the importance of habituation.

Let's have a closer look at the place of teaching in ethical education, as presented by Aristotle. He identifies three ways, as proposed by the thinkers of his time, in which people can be made good. These are by nature, by habituation and by teaching (X.9, 1180b20). His account clearly allots a role to each of these, and I have discussed the roles of the first two above. For argument and teaching to be effective, Aristotle asserts that:

the soul of the student must first have been cultivated by means of habits... The character... must somehow be there already with a kinship to virtue.... It is difficult to get from youth up a right training for virtue if one has not been brought up under right laws; for to live temperately and hardily is not pleasant for most people, especially when they are young. For this reason their nurture and occupations should be fixed by law; for they will not be painful when they have become customary. (X.9, 1179b30)

This passage leaves open two important questions. What degree of formation of character is necessary before teaching can be effective? When is the soul or character sufficiently cultivated? The standard answer seems to be that the character must be fully formed, and that this does not occur until into adulthood. Pritchard (1992), in attributing this view to Aristotle, quotes a passage that includes the following (albeit in a different translation):

Anyone who is to listen intelligently to lectures about what is noble and just and, generally, about the subjects of political science must have been brought up in good habits. (I.4, 1095b3)

Again, I note the ambiguity as to whether Aristotle is here discussing a lecture from an adult to a child on a specific instance of moral behaviour, or from a professor to a student on abstract moral theory. The standard interpretation of Aristotle seems to assume the former, and this is certainly Pritchard's interpretation. Pritchard is at pains to reject this view, since he is interested in whether children can engage in something a little closer to the latter. I shall also be addressing the same question in my companion article.

Here, however, I am more concerned with the former case. Do these passages support the contention that Aristotle holds the view that children ought not to be engaged in practical reasoning until they have had their characters fully formed by mechanical habituation, and that this is not reached until adulthood? While they may seem to be consistent with such an interpretation, they do not entail it, and I have been developing a more subtle interpretation of Aristotle. We have seen above that Aristotle does not hold that our characters are ever fully formed: we are always becoming virtuous. Part of that process inherently involves practical reason in the evaluation of the present state of this project, and the decision to act in certain ways so as to reinforce good, or replace bad, habits already formed. Yet there is a clear insistence that some habits must be in place for this process to work on:

The man who is to be good must be well trained and habituated.
(X.9, 1180a14)

Of course, even very young children have already been trained and habituated to some degree. So the processes of being lectured on, engaging in argumentation about, and reflecting on, the habituated responses need not, and ought not, wait for a (hypothetical and unachievable) completion of habituation. The very process of habituation itself, we have seen, can lead to the subverting of the eventual application of practical reasoning. Indeed, it is in response to the fact that not all families are perfect places for inculcating habitually virtuous actions that Aristotle argues a place for the law. Since virtue 'in the strict sense' involves practical wisdom, habituation devoid of any measure of practical wisdom cannot develop the virtues.

The thrust of my argument so far is that we cannot support an interpretation of Aristotle that claims the task of applying practical reasoning to the character must wait until virtuous action has been fully habituated, and that this is not complete until adulthood. Nancy Sherman (1989) in a lengthy discussion of the habituation of character, presents a similar case, and argues that the notion of habituation needs to be expanded. Rather than making a sharp split between mechanical habituation and practical reasoning, she argues that the notion of habituation, as used by Aristotle, includes a reasoned aspect. Habituation is then, not a process that merely requires external imposition, but rather one that inherently involves the use of practical reasoning. Drawing in part on the work of Burnyeat (1980) and Sorabji (1980), she says:

My overall claim is that if full virtue is to meet certain conditions, then this must be reflected in the educational process. This will require a developmental conception of cognitive and affective capacities, as well as a conception of habituation in varying degrees reflective and critical. (159)... We misconstrue Aristotle's notion of action producing character if we isolate the exterior moment of action from the interior cognitive and affective moments which characterise even the beginner's ethical behaviour. (178)

It is worth quoting some of Sherman's arguments for these conclusions at a greater length:

The child is not an empty box in which beliefs are instilled, but an individual who has, to a greater or lesser degree, already formed certain construals and judgements, which become adjusted and revised through interaction with an adult. Education is thus a matter of bringing the child to more critical discrimination.... What is required is a shifting of beliefs and perspectives through the guidance of an outside instructor. Such guidance cannot merely be a matter of bringing the child to see this way now, but of providing some sort of continuous and consistent instruction which will allow for the formation of patterns and trends in what the child notices and sees.... Though the educator persuades and exhorts, the goal is not to *manipulate* beliefs and emotions - to influence an outcome here and now - but to prepare the learner for eventually arriving at competent judgements and reactions on his own. Any method which secures rational obedience must at the same time encourage the child's own development... in a way that engages his own critical capacities. What is required is some dialogue and verbal exchange about what one sees and (feels) and should see (and feel); in other words, actual descriptions which articulate a way of perceiving the situation and which put into play the relevant concepts, considerations and emotions (see *Pol.* 1253a12). (171-2)

Aristotle, habituation and reason

In this survey of Aristotle's views, we have seen that habituation has commonly been interpreted to mean a mindless repetition of action imposed from the outside: mechanical habituation. Arguments of this type have been used to justify strict imposition of morality on children by authoritarian parents and teachers over the ages. The account I have advanced here has shown that habituation must include engaging children, from an early age, in practical reasoning, if true virtue is ever to be achieved.

Aristotle's account of moral development, therefore, requires us to bring up children to be reasonable if we wish them to be virtuous. I have not yet explored just how this reasoned habituation ought to be carried out, nor the place of philosophical inquiry in it. That will be the major task of the subsequent article.

Endnotes

¹ My exposition here draws on the Ross translation of *The Nicomachean Ethics* section number in the form used by Ross (eg Book Two, section 6 as II.6), reference to more specific citations and quotations will be in the standard form, referring to the Bekker text (Prussian Academy, Berlin, 1831) by page, column and first line of the quotation.

² See Sprod (forthcoming) for a more detailed account of reasonableness.

³ For example, Baron (1985, 147) paints virtue ethics as 'a form of education [which] would set the subject's gears in a certain way, without his realising that anything has been set and, of course, without him being in a position to 'reset' the 'gears'. It keeps from the subject both self-understanding and self-direction.'

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The Vygotsky Touch

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I'd like to talk about my reading—and being touched by Vygotsky. Something I felt more than ever inclined to do once I had seen Ann Paul's deeply moving BBC documentary, "The Butterflies of Zagorsk," which is about the treatment of deaf-blind children using Vygotsky's ideas on "defectology," as the Soviets call it.

In the late 70's, I had read Vygotsky's *Mind in Society*, and while I appreciated the amplification of his ideas that I found there, particularly the notion of the "zone of proximate development," it mainly served to remind me of the deep impression his ideas had had on me when I first encountered them. This encounter, I was certain, occurred when I read Vygotsky's *Thinking and Language* (I use James Wertsch's translation of the title, rather than the more familiar but apparently erroneous *Thought and Language*) in the late 40's. To my surprise, when I opened the book again, I discovered it was first printed in English in 1962, by MIT Press. Yet, even with this seemingly incontrovertible piece of evidence, I could not shake the feeling I had that I had read Vygotsky many years before 1962.

Then I glanced through the bibliography, and the explanation leaped out of the pages. An earlier translation of Chapter 7, the concluding chapter of Vygotsky's book, had been published in *Psychiatry* in 1939. My thoughts went back to the long afternoons I used to spend in Columbia University's Psychology Library, browsing through back issues of the journals, perusing *Psychological Abstracts*, and in general following each train of thought that emerged, to see where it led. Since I was particularly interested in the relationship between thinking and its social or cultural contexts, I was intrigued and delighted by the prospect of going through the nine or ten volumes of back issues of *Psychiatry*. I recall vividly their unusual, lemon-coloured pages, with articles by such revisionists as Harry Stack Sullivan, Erich Fromm, Frieda Fromm-Reichman, and Karen Horney. And I remember very well the title-page of the article in question: "Thought and Speech," by L. S. Vygotsky.

Then something else occurred to me. One of my first published articles, "Charismatic Participation as a Sociopathic Process," dealt with the authoritarian manipulation and control of thinking in what Fromm would have called a "defectively patterned social situation." I had naturally sent it first to *Psychiatry*, and it appeared in that journal in 1956.(1) The article owed much, of course, to Max Weber. Was it possible that Vygotsky had also been influenced by Weber? My own reflections during this period on the sociohistorical influence upon thinking were largely based on what I had been reading in Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia*, Arnold Hauser's *Social History of Art*, Wylie Sypher's *Four Stages of Renaissance Style*, as well as bits and pieces of Talcott Parsons, Levin Schucking, Georg Simmel, Stuart Hughes, and Paul Schilder. Weber, like Marx, seemed to have influenced many of these thinkers, but the only link—and that a faint one—between Weber and Vygotsky that I could find was Wertsch's discussion (in his *Vygotsky and the Social Formation of Mind*) of the connections between literary practice and social history on pp. 217-223, and here the emphasis is on the possible mediation of Lukacs rather than Weber. In any event, the fact that this Russian psychologist of an earlier

generation had published an article on a similar subject area to my article appearing not many years later in the same journal—all of this left me with a feeling of connection with him. But was there any evidence of a tangible relationship between Vygotsky's ideas in that early *Psychiatry* article and the subsequent development of the Philosophy for Children curriculum?

I think I can point to at least one such connection, although I suspect there are a good many more. In *Suki* (Chapter II, Episode 4), Suki and Harry are sitting on an embankment near Belcher's Brook, and Harry confesses to Suki that he is unable to do his writing assignment. Suki tries to help him by getting him to pay closer attention to his experience, and by getting him to arrange what he says in a way that will more accurately reflect the order or sequence in which things happen to him. Pretty soon they move from "The sun is shining" and "The river is flowing" to "Shining is the sun" and "The flow is rivering." Suki's point, as Harry understands it, is that what comes first in experience is the shining; it is only later that we add the abstract concept of the sun and insert it into the sentence as its subject. But it is a do-nothing subject: all the action is in the predicate—the shining.

In distinguishing "inner speech" from "written speech," Vygotsky contends that inner speech omits subjects and contains only predicates, while written speech contains both subjects and predicates. This is one reason why written speech is so much more abstract than inner speech. Inner speech is dominated by the sense provided by the context, whereas written speech is dominated by the individual meanings attached to the individual words in the individual sentences. Now, I think there is enough resemblance between Suki's claims and Vygotsky's to suspect her heavy indebtedness to him. Nevertheless, I cannot deny that there were other sources of Suki's ideas—in particular, Dewey's castigation (in *The Quest for Certainty* and in *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*) of the subject-predicate structure of the proposition, and Heidegger's castigation (in *The Origin of the Work of Art*) of the substance-attribute and thing-property presuppositions of classical ontology.

There are many other points of correspondence, but I shall mention only a couple more. There is Vygotsky's remark (in Chapter 7 of *Thinking and Language*), "Every thought tends to connect something with something else, to establish a relationship between things," (p. 125) and there are the chapters in *Pixie* that deal almost solely with the theme of relationships; there is the final remark by Lisa's father (in *Lisa*), "Sometimes, when we can't find the right connections, we have to make them," and there is the contention (in *Thinking in Education*) that every judgment involves a relationship, just as every angle necessarily subtends an arc.

There is also Vygotsky's emphasis upon the way the vocal and the semantic dimensions of speech move in opposite directions: speech is an example of parts (words and sentences) being put together in order to build up wholes, while meaning moves from the undifferentiated whole to the particular parts. In *Philosophy for Children*, part-whole and whole-part relationships are given consideration repeatedly, whether (as in *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery*) they form the context of the important fallacies of division and composition, or (as in *Suki*) they form the basis of aesthetic experience, or (as in *Lisa*) they are important for gauging each moral act in terms of its contribution to "the sort of person one wants to be." It is not that Vygotsky is the only thinker

pointing to the importance of part-whole and whole-part reasoning; rather, it is the centrality he assigns to this kind of thinking that links it to Philosophy for Children, in which aesthetic experience plays such a major role. It keeps us from forgetting that Vygotsky, early on, was the author of a psychological treatise on art, *The Psychology of Art* (first published in English in 1971).

The article on charisma that I referred to earlier was written around 1955, perhaps six years after I had first read Vygotsky. During the earlier period, say from 1948 to 1950, my concern was not merely the matter of the social formation of thinking, but was more broadly the matter of the social formation of experience. Meyer Schapiro, a constant source of intellectual excitement and inspiration during this period, had told me about Paul Schilder's principal work, *The Image and Appearance of the Human Body*. Schilder maintained that every psychological disturbance revealed itself either in language or in deformations of the conception one had of one's own body—what Schilder called the "body-image." Since Schilder agreed with the notion (voiced earlier by Charles Peirce and G. H. Mead) that what we think of ourselves is based largely upon what we think other people think of us, he had come to the understanding that body-imagery is a communal rather than an individual matter: our body-image is an internalisation of the attitudes and opinions of others in our community towards ourselves. During this period, I even resolved to write a monograph some day on similarities between G. H. Mead, Martin Buber, and Paul Schilder on the relationship between society and the individual in the fashioning of individual experience.

That this interest in Schilder persevered, and that a residue of it was to be found in my later writing, could be verified not only by a glance at the chapter on the body-image in *What Happens in Art* (completed in 1952 but not published until 1967), but also by consideration of such passages as the one in *Kio and Gus* in which Gus, a blind girl, contrasts her way of knowing and creating with that of her summer friend, Kio. My reading of the experience of people lacking sight, during this 1948-1950 period, included Pierre Villey's *The World of the Blind*, Viktor Lowenfeld's *The Nature of Creative Activity*, and Lowenfeld and Munz's work, *Plastische Arbeiten Blindler*. It also included an essay by Schilder on children's conceptions of the insides of their bodies, as well as Bergson's metaphysical reflections on the difference between merely seeing the surfaces of a thing versus "knowing it from the inside" (in his *Introduction to Metaphysics*). The differences between Kio's way of making a peach and Gus's way are suggestive of epistemological differences between sighted and unsighted people, boys and girls, Western culture vs. Eastern culture, and haptic vs. optic.

As I reviewed Vygotsky's *Thinking and Language*, my attention centred on Chapter Six, "The Development of Scientific Concepts in Childhood," as well as on the second chapter, which dealt with Vygotsky's grounds for rejecting a number of claims made by Piaget. There are many things in these two portions of the book that seemed particularly familiar, but I shall take up only a few, at this point, as representative.

1. Vygotsky recognises that an indispensable component of education is consciousness-raising. We must not only learn to use our minds efficiently, but we must also become aware of how we use them. Thus, Vygotsky write:

"I have just tied a knot—I have done so consciously, yet I cannot explain how I did it, because my awareness was centred on the knot

rather than on my own motions, the how of my action. When the latter becomes the object of my awareness, I shall have become fully conscious. We use consciousness to denote awareness of the activity of the mind - the consciousness of being conscious. A pre-school child. . . knows his name, but is not conscious of knowing it." (TL, p. 91)

Now, one interpretation of "the consciousness of being conscious" has been developed under the title of "metacognition." This means knowing how we know, in the sense that students are encouraged to become aware of the causes and motives that dispose them to think as they do. According to this interpretation, metacognition is a useful component of education because it offers us an explanation of our own cognitive processing, and with that explanation in hand, we can set about improving the processing.

In contrast to the psychologists who emphasise the causes of mental activity, there are the philosophers who stress the components of such activity. I am talking about what philosophers call "mental acts": the very flora and fauna, the very landscapes of the mind: surmising, imagining, conceiving, denying, assuming, distinguishing and the like. What is more, philosophers tend to steer clear of causes and motives as the recognised territory of the psychologists, and to underscore the importance of reasons, about which few psychologists seem to have anything to say. Now, it may be contended that psychologists and philosophers are simply working with different parameters, in different, non-overlapping frames of reference. Philosophers, it will be said, are concerned with justification, not with explanation, and this is why philosophers emphasise the reasons employed in thinking rather than the causes. But this contention cannot be correct: metacognition is offered as a way of improving thinking, and it cannot do this unless it can show that some ways of thinking are more justifiable than others.

In *Thinking in Education*, I have employed the term "complex thinking" to refer to that kind of thinking that involves both substantive thinking (thinking about the issues under examination) and procedural thinking (thinking about how we think about the issues under examination). Certainly, then, my use of the term "complex thinking" involves metacognition in the way that term is used by psychologists as well as in the way it is used by philosophers. (It is complex in a way analogous to the way grammarians classify sentences that contain an independent and a dependent clause as complex.) But I will not deny that, when used in this fashion, "complex thinking" is to be understood rather differently from some of the other ways in which the term is currently being used.

Philosophy for Children persistently encourages complex thinking rather than merely substantive thinking. If, for example, the topic of whales come up, then children are invited, through exercises and discussion plans, to think about how we think about whales, how we reason about whales, how we judge whales, and so on. Perhaps if this were done more systematically throughout all the disciplines, children would have more intellectual weapons with which to fight their own dispositions towards bias and prejudice.

2. Internalisation. This is one of the key concepts in Vygotsky, and has to do with the social origins of thinking. (He often uses the terms "social" and "mental" as synonyms for "external" and "internal," and vice versa.) But, as Leont'ev has emphasised, he does not mean that an external activity is transferred to a preexisting, internal plane of

consciousness; rather, he means, by internalisation, the process in which this internal plane is formed. (Quoted by Wertsch, p. 64)

By social behaviour, Vygotsky means not only speech, but all forms of communicative interactions. An example Vygotsky uses, chosen because it is so primitive a form of communication, is pointing. (Even intelligent animals have difficulty grasping that pointing has to do with the object pointed at, and not with the hand.) The behaviour of pointing is one which other humans can readily identify with, with the consequence that they can attach to it the same meanings. Thus, in *What Happens in Art*, p. 59n:

"That to which the Parisian and I both point, and which lies at the intersection of the directions we indicate, is one and the same object, and although the connotations we each have of the name 'Eiffel Tower' may differ, our agreement on the name is based on our using a common method of identification. It is the implicitly agreed upon method which is universal; the end products themselves—this play by Racine, that still life by Chardin—and wholly individual and particularised."

What is internalised, then, is an activity. Internalised, the asking of a question in a group becomes the thinking of a question in a mind. The offering of an example to another becomes the thinking of an example as part of one's private mental activity. Social behaviour is the model which thinking behaviour replicates—not identically, necessarily, but similarly.

In the pedagogy of Philosophy for Children, the community of inquiry is indispensable as the social model for the particularised thinking of the members of the group. The inquiry behaviours adopted by the members vis-à-vis one another are internalised so as to become the mental counterpart or correlative of the external behaviours of the community members towards one another. Indeed, the sluggishness and inefficiency of the learning process that does not employ the community of inquiry as a model can be explained almost solely by that very omission.

But Philosophy for Children utilises the community of inquiry format in a way that is more intensive than is the case with other academic approaches, in the sense that the model community has concealed within it another model community. I am referring to the novels, used as texts, which depict a group of fictional children together engaged in inquiry of one sort or another. I am also referring to the instructional manuals, which contain discussion plans that instigate, among the live children in the classroom, the inquiry behaviours that the individual participants are being encouraged to emulate. (Pace Veblen! Not all emulation is deplorable!)

Internalisation in the classroom is much closer to the process by which the child, as a member of the family, acquires linguistic skills than it is to the process by which children are expected to learn from the teacher's teaching. The child in the family circle registers each communicative usage together with the circumstances under which that usage occurred; subsequently the child endeavours to replicate such usage, when similar circumstances seem to have occurred. If we want children to strengthen their reasoning, judgment and other cognitive proficiencies, we must attend much more than we have to the nature of the texts with which we provide them and to the structure of the classroom as a community setting.

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Philosophy for Children Association of New Zealand

Workshop/Conference
25th, 26th, 27th May 2001

Programme

Presenters:

Roger Sutcliffe (Keynote Speaker)

Dr Vanya Kovach
Clinton Golding
Sheree Campbell
Erin Hanifin
Gabriel Evans
Gary Pearce
Nicola Johnson

Jeremy Seligman
Graham Oliver
Soraya Gollop
Anne-Maree Olley
Suzanne Parkinson
Sue McRae

P4CNZ Annual General Meeting

The annual general meeting will take place at 4.30pm on Saturday. Anyone interested in being involved in the election of a new committee and coordinator, or in having input into the running of P4CNZ, is encouraged to attend.

The meeting will be followed by an informal dinner at Freya's in Ponsonby for all who would like to come.

Please advise Anne-Maree of your attendance to ensure sufficient places are booked: e-mail aolley@xtra.co.nz

PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN



P4CNZ Workshop/Conference 2001

Registration Form

Ponsonby Intermediate, May 25, 26, 27

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: H _____ W _____ Mobile _____

E-mail: H _____ W _____

My area of interest in P4C: (eg teacher, parent, philosopher)
If teacher, please state primary, secondary or tertiary.

Have you attended a P4C training course prior to this workshop/conference? (Please circle) YES/NO

Dietary preferences: (Please circle)

Vegetarian/ Non Vegetarian/ No Preference/Other: _____

Any special dietary considerations: (Please state)

How did you hear about this workshop/conference?

Cheque enclosed: (Please circle)

\$180, Registrations received prior to March 31.

\$220, Registrations received after March 31.

\$150, 3 or more attendees from the same organisation received by 31 March.

\$100, Students/unwaged

(Please circle)

I would/would not be interested in attending the Saturday night dinner at Freya's.

For any further queries please contact:

Anne-Maree Olley 021 1172212 aolley@xtra.co.nz

Please return registration by e-mail address above, or post to:
A Olley, c-/ I Boardman, State Highway 25, RD 2 Coromandel

The Encouragement of "Reasonableness" through the Practice of Philosophy with High School Children at Risk.

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cfox@uow.edu.au

Aim of the research project

The aim of the research was to engage in philosophical discussion with 12 high school students in grades nine and ten who were identified by their school - a seven to ten co-educational school situated in Western Sydney - as being at risk through their "unreasonable" behaviour. It was hoped that the practice of philosophy via a two hour session every school week over a one year span, would assist these young people attending a multi-cultural school in a socio-economically deprived area of Sydney, to think through their lives in the expectation that their social, intellectual and educational prospects would be enhanced.

It was the dominant idea that emerged from the literature - that the practice of Philosophy for Children is a liberating process which opens up to children 'greater understanding and insight', and that 'the thoughts, words and beliefs gained thereby resonate with behaviour'; (Splitter and Sharp 1995), along with the observation that Philosophy for Children had in the main, been located in the pre-school and primary sector of education, which prompted the researcher to investigate whether: the practice of philosophy could encourage reasonableness in high school children who were at risk.

Selection of participants

The identification of the participants was made by an existing school committee called 'The Students' Support Group', which was made up of the school principal, the assistant principal, the school counsellor, the four school house coordinators and other interested teachers. The researcher was not a member of this committee. An important factor in the choice of the participants was that their disruptive and "unreasonable" behaviour was not a result of reactions to any one teaching style or school staff member, but that it was exhibited across all subject areas, in the school playground and also with administrative and auxiliary staff.

What constitutes a reasonable person?

If as Splitter and Sharp (1995) maintain, that the concept of a reasonable person lies at the heart of Philosophy for Children, and arguably, of education and democracy, how was the concept understood in the context of this piece of research?

Sibley in grappling with the term 'reasonableness', (as outlined in Pritchard 1995), argues that within a nonmoral context, rationality and reasonableness may often be equated with each other. It is in a moral context that he sees a significant difference:

'To be reasonable here is to see the matter - as we commonly put it - from the other person's point of view, to discover how each will be affected by possible alternate actions; and, moreover, not merely to 'see' this (for any merely prudent person would do as much) but also to be prepared to be disinterestedly influenced in reaching a decision, by the estimate of these possible results'.

Sibley sees reasonableness as arising from the justification of behaviour according to principles that have been arrived at in common and as such capable of being referred to by all concerned.

Matthew Lipman stresses that the concept of reasonableness is socially related and bound up with knowledge and understanding (Lipman 1996 p.92). In an earlier work, Lipman and his colleagues (1980), show how the process of *discussion - reflection - internalisation* - process of Philosophy for Children is bound up with interpersonal dynamics which encourages sensitivity and insight into the differing perspectives of other persons. The perception gained from this process enables sound judgements to be made regarding others: 'Unless interpersonal sensitivity is fostered and encouraged as a prerequisite for the child's social development, that social development will be thwarted' (p.65). They further argue that the practice of Philosophy for Children encourages understanding of what is perceived socially appropriate and inappropriate in specific structures.

In encouraging children to develop an ethical understanding we must help them see the relationship between what they propose to do and the situation in which they propose to do it...Thus children must be sensitised to the ethical aspects of situations in such a way that they begin to sense that what they are doing is appropriate or inappropriate as they prepare to act on them. (p.81).

The democratic processes of a community of inquiry permits the tension which emerges when different perspectives on problematic issues are presented, to be harnessed creatively. The open ended nature of philosophic discussion encourages children to examine the reasons underlying their own position and to weigh up their argument in relation to the 'oppositional' ideas and reasoning of others. In an atmosphere where respect and consideration for others is strongly encouraged and where all participants have the right to express their opinion with confidence - there is not a pressure to maintain an intransigent position - face saving is not an issue. Such an atmosphere allows a child in the light of the good thinking of others, to modify their own position or indeed build on their own ideas or on the reasoning of others.

The knowledge gained in a community of inquiry is internalised therefore, when students manifest through their interactions with others, practices of reasonable behaviour. Indeed Splitter and Sharp maintain that 'reasonableness, as both a goal and a form of ongoing behaviour, is the cornerstone of the community of inquiry'(Splitter and Sharp 1995, p.7). They see reasonableness as being related to good thinking practices - the establishment of meaning, sound judgements, care of the personhood of others, and development of the individual thinker's own personhood. Reasonableness serves to present a holistic educational reality, to "bridge the cognitive and affective domains of education to focus on relationships among reasoners as well as relationships among reasons" (p.7). This interrelatedness Splitter and Sharp propose, presents a holistic educational reality.

Five criteria of reasonableness

In reference to the above considerations, **reasonableness** within the confines of this research was considered as a three dimensional concept: *intellectual, interpersonal* and *intrapersonal*. It involved:

1. The appreciation and pursuit of logical thought resting on knowledge.
2. Sensitivity to, and the valuing of, the opinions of others.

3. A willingness to change or modify an opinion because of the good thinking of others.
4. An awareness of, and consideration for, ethics.
5. An awareness and appreciation of social appropriateness.

The selection of participants for the research project therefore, came from students perceived by the participating school's student counselling arm (The Student Support Group) as lacking in most or all, of the above criteria.

Concerning the term 'at risk'

The term 'at risk' in the context of the research, meant that the twelve students invited to take part in this research project were ones that the Student Support Group identified as being at risk of being asked to leave the school because of their disruptive and uncooperative behaviour.

The Research Area

The researcher investigated:

- 1). The "nurture of reasonableness" through the practice of philosophy with high school students at risk.
- 2). What adaptations of the Matthew Lipman paradigm for practicing Philosophy with Children were beneficial in the context of the situation of these young people.

Indications that Philosophy for Children can alter children's behaviour positively

The literature revealed several examples of research which indicated that children's behaviour could be positively altered through the practice of philosophy. Among the research is the 1995 UK study by Joyce Field. Although Field was primarily concerned to study whether 'average' children as young as grade two, could be emergent philosophers, she also noted positive behavioural changes which she believed came about as the result of the practice of philosophy. Susan Gardner's recently initiated study in Canada (1998) is involved in a West Vancouver school where it is hypothesised that participation over a sustained period of time in a community of inquiry nourishes principled and moral behaviour in children.

A qualitative inquiry with some modest quantitative data

A qualitative/multiple case study approach, with the researcher as a participant observer, was chosen based on the following considerations: Group projects (other than this project) occurred in the School Learning Centre on a daily basis and as such were perceived by the school community as being an everyday educational occurrence. The setting therefore was a naturalistic one as the participants were operating within a normal school context.

A major component of the project was to determine what adaptations needed to be made to Matthew Lipman's model of doing philosophy with children in the context of this particular study i.e.:

- * the participants of this project had been classified as disruptive and uncooperative by their school community and as a consequence of their behaviour they were at risk of being asked to leave the school community
- * the project occurred in a multi-cultural high school in what is recognised as a socio-economically deprived area of Sydney.

The generality and non-categorical nature of these factors called for a flexible qualitative approach as it was estimated that the study would itself '...structure the research, not preconceived ideas or any precise research design'(Bogdan and Biklen 1992, p.58).

One of the expectations that a facilitator has when starting a philosophy group for children under the principles of Lipman's paradigm, is that ultimately a community will be formed. The researcher therefore, was not only interested in the intellectual, social and educational enhancement of the individual participants, but was also interested in the possibilities of their development as a cohesive group with a corporate search for meaning.

Interacting with the group as a participant observer, making genuine - sometimes risky contributions to the community's inquiries - allowed the researcher a teacher at the school and as such could have been perceived by the participants to be representing staff interests (Bogdan and Biklen 1992) to acquire over time '.... the status of a trusted person ... that motivated them [participants] to tell what otherwise they might not have' (Glesne and Peshkin 1992, p.39).

Research design

The research involved assembling the twelve students from grades nine and ten with behavioural problems, who had been recommended by the school's Student Support Group, for two consecutive periods each week.¹ The sessions were 28 in number and were conducted from the 12th March 1998 to the 5th November 1998. It was originally envisaged that the participants would sit around a table and voluntary turns would be taken to read aloud stories that had been specifically written for children's philosophic inquiry. After allowing a time for reflection, participants were to be asked to respond to the narrative text via questions, statements and identification of problematic issues, which were then to be written down on a whiteboard along with the student's name. Links or connections between contributions were to be made so that an agenda for discussion could be worked out. It was also originally planned that the novel *Suki*, written in 1978 by Lipman for a target group of grades nine and ten would be used. The formal nature of the above approach had to be discontinued after four sessions and the novel *Suki* was never used because the researcher increasingly came to appreciate that the substance of *Suki* would hold no interest for this group of young people and that other stimulus material would have to be found. The following approach was adopted:

The participants gathered each week around a table in the school's Learning Centre or around a video player in the school library, where we investigated stimuli - chosen in many cases by the participants themselves - for philosophic content. The audio tapes of the sessions were transcribed completely or in part by the researcher. Data of the sessions or data associated with the participants including participant self evaluation of their philosophic sessions; extracts from the transcript; reflection of the researcher on the session; interviews with teachers and anecdotal material, were recorded in a sequential sessions in order to relay a historical perspective. The stimuli used included short story anthologies; an extract from the novel *Anna Karenina* (1997) by Tolstoy; space video documentaries; a documentary video program about the human body; a contemporary film; a popular song and some poetry. After the 7th session the agenda for

¹ The Student Support Group members recommended that some students should not be put in combination with certain other students. They also recommended that the proposed community of inquiry group should contain some students who were recognised as helpful and reasonable young people, so that correct co-operative behaviour would be modelled. I declined on both counts, asking that the students be chosen on the basis of greatest need in the area of reasonableness and that 'unsuitable' combinations not be considered.

discussion was not written on a whiteboard as originally planned, but occurred in a more spontaneous way.

There was from the outset, an expectation that the researcher's 'authority' role as a teacher would ultimately disappear in an egalitarian community where all opinions would be given equal respect and consideration. Out of recognition of the established behavioural problems of the student participants however, and the deliberate absenting of students who could act as role models, it was realistically expected that the researcher would have to have a high profile to begin with as she modelled and scaffolded the process of inquiry.

Profiles of Participants

| Name | Sex | Grade | Age |
|------|-----|-------|-----|
| C | M | 10 | 15 |
| X | M | 9 | 15 |
| P | M | 9 | 15 |
| M | F | 10 | 16 |
| T | M | 9 | 14 |
| B | M | 10 | 15 |
| K | M | 10 | 15 |
| G | M | 9 | 14 |
| E | F | 9 | 14 |
| S | M | 10 | 15 |
| L | M | 9 | 14 |
| Y | M | 9 | 14 |

Collection of data - the research tools

The following tools were perceived to be appropriate to the project because they allowed all stakeholders - student participants, researcher and other adult members of the school community, opportunities to gauge any growth in reasonableness both on an individual and community level. Anonymity of participants was also a consideration, consequently a tape recorder was chosen in preference to a video recorder.

Individual growth in reasonableness:

Individual growth in reasonableness was gauged via the following:

- * The differences in a pre and post questionnaire filled out by the Student Support Group using a Dependent t Test
- * Comments made by the Student Support Group on the pre and post questionnaires
- * Comments made by other teachers and auxiliary staff
- * Observation by the researcher
- * Analysis of the audio tapes of the sessions by the researcher for indicators of individual growth or otherwise, in reasonableness

Community growth in reasonableness

Community growth in reasonableness was gauged via

- * group evaluation after each session
- * researcher observation
- * analysis of the audio tapes of the sessions by the researcher.

Relationship between researcher and student participants

Of significant interest has been the type of relationship that developed between the researcher and the participants. The role adopted with this group of year nine and ten students was very different to the one involved in

conventional year 9 or 10 classes or philosophy groups. This difference has primarily resided in the growing patience and easy manner of facilitation which resulted in the students being more active in running the agenda. Initially the researcher was seen perhaps as a representative of a 'teacher class', a representative who was in a somewhat vulnerable position regarding their comments and frustrations. Gradually the role became dualistic in that the researcher/participant became also something of a trusted counsellor and adviser.

The invitation issued to the group to call the researcher by her first name at the outset of the meetings, while initially being taken up by the participants, was ultimately rejected by them as early as session 6. After this session the student participants referred to the writer as 'Miss', or 'Mrs. Mac'. Certainly the student participants were always respectful, particularly after session 4, and over time were keen to perform little courtesies for the researcher such as making her a cup of coffee, ensuring that they helped to put things away after meetings without being asked to do so; sharing sweets or drinks; in T's case, taking a scythe home after session 12 to restore it. None of the participants ever tried to take advantage, either in the playground, in the classroom or elsewhere in the school, of the relationship of trust that existed in the philosophy meetings. In session 24, P pulled himself up before he fully stated the word 'stupid' in relation to the researcher's comment that 'beauty could be found on the inside'. This retraction did not occur out of any student "fear" of a teacher, for these young people were not fearful about speaking their minds to anyone, it was quite simply a slip up in courtesy which P immediately sought to rectify.

Horowitz (1986) interestingly points out that the role of the researcher is formed via the continuing interaction between the researcher and the participants in the research project:

'Together the qualities and attributes of the fieldworker interact with those of the setting and its members to shape, if not create, an emergent role for the researcher (1986 p.410).

The researcher's role formulated by the interactions of the group appears to have been that of an adviser - a counsellor - or even a group elder. The reality is that the researcher has been at home in that role. That is not to say that it would be appropriate to her conventional year 9 or 10 subject classes or to philosophy groups, but it has been appropriate to this group of young people and their needs within the context of their school life. It has also been appropriate for the researcher as a participant observer looking at the need of these student participants to gain greater levels of reasonableness so that they could function more harmoniously in their social spheres. As a teacher in their school the writer is optimistic that the style of interaction has encouraged and nurtured growth in reasonableness.

Were the sessions philosophic in nature?

W. Turgeon (1998) in discussing the ideas of Berrie Heesen, posits that rather than being concerned about whether children's discussion constitutes philosophy or not, there should be a 'focus on the liveliness of the ensuing discussion'. 'One goal of philosophy in the classroom', she posits, 'should be the creation of an atmosphere of openness, acceptance and encouragement of expression. A second, more rigorous meaning', she continues, 'would be the formal activity of stimulating children to think together about each other's thoughts and ideas in dialogic form' (p.15). Undoubtedly, the sessions together constituted such dynamic and open examination of each other's thoughts and ideas in an atmosphere of encouragement of expression. While

Palsson (1988) pushes for strong procedural techniques in doing philosophy with children, he also acknowledges however, that there is a significant place for spontaneity, this spontaneity he maintains actually 'transcends applications of pure techniques'(295).

In examining the features of a philosophic discussion Splitter and Sharp (1995 p.128-133) adopt a rigorous approach in their identification of three indicators which attest to philosophic discussion taking place:

- * reasoning and inquiry
- * concept formation
- * meaning making

They maintain that the presence of 'reasoning and inquiry' are evident by the use of such vocabulary as would seek to make *distinctions*; *recognise relationships*; *supply analogies*; *demand logic*; *make inferences*; *recognise assumptions and give examples*.

The sessions particularly from the middle to latter parts of the research do appear to the writer, to provide examples of philosophic discussion. To take session 19 for example; when B sought to know the origins of desire - when he sought to know if desires were based in physical or mental realms - he was endeavouring to make a *distinction*. S in his effort to test the truth of the statement: 'The eyes are the windows of the soul'; found an exception and thus he believed the statement to be disproved. In an unwieldy way he used deductive reasoning, going from the particular to the general, to disprove this statement under community scrutiny. Further on in the same discussion C asked: 'But where did the soul originate from?' S offered to his companions the idea that the soul might be an individual's personality; but then almost immediately saw a difficulty in his own hypothetical *example* because of the existence of people with multiple personalities. B after some further discussion about the nature of the soul used the *analogy* of a computer shutting down to describe his ideas about death. Y took up B's idea to question the *assumption* that he and others have had about life after death. He sought to know if such concepts had been humanly constructed. P followed Y's question up to ask one of his own. Why would people make up such things as heaven and hell? T followed through with an extension to P's question when he sought to have proof: 'How do people know that there is a heaven and a hell?' Further on again when the subject of why calamities happen to good people arose, the statement was made that two people known to the school community, had died because 'God wanted them'. B responded with the rejoinder that to say 'God wanted them' is to *infer* that God did not want us. At the conclusion of this session, following on from P's concern about a man, who under the influence of liquor had been badly treated by some youths, M demonstrates empathy, or at least sensitiveness towards those with disabilities. She stated that she no longer laughed with her friends at people with disabilities and as a result suffered disapproval from some of her friends.

In regard to 'concept formation' Splitter and Sharp (1995), maintain that asking questions about such things as 'cause, space, time, hypothesis, theory and law is different from asking questions about how in fact, the world functions in accordance with these concepts. Continuing with session 19 as the source of examples; this session did indeed see the exploration of concepts as the participants wrestled with such ideas as 'the nature of desire', 'the nature of the soul', 'the possibility of life after death', and 'the nature of guilt'.

In regard to 'meaning making', Splitter and Sharp 'include under this heading all those strategies which the community of inquiry employs in its ongoing quest to make sense of that which is puzzling, confusing, ambiguous, vague or in other ways problematic' (p.130). In summary of this 'meaning making' indicator, Splitter and Sharp posit that meaning making occurs when there are in the dialogue: 'questions and statements which reveal a search for the connections that make meaning' (Splitter and Sharp 1995 p.131).

The most evident example of 'meaning making' within session 19 for the researcher, is a segment in which the participants explored their puzzlement over the recent death in their school community of a father and son in a boating accident. In their discussion they recognise the basic goodness of the family involved, particularly the good nature of the father. The problem for all of the participants is one that has puzzled millions of human beings before them - Why does "bad" things happen to good people? They were concerned to examine what has come to be called "the problem of evil".

The researcher posits therefore, that the participants did demonstrate the indicators of Splitter and Sharps' requirements of a philosophic discussion, that is, there were examples of: reasoning and inquiry; concept formation and meaning making. They did during this research project, engage in philosophical discourse - not always, and not with any great linguistic polish - but philosophical discourse did occur in what appeared to the researcher to be with one or two moderate regressions, increasing commitment.

Was community achieved?

There was an absence of community from the earlier sessions and session 4 provides a particularly virulent example of the workings of the group in the early stages of the project. The transcript of this session reveals animosity towards each other. There are examples of put-down; intolerance of racial and ethnic difference; covert threats of violence, and general procedural uncooperativeness. Violence against someone of another colour was held by S, P, X, T, K and to a certain extent L, as being acceptable. This early session was singularly lacking in any semblance of logic or desire to objectively explore in the interests of truth, areas of "difference". P stated in this session a determination to return to his motherland once he was old enough, and several of the participants expressed in one way or another, their hope that he would do exactly that!

Session 12 saw a revisiting of the subject of racism, only this time the members of the group - including P, referred to themselves as 'us Australians' in spite of the reality that there was a wide variety of cultural backgrounds and national origins. Session 23 again saw the subject of racism introduced and there appeared to be some further growth in community as the participants genuinely recognised the cultural and linguistic needs of ethnic and racial groups within the Australian context. T was something of an exception here, for while he recognised the linguistic needs of cultural and ethnic groups, he did not agree with persons speaking their mother tongue in front of non speakers of that language. Even this deviation from the group opinion was not put in a dogmatic way however. In this session P also stated that his position of bitterness towards all white people had changed. S also recognised that he had moved away from his position of intolerance towards new settlers to Australia [from Asia, Africa and the Middle East], to one of 'acceptance'.

Another example of the participants' growth in community was in session 24. After weekly evaluations which progressively demonstrated that they were adopting for the most part, higher procedural and substantive standards, the participants gave themselves an endorsement in their journal by recognising their growth in community. It took 24 sessions however, before two of the participants T and P were able to go through a whole session without some form of - albeit minor - altercation. T's isolation from the group was rectified in this session, the researcher would argue, by the ensuing dialogue which explored the nature of superstition and which constructively touched upon the regrets and worries that he felt surrounding his brother's drug related death.

Community of these diverse young people was further demonstrated by their reaction and delight in session 25 to M gaining first place in 'The Year of The Ocean International Competition'. There were perceptible illustrations of how each member of the group wished her well and shared in her success. The presentation made to me by the participants at the beginning of session 28 - our last meeting - indicated a communal cohesiveness and good will that had grown over the course of the sessions.

While the above examples of community are obvious ones, the researcher would argue, that there were "snatches" of community from session 5 onwards. The researcher would also posit that - with some regressions - these snatches increased in number and length of time over the flow of the project. Community was demonstrated for example as early as session 5 in the empathy that was shown towards T when he revealed the tragic nature of his uncle's and brother's deaths. Community awareness was also apparent in the student participant's willingness and efforts in session 14 to explore concepts in poetry, a medium previously, by their own admission, not held to be important to them. Even their efforts to obtain reassurance about the sincerity of my care towards them as a group, in session 16, demonstrated their awareness of themselves as a community.

Was a community of inquiry achieved?

Hreinn Palsson (1987) in his thesis entitled *Educational Saga: Doing Philosophy for Children in Iceland*, posits that: 'A [philosophical] community of inquiry is not necessary to improve students' reasoning when working with the Philosophy for Children program (p.295). Palsson in his research, registered qualitative improvements in children's reasoning over time without the development of a philosophical community of inquiry. The participants of this research project however, did on many occasions engage in philosophical discussion which did allow a community of philosophical inquiry to emerge, particularly in the latter sessions of the research. The statement that a community of philosophical inquiry did emerge is not to claim however, that the emergence of such a community lasted for whole sessions - except perhaps for two sessions, 24 and 28.

At the beginning of the project there were 12 participants all proclaimed by the Student Support Group to be at risk through their behaviour, of being asked to leave the school. Between session 2 and 3 G's parents were asked by the school administration to locate him at another school. Between the 4th and 5th session, K's parents were also requested to find him another school. There were no further exclusions from the school until X was asked to leave after session-20. That three participants had to leave what the researcher believes to be a caring and student centered school, was extremely regrettable. Their departure, particularly X's, constituted for the researcher sad events.

In spite of the forced exits from the school of K, G and X, the writer is still heartened by the hope that attempts to become more rational through the practice of philosophy sessions - limited though they might have been - may assist K (4 sessions) and X (19 sessions), towards a more reasoned and even existence. On balance however, there was extreme satisfaction gained from the school's retention of the nine other participants. This satisfaction was further added to by the diminishing reputation of the participants in regard to anti-social, unethical and uncooperative behaviour. There was also data to suggest that individual participants such as E, L and M were endeavouring to seek support and improve thereby their academic pursuits. The comments registered by The Student Support Group at the base of the post questionnaires issued to them, further attest to their improved perceptions of the participants. Towards the latter part of the project, anecdotal comments made by teachers, and auxiliary staff encouraged the researcher to believe that the participants had grown in reasonableness. Further, in the case of C, M, E, L, Y, P and to a limited extent T, there was anecdotal comments made by teachers that indicated an increase in commitment and application to their school work. This was further endorsed by the repeated comment by teachers that the researcher should take into her group certain other students who were gaining a reputation for unreasonableness. Splitter and Sharp (1995) in *Teaching For Better Thinking* state that if teachers assert that philosophy improves children's school based skills and knowledge, 'then their collective opinion should be taken seriously'(p.151).

So what?

As stated in the research design, participant assessment of their own procedural practices and observation of the quality of their substantive material, was also recognised as constituting data for the research. The participants, as the sequential flow of their assessment comments tend to show, were unaware at the earlier stages of the project, of the requirements of co-operative discursive behaviour. Time and practice, along with their gradual discarding of specific questions in order to evaluate the quality of the sessions, in favour of "discussion about their discussion", reformed and heightened both their individual and community standards. In seeking to evaluate the "so what" or value to the participants, of increases in reasonableness, it would seem appropriate to re quote Lipman, Sharp and Oscanyan (1980): 'The interest of the individual in the improved management of his own life must be acknowledged to have priority, for we can have no better incentive [by doing philosophy] than to see our lives improve upon thinking them through' (p.XIV). They go on to say: 'it may well be that the program has served not simply to accelerate children's growth but to enlarge their capacity for growth... (ibid., p. 66).

The choice of participants for this research project revolved around their being at risk of being asked to find another school because of their school based behaviour. For three participants this concern eventuated into a reality. Such an occurrence brings pain to the young person involved, their caregivers and family; the relationships with school peers and friends are also adversely effected. On a school level, administrators and teachers are also pained by the whole process. The evaluative "so what?" should take into account therefore, that for nine participants of this project, the practice of philosophy within a group - and the eventual emergence of a community of inquiry - has, the researcher posits, contributed to the retention of these young people within the school community. Further it can also be said that

to become more reasonable is to enhance the lives of those who surround us by increasing the logic, sensitivity, respectful awareness, ethics and social appropriateness of our relations with them.

Facilitator's role

The original intention at the outset of this project was to try to follow Lipman's paradigm for Philosophy for Children as closely as possible. Of particular concern was the encouragement of a situation where the researcher's role as facilitator decreased to such an extent that it would be indistinguishable from that of any other member of the group. Such a diminishment would have been in keeping with Lipman's paradigm. This in fact did not happen. The researcher's role as facilitator remained prominent. It should be stated however, that in no way did the participants ever seek to use the group relationship outside of philosophy meetings to their advantage, but they did approach the researcher from time to time for assistance with academic projects.

Analysis of the audio tapes of the early sessions demonstrated that much of the two hour sessions was extremely unruly. A great deal of the time was spent in the students "getting of track", and the researcher attempting to get them back on. In the early sessions the talk was semi-philosophical 'in the sense that the issues were really philosophical, but they were not worked in a philosophical spirit' (Palsson 1988 p.299). The student participants, again particularly in the early sessions, often succeeded in turning these semi or prospective philosophical discussions into therapeutic sessions in which they aired grievances and resentments. Lipman's theory and stated procedures recommend avoidance of such therapeutic happenings. Further this direction was contrary to the researcher's past experience with children's philosophy groups, where after the presentation of narrative stimuli, entry into a philosophic discussion occurred with a certain natural ease.

In and around the session 7 however, attempts to air grievances diminished and when they did occur the writer did not resist them as she had in the earlier sessions. The change in attitude was due to a realisation that these grievances were extremely significant to the participants and therefore a worthwhile and relevant topic of discussion. Further the researcher had come to realise that the discussion of problems often opened up different perspectives on the issue, and in so doing encouraged reasonableness. An example of this occurred in session 2 when the power of parents over their children was first perceived almost totally in negative terms. Through the ensuing discussion however, the students themselves recognised that in the majority of cases, parents were concerned to choose what they considered, best for their children. A certain recognition relating to the acquired wisdom of parents through life experience, also emerged in this discussion

The needs of these young people in the context of the early sessions, demanded the recognition not only of their individual differences, but also involved their need to express their confusion and resentment regarding their school based realities. Bohn (1989) states that in order to make meaning within a discussion group, it is first necessary to recognise differences. Coherent shared meaning he maintains, evolves working through difference. In support of the therapeutic nature of these first sessions -and elements of some subsequent sessions as for example, session 21 - the working through of these differences allowed the cup to be empty so that it was free to hold other things (Bohn 1989 p.5).

Flexibility of discussion stimulus material

In further discussion of the role that emerged for the researcher/facilitator, there was often a strong awareness of the thinking of both Vygotsky (1934) and Shor and Freire (1987) who were perceived by the researcher as having aspects of compatibility. In their need for specific adult guidance, the researcher was conscious of Vygotsky's premise that it is the people in a child's world who promote development; and there was also an awareness of his assertion that the only worthwhile learning occurs when a child is drawn on beyond where they would be without intervention. In spite of their appearance of self assuredness, it became increasingly more apparent that this group of students was most in need of scaffolding in the area of their self confidence. Part of the facilitator's strategy in this regard was in minor opposition to Lipman's ideas surrounding the choice of stimulus material for promoting discussion. In recognition of their individual and corporate life experience, the group was allowed to turn away from the narratives that had been specifically written for philosophic discussion and to choose stimuli that was more contextually relevant to their interests.

The thinking of Shor and Freire (1987) influenced the researcher's approach in regard to flexibility of stimuli, in that they posit that there is a necessity to creatively adjust a proposed course of pedagogy to the needs of the students who are involved (1987 p.115). Freire in particular perceived the teacher's role as: 'a helper of the students in their process of formation, of their growing up'(ibid., p.118). He also perceived this process as being an 'artistic one', the teacher as it were, sensitive to the needs of the students at that point in time - at that point in their formation - and therefore assisting them with what ever scaffolding they needed in their process of their self shaping.

The difficult social and economic realities of the majority of these young people's lives were in all probability the reason that excluded them from finding meaning in the specially written philosophic texts. These philosophic texts however, have been very useful with other communities of inquiry that the researcher has facilitated within the school. In contrast to other groups and in contrast to the usual operations of a community of inquiry, there was a constant need for the researcher to be with the group. Whereas in some groups it is possible for the facilitator to be absent for limited periods of time, this was not the case with this group of students.

Journey towards reasonableness

The words 'towards reasonableness' encapsulate the essence of what the group experienced together. There was never an arrival at 'a state of reasonableness'; but can ever such a claim be made? As a group - and ever increasingly as a community - there was a strong endeavour to go in that direction, although at times, particularly in the beginning, progress was often bogged down by personal differences and prejudices. At first the researcher was "discouraged" by lack of sustained philosophic discussion. Then an appreciation began to form that the context of our group was not dissimilar to teachers and professionals working with children in Special Education - what may be considered a small step in conventional pedagogical terms often constitutes a big step within the confines of Special Education.

It is owned by the researcher that she had often to intervene in order to repair or redirect the discussion, so that it not break down under the weight of personal differences. The happy reality is however, that discussion did take place. In between these personal differences, and in spite of the banter

and rowdiness involved in the sessions of these dynamic young people - particularly the early sessions - there were increasingly longer stretches of meaningful dialogue where the participants challenged not the personalities of their peers, but each other's arguments in the interests of reasoning and inquiry, concept formation and meaning making (Splitter and Sharp 1995 p.131).

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Philosophy for Children and the Promotion of Student High Level Cognitive Talk in Small-Group Cooperative Learning

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Abstract

This descriptive study examines student talk during Philosophy for Children classes in a small-group cooperative learning setting. It builds upon several studies by Associate Professor King and his colleagues in analysing student talk, and the conditions that affect it, in small-group work. Four Philosophy for Children lessons with a class of 23 year seven students in a Catholic primary school form the content for the study which was based on a cognitive psychological framework of cooperative learning. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques to analyse the nature and degree of connection between the intent and form of cooperative learning set by the teacher (conditions) and student talk in Philosophy for Children lessons. The data revealed that the quality of student cognitive discussion was uniformly high with nearly all discussion being task enhancing in nature. In the MAKITAB analysis 53.9% of student talk involved higher-order thought. Metacognitive processes in reviewing the task and group evaluation were also evident. Analysis also showed that 14.3% of student statements involved cognitive questioning. In the NUD*IST analysis 38.8% of student group talk contained words or phrases associated with key word groups such as think, argue, understand, meaning, question, classify and perspective. It has been concluded these results most likely resulted from the cognitive intent and the conditions of learning set in place by the teacher. These include the transfer of social and communication skills from the whole class to the small-group setting; the modelling of language and thinking style by the teacher; the use of Philosophy for Children as a study domain; and the teacher's role fulfilment, expertise and enthusiasm in promoting thinking and building a community of inquiry.

Introduction

In the past ten years research into teacher influences on student cognitive processes during small-group cooperative learning has emerged as a significant domain of inquiry (Meloth, Deering & Sanders, 1993). Such a move has occurred against a background of research that has mainly focussed on social psychological aspects of cooperative learning. In recent times more research attention has been given to aspects of cooperative learning that are more cognitive psychological in nature. Our study into the use of Philosophy for Children within small-groups has continued the probe into the cognitive psychological domain of cooperative learning.

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Specifically the study attempted to:

1. Provide some understanding about the development and complexity of students' thinking in Philosophy for Children classes.
2. Observe and analyse student talk during small-group cooperative learning in Philosophy for Children classes.
3. Establish the nature and degree of connection between the intent and form of small-group cooperative learning set by the teacher (conditions) and the kind of peer group interactions and talk (discussion).

Theoretical Framework

Collaborative Learning

Recent work in the study of teaching world-wide has resulted in strong support for collaborative learning. Most product studies suggest that students attain academic learning gains equivalent or better than those attained in traditional learning situations (Slavin, 1991, Good & Brophy, 1997). According to Slavin (1992) much current research into small-group cooperative learning has focussed on social psychological outcomes such as group composition, group member roles, decision making processes, evenness of group member contributions, and learning of other group process skills along with kinds of accountability and reward structures.

While the social psychological perspective of small-group learning has been the focus for most researchers a small group of researchers have been focussing on cognitive psychological outcomes relating to learning processes and achievement (Bennett & Dunne, 1991; Bossert, 1989; Cohen, 1991; Galton & Williamson, 1992; Meloth, Deering & Sanders, 1993; Noddings, 1989) For example, Bennett and Dunne (1991) discussed how teacher verbal behaviour and use of particular teaching skills influenced the quality of student talk and probably the quality of student learning.

The lead given by Bennett and Dunne (1991) on the development of higher cognitive level talk and therefore, by implication, better thinking has been a current emphasis in the cooperative learning literature. The student learning theories of Bruner (1986) and Vygotsky (1978) posit the importance of group social interactions in the development of student cognition and thinking. Students working in small groups can engage in what Bennett and Dunne (1991) refer to as task-enhancing talk, a theme that we pursued in another study (King, Barry, Maloney & Tayler, 1997). Further focussing of the relationship between cooperative learning and developing thinking was provided by Meloth, Deering and Sanders (1993) when they suggested a cognitive psychological perspective to match the existing social psychological perspective in research on cognitive learning. Such a cognitive psychological perspective sought to investigate the progressive connections between the teacher's cognitive intent for group work, the prevailing conditions set for the group work, the quality of student interactions and talk occurring during group work, and the quality of learning that resulted relative to the teacher's original cognitive intent.

Our studies (King, Barry & Zehnder, 1996; Barry, King, Pitts-Hill & Zehnder, 1998) confirmed the usefulness of the Meloth, Deering and Sanders research framework in investigating how cooperative learning facilitates the development of student thinking. In particular conditions of learning relating to the type of group task (convergent or divergent) and the teacher's whole class introduction, group monitoring behaviours,

whole-class interventions and lesson wrap-up were shown to be related to the quantity and quality of student talk (King, Barry, Maloney & Tayler, 1997). The issue of group task was explored in more depth in a study by King, Barry and Zehnder (1996). This study found that the nature of problem-solving tasks set for cooperative learning seemed to be associated with the amount and quality of student talk. Problems with variable answers of a divergent problem-solving nature were associated with a greater number of student-talk interactions and a higher proportion of cognitive level talk. Problems with a single solution and of a convergent nature on the other hand gave rise to a lesser amount and a lower cognitive level of student talk. The study also confirmed previous work in that higher cognitive level talk was also influenced by such conditions as key teacher behaviours in the whole class introduction, group monitoring, whole-class interventions and lesson wrap-up. Moreover, the conditions of cooperative learning set by the composition and functioning of groups also impacted on the quality of student talk.

This study builds on our work, and that of Meloth, Deering and Sanders (1993), within the cognitive psychological perspective on small-group cooperative learning. In particular the view that a teacher's cognitive intent shapes the nature of the cooperative learning task (conditions) and the kind and quality of student talk (discussion) during small-group interaction. However, the study also seeks to bring together the movement for helping students learn to think through Philosophy for Children and the cognitive psychological perspective on small-group cooperative learning. In both research lines the role of the teacher is seen to be of vital importance. The belief system and the pedagogical expertise of the teacher provide the foundation for the success or otherwise of this union.

Philosophy for Children

The study of teaching literature currently embraces helping students learn to think as one prominent line of research endeavour (Good & Brophy, 1997). Based on theories about how students learn (Gagne, 1986; Piaget, 1950; Vygotsky, 1978) researchers and educators have shown considerable interest in how students can engage in higher cognitive level talk, develop higher order thinking, and learn about how they learn and perceive learning.

But the teaching of Philosophy for Children opens new lines of approaching this research effort. Those promoting Philosophy for Children, such as Lipman (1991) and Splitter (1995a), point to conceptualising the teaching of thinking not so much in terms of thinking skills or in terms of a hierarchy of lower to higher-order thinking skills but rather, firstly, as better thinking within the discipline of philosophy and, secondly, within a classroom environment that can be regarded as a community of inquiry. The advantage claimed about learning to think better in Philosophy for Children is that, once learned, students are then free to apply such learning to any other classroom domain or discipline (Splitter, 1995b).

According to Splitter (1995b, p.15) the following tools and dispositions are more or less central to the notion of Philosophy for Children:

- the skills of argumentation (forming conclusions, identifying premises, deductive and non-deductive thinking, exposing poor reasoning, striving for consistency)
- a propensity to question and search for reasons rather than simply accept what is given

- identifying, applying and modifying the criteria by which we form judgements (including value judgements) and make decisions
- making distinctions that allow us to see the complexity of things (the 'grey' between the black and white)
- identifying relationships that help us make sense of things (including relations between cause and effect, means and ends, parts and wholes)
- exercising 'moral imagination' by contemplating different ways of proceeding, and representing alternative moral positions and world views (the 'What if...?' strategy).

In addition to these tools and dispositions in the teaching of Philosophy for Children considerable importance is also placed on building a community of inquiry characterised by:

a teaching and learning environment 'which practises what it preaches'. It is both student-centred and highly structured, with a focus on improving critical thinking and reasoning, inquiry-based questioning, collaborative dialogue and communication, imagination, and building self-esteem through active participation (Splitter, 1995b, p.18).

According to Freakley and Burgh (2000) in building a community of inquiry the teacher needs to be able to facilitate a number of skills relating to having students:

- engage with each other as members of a community of inquiry (eg. attentive listening; openness to alternative ideas)
- engage with the ideas experienced in an inquiry discussion (eg. stating ideas clearly, questioning)
- engage in the skills of critical thinking (eg. engaging in self-correction, identifying fallacious reasoning).

In developing these skills teachers typically spend a considerable amount of time throughout the year facilitating trust activities, practising social skills and sharpening thinking and information processing skills.

Methodology

Design

The research was designed as a single classroom case study involving the teacher and 23 students of a seventh grade class (12 year olds) in a medium sized suburban Catholic school.

Background of Students

This sample of 23 students (11 boys and 12 girls) was drawn from a medium socio-economic area. The class had a wide range of ability with above average, average and below average achievers. Students had a sound background in religious and moral issues.

During their seven years of primary schooling the students had from time to time been involved in small-group work but had not had formal, sustained and intensive instruction and experience in small-group cooperative learning lessons. Initially, Philosophy for Children lessons were conducted with students in a circle on a whole class basis. However, throughout the year there had been a continual emphasis on social and communication skills; skills that are fundamental to collaborative learning (see below).

The students had been involved in the Philosophy for Children program for eight months. In this time the teacher, in Freakley and Burgh's (2000) terms, had built a community of inquiry characterised by:

Students engaging with each other through:

- sitting in a circle with face-to-face interaction
- attentive listening (looks like, sounds like, feels like)
- speaking clearly so all can hear
- taking turns; one person speaking at a time
- working as a group - whole group discussions in a large circle - student talk does not have to involve the teacher
- trusting the group (not to laugh at other contributions, no put downs)
- treating each other with respect; caring for each other
- giving people time to think/make points
- constructing an opinion before explaining and justifying it
- appreciating the contribution of others
- accepting that it is okay to make mistakes
- controlling annoyance/anger
- having the courage to put a point of view to the class

Students engaging with ideas through:

- defining terms and exploring assumptions
- thinking independently
- asking questions (especially divergent questions)
- accepting the ideas of others in a non-judgmental manner (being appreciative; disagreeing in an agreeable way)
- sharing, and building on, other ideas
- listening to other points of view
- looking for alternative points of view
- paraphrasing ideas - and the ideas of others
- clarifying thoughts or asking for clarification from others
- sticking to the discussion point
- justifying what is being said
- testing the truth - giving examples and counter examples
- contributing to the whole-class discussion
- accepting silence as thinking time
- accepting the notion that there may be no one right or wrong answer
- engaging in hypothetical reasoning
- writing or drawing in a Philosophy for Children journal

Students engaging in critical thinking through:

- identifying weaknesses in a definition
- identifying or questioning underlying assumptions in a point of view
- disagreeing over ideas (but not with the person)
- being able to change one's mind or the minds of other students
- being consistent in an argument (eg. using logic; avoiding contradictions)
- identifying fallacies in arguments
- recognising inconsistency/ies in an argument.

A Typical Whole-class Format for a Philosophy for Children Lesson

Before the introduction of cooperative learning a typical format for a Philosophy for Children lesson was:

1. Pre-lesson Organisation

Students seated in a large circle; 23 students (11 boys, 12 girls)

2. Oral Reading

Teacher sets a reading from a stimulus story (typically from *Thinking stories* edited by Philip Cam). Students read aloud, one at a time in a circle. Each student read orally a numbered section of about four sentences

3. Think-time/Generation of questions

When the reading of the story was completed, the teacher allowed 30 seconds private thinking, then called for possible questions for discussion. The teacher emphasised that the questions were to be divergent questions. Student questions were written on a chart.

Examples of questions from one lesson included: Does outer beauty change the person you are? How come people tease you if you are tall or short? What is beauty? Is the world different to people who are tall or short? Is there ever a proper size for your age? How can someone's self-confidence affect their self-esteem?

4. Consolidation of questions

Similar questions were consolidated into one question.

5. Voting on question for discussion

Students voted on the question for discussion. Eg, in the first lesson observed (on a whole class basis) the question selected for discussion was: 'What's more important physical beauty or inner beauty?'

6. Reminder about the characteristics of a good philosophical discussion

The teacher reminded students of one or more characteristics of a good philosophical discussion such as the giving of reasons, stating ideas clearly, attentive listening to alternative points of view and so on (see section above on building a community of inquiry).

7. Whole-class discussion

8. Summary of the discussion

9. Self-reflection in a student Philosophy for Children journal.

A lesson typically took between 60 and 90 minutes and could extend over several periods.

Procedure

The study occurred in two phases. First we observed the class engaged in Philosophy for Children where the lesson was conducted on a whole class basis. The students were well experienced in this form of lesson. The second phase consisted of students spending the discussion section of Philosophy for Children lessons in cooperative learning (Burns, 1981). Group composition was heterogeneous with a high, two average and one low achiever in each of two groups but because of uneven numbers five students were placed in three groups (heterogeneously). Groups were gender balanced as much as possible (2/2 or 3/2). A typical format for the lesson was:

1. Steps one to six as outlined above in the typical whole-class format
2. Students move into heterogeneous groups
3. Discussion in small-groups
4. Reports from groups to whole class
5. Whole class summary of discussion
6. Self-reflection in a student Philosophy for Children journal

We observed and audio-recorded three such lessons, including the recording of all group discussions. The questions selected (on a whole-class basis) by the students for discussion were:

Lesson 1: Is there a difference between a story being written and a story being told? Does a story have to be written to be told?

Lesson 2: Can one single photograph tell a story?

Lesson 3: Does it really matter if you are tall or short?

Data Sources

Several sources of data were used for this study. Data were collected through observations, audio-taped lessons and discussions. All group discussions across the three lessons were transcribed. Two target groups

(groups 1 and 2) were observed by experienced observers. The teacher's cognitive intent and the conditions for cooperative learning were shared in meetings with the observers before and after lessons. The recorded students' talk in peer group discussion and the teacher's talk were analysed through the use of a low-inference observation system (MAKITAB) and a computer software package for working with qualitative data (NUD*IST).

The low-inference observation system used was the MAKITAB Small Group Learning Interaction Analysis System (King, Barry, Maloney & Tayler, 1993), a system which has been cross-validated over several years with data from Missouri and Perth (see summary chart in appendix). Details of the reliability trials are contained in the Technical Report (King, et al., 1993).

In the current study the following MAKITAB interaction categories were significant:

Group Task: Attending to the Task/Fulfilling the Task

(Illustrative examples have been taken from lesson three: Does it really matter if you are tall or short?)

TS08 - Examining, comprehending, clarifying and routine responding

Student comments, questions and other interactions which are associated with *identifying, defining or paraphrasing content; examining, discussing or gathering information; elaborating upon content; clarifying facts and concepts; manipulating materials or equipment in relation to task content or procedure; making routine, low level responses (chatter) while working through task content/procedure.*

Example:

TS08 (S1-5) Okay when you were in grade 4 you were short.

TS08 (S 5-1) I wasn't that short. I've been tall for most of my life.

TS10 - Proposing

Interactions in which a group member(s) offers for consideration, acceptance or action a *definite recommendation, suggestion, prediction, plan, method, explanation or answer* for inclusion in the group task. This offer may take the form of a proposal, an extension of a proposal, or a counter proposal. A proposal, extension of a proposal, or counter proposal may be *ignored, negotiated over, accepted or rejected* (see TS11-TS13).

Example:

TS10: (S2-9) I think being tall or short shouldn't matter but it sometimes does. What really matters to me is on the inside. But if you think about it all models are tall... so for certain professions... people do judge on your physical appearance.

TS11 - Negotiating, arguing, reacting to ideas, insights or proposals

Student comments and questions in which group members *talk, work through or react to ideas, insights or proposals*. These interactions normally involve higher-cognitive level interactions such as *reciprocal discussion, consideration of implications, application of content, examination of different points of view, verbalization of reasoning processes, critical thinking, or statements for and against a proposal or counter-proposal.*

Example:

T?11: (S5-3) What do you mean you shouldn't be judged on height for a job?

TS11: (S5-3) Like some jobs you need to be tall like say models; you need to be over a metre seventy or something like that.

TS11: (S3-5) I don't agree with that because when you're doing modelling I don't think you necessarily have to be tall.

TS11: (S5-3) I think that the models have to be tall because my sister is an ex-model and couldn't do it anymore because of her height. Because some of the clothes are meant to be on long bodies to show the full length and everything.

TS15 - Reviewing

Student comments and questions related to *going back over developed content* in order to *check its usefulness, appropriateness or accuracy*.

Example:

TS15: (S1-9) We started off with the main point and then we drifted off into advertising.

TS15: (S2-9) And how people have a certain stereotype that everyone (ie. in advertising) should be skinny.

TS15: (S5-9) Then Ms Burke brought us back to the main point (ie. tall/short) and we started to discuss that a bit more.

TS99 - Non-task related

Student actions, comments and questions which indicate *non-involvement* with or *distraction from the task* being worked by the group.

Example:

TS99: (S2-5) Wayne, can you please stop thinking about food; you've already had lunch.

Group Dynamics: How the Group functions

DS05 - Challenging/asserting

An individual group member *interrupting, asserting or reasserting the right to speak, to contribute content, to argue content, to follow procedure, to demand a response or contribution* from another group member.

Example:

D?05: (S1-5) What does that have to do with the question of tall or short?

DS06 - Positive response to challenge/assertion

Following a challenge from a group member, *agreement* or a *positive response* is given by a student.

Example:

DS05: (S1-2) Carol, would you mind finishing off that sentence you were saying?

DS06: (S2-1) Well I was saying before God gave us our height for a reason...

DS07 - Negative response to challenge/assertion

Following a challenge from a group member, *rejection* or a *negative response* is given by a student.

Example:

DS05: (S5-1) Carol, do you have any contribution to make?

DS07: (S1-5) No, I'm still thinking.

DS12 - Group evaluation

A group member makes evaluative comments to another group member or to an outsider about the *relationships, rules, decision making, problems or successes* within the group; about the *com-position* of the group; about *being part* of the group; or about *feelings* towards the group. Such comments may be positive or negative.

Example:

DS12: (S2-9) I think we went well because we were cooperating and listening to what everyone else had to say.

Definition of a Cognitive Question

T?.. or D?.. - Cognitive question

A question (a) related to task content, that is, the knowledge and/or skills to be learned; and (b) that involves thinking processes used while learning content or working the learning task, including the procedures to undertake the task.

Example:

T?10: (S1-2) Do you think people tease if you are tall or short just because they are jealous?

TS11: (S2-1) No.

T?11: (S2-1) Why would they be jealous?

The transcripts from all groups were also coded using a non-numerical, unstructured data, indexing, searching and theorising tool, NUD*IST. This is a widely used, and accepted, software package for working with qualitative, non-numerical data. The NUD*IST analysis of student talk was used to identify thinking associated with the occurrence of key words, and their synonyms, in Philosophy for Children classes.

Key words selected for this study were: think, argue, understand, meaning, question, classify, perspective, fair, listen, like, assume.

From these tools transcribed talk from each of the three lessons was analysed in terms of the quantity and quality of talk for each student, the small-group and the teacher.

Findings and Discussion**Significant levels of higher cognitive talk**

The analysis of student talk during group work in our study showed that nearly all talk was task-enhancing in nature (there were only six instances of non-task related talk) and involved higher-order cognition. In each lesson students contributed constructively and creatively to discussion, presented sound logic and reasons for their views, responded dispassionately to challenges on their ideas, displayed respect for other students and their ideas which in turn facilitated objective appraisal or acceptance of challenges, engaged in quality analysis of ideas, differentiated between factual statements and opinions and reflected critically on all ideas expressed, whether their own or others.

In the MAKITAB analysis the higher-order cognition categories of (a) proposing (b) negotiating, arguing, reacting to ideas, insights or proposals accounted for a mean of 53.9% of student talk, across all groups, in the cooperative learning phase of the lesson. Group one had the highest mean of 73.2% of talk in the two categories over the three lessons; group five the lowest, but still impressive, mean of 37.3% of higher cognitive level talk (Table1). These figures are highly significant, especially, when compared to previous studies using the

MAKITAB instrument. In one study involving three classes and six problem solving lessons in maths the maximum amount of higher cognitive level talk in a class was approximately 40%, with most classes ranging from 15 to 30% (King, Barry, Maloney & Tayler, 1997). In a second study involving seven problem solving lessons in science and maths the mean for higher cognitive level talk was 32.6% (range 16 to 58%) (Barry, King, Pitts-Hill & Zehnder, 1998).

TABLE 1: Distribution across lessons of most frequently occurring categories of student talk during group work as measured by the MAKITAB Interaction Analysis System (%s).

| MAKITAB Interaction Areas Mean %of talk | Lesson 1 Groups 1-5 | | | | | Lesson 2 Groups 1-5 | | | | | Lesson 3 Groups 1-5 | | | | |
|---|------------------------|------|------|------|------|------------------------|------|------|------|------|------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| | G1 | G2 | G3 | G4 | G5 | G1 | G2 | G3 | G4 | G5 | G1 | G2 | G3 | G4 | G5 |
| TS08 : Examining, comprehending, clarifying, and routine responding Mean = 20.5% | 16.4 | 3.6 | 35.5 | 33.0 | 31.9 | 5.5 | 38.0 | 42.3 | 7.8 | 30.0 | 7.0 | 13.6 | 1.4 | 11.9 | 29.6 |
| TS10 Proposing Mean = 20.0% | 32.8 | 15.0 | 17.7 | 18.0 | 10.6 | 22.1 | 3.7 | 9.3 | 16.7 | 4.9 | 48.1 | 17.3 | 26.6 | 38.8 | 18.8 |
| TS11 Negotiating, arguing, reacting to ideas, insights or proposals Mean = 33.9% | 32.8 | 52.0 | 31.8 | 25.8 | 27.0 | 52.4 | 21.8 | 15.3 | 47.2 | 25.4 | 31.6 | 43.7 | 53.8 | 22.2 | 26.4 |
| TS15 Reviewing Mean = 3.1% | | | | | 2.9 | 5.5 | | 17.2 | | | 4.4 | 3.7 | 3.8 | 4.0 | 5.2 |
| (DS05) Challenging/ asserting Mean = 5.3% | 3.2 | 2.4 | | 2.1 | 6.7 | 1.3 | 12.6 | 2.3 | 11.1 | 12.7 | 3.8 | 8.0 | 1.0 | 4.7 | 7.0 |
| DS06 Positive response to challenge/ assertion Mean = 2.7% | 3.2 | 1.8 | | 2.1 | 3.4 | 1.3 | 4.3 | | 5.5 | 7.0 | 1.9 | 4.0 | | 4.0 | 2.1 |
| DS07 Negative Response to challenge/ assertion Mean = 1.0% | | | | | 1.5 | | 4.3 | | 2.7 | | | 4.0 | | | 2.7 |
| DS12 Group evaluation Mean = 6.9% | 4.0 | 12.0 | 11.8 | 17.2 | 8.2 | 6.9 | 1.3 | 9.3 | 6.6 | 9.4 | | | 9.7 | 5.5 | 1.4 |
| Cognitive question Mean = 14.3% | 13.1 | 9.6 | 14.0 | 12.9 | 24.6 | 16.5 | 14.0 | 9.3 | 15.5 | 19.2 | 9.5 | 16.4 | 10.6 | 11.9 | 17.4 |
| % calculated on total number of group interactions (incl. categories not shown in this table) | 152 | 167 | 135 | 93 | 207 | 145 | 183 | 215 | 180 | 244 | 158 | 197 | 206 | 126 | 287 |

The matrix analysis undertaken across the series of lessons using NUD*IST suggest that between one-third and one-half of the student group talk (mean 38.8%) contained words or phrases that indicate the use of words associated with thinking in Philosophy for Children classes (Table 2). This is most evident in searches conducted for the following key word groups:

1. Think, thinking, thought, thoughtful, wonder, wondering, thoughtful, idea, ideas, concept, concept, analyse, explore
2. Argue, argument, explain, explanation, reason, justify, justification, because, reasoning, example, examples, true, false, correct, incorrect, right, wrong, relevance, relevant
3. Understand, understanding, understood, realise, know, knowledge
7. Perspective, view, standpoint, difference, different, distinction, big picture, big ideas, whole picture, alternative

Students, in the main, uttered these words often. Key word group one represented 9.72% of all utterances; key word group two, 12.4% of all utterances; key word group three, 3.7% of all utterances; and key word group seven, 5.1% of all utterances. Moreover, no apparent major difference existed between groups. That is, low finds of key words in one group were generally echoed by low finds in other groups for the same key words.

In general the NUD*IST analysis supports the MAKITAB data, albeit from a slightly more limited, and different perspective, on higher cognitive levels of student talk. It is also reasonable to assume that had the key word group been extended further to include examples of student talk providing evidence of the target talk (eg. vocabulary indicating student sharing of ideas; agreeing; disagreeing) then the percentage of talk exhibiting high level cognition would have been higher. The conclusion is clear though, that, from both kinds of data analysis, highly significant levels of higher cognitive talk were taking place in all groups and the class as a whole.

Metacognitive Processes

Metacognitive processes were identifiable in student talk and teacher talk data. The teacher had consistently modelled think-ing processes in the preceding whole class work. In the lesson observed thinking processes were modelled in the lesson introduction, monitoring of groups and the lesson conclusion.

In the MAKITAB data shown in Table 1 the categories of reviewing the task (TS15) and group evaluation (TS12) specifically highlight metacognitive processes by the students. The frequency of distribution in these categories indicates a significant amount of reviewing the task in lesson three and strong and consistent attempts at group evaluation in all lessons. Students often commented that we "are off the point" and the discussion was re-focused. In addition a secondary examination of transcripts by the coder found strong evidence of metacognitive talk intertwined with cognitive talk in the higher-order cognition categories of (a) proposing (b) negotiating, arguing, reacting to ideas, insights or proposals.

Students also showed that they were aware of how they were learning. For example, in reviewing whether she preferred to learn Philosophy for Children in a whole-class or small-group mode a student claimed that small-group work in philosophy had the following advantages:

Talking in small-groups gives us better organisational skills. We are not so restricted, we can wait for each other, discuss a bit and organise it ourselves, go on to different parts which are still relevant but we go into more interesting details.

A similar awareness of learning processes was shown by other students and will be discussed in a later section of this paper.

TABLE 2: Distribution of key word Groups by small-groups across lessons as measured by NUD*IST (%s)

| Key Wd Grp | Me -an | Student Small-group Lessons 1-3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|--------|---------------------------------|------|------|---------|------|------|---------|------|------|---------|------|------|---------|------|------|
| | | Group 1 | | | Group 2 | | | Group 3 | | | Group 4 | | | Group 5 | | |
| | | L. 1 | L. 2 | L. 3 | L. 1 | L. 2 | L. 3 | L. 1 | L. 2 | L. 3 | L. 1 | L. 2 | L. 3 | L. 1 | L. 2 | L. 3 |
| 1 | 9.7 | 9.4 | 9.4 | 8.0 | 15 | 9.5 | 4.7 | 8.3 | 9.3 | 9.0 | 9.6 | 8.9 | 11.0 | 11.0 | 7.7 | 15.0 |
| 2 | 12.4 | 8.2 | 15.0 | 11.0 | 13.0 | 12.0 | 10.0 | 12.0 | 19.0 | 17.0 | 13.0 | 11.0 | 15.0 | 7.6 | 14.0 | 9.3 |
| 3 | 3.7 | 1.9 | 4.0 | 1.5 | 2.4 | 3.1 | 4.7 | 7.8 | 2.3 | 3.3 | 5.0 | 5.7 | 3.1 | 4.8 | 2.9 | 3.0 |
| 4 | 1.9 | 1.9 | 1.9 | 2.0 | 1.3 | 0.5 | 1.4 | 4.3 | 3.0 | 0.4 | 1.0 | 2.4 | 1.6 | 3.6 | 1.9 | 1.9 |
| 5 | 2.0 | 1.9 | 3.8 | 1.8 | 4.7 | 2.9 | 1.1 | 0.8 | 1.2 | 1.7 | 3.6 | 0.8 | 1.0 | 2.0 | 1.7 | 1.3 |
| 6 | 2.5 | 4.9 | 2.9 | 0.8 | 4.7 | 1.4 | 0.0 | 4.8 | 3.2 | 0.9 | 5.3 | 0.8 | 1.8 | 2.5 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| 7 | 5.1 | 6.1 | 5.4 | 2.8 | 11.0 | 1.9 | 1.1 | 7.8 | 4.2 | 1.1 | 6.9 | 0.3 | 8.7 | 9.9 | 6.0 | 4.8 |
| 8 | 0.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 1.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.2 | 0.7 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| 9 | 6.1 | 0.5 | 0.0 | 1.7 | 1.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.1 | 0.0 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.5 | 0.0 | 0.5 | 0.2 | 0.0 |
| 10 | 0.7 | 0.2 | 0.0 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 1.0 | 0.3 | 3.8 | 1.4 | 1.3 | 0.0 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 0.5 | 0.4 |
| 11 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Tot | | 35.1 | 42.4 | 29.8 | 53.7 | 32.2 | 24.4 | 50.7 | 43.6 | 35.1 | 45.4 | 30.7 | 43.2 | 42.9 | 35.9 | 36.6 |
| Mn | 38.8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Key word groups

1. Think, thinking, thought, thoughtful, wonder, wondering, thoughtful, idea, ideas, concept, concept, analyse, explore
2. Argue, argument, explain, explanation, reason, justify, justification, because, reasoning, example, examples, true, false, correct, incorrect, right, wrong, relevance, relevant
3. Understand, understanding, understood, realize, know, knowledge
4. Meaning, means, meant, connect, connections, links
5. Question, questioning, questions, asking, ask, enquiring, inquiring, enquire, inquire, seeking, looking for
6. Classify, group, section, part, parts
7. Perspective, view, standpoint, difference, different, distinction, big picture, big ideas, whole picture, alternative
8. Fair, fairness, in general, sharing, open mind, open mindedness
9. Listen, listens, listening, respect
10. Analogy, analogous, just like, as if, like when, like for example
11. Assume, assumption

Cognitive Question Asking by Students in Groups

Another level of analysis of student talk considered the questioning behaviours of all students in small-groups. The percentage of student-student cognitive question asking as a percentage of all talk in the small-group mode averaged 14.3% (Table 1). In previous studies conducted by the researchers, with a maths or science focus the average amount of student-student cognitive questions was less than 5% (King, Barry, Maloney & Tayler, 1997; Barry, King, Pitts-Hill & Zehnder, 1998).

In seeking an explanation for the growth in quantity and quality of student question asking in small groups the researchers feel confident in ascribing it to the extensive modelling of divergent question asking in the whole-class situation. In our previous studies of small-group work there was little or no evidence of modelling question asking skills or providing practice in generating student questions for discussion. However, question asking was a significant feature of all Philosophy for Children lessons observed and it seems reasonable to attribute this differential in our data to a transfer effect from whole-class modelling to small-group practice.

Moreover, in terms of student thinking the significant quantity and quality of student cognitive question asking in these lessons would seem to be a useful indicator about the level of student cognitive functioning during group-work. Logic would suggest that where students were active question askers, higher-level thought processing and learning would be occurring.

Challenging Group Members/Asserting; Responding to Challenges

When compared to previous studies conducted by the researchers there also appeared to be higher levels of individual group members challenging, asserting or calling on other group members to contribute to discussion. In this study the average number of challenging type behaviours per group for each lesson was 5.3% of all student interactions whereas in previous studies it was in the order of 2-3%. A noteworthy feature of the talk that involved challenging was the group awareness that all students, regardless of ability, should contribute. It was especially noticeable in the secondary perusal to transcripts that passive and or low achievers were brought into the discussion by other students although sometimes they claimed they were "called on but had nothing to say".

Student Perceptions: Strengths and Shortcomings of the Small-group Format in the Philosophy for Children Program

In the final lesson students were asked to give their views on whether they preferred the whole-class or small-group mode for Philosophy for Children lessons. A majority of students supported the small-group mode but there was support for each approach or a combination of approaches. The **major advantage** of cooperative learning was that everybody had the opportunity to contribute as much as he/she liked. This was seen as a particular advantage for shy or nervous people. Our data would strongly support this with a mean number of 180 interactions per group per lesson (Table 1). Linked to this opportunity to participate in small-groups was the restrictive nature of whole-class discussion. For example:

- In a small-group I can speak freely-I don't have to wait with my hand up (and then I forget the idea-or it becomes irrelevant to the discussion)
- In a big circle some people can just switch off and start thinking about something else...people get off-task.

The **main disadvantage** in the small group mode was that groups sometimes had difficulty in clarifying fundamental definitions or moved away from the issue being discussed. When this happened the discussion of the question tended to be restricted but on the other hand thinking processes were being engaged. Another problem which occurred in some small-groups was that the group sometimes ran out of ideas. As one student said:

- In a big group we get to hear more ideas and this keeps discussion going; in a small group we can run out of ideas or have nothing to say and discussion finishes.

The view was also expressed that a combination of whole-class and small group approaches would be appropriate. For example, when asked what advice the students would give to someone writing a book on how to teach Philosophy for Children one student responded:

- If I was giving someone ideas for a book writing on Philosophy for Children I would say it would be good to do a mix of whole-class and small group. In the circle so you get the chance to be good at public speaking and listening to other ideas. But also in a small group you get more time to contribute and listen and argue.

Conclusions

The study has revealed that the quality of student cognitive talk during small-group cooperative learning lessons involving Philosophy for Children was uniformly high. As educators we are challenged to explain how this quality of student discussion emerged, especially given that the students had little previous experience in cooperative learning. Using the cognitive psychological framework suggested by Meloth, Deering and Sanders (1993), certain conditions for cooperative learning were set in place by the teacher.

1. In building a community of inquiry in the whole-class mode throughout the year the teacher and students had assumed many social and communication skills and attitudes considered fundamental to effective cooperative learning and these had transferred naturally to the peer learning mode.
2. Initially the teacher and eventually the students had modelled for each other the language style and thinking processes of Philosophy for Children during the whole-class sessions and these likewise were transferred to the small-group setting.
3. The use of Philosophy for Children as a study domain was carefully determined by the teacher to allow student choice of questions to be discussed which engendered student efficacy in an academic sense and stimulated much personal identification with the topic in question.
4. The process of generating higher cognitive questions from the students at the beginning of the lesson, and encouraging question asking of other students throughout the whole class lesson, appeared to transfer across into small-group behaviours.
5. The teacher's role fulfilment was highly effective and this expertise, coupled with high enthusiasm for Philosophy for Children, became infectious with the students who assumed much the same kind of positive attitudes toward thinking.

Given these prevailing conditions, and their association with higher cognitive level talk and quality student interactions during small-group work in Philosophy for Children this study would seem to strongly support the view that there are substantial cognitive benefits to be gained from the use of Philosophy for Children with small-group cooperative learning.

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“Politics of a Philosophical Education”

Melbourne High School, South Yarra

Sunday, 29th April

10.00 am - 4.30 pm

10.00 am REGISTRATIONS

10.30 am OPENING Janette Poulton

10.45 am INTRODUCTORY SPEAKER Dr Tim Sprod (University of Tasmania)

"Morality, Democracy and Citizenship: where does Philosophy fit?"

11.45am CHOICE of STUDENT DEMONSTRATION CLASSES

"Discovering Democracy" with year 5, 8 and 11 students and their teachers. The University of Tasmania P4C and Citizenship project.

1.00 pm LUNCH (ACER resource display)

3. KEY-NOTE ADDRESS Dr Brenda Cherednichenko (Victoria University)

"Politics of a Philosophical Education"

4. CHOICE of COMMUNITY OF INQUIRY WORKSHOPS

Facilitators include B. Cherednichenko, Stan Van Hooft, Laurance Splitter

5. PLENARY and REFRESHMENTS

4.45 pm AGM

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Philosophy is not a technology

Matthew Del Nevo: Catherine McAuley Girls High School,
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Will philosophy help us with integrating the curriculum? Should it do so? Is integrating the curriculum a philosophical problem? Is philosophy about 'problems'? Philosophy is not a technology. It is not merely a tool that needs to have a use found for it or otherwise it is 'useless'. *Philosophia* is not a *techne*, a *skill*. Philosophy extends and delimits skills, it defines them and defends them as such; it brings to light not just what skills do, but what they *are*. But if philosophy is not a technology, we need to consider what it is.

Pierre Hadot (Professor Emeritus of the History of Hellenistic and Roman Thought at the Collège de France in Paris) writes that, "in Antiquity, the philosopher regards himself as a philosopher, not because he develops a discourse but because he lives philosophically." (Hadot, 1995, 27) Apparently, all six schools of philosophy in Antiquity – Stoicism, Epicureanism, Platonism, Aristotelianism, Cynicism and Pyrrhonism – presented themselves "as choices of life". Each of the ancient schools of philosophy represented a certain stance toward life. The schools taught this stance and members of the school took it up. The philosophical discourses of the schools issued from the chosen life-style as expressions and representations of it. Hadot says,

every existential attitude [of the schools of philosophy in Antiquity] implies a representation of the world that must necessarily be expressed in discourse. But this discourse alone is not the philosophy, it is only an element of it, for philosophy is first of all the existential attitude itself (31)

Philosophy consists primarily in choosing a living attitude and the six ancient schools of philosophy can be regarded as each corresponding to a permanent possibility of the human spirit in this regard. Desire in Epicureanism, will in Stoicism, yearning in Platonism, intellect in Aristotelianism, non-judgmentalism in Pyrrhonism, asceticism in Cynicism – these are permanent possibilities of the human spirit that the ancient schools enshrine and legitimate. Hadot says, "Desire in Epicureanism and will in Stoicism do seem to correspond to two opposite poles of our inner life: tension and relaxation, duty and serenity, moral conscience and the joy of existence." (108)

What all the ancient schools of philosophy held in common was the pursuit of the good life, which was the happy life. Philosophy was always first a matter of human well-being and well-doing. Philosophy distinguished this good which is happy under three names: ethics, logic and physics. Originally, physics was not merely a discursive theory of the universe, there was a lived physics, whereby we endeavour to live according to the *nature (physis)* of things. And logic originally had to do with the well-being or true disposition of the mind. Logic still *is* a discipline to a large degree. And ethics is still about our behaviour; in the sense of how our well-being is wrapped up in the question of our well-doing. Ethics is about our *civility* (to use, strangely, what has become now an old-fashioned-sounding word).

Ethics, logic and physics, the three bases of traditional philosophy, once were *lived*. This is the first point. The second point is that despite the different schools of philosophy that prospered in antiquity for hundreds of years, one thing all schools held in common was a sense of

the continuum upon which ethics and politics are posited or envisioned. A civil society is one which balances the individual good with the common good. Aristotle analysed the mechanics of this in his *Ethics* and *Politics*. A civil society legislates to enshrine and ensure the balance between the individual and common good.

Philosophy was born in such circumstances, because the humanity of such circumstances led to genuine thought and this was upheld by genuine speech. In a true civilisation speech is philosophical for it is an extension of life and moreover, of an examined life. Speech holds true the dynamic between personal good, which is ethical and social good which is political, and integrity is a matter of the harmony of the two kinds of good. True speech is not just about something truly said at the level of the proposition, but rather, true speech upholds a true state of affairs, that is, a state of affairs that is truly civil. A civil society in which philosophy as a higher learning is a reflection upon the good, is a society in which common language is truthful, because it has a common sense, it endorses and legitimates the goods which civilisation stands for, which are intrinsically ethical or godly.

Today we are very proud of our progress. Progress is one of our gods in fact. Progress demands development, efficiency, speed, easy access, communication, organisation and continual improvement. The measure of improvement (of things getting better) is money or wealth. The stock exchanges, especially the Dow-Jones and Nasdaq, are where we can see if things are progressing. Most talk of 'should' and 'should not' in our society is checked by looking at the effect – or even better by predicting the effect – on the stock market. Some philosophers have characterised our society as a so-called dog-eat-dog society; a society in which 'greed is good', in which money is a commodity 'up for grabs'. If so, civilisation is still something we yet have to achieve.

Our social justice and welfare policies go somewhat in ameliorating the free-market policies of our governments, but today there is sometimes a clash between business and society. In America and Britain, societies like our own, big business corporations run some prisons, schools and social facilities. These companies are beholden to their shareholders, not to society, let alone to those whom they ostensibly service. The corporatisation of education and equivalent notions of 'social management' put certain social institutions into the hands of non-democratic organisations, and increasingly, democracy itself is beholden to these same organisations. Increasingly, our perception of a repressive regime governing another country is based on it being resistant to Newscorp or some other such colossus, manipulating and dominating the populace as it does via our own living rooms. Perhaps Newscorp manipulating and dominating us is better than a religion like Islam or a socialist ideology like Communism. Nevertheless, it is disturbing if we can no longer see that globalism is itself an ideology. It is disturbing if we promote civilisation as progress, but have no philosophy, only policy, and no end better than 'good statistics'. My point is that questions of self and society, the personal and the common good, are natural to philosophy and there is no philosophy otherwise.

Now let us hone in on our real subject by asking: what happens when we bring philosophy to school? Immediately, we may well wonder what such a question could mean in the context that I have just set out. The difficulty with philosophy in school is that it cannot be just another subject like Geography or Chemistry, because schools are based on

philosophy to begin with, as are hospitals. Schools belong to the history of philosophy. Philosophy has to do with principles, so do schools. Philosophy is always already related to the very nature and existence of schools.

If philosophy moves into schools and is taught in terms of its history and analytically in terms of its questions - thinking about thinking - this is good for the students and the school as a whole. But it is also bad, because then philosophy will become free-floating, a pseudo-discipline cut off from itself. Cut off from ethics on one side and politics on the other, philosophy becomes a technical subject harnessed to maths or science (in the strict sense), whose judgements then become determinative for it.

Ethically and politically, philosophy is allied to liberal education. This is true both phenomenally and historically. 'Liberal education' is a phrase, which like 'civility', sounds a little quaint to ears attuned to the latest educational fad. By liberal education I do not refer romantically to the past - whether Medieval or Victorian. I refer prescriptively to the place of philosophy in schools. Anthony Grayling (1997, 53) states what common sense means by liberal education.

By 'liberal education' I mean one that includes literature, history and the appreciation of the arts, and gives them equal weight with scientific and practical subjects. Education in these pursuits opens the possibility for us to live more reflectively and knowledgably, especially about the range of human experience and sentiments, as it exists now and here and in the past and elsewhere. That, in turn, makes us better understand the interests, needs and desires of others, so that we can treat them with respect and sympathy, however different the choices they make or the experiences that have shaped their lives. When respect and sympathy is returned, rendering it mutual, the result is that the gaps which can prompt friction, even war, come to be bridged or at least, tolerated. The latter is enough.

I know that to ally philosophy with liberal education and values is itself a philosophical move; and it is meant to be. There is no objective ground outside philosophy from which to observe, elucidate or judge it. Seeing education and philosophy together in terms of the notion of a 'liberal education' is better, I contend, than treating philosophy instrumentally, which is what happens whenever we say philosophy is for this or that. Philosophy is then yoked to pre-established criteria the basis and end of which have not been philosophically examined and authenticated.

One can be scrupulous and say that the days of liberal education are over. The Nazis read Hegel and Heine and listened to Bach and Beethoven, and look what liberal education did for them. True. "Liberal education doesn't automatically produce better people. But it does so far more often than stupidity and selfishness which arises from lack of knowledge and impoverishment of insight." (Grayling, *ibid*)

If philosophy merely has some use-value, if it is merely an instrumental enterprise, for something, other than itself, then its ethical and political dimensions - those things which in fact make it what it is - are destroyed. If philosophy is in schools (in the form of philosophical teachers, not just Philosophy teachers) it will, of itself, by virtue of its own presence, promote liberal values, of which goodness is the chief and

tolerance is one. Philosophy doesn't need a reason to be in schools, everything else does; that is the whole point.

For over a thousand years in our culture, schools were seen in terms of philosophy, not the other way around. The progressives – today the technocratic types - have the wrong end of the stick. What do we see if we look at philosophy in schools *not* in terms of schools? We see that less and less are schools places of civility. Less and less are schools places of liberal education. More and more we are training our young, not educating them. To educate, remember, comes from 'educere': to bring forth *the person*. Not to crush or warp the person in training which passes for 'lessons', in which the student comes to believe that the meaning of life has to do with employability (by increasingly irascible large corporations, I might add) and income. Education, remember, is not just about bringing forth the person, but the *best* of the person. The best of a person – their good qualities – is something quite different from training speak about 'my personal best', in which quality has more to do with the product or service (which is usually also for sale) than the person.

To educate is intrinsically ethical and therefore philosophical. When schools become feeders for universities, and universities have become training grounds for industry, Lady Philosophy surely must shudder. The following courses are from the UAC 2001 Guide and are being looked at by prospective undergraduates in year 12 in NSW:

Meat Marketing; Floristry; Electronic Commerce; Contemporary Music; Business Hotel and Catering Management; Business in Tourism; Naturopathy; Indigenous Studies; Exercise Science and Nutrition; Agribusiness; Aviation Operation Management; Information Management; Hotel Management; Community Education; Health Promotion; Tourism; Construction Management and Economics; Commerce in Accounting; Commerce in Banks and Finance; Natural Resources; Financial Administration; Digital Media; Building Construction Management; Taxation; Jewellery; Online Media Production; Advertising; Spatial Information Systems; Welfare Practice; Behavioural Science; Knitwear Studies.

The evident lack of any inclination toward what used to be called 'higher learning' in the UAC 2001 Guide is depressing. It is all trades. Where do you point all the best students with academic potential in Year 12? Are they all to become lawyers and doctors? Where are human minds being nurtured? Where is the future of ideas? And schools have become feeders for all this.

My point is that the universities have become service industries to 'meet the needs' (dread phrase!) of business interests, which, predominantly, means the *profit motive*. The courses just listed consist of three years of academic study. But is this not a masquerade when Knitwear Studies is an academic subject and Management is a science? I don't doubt the usefulness even necessity of the occupations represented by these subjects. I do doubt that they are university subjects, unless of course – which is the case – a society upholds a puerile and uneducated view of what a university is. One thing students on these bogus courses will not learn, which it should be the duty of every university education to teach, is how to tell the difference between useless waffle and genuine thought. In a recent article Duke Maskell (2000, 18) says,

In accepting such courses, the university confesses that it has no definite character, and that what counts as knowledge might be anything. Each of these hundreds of courses goes its own way without

reference to any other or the standards of any other. So what, if the examination papers in Tourism are rubbish by the standards of those in Philosophy? The philosophers have no say in what goes on in Tourism. How could they? They haven't been trained in it. The only thing that makes the two subjects part of one body is that both get funding to be so. And, of course, if the customer demand dropped for Philosophy and rose for Tourism, a responsible management would have no choice but to move the funding with it, and, perhaps, to move Philosophy off the premises.

The fact that schools are more and more taking on the role (and gladly taking it on) of becoming feeders for university affects philosophy in schools. Philosophy in schools can and *should* clash with the philosophy of schools, if, as I say, feeding universities is the prevailing philosophy. Philosophy in school is not just about teaching the subject of Philosophy, divorced from ethics on one hand and politics on the other, or put more simply, divorced from civic life as a whole.

"The aim of liberal education," Anthony Grayling (op cit) writes, "is to produce people [not just trainees] who go on learning after their formal education has ceased; who think, and question, and know how to find answers when they need them. This is especially significant in the case of moral and political dilemmas in society, which will always occur and will always have to be negotiated afresh every time; so members of a community need to be reflective and informed."

Thinking and questioning. This is a good thing to be happening in a philosophy class at school. Philosophy is debased if it becomes just a mathematical exercise in algebraic logic or a scientific exercise in empirical thinking. Thinking and questioning must take place against the backdrop of the liberal humanities' hope of a civil society. This hope needs people who will go on learning, which is quite different from the prevalent mechanistic and behaviouristic concept of 'reskilling'.

Philosophy is crucial to educating people who can think and question and find answers. Philosophy *in* school and philosophy *of* school bear a relation to one another which is very real and which philosophers and educators must notice and take account of in their deliberations about schooling. Education needs to be educated by philosophy. If universities are becoming industrial training centres and if schools are taking on the role of supplying suitable fodder, this is not just a problem for the philosophy *of* schools, but for philosophy *in* them. The place of philosophy in schools bears a relation to the place of philosophy in society.

Philosophy is ethical and political. But how does this translate to the level of the classroom? Having said what I have about the relation of philosophy to education and education to civil society, what then? Philosophically, it is good to have the liberty, as we do, to teach children to think and question more rigorously, and to be able to find answers when they need them. For we do not know what they will need or what our legacy, politically and ethically, will be. We begin philosophy in school (as well as *of* school), I believe, by *helping children to preserve a strong common speech*. I am aware that in saying this I am proposing a philosophical position, but it is arguably, I think, a good one. Maskell (op cit) proposes the following:

The one thing needed – without which nothing will follow, with which everything does – is genuine thought, and genuine speech without which there is no genuine thought.

A strong common speech is one that is not controlled by 'newspeak'. Newspeak is always a jargon of authenticity (currently it is the jargon of business. To be spouting this jargon is to be taken seriously and to be imagined as saying something of meaning and importance). Philosophy has its own jargon of authenticity too of course (currently, the political correctness of 'postmodernism'). Whether in philosophy or in education, a strong common speech will ensure that one is not duped into thinking that jargon refers to reality. For instance, the much used phrase 'in the real world' has more to do with mobile phones or some such trivial fetish from the world of business marketing, than with any concept of reality as such.

The English of the global economy is not what I mean by a common speech, because it is an unexamined speech, its nativity is technological, its motive is economic, it is a parlance rather than a speech. It is the shallow parlance of international capitalism where one can talk about Madonna and Cannes, Pizza Hut, web sites, Chanel and Baskin-Robbins flavours with people who belong to the same label-clad elite as yourself. Actually, have you ever thought how provincial this globalism is? The rhetoric of globalism is an unquestioned common speech, which unquestioning people aspire to live, rather than a lived speech by the authentic beneficiaries of what, philosophically and ordinarily we mean by *humanity*. Speech that upholds humanity is compassionate, value bearing speech, which reflects a life, perhaps hidden in the provinces, insignificant and not newsworthy, but which, nevertheless, has universal bearing; such life as gives rise to the stuff of literature and art.

Iris Murdoch (1992), reminds us that:

Language is full of art forms, full of values, we rely daily upon intuitions and distinctions, life passes on, we have to trust our memories, we have to trust the truthfulness of other people. (281)

We must indeed preserve and cherish a strong truth-bearing language, not marred or corrupted by technical discourse or scientific or educational codes; and thereby promote the clarified objectives of knowledge of man and society of which we are in need as citizens, and as moral agents. (164)

Strong truth-bearing language is that of citizens and moral agents. It is language integral to our humanity, regardless of our role as marketing managers, commercial accountants or stockbrokers. This kind of language doesn't change just because we have got email and our own website; or at least, it shouldn't. Truth-bearing also has to go beyond politically correct language. Language is first and foremost personal whereas political correctness is abstract and impersonal. Those who think only along politically correct lines become spiritually stunted. Political correctness can be good, if it is a first step along the way to truthfulness, which is a bearing of the self toward the other, not a hiding behind description. The art forms and values with which language is replete are those of daily life and intuitive perception. We draw what we call upon as our common sense from these things. Political correctness is often amazingly oblivious to common sense.

Preparing philosophy lessons that preserve and cherish a strong truth-bearing language of everyday is our task. A compassionate, value-bearing language of everyday will produce students who, when they leave school, will be able to recognize a Mickey Mouse course when they are on one. And when, in time, they take over those universities and

governmental positions, they will change them for the better and having thought about it, they will have some concept of what 'better' means. Preparing philosophy lessons that give artistry and humanity back to language – rather than adding more acronyms and techno-speak to it – is our task; imbuing what we think and therefore say with a sense of moral and civil conduct is our task. Our context is not just the school, but also the context that the school is in, which means the university as well, and the institutions that define that.

Philosophy in school is not just about using philosophy for something – eg. to integrate the curriculum – nor is philosophy in school really even about school, because philosophically, 'school' refers beyond itself to its civil setting. Philosophy is not a technology, it is ethical and political in its being. If the world is dominated by technological signs, which depends upon reality being out there and objective, in which contemplation stands for next to nothing, and in which the best things in life are expensive, the philosopher can only stand back and examine what this means, and whether this is for the best. The philosopher cannot, in conscience, jump on the bandwagon. As it did in ancient times, philosophy still depends upon a living attitude, and in *living* this attitude. Perhaps for the time being, it is better for philosophy to be alternative, living in the margins.¹

Finally: in any discussion of philosophy in schools, let us not forget two things. Firstly that philosophy is an ethical practice with a political character. If we try to turn philosophy into a technology – a tool for something – we literally pervert the course of justice even while we may have the best of intentions. And secondly, philosophy in school is not just about school.

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Endnote

¹The question of what constitutes a strong truth bearing language is a separate topic. Let me just say here, in addendum, that it is linked with philosophy 'living in the margins' (Terry Velting's phrase in his book of that title). Living in the margins does not mean that philosophy is marginal. It is a way of saying that philosophy can never become a mass exercise. Philosophy is not *consigned* to the margins, for it has never been other than there. In the ancient schools of philosophy and philosophy in the Christian context (the monasteries) the philosophical life was outside the main-page of social life in which it is relatively unexamined, if not, often, downright barbarous. Nevertheless there is no margin without main-page, and vice versa. While lies, deceit, self-deception, illusion, and while the simulated truth of political correctness and jargonising persist, an activity involved with the preservation and cherishing of strong truth bearing language is necessary, even if only as a *task*. This task includes preserving the true meaning of 'philosophy' above all. Philosophy reduced to a so-called 'community of enquiry' has serious problems...

Concept Games - a method of philosophical exploration

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One of the main aims of philosophy for children is to get students to analyse, explore and understand the concepts we use to make sense of the world. Let me call this process conceptual analysis. Concept games, when used in the philosophy classroom, are a particular tool for enabling students to engage in conceptual analysis at a very sophisticated level.

I will explain what conceptual analysis is in more depth, explain how concept games enable this process and look at the virtues of this approach to conceptual analysis. Finally I will give an example of a concept game using excerpts taken from the book *In the Spirit of Socrates*.

The key feature of conceptual analysis is exploring concepts that are, in Laurance Splitter's phrase, 'common, central and contestable'. Examples of such concepts are knowledge, culture, mind and responsibility. The concepts are common in that they are familiar ideas we use or refer to almost everyday. The concepts are central in that they are important to our understanding of the world and ourselves. They are also central in that they provide the foundation for all the disciplines and subjects, as well as being links and connections between them. Finally, the concepts are contestable in that, ultimately, exactly what these concepts mean is controversial. There is no set definition that covers all possible cases, which has no possible faults or which cannot be revised. True conceptual analysis only occurs when dealing with such concepts and it leads to a sense of wonder, intellectual excitement and a deeper appreciation of the world and our place in it.

What are we trying to do when engaging in conceptual analysis of common, central and contestable concepts?

Basically we are trying to understand what a concept means and what it applies to. In other words, we are trying to define the concept.

It is hard to be more specific about what conceptual analysis is as there is a lot of controversy and debate around this issue. Also, I will not look at the complexities involved with the issue of what concepts are. Nevertheless, we need some sort of common starting point we can use to allow us to define concepts which does not force us into only one way of engaging in conceptual analysis. I think the concept game provides this starting point. Students can use concept games to do conceptual analysis and to answer the question of what it means to understand a concept.

A standard task of conceptual analysis since the time of Socrates has been to make how we define a concept and how we use the concept to be consistent. The problem conceptual analysis is dealing with is that what we say or think our concepts mean and how we use these concepts are often in conflict. Sometimes we may even have several contradictory definitions or we might use a concept in several mutually exclusive ways. This problem shows conceptual analysis to be the process of removing the contradictions and inconsistencies in our thinking and our way of conceptualising the world.

The process of conceptual analysis is thus first to set up a definition of the concept. Then, test the definition to see if it is adequate. If it fails the test, suggest a new definition and test this also. Keep going with suggesting definitions until we find one that passes the test.

What counts as an adequate definition?

We are trying to get a consistent definition, so an adequate definition is one with no inconsistencies or contradictions. Second an adequate definition must describe all the characteristics of the concept but should not describe anything that is not covered by the concept. We are trying to get a definition that is neither too broad nor too narrow.

A definition that is too narrow would not describe everything about the concept and would leave out some essential aspects. A definition is too narrow when there are examples of the concept that are not described as part of the definition. For example, we could show the definition of courage, 'acting with no fear', was too narrow by pointing to examples of courage that are not of people acting with no fear. The terrified Mother who jumps in the raging stream to save her child is courageous but it is not covered by the suggested definition.

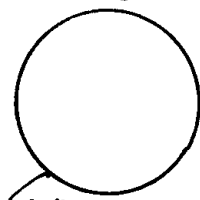
A definition that is too broad would equally apply to other concepts and so is not really a definition of the concept we are interested in. A definition is too broad when there are examples described as part of the definition that are not examples of the concept. For example, we could show that the definition of courage, 'acting with no fear', was too broad by pointing to examples of things that are not courageous but are acting with no fear. The person who gets out of bed in the morning is acting with no fear but we wouldn't say they are courageous.

How do we test whether a definition is too broad or narrow?

We suggest counter-examples to it. A counter-example is an example used to knock down an idea or definition rather than to support it. A counter-example could show a definition was too narrow, too broad or both too narrow and too broad. We have a definition that can pass the counter-example test when we cannot come up with any examples that show it is too broad or too narrow. If we run out of counter-examples we have found an adequate definition.

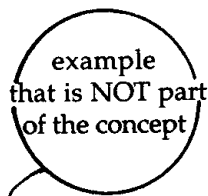
If I use a circle to represent a proposed definition of a concept, the following diagrams represent definitions that fail the counter-example test and definitions that pass the counter-example test.

examples
of the concept

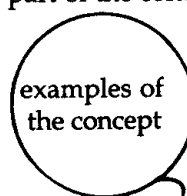


defin. too narrow

example that is
NOT part of the concept



definition too broad



adequate defin.

This process of offering a series of definitions, each of which turn out to be too narrow or too broad, can seem to be pointless. However, progress is being made. It is similar to the process used by a sculptor. They slowly chip away the useless bits of rock until the perfect form remains. In a similar way, by rejecting incorrect definitions we come closer and closer to an adequate definition.

Another way of looking at this is as dialectical progress. A definition is suggested (the Thesis). A counter-example then shows that definition does not work (the Antithesis) and a new definition is suggested that takes into account the flaws and the good points of the old definition

(the Synthesis). For example, the thesis might be that courage is 'acting with no fear'. However, counter-examples, the antithesis, were suggested that showed the definition was both too broad and too narrow. So, a new definition, the synthesis, 'acting in the face of fear' is developed. This would then be tested with new counter-examples.

How does a concept game enable students to engage in this process of conceptual analysis?

Concept games include a large number of examples students can use to build and test definitions. Each is either an example of a particular concept, an example of something that does not fall under that concept, or a borderline case. The students must grapple with categorising these cases, and in the process they explore and refine the concept. The process swings easily between the concrete and the abstract. The students construct general definitions and test them with concrete examples, and then they can modify, accept or reject the definitions. The students agree and disagree with each other, leading to the group building up their own detailed understanding of the concept under investigation.

How would you use a concept game?

The standard process of a concept game involves putting each example on a sheet of card or paper. Also put on paper or card is a label for the categories the examples could be put in. The categories are: examples of the concept, not an example of the concept and '???' or 'borderline'. For example, if Mind was the concept being explored, the categories would be 'has a mind', 'no mind' and '???'.

Explain to the students that we are using a concept game to explore and understand a particular concept. Tell them: "You will be given some cases and you have to figure out which category these cases belong in." Explain that some cases are examples of the concept ('Some things have a mind'), some cases are examples of the contrary of the concept ('Some things don't have a mind') and some things we are not sure about ('They go in the '???' category'). As you decide where the cases go, you should work out what you think the best definition of the concept is. Agreeing and disagreeing with others is great, but the main point is to try to build on what others say and work together to construct an accurate definition."

Give out the cards with the examples on them to students after explaining how the examples are to be used and what they are supposed to do with them. Cards can be given out to individuals or shared in pairs, threes . . . Each person or small group should be given at least one case. The more cases that are given out, the longer the concept game lasts. When they have their case, the students are to discuss which category it should be placed in and, most importantly, their reasons for placing it there. Even if each person has a case of their own, they must discuss where their case should go with at least one other person.

Once they have decided where their cases should be placed, ask the students to place their cards down. Once all the cases are placed, invite the students to walk around and read all the different cases. Again say that they are not to move anyone else's case, but they are to note the cases they think are in the wrong place or are interesting.

Start the discussion by asking someone to pick a case that they found interesting or in the wrong place and begin discussing whether this case really is in the right place. Make sure you ask the people who placed the case why they placed it there and then invite the rest of the class to

comment and challenge. Keep focusing on the case until the ideas seem exhausted, as a detailed examination of a case is necessary to give a satisfying and deep discussion. However, allow students to make comparisons with other cases. When the ideas about a case seem mostly exhausted invite someone else to pick another case to focus on.

More categories can be added during the process if the class want to make finer or different distinctions. Also, the class might suggest that it would be better to have a continuum or another way of defining the concept rather than discrete categories. If students suggest new cases, write them on pieces of card and include them also. Their own cases are likely to be even more meaningful to them. Try out any ideas about how the process should change that the class suggests.

During the discussion note on the board any ideas given about the definition of the concept. This is important to focus the discussion and to give a sense of progress and moving forward. For example, while discussing the case of whether chickens have minds, someone might say chickens don't have minds because anything that can't speak doesn't have a mind. Another student might argue that language isn't important, being able to feel is enough to have a mind. Yet another student might add that a chicken can do things by itself, so it must have a mind. List these ideas on the board as part of a tentative definition of what it means to have a mind and what it means to not have a mind. Every time a point is made that adds to the definition, note it on the board.

Finish a concept game at the end of a session by reconsidering the definitions listed on the board. Do we agree with everything that has been written? Is what we have written consistent with where we have placed our cards? The cards can be collected in and used again to explore other aspects of the concept next period or an extension activity used.

Why use a concept game for conceptual analysis when students raise conceptual analysis questions all the time when doing philosophy for children?

I think there are a number of virtues that concept games have that supplement what we normally do in a philosophy classroom.

Concept games are easy to use and quickly get students doing high-level conceptual analysis. Most teachers, even if they knew how to do conceptual analysis themselves, would find it difficult to get their students to do it also. Because concept games are designed to automatically bring out problematic areas for consideration and clarification, you don't need to be a Socrates to enable students to form a much better understanding of a concept. The philosophical problems are made obvious in a concept game because of the example used. These are deliberately chosen to bring out all the controversial features of a concept so that students will be able to easily see the problems for themselves.

Second, the concept games are fun and engaging to use. It is sometimes difficult to maintain student attention on tricky abstract problems like conceptual analysis. Because the concept games are full of interesting and problematic concrete cases this attracts and keeps the students' attention. There is enough diversity to keep them interested for long periods while actually focussing on one problem ñ what does this concept

mean. The students also enjoy being able to see their concept develop as they move cards around and to physically be able to control where the cards go.

Third, a concept game fits the model of a community of inquiry well. Although the teacher might choose the concept to be examined, the students are doing all the actual conceptual analysis themselves. They construct and test their own definitions. The examples are there to help the students to find all the major problems, but they have to figure out how to deal with them. As well as this, concept games develop all the skills we value from philosophy for children. In using a concept game, the students explore a concept, but they also look at their own thinking and the thinking of others in this process. In particular, they learn to give and evaluate reasons, question, consider examples and counter-examples and self-correct. They learn to share relevant ideas and develop a sense of intellectual confidence. They learn to understand and respect the views of others while not necessarily agreeing with them, defend their views and build on what others have said.

Example of a concept game: The Mind

The major question explored in this concept game is: 'What has a mind?' The students are basically investigating what they think counts as having a mind by dividing up the world into things that do and things that don't. Some of the criteria they are likely to appeal to in deciding what has a mind are:

free will, consciousness, awareness, can think, has a soul, natural vs. man-made and capable of action.

The labels for categories need to be: 'has a mind' 'no mind' and '???'
Examples of cases to use:

A dolphin. A dog. A bird. A worm. A bacterium. A rock. A car
An answer phone. A personal computer. A chess-playing computer.
An artificial person (Commander Data from Star Trek, C3P0 from Star wars, or the Terminator). A Martian whose brain is made of Silicon. A human whose brain is dead, and has to be kept alive on life support. A brain that has been taken out of the body but is still kept alive. A person who is paralysed
A tree. A human cell. An unborn baby. A new born baby
An ant colony or termites' nest

Some questions that could be asked of students to help them to investigate what the concept 'mind' means:

Do all living things have a mind? Does anything with a brain have a mind? Can something with no brain have a mind?
Does a thing have to be able to do something in order to have a mind?
Is any sort of movement or reaction enough to count as having a mind?
Does something have to be free to have a mind? What does it mean to be free? Can something man-made have a mind?
Can something that isn't flesh and blood have a mind?
How can we distinguish between something that looks like it has a mind but doesn't and something that really has a mind?
Where in the development of a human do we get minds?
Do sperms or eggs have a mind? Is it the same mind as the grown human?

Reference

Clinton Golding: *In the spirit of Socrates*. \$20: available from the author

Book Review

Mark Freakley and Gilbert Burgh, *Engaging with Ethics*,
Social Science Press, Katoomba: 2000.

Verdict: pedagogically excellent, philosophically wanting.

Clive Lindop, Deakin University, Warrnambool, Victoria.
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In many respects, *Engaging with Ethics* is an excellent book firmly entrenched in the tradition of Philosophy for Children, applying the principles and practice of philosophical community of inquiry to the teaching of professional ethics. For those unfamiliar with Philosophy for Children, the book offers a unique approach to the teaching of ethics by inviting readers to engage in a philosophical community of inquiry about the ethical dimensions of their professional practice. Although it is written for teacher educators and their students, there are enough parallels with other professional situations for it to serve as a useful reference for them too as it is designed to help students bridge the gap between moral theory and their experiences as beginning professionals.

It is a well organised book in two Parts A & B. Part A, in four chapters, explicates the theoretical framework for the approach, community of inquiry, with an excellent chapter (Ch 3) on putting it into practice, actually developing ethical communities of inquiry and guiding philosophical discussion. This is supplemented by practical teaching materials collected in the second half, Part B, of the book. These consist of a series of ethical vignettes of life in a fictional school, Downtown State School, catering for students from Kindergarten to Grade 12, supplemented with accompanying exercises or 'cues' to stimulate discussion of the ethical issues contained in the incidents. These vignettes contain narrative episodes in the lives of a set of major characters (teachers and students) in conversation about the ordinary affairs of school life which raise several ethical issues in a realistic context. With the accompanying exercises and guide to developing a community of inquiry, the class should be able to converse intelligently and fruitfully about ethical decision making in these scenarios which are plausible and realistic enough for them to identify with as beginning professionals. This is a vast improvement on the ethical dilemmas and value clarification approach to teaching professional ethics.

The authors are to be congratulated on providing a book that can actually engage students in *doing* philosophy rather than passively reading about how they ought to conduct themselves in their professional lives as teachers. The vignettes are the life and strength of the book while the accompanying 'cues' provide questions appropriately designed to keep the inquiry philosophical. But having so engaged them, does it help students improve their moral decision making? Not to my satisfaction, anyway. Although it provides a guide to some four ethical perspectives that could be adopted on each issue, it is not enough to suggest that ethical decision making is a matter of juggling four such perspectives until a balance emerges. I explain why later. Let me first review the book's strengths..

The four chapters of Part A articulate the community of inquiry approach. Chapter 1 explicates Matthew Lipman's community of inquiry approach to teaching philosophy and how he developed it from the work of John Dewey and Charles S. Peirce. This is a brief but

accurate overview of the development of a practice which has come to be recognised throughout the world as a powerful way of actually having students, even very young children, actually doing philosophy as opposed to passively reading about it or hearing dissertations from others about it. In a brief section contrasting Lipman's approach with deBono's deliberate teaching of thinking, deBono is rightly castigated for misconstruing Plato's methodology as adversarial when it is not. No evidence from Plato is provided in the book, but Plato himself, in the *Protagoras* for instance, contrasts his method of argument with adversarial debate: when the exchange between Socrates and Protagoras becomes a little acrimonious and Socrates decides to leave, both are urged to continue, and "agree to argue the topic and not debate it: for whereas argument is conducted amicably among friends, debate takes place between antagonists and adversaries. The former will be the most proper atmosphere for our discourse." (*Protagoras* 337a; tr. Hubbard & Karnofsky, 1982) Clearly Plato's method is not the adversarial one. Lipman's community of inquiry approach espoused in *Engaging with Ethics* echoes Plato and should result in group discussions that can be classed as "splendid conversations" rather than hostile wrangles (to use CCW Taylor's 1991 revised translation of the same passage from *Protagoras*). Freakley and Burgh are to be congratulated for attempting this pedagogy in tertiary teacher education.

Chapter 2 explains the strategies and provides the framework for engaging students in fruitful ethical conversations. It gives a well structured introduction to the elements of the community of inquiry providing useful ways of organising students for discussion in collaborative learning groups, with activities designed to foster the skills required to participate successfully in a community of inquiry. There is also discussion on how to use the ethical vignettes and cues for inquiry from Part B, plus a useful set of self and peer assessment instruments to promote awareness of the inquiry process.

Chapter 3 provides an excellent program (of nine sessions) for building a community of inquiry complete with activities and self/peer assessment guides. This community of inquiry approach is a unique educational practice that cultivates democratic character in students and a special sense of community - the community of ideas. It is an exemplar of democracy in action for it involves participants in a mutual co-operative endeavour that cannot work properly without each respecting all the others. The program is well formed and supported by the teaching materials from Part B. It is designed to help students become proficient at (1) engaging with each other as co-inquirers in a community of inquiry, (2) identifying and exploring ethical issues, and (3) correcting ideas through fair criticism of both form and content of arguments. While the program goes a long way to achieving these aims, especially (1) and (2), it is (3), developed in Ch 4, that is flawed and leaves out much of importance that would contribute to more effective ethical decision making.

Chapter 4 is an attempt to provide a framework against which discussion and dialogue about moral issues can fruitfully occur. As a resource bank of developed ideas about ethics and morality, it is inadequate because it fails to address the origins of moral principles and the nature of moral concepts. Without such considerations, ethical decision making will be the poorer, remaining confused and ill-judged. The authors describe four ethical perspectives from which to approach moral issues (duty, consequences, virtue, care) which leaves the

impression that moral problems are to be dealt with by viewing the problem from each of these perspectives with a view to giving it a weighting and deciding that, on balance, it is best to adopt one course of action rather than another. While this sort of approach may often be used by people in deciding how to act, it smacks of relativism with the danger of sliding into nihilism, alternatives that the authors set out to counter in the first place. While it is true, as the authors quoting Peter Singer point out, that "getting rid of the idea that an ethical life must consist of absolute obedience to some short and simple set of moral rules makes it easier to avoid the trap of an unworkable ethic," a workable ethic is neither a matter of proceeding by whim nor by tossing up between four alternatives.

Theoretical perspectives such as consequentialism and non-consequentialism are of limited value for making practical judgments, especially moral ones. Moral judgment is not a matter of switching between one or more perspectival spectacles (consequentialist, duty, virtue, care) from which to view the act and give it a score, as it were. This gives the impression that the act is somehow value-neutral and that the judgment of value (good/bad; right/wrong) can be added afterwards (like the icing on the cake). But moral concepts are not like this, they are value loaded right from birth, more a plum pudding with the sweet fruits built in, not added like icing onto the cake after it is done. Take murder for instance, Hume's example, it cannot be described simply as a consequentialist act, nor can it be described simply as a non-consequentialist act. Murder has the consequence someone is killed, but not all killings are murder whether deliberate or accidental. From the moral point of view, murder is always wrong. It is not a matter of adopting virtue spectacles, then caring spectacles, then utilitarian spectacles and judging that murder is sometimes wrong and sometimes not wrong, depending which perspective one adopts. Nor is it a matter of balance; that, four perspectives having been considered, murder is more wrong than right. But unfortunately, this is the impression one is left with after reading Ch 4, the chapter designed to provide students with the theoretical where-with-all to handle ethical issues. We are more inclined to say that lying is sometimes right and sometimes wrong, but are still uneasy about this, especially with young children. Of the various sorts of killings, one sort have been separated out as particularly morally abhorrent and reprehensible, and given their own special name - "murder." The very concept of murder is a concept formed completely from the moral point of view. From this point of view, murder is always and absolutely (morally) wrong. These remarks suggest that there is such a thing as a moral point of view, so it would be very helpful to have this explicated. Unfortunately *Engaging with Ethics* does not do this and so fails the very people it intends to help - teachers of ethics.

This omission is compounded by another, the failure to distinguish between the different kind of moral concepts that we have. Moral concepts are not all of the same kind. This chapter fails students because it fails to differentiate between complete and incomplete moral concepts (Kovesi, 1967), between concepts that are formed completely from the moral point of view and concepts that are not, concepts that are incomplete (from the moral point of view). Lying, for instance, is one of the incomplete moral concepts that calls for judgment as to when it is morally acceptable and when it is not. We struggle to differentiate these occasions with modifiers such as 'white,' and 'professional.' What Kovesi argues is that we struggle to differentiate between the

different instances of telling falsehoods because, as yet, the English language has not appropriated a different word to mark out the morally reprehensible instances of telling falsehoods from the others. The word "lying" is used of all instances, but we are unhappy with this and struggle to modify the word when the occasion is marked by moral reasons for not telling the truth (eg to save an innocent life; to avoid unnecessary distress for an innocent person).

Promise keeping is another example. We intuitively feel that anyone of honesty and integrity, who seeks to establish and maintain caring relationships with others, ought to keep one's word, keep one's promises. We feel that 'keeping promises' ought to be an absolute moral principle, and are disappointed when it isn't the case. In Australia we have a Prime Minister who has added to the lexicon with his distinction between non-core and core promises to distinguish those he feels free to break from those he hasn't yet broken. In English, there isn't, as yet, another single word to serve as the equivalent of non-core promise (those that can be broken) from promises that cannot, or ought not, be broken without moral approbation. This may not be the case in other languages. As moral principles are instantiated differently in different languages it is often difficult to accurately translate all the nuances of a concept of one language into another language. It is difficult enough even within the one language as Kovesi has indicated with English in the case of incomplete moral concepts.

What marks one occasion out from others as moral has much to do with the four perspectives that Freakley and Burgh discuss. However the distinction between these perspectives is blurred and not as helpful as it might at first appear. Of the four perspectives, three might arguably be described as non-consequentialist or agent based (labelled according to the differing intent of the agent) and the Utilitarian one as consequentialist. When making a sound judgment about what to do, whether in the domain of morals or not, we need to take into account the intention, the occasion or context as well as the likely consequences. It is then a case of accurately describing the situation: is it more accurate to describe an act as saving a life or stealing (the famous Heinz example from Kohlberg's dilemmas)?

If there is a second edition, and I hope there will be, Chapter 4 can usefully be revised by scrapping or revising the four perspectives and taking into account the origin of our moral principles as initially outlined by RS Peters in his *Ethics and Education* (1966), later elaborated and refined by Jurgen Habermas as discourse ethics. Anyone who genuinely engages in inquiring about how to act, how to live, what one ought to do, is committed to certain presuppositions not only in the conduct of the inquiry but in relationship to others entering into the discourse. Participants in the discourse are committed to telling the truth as they see it and not permitting self-contradictions (otherwise they are not genuine). All points of view are to be heard, no-one is to be barred from participating and speaking; all views are to be given equal consideration, and so on, otherwise the inquiry is not genuine. All these presuppositions form the basic procedural principles of genuine inquiry. They constitute the basic moral principles of freedom, equality, respect for persons that are realised in a genuine community of inquiry. This is why the community of inquiry approach is so apposite to teaching ethics; it is an exercise in morality. And these underlying principles of genuine dialogue are universal which is why we all have the intuitive notion that moral principles ought to be, even when they seem not to be,

universal. Genuine inquirers all over the world, of whatever culture or creed, submit to the same set of procedural principles. Of course, just how these principles are instantiated at any given time, in any given place, may well vary according to the prevailing etiquette or custom for showing respect to others, giving equal consideration to other views, and so on. Psychologists and sociologists so often confuse form with content in this regard, so inadvertently promoting relativism.

The above points must be addressed in any book or program of moral education worthy of the name. *Engaging with Ethics* serves as an excellent platform from which to launch such a revised program. Both the vignettes and discussion cues would benefit from including the discourse ethics perspective and the challenge of more adequately describing what is going on in any given situation or decision. As it stands, I rate the book as pedagogically sound, even excellent, though philosophically wanting in the ways indicated above.

References

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Peters, RS. *Ethics and Education*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1966

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VAPS Annual Conference and AGM 2001

“Politics of a Philosophical Education”

Melbourne High School, South Yarra

Sunday, 29th April

10.00 am - 4.30 pm

10.00 am REGISTRATIONS

10.30 am OPENING Janette Poulton

10.45 am INTRODUCTORY SPEAKER Dr Tim Sprod (University of Tasmania)

"Morality, Democracy and Citizenship: where does Philosophy fit?"

11.45am CHOICE of STUDENT DEMONSTRATION CLASSES

"Discovering Democracy" with year 5, 8 and 11 students and their teachers. The University of Tasmania P4C and Citizenship project.

1.00 pm LUNCH (ACER resource display)

3. KEY-NOTE ADDRESS Dr Brenda Cherednichenko (Victoria University)

"Politics of a Philosophical Education"

4. CHOICE of COMMUNITY OF INQUIRY WORKSHOPS

Facilitators include B. Cherednichenko, Stan Van Hooft, Laurance Splitter

5. PLENARY and REFRESHMENTS

4.45 pm AGM

INQUIRIES

Janette Poulton PH: 9443 0208 FAX: 9481 3386

Bev Steer PH: 9817 3173

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Philosophy for Children Association of New Zealand

Workshop/Conference
25th, 26th, 27th May 2001

Programme

Presenters:

Roger Sutcliffe (Keynote Speaker)

Dr Vanya Kovach
Clinton Golding
Sheree Campbell
Erin Hanifin
Gabriel Evans
Gary Pearce
Nicola Johnson

Jeremy Seligman
Graham Oliver
Soraya Gollop
Anne-Maree Olley
Suzanne Parkinson
Sue McRae

P4CNZ Annual General Meeting

The annual general meeting will take place at 4.30pm on Saturday. Anyone interested in being involved in the election of a new committee and coordinator, or in having input into the running of P4CNZ, is encouraged to attend.

The meeting will be followed by an informal dinner at Freya's in Ponsonby for all who would like to come.

Please advise Anne-Maree of your attendance to ensure sufficient places are booked: e-mail aolley@xtra.co.nz

