
P4C in Schools

A cross phase planning
toolkit for teachers

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Introduction

Philosophy for Children (P4C) provides a framework for developing a community of enquiry within the classroom based on Socratic dialogue. By encouraging learners to explore ideas and beliefs they are challenged to engage in higher order thinking and most learners report that they have welcomed the opportunity to share thinking in this way. A small group of interested teachers formed the EPIC project (Establishing Philosophy In our Classrooms) to investigate the worth of P4C as a strategy for challenging able, gifted and talented students within a mainstream classroom environment. This is the report of their work. It is intended as a brief introduction to other teachers who might like to try out P4C. For those who would like more detailed information please refer to the links on page 14.

What is P4C?

Philosophy for Children (P4C) is a pedagogical approach based on Socratic dialogue. Through enquiry style questions that are open ended and rigorous, it offers learners the opportunity to develop their thinking skills through exploratory talk and the careful use of reasoning. It is an approach that can be used in any subject and at any age. Despite Piaget's suggestion that children below the age of 11 or 12 cannot think critically this approach has been successfully used with children as young as 5 (Stanley and Bowkett, 2004, see link on page 14). P4C is not the formal teaching of philosophy as a subject, but it does help to develop philosophical reasoning and the application of logic.

"We talked about whether everything with wings could fly, but some birds can't fly as they have different kinds of defenses and we learned this. "
(Year 4 pupil)



How to run a P4C lesson

In the classroom, P4C usually takes the form of a “Community of Enquiry”. Sitting in a circle, learners share a stimulus, which might be a picture, headline, music, story or object. In groups, learners construct an enquiry question in response to the stimulus. (See page 8, “What is an enquiry question?”)



The whole class then considers all the group questions (there may be about 8 possibilities at this stage) and through discussion or voting (this could be a secret vote with eyes closed), the most appropriate question is selected by the whole class.



Learners indicate that they wish to make a comment by using a pre-arranged signal such as putting their hand out in front of them. (Avoid hands-up). Once a comment has been made the speaker chooses the next person to speak from those with their hands out. It might be useful to have an object that is passed from speaker to speaker. A soft toy is good for younger learners.

“When we go into the circle I know some stuff about the topic and then some people say something I don’t know and it puts more into my brain.”

(Year 6 pupil)

Ground rules for learners:

- Learners only speak when they have been selected (or when they are holding the object). Those who wish to interject must indicate using the pre-arranged signal and then must be chosen by the speaker. In this way only one person speaks at once and comments are more measured.
- Only the person speaking can choose who speaks next.
- Learners should be encouraged to start each comment with “I agree/disagree with what.....says...” rather than “I agree/disagree with.....” By agreeing/disagreeing with what has been said, rather than with the person, any disputes become less personal.
- Each person responds to the previous speaker and not to the teacher.
- All learners try to contribute and to value and respect the opinions of others.

“Sometimes when we did philosophy I didn’t know anything about the topic but by the end I did.”

(Year 6 pupil)

The role of the teacher

The teacher is usually the **facilitator** of the discussion but this role may be taken by another member of the group. Whoever facilitates, that person is an **equal member** of the “Community of Enquiry” and sits in the circle with the other learners.

- The facilitator should model good practice in **philosophical listening** by responding to and building on what has been said by others.
- They should also model **good social skills** by demonstrating a positive and courteous manner.
- As a **philosophical guide** the facilitator could ask for reasons or clarification. By asking open ended questions they can help to keep the discussion flowing.
- The facilitator may choose to review the discussion at certain times to maintain the focus on the search for an answer (even though there may not be one!)
- The facilitator may act as **counter-advocate** by questioning logic and putting forward counter arguments.
- Learners should see the facilitator as someone who respects them as individuals, takes what they have to say seriously, doesn’t know the answer to everything and shows good manners and an enjoyment of ideas

Ground rules for teachers:

- The teacher should avoid imposing their own questions on the group.
- The teacher should avoid dominating the discussion.
- The teacher should not intervene except to enforce the rules, prevent the debate getting too far off topic or becoming stuck in a blind alley.

What works well:

- P4C really seems to work best when learners are in a circle with no more than 1 row. This conformation seems to assist contribution and makes all the learners feel included and comfortable. (May not be possible for whole classes.)
- Many teachers first trying out to P4C find that the optimal number of learners involved is 8-15. This number means that learners have sufficient numbers to bounce ideas off each other but not so many that they get frustrated if they have to wait for a long time in order to make a point.
- You don't have to use the class room- any space will do and this can lead to more creative discussion.



Stick to the Rules!

- The rules prevent chaos, and help learners to listen to each other and use the points of others within their own arguments
- Ask learners to summarise if it all gets too chaotic!

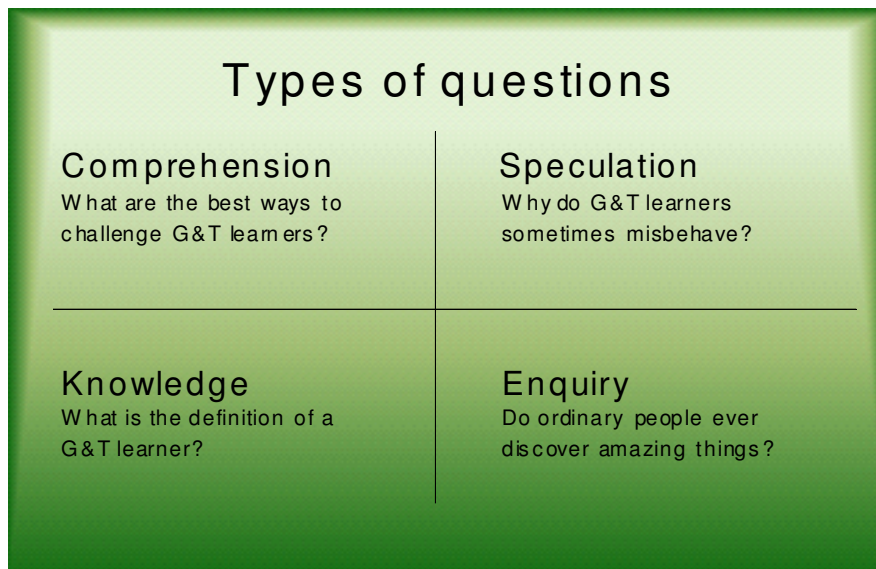
What is an enquiry question?

Forming questions

This is a crucial part of the whole process and you might need to spend some time with your class, even the older and more able learners, deciding what an enquiry question is. Only enquiry questions will allow the full range of thinking and discussing. Comprehension, speculation and knowledge questions, while valuable at other times, will limit your group thinking.

It is worth taking the time to explain and model enquiry questions in advance, and allow the learners to formulate their own as they will choose the enquiry question they have the most interest in and, therefore, the one upon which they have most to say about. Choosing the enquiry question gives them ownership of the debate.

Here is an example of the different kind of questions:



Examples of enquiry questions



There are further examples of subject specific enquiry questions on page 13.

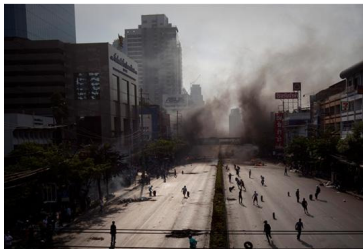
The use of stimuli

P4C lines of enquiry can be generated through a range of stimuli. Pictures/visual images can be extremely powerful sources of enquiry questions, as children of all literacy abilities are able to fully participate and engage, without the need to read or decode for themselves.



These photographs generated the following questions (Y6 & 7):

- *What is conflict?*
- *Will nature take back the planet?*
- *What is beauty?*
- *What is the point of life?*
- *Do we rule fashion or does fashion rule us?*
- *Are we running away from something?*
- *Do we control the future?*
- *Is everything bad?*
- *Is age just changing?*
- *What is a home?*
- *Everything dies so why are we here?*
- *What lengths should we go to for fashion?*



Other useful sources include objects, short quotes or even short pieces of music or film. As facilitators, it is important to choose a source which engages and questions the beholder at different levels. Essentially, the quality of discussion hinges on the quality of enquiry question and hence the stimulus demands careful thought and consideration.

Learners, once accustomed to the process and practiced in the discussion, can also be encouraged to look for interesting sources and enjoy the ownership and freedom this generates. Additionally, this can encourage topical debate through a range of sources such as newspapers, web pages, curriculum studies, etc, which offer other excellent opportunities to build on what is relevant to the learners at the time.

All of the above can be further reinforced through classroom display. Sources can be displayed in advance, generating a natural element of mystery or offering learners time to prepare their thoughts. Retrospective displays encourage learners to continue to question and can prompt further thinking beyond the original discussion. Learners' observations and opinions can be captured and displayed alongside the original enquiry question.

Encouraging everyone to participate

To begin with it is common for discussions to be two sided arguments between the two most articulate pupils in the class whilst the rest are silent.

You can encourage participation by all by some or any of the following:

- Ask learners to bring in their own stimuli.
- Ask all learners to use one word to describe the stimulus.
- Keep the discussions short to begin with
- Provide sentence starter or prompts to support those who are less confident. (*I agree with... I think. Etc*)
- Model questions
- Offer alternative ways to contribute e.g. posting ideas and thoughts in an ideas box that can be read by someone else. Older learners can be encouraged to write down a question/response as it occurs; they can come back to it later.
- Facilitator intervenes and asks: *"Is there anyone who has not yet spoken and would like to speak?"*
- On the spot: *"What are you thinking now?"*
- Nominate the next speaker
- Bouncing ball... whoever has it talks
- Start debates in small groups (i.e. four or five) prior to a whole class discussion.
- Use talk partners (See below)

The use of talk partners

Learners can use talking partners to help provide rich learning opportunities in a number of ways. Talking partners allow for learners to share ideas and thoughts in a safe environment. Learners can rehearse and share words, phrases or sentences which can be changed and improved by a peer before committing them to paper or shared in a larger forum. Learners will in turn feel more confident to share and accept improvements, their thinking will become more active as they rehearse, evaluate and apply their knowledge before sharing it whilst also having the opportunity to make critical judgments of other peer's ideas.

The pace of a lesson is currently very much in the national agenda and with the use of talking partners, lessons can allow for much less teacher talk and more learner to learner discussion where the teacher initially uses talking partners to stimulate ideas or make judgments and then facilitates a discussion based on the learners' thoughts. Learners have much more control of the direction of their learning this way and, as a result, are more likely to feel empowered to learn, remain on task and succeed.

Talking partners combined with other Assessment for Learning strategies such as 'no hands up' allows learners to keep focused on the learning. This can be very powerful.

Examples of use:

- Short focused tasks e.g. "You have 30 seconds to come up with 5 ideas why the Boudicca was right to revolt against the army".
- "Which of these 4 answers are correct? Can you explain to a partner?"
- "Which of these moral statements do you agree with? Persuade your partner to think the same."

Discussion boards

- Use a display board in the classroom as a discussion board to encourage learners to get into the habit of thinking about ideas.
- Display a weekly stimulus.
- Learners can write their thoughts, questions and ideas onto the board. You could use post-its.
- Learners can respond to one another.



Question trails

A question trail is simply a sequence of questions. Starting with a stimulus/question, instead of asking learners to respond with answers/ideas etc., they are asked to respond with a follow on question. This keeps going until you run out of questions!

Success criteria (R.E. Level 4, AT2)
ask questions about puzzling aspects of life

→ Is God real? Dale

IS TRUTH A REALITY? *Graham said "There are no answers only questions"*
Georgina, Nathan, Josh

↑

IS THERE A DIFFERENT TRUTH FOR EVERYONE... Dale

Question Trail

How can we know? Ali → Will we ever know? Georgina →

(Cleaner in charge and a governor)

Is there an answer for everyone? Josh ←

Is meaning only personal? Nathan ←

Literacy

P4C across the curriculum and cross-phase

There are many benefits of using P4C in topic work in primary school and in different subject areas in secondary schools.

In primary schools

- Using P4C techniques enables learners to have a deeper understanding of the topics they are covering in primary schools and enables them to quickly engage with the subject.
- Use P4C in topic debates such as Fair Trade. The learners quickly establish personal opinions about the issues surrounding fair trade and they gain a deep insight into the effects trade has on other people, through their P4C discussions.

In secondary schools

- In secondary science P4C fits into the 'How Science Works' idea, possibly with Theory of Knowledge type concepts. The idea being thinking deeper into how and why science develops the way it does. This is becoming an increasing focus even from KS3.
- Generate ideas for improvisation and role play in Drama and English through pictures as stimulus
- Problem solving in D&T, ICT etc
- Discussion of moral issues in RE, History, English, MFL

A sample of questions in different subject areas in secondary schools

All the questions have a valuable place in class activity but it is the enquiry questions that will generate free ideas and thinking.

English

- *Knowledge:* A poem from a different culture means what?
- *Comprehension:* What do all of these poems have in common? (e.g., conflict)
- *Speculation:* Why study these poems?
- *Enquiry:* Happiness, i.e. personal is dependent on one having a sense of identity...
- *Knowledge:* What is a social drama and what is a domestic drama?
- *Comprehension:* Where in the play is their evidence for either/or these genres?
- *Speculative:* Why infuse both genres?
- *Enquiry:* Do all social dramas have to have their origins in the domestic and are all domestic dramas infused with the zeitgeist?

Geography

- *Knowledge:* What is an ecosystem?
- *Comprehension:* Where are the world's ecosystems?
- *Speculative:* Are some ecosystems more important than others?
- *Enquiry:* A study of ecosystems has to include the notion of sustainability; otherwise it is of no real value?
- *or*
- *Enquiry:* Can we ever resolve the conflicts implicit in the different perspectives to National Parks?

Maths

- *Knowledge:* What is probability?
- *Comprehension:* How can we calculate probability?
- *Speculative:* Why use probability?
- ***Enquiry:* The amount we risk depends on the probability of the event.**

More Enquiry Questions for Mathematics:

- What does it mean to be good at Maths?
- How can you get better at solving problems?
- Is Maths everywhere?
- What do numbers mean?
- What is the best way to record your thinking in Maths?
- Is algebra helpful? (KS3 +)
- What is a 4 dimensional shape? (KS4 +)

Variations on noticing differences and similarities leading to classifications and deeper understanding of definitions:

- Could a circle be a polygon? (KS3 +)
- When is a fraction not a fraction? (KS3 +)

R.E.

- *Knowledge:* Define a team player.
- *Comprehension:* How may one be a team player?
- *Speculation:* Why is it important to be a good team player? Use PEE in your analysis.
- ***Enquiry:* You can be successful without the help of others?**

Links and useful material

- SAPERE run the official P4C training which is highly recommended. Their website, www.sapere.org.uk gives information on dates of training at levels 1, 2 and 3.
- www.p4c.com contains a wealth of information about p4c at all levels although subscription is necessary to access some of the materials.
- Matthew Lipman was the founder of P4C and has published widely. He was always particularly concerned that students learn to reason; sharing ideas and beliefs and articulating reasons for those ideas and beliefs continue to lie at the heart of P4C. The official P4C trainers still work with the team at Montclair University (<http://cehs.montclair.edu/academic/iapc/>) who continue Matthew Lipman's work.
- Robert Fisher books are excellent - Stories for Thinking (1996, Nash Pollock) etc.
- 'But Why? Developing philosophical thinking in the classroom,' Sara Stanley with Steve Bowkett. Network Educational Press, 2004. ISBN 1-85539-172-4. A resource aimed at teachers doing P4C with infants. Includes Phil, the philosophy bear and three story books.
- The Philosophy Club by Roger Sutcliffe and Steve Williams, ISBN 1-903804-03-5, is a detailed manual for setting up and running a P4C club in a school.
- Ian Gilbert's books are also really good, e.g. The Little Book of Thunks, and Little Owl's Book of Thinking. Brilliant in the primary or secondary classroom.

Appendix 1: Case Studies

Yr 5 mixed ability

Literacy

Method

- Children introduced to the rules of P4C and carried out a class discussion based on a story prompt linked to Literacy (Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters)
- Created an 'I Think...' board in the classroom with a key question that children could respond to using post it notes
- For those less confident learners, a thought box enabled them to contribute without others necessarily seeing their opinions
- Linked with visiting Yr 12 Philosophy students to further support P4C discussions
- Held discussions in different places e.g. classroom, hall, field, playground to see how different children reacted
- Linked P4C discussions to other areas of the curriculum e.g. slavery in History
- Began to work on formulating enquiry questions but this remained an area for further development.
- Split into smaller groups for mini P4C discussions before coming back together and holding whole class discussions

Evaluation

I found it more successful to initially introduce an enquiry question for discussion and then later introduce different options for the children to choose to discuss. This enabled the children to lead the discussion without excessive confusion over the formulation of enquiry questions. I believed that it was more crucial to work on the discussion skills initially, including justifying opinions and linking them to the thoughts of others.

I felt that by having the discussions outside of the classroom, those children who were lower attainers appeared more confident to take part. Beginning in smaller groups also supported these children as well as less confident members of the class because they were able to gather their thoughts before taking part in a whole class discussion.

I would advise anyone who wants to start P4C with their class not to be overly concerned with the children formulating their own enquiry questions from the start as this will come later when they have a better understanding of what a P4C discussion looks like.

Conclusion

P4C has enabled the children to feel that their opinions are valued and whilst recognising that there might be several different opinions but that there is no one right answer. The children appear to listen more thoughtfully to one another and retain what they have heard, evidenced by the links they make to what others have said.

Yr 6 mixed ability

Art (but not always subject based)

Method

- Created a discussion board in the classroom consisting of key questions, a stimuli and cards for the children to write their questions or ideas.
- Introduced the children to the rules of P4C and carried out a class discussion based on a photograph.
- Put four labels in the corners of the Hall – strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree. I gave the children a statement and they had to move to the section of the hall that most closely matched their opinion of that statement. They could then justify their position, and based on their response, children could decide whether or not to move.
- Filmed the next session to use later as evidence for progression.
- Worked on how to formulate an enquiry question with the class.
- Split the class into smaller groups to sort pictures into 'Art' and 'Not Art'. They then started the discussion in small groups before moving to a class discussion. This was to encourage more reticent pupils to contribute.
- Having become confident in carrying out a P4C discussion, in groups the children created their own training sessions to deliver to the Year 5 pupils.

Evaluation

I found that expecting the children to formulate their own enquiry questions at the start of the process was too difficult. If I were to repeat the programme I would introduce this later in the process and provide teaching sessions on what makes a successful enquiry question.

Conclusion

P4C has developed my pupils' confidence, self esteem, thought processes and ability to express their ideas. It provides a non-threatening environment which allows them time to think, discuss and express their opinions. As a result they feel their views are valued and they derive a huge amount of enjoyment from the sessions.

*"As there are lots of different opinions you learn to change your mind more easily. "
(Year 4 learner)*

Method

- The group met for six one hour sessions where they were offered the opportunity to explore and generate their own questions from a selection of topical stimulus according to the Community of Enquiry method.
- At first these were carefully chosen by the teacher, but after an initial introduction children were invited to find and bring their own choices for discussion.
- During the final session the group were videoed as part of an initial evaluation which fed into an overall summary of the curriculum initiative.
- Following this successful initial trial, the teacher used the techniques learned with whole class discussions before modeling the basics with the whole staff as part of a cross curricular inset around the theme of art week.

Conclusions

The P4C action research project was an excellent introduction to philosophy and connected well with new curriculum initiatives. The open enquiry and emphasis on learning in equal partnership, challenged the children to think deeper and take more responsibility for their learning. Some, particularly the more able, relished the chance to talk beyond their immediate experiences and question their understanding in order to deepen their knowledge. Teachers were often surprised by the quality of some of their responses.

"I like sharing with everyone and being part of the discussion. I liked that everyone got to say their ideas and can change their minds without anyone forcing them to change their ideas."

(Year 6 learner)

Method

- P4C discussions did not take place during one specific slot on the timetable.
- Many classroom discussions took the form of the “community of enquiry” format and learners were provided with sentence starter prompt cards to help develop the discussion.
- After consultation with other staff involved in the project a more flexible learning environment and more reflection time was introduced within the P4C session. This allowed time for talk partner discussions, personal thinking time and smaller discussions before contributing to the whole class debate.

Conclusions

P4C was a worthwhile project to be involved in. Cohesiveness within class discussions became more apparent. Children communicated more effectively with each other and it was noticed that children *listened* more carefully to each other, accepting and processing someone else’s idea or thoughts without prejudice. P4C discussions allowed more learners to feel encouraged to contribute ideas. The experience seemed to draw in more reticent learners, increase speaking and listening in the classroom and developed thinking skills and enquiry based approaches.

*“Sometimes what others say changes your ideas and that’s good.”
(Year 6 learner)*

Method

- Three sessions in Classics lessons, a special Chemistry and History P4C session.
- In the first Classics lesson, all that was employed were the discussion techniques without introduction of the philosophy element. In the second, the inquiry question was set for the students, but the discussion was framed from a philosophical stand-point. In the third Classics lesson students were able to pick their own philosophical question based on the idea of education.
- In the Chemistry session the students were able to produce and select their own enquiry questions, based around the relationship of science and religion.
- Their final P4C lesson was a History related in which the inquiry question was chosen for them as a restricted, subject specific one.

Observations

The choice of the right inquiry question is critical for a good discussion. Students were gradually introduced to P4C before formulating their own questions, and they still struggled to formulate questions with enough breadth and significance to be useful.

Equally importantly, teachers need to be unafraid of stepping out of their subject areas. The best discussions were those where the students employed evidence and ideas from the widest range of sources; attempts to set up very narrowly defined questions led almost inevitably to a restricted discussion.

Students in the class all participated at one point or another, and became increasingly better at self-regulating. Students enjoyed themselves, and several displayed impressive deep-level thinking that would not necessarily have been apparent in a straight-forward Classics, History or Chemistry lesson.

Conclusions

Several students from the class want to do more P4C lessons, and are contemplating joining a lunchtime philosophy club. By the end students were much better at adhering to both the rules and the spirit of P4C. They listened to each other more, and responded to what each other said, rather than just stating their own opinions.

Method

- In assessments, students had not always engaged with complex issues, it was hoped that this would help develop their writing and result in higher grades.
- The students were working on improving their creative writing, so the session was used to get them to think about more 'serious' issues in more depth.
- Questions pre-prepared that started off with simple knowledge based questions and worked up to enquiry style ones.
- Students sat in a circle away from the desks.
- The purpose of this different style of lesson was explained to the class before the discussion began.
- After the lesson students were interviewed about their experience.

Observations

The general feedback from students was extremely constructive. Students reported that they could see a "big difference" between this and other types of questioning used in other lessons. They really liked sharing their ideas and hearing those of other pupils and they commented that they had been made to think about things in more depth and to question their own ideas. The students were very enthusiastic and said that it was something they would like to see used more frequently in a variety of subjects.

The main negative point was that not all students had volunteered to contribute to the discussion, and the students said they would have liked to have heard everyone's thoughts so that it felt like more of a whole-group discussion. Students also reported that the process had been quite draining, and they questioned whether it could be used for a whole lesson.

Implications for teaching

As a result of observations of other staff it was felt that training was needed in order to understand the nature of an enquiry question. One teacher concluded that she "had not focused on giving time to a question that would require a deeper level of thinking and work on many levels". After further training the same teacher noted that she now had a "deeper understanding of how to trust in the question and allow pupils to steer the discussion rather than stepping in". She felt that the process was "extremely effective when properly executed...pupils respond because they enjoy being drawn into the debate".

Appendix 2: Running an action research project

The EPIC Project - Establishing Philosophy in our Community

Background

Teachers are always looking for effective ways to integrate challenge into their lessons. This is a particular priority for those involved in teaching those learners who are identified as Able, Gifted and Talented (AG&T). As part of an ongoing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme for Leading Teachers in AG&T an introductory session on Philosophy for Children (P4C) looked at how this might be used as a strategy to increase challenge for AG&T learners. Many of the teachers who attended this session expressed a desire to study the approach in more detail and as a result a small scale action research project was set up.

The aims of the project were:

- To develop the teaching skills of the group
- To develop expertise in using a community of enquiry so that P4C strategies are embedded across the curriculum
- To develop oracy in the classroom

This document is a product of that project and aims to provide information to help teachers who wish to develop a community of enquiry within their own classrooms.

Structure of the project

Time for reflective thought is a luxury that classroom teachers are rarely afforded but the value of uncluttered contemplation is well documented (Johns, 2004). Funding was allocated to the project to allow time-out for teachers to reflect and think deeply about their practice and the place of P4C within their classrooms. Individuals decided on their own specific focus under the umbrella of P4C and set their own hypotheses to investigate.

The formation of small peer coaching groups, as a method for embedding CPD and bringing about sustainable changes in practice, has been advocated by Joyce and Showers (1996) and this structure was therefore chosen for managing the project. The project group consisted of teachers from both primary and secondary phases and two LA consultants. Those involved has already expressed an interest in learning more about P4C and had therefore identified a personal need. They were, therefore self-motivated to learn. Additional personnel were invited to provide P4C expertise as necessary.

To further promote motivation, attention was paid to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. (Maslow, 1987).

- Pleasant venue conducive to reflection
- Adequate refreshments
- Project group cohesion
- Academic reading
- Creation of new knowledge
- Opportunity to lead fellow colleagues

The group met for a two whole days with an experimental period of 3 months in between. A short twilight meeting within the experimental period served to maintain the momentum (as this period had included the summer holiday) and refocus the group on the expected outcomes. Setting up a closed e-forum on the National Strategies site <http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/> provided an additional vehicle for sharing ideas and sign-posting useful documentation. Although the first study day included time to learn P4C strategies in more detail, the agendas for both days and the interim meeting were kept deliberately open to allow plenty of time for reflective thought. On the second day, during which the group fed back on their classroom experiments, the discussion was structured around the Reflective Teams model (Jackson & McKergow, 2007) as follows:

- One team member (the speaker) presents their problem/experience to the group
- Team members take turns to ask one question for clarification and the speaker responds
- Team members take turns to state one thing that has impressed them about what they have heard
- The speaker responds to the group reflecting on what has been said.

Impact statements were drawn up at the beginning of the project based on desirable outcomes if change is effected. These were graded (e.g. always, sometimes, rarely, never) and the answers converted to a numerical total, (see Appendix 4). Benchmarking the statements and then revisiting at the end of the project allowed for any change to be measured. Teacher evaluations were also collected to ascertain individual impact.

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Appendix 3: Evaluations and Impact

Teacher evaluations of the EPIC Project (Embedding Philosophy in our Community)

1. What was most enjoyable about being involved in the project?

- Having time to meet with other teachers and discuss ideas
- Introducing and leading a new subject
- Seeing children take ownership of a debate and actually listen to each other
- Meeting and communicating with everyone
- Watching the children engage with the discussion as co-collaborators in their learning and taking positive feedback from pupils and parents.
- Understanding of P4C and the collegial nature of the sessions
- Working with primary school teachers and finding out about year 6/7

2. What have you learnt from the project?

- Skills in how to carry out a P4C discussion
- Any age group can engage with philosophy
- Projects can be very powerful
- Framework for discussions
- Children welcome the chance to think more deeply, share opinions and form their own questions
- Understanding of the nature of inquiry and how it links to evaluative skills
- How to successfully do a P4C lesson!
- How a multi-school action research project works

3. Have you changed your practice in any way since taking part in the project?

- Including PAC in my timetable
- Using enquiry questions in other subjects
- Yes, now more likely to throw open a debate to the children relinquishing control – volleyball, not ping pong
- My practice has developed, as it has challenged me to offer more opportunities for children to the responsibility and engage in their learning which can be more difficult to manage
- More use of style of questioning in my classroom and training of g and t representatives
- Seen some students in a new light because of their contributions to the discussions
- Changed the way some discussion are run in my lessons

4. How have you communicated the project work to your colleagues? (If you haven't, how do you plan to?)

- I have delivered a staff meeting about P4C

- General discussions with teachers of the classes covered. Have given examples, sentence starts and notes from lessons to staff for their perusal and use if wanted.
- Staff meeting time as part of cross curricular inset
- Each g and t representative will be trained and or/observed in the process
- We wish to run a T+L session for interested teachers and we can now model P4C with a class for teachers who wish to observe

5. What are your thoughts on using an e-forum to compliment the project?

- I found it helpful to be able to look at other people's thoughts and ideas
- Brilliant. People can communicate easily and share ideas/files if needed
- Great ideas for reflection and showed practice
- Allowing us to communicate on a more ad hoc/need to know basis
- Didn't really use it, sorry ☹

6. If a follow up project were to run next year would you be interested in taking part and why?

- Yes because I have gained a great deal from this project and my class have also enjoyed taking part
- Yes – very useful and also I think I could make more of it in school
- Most definitely – what next?
- Yes...build on what I have already learnt
- Yes, because a) working with other schools has been really fulfilling and b) I believe P4C is worthwhile. However, other staff at my school might want to be involved instead

7. What changes could be made to a follow up project to make it more successful?

- Funding for some supply cover for research etc
- Maybe more of an initial training session as I felt a little bit lost to start with and took a while to become confident
- Perhaps further online resources to consider and share thinking
- Greater participation by other secondary schools
- Be clear about how to benchmark from the start

Evaluation of Impact of EPIC Project

Benchmark – O

Final - X

| | | often | some- times | rarely | never |
|---|--|-------|----------------|--------|-------|
| 1 | Students use inference indicators in their speech | | X O | O | |
| 2 | Students accept and value differing opinions: | X | O | O | |
| 3 | Students feel confident to contribute to a discussion | X | O | O | |
| 4 | Students can formulate enquiry questions | | X | O | O |
| 5 | Students have the opportunity to direct their own learning. | | X | O | O |
| 6 | Other teachers in schools have experienced EPIC techniques | | | X O | O |
| 7 | An enquiry based approach is evident in the school | | | X O | |

Benchmark: Scoring 0 for "never" and 3 for "often" gives a total score = 7/21

Possible improvement = 14/21

Final score = 14/21

Improvement = 7 which is **50%** of the total possible (14)

Appendix 4: Communication

The use of e forums

At teachers' request a twilight G&T session was held to explore P4C. This proved very popular and the e-forum was used to help develop and share interest in the P4C. Many teachers, both those who had been on the course and those who had been unable to do so, took part and shared ideas and views. The expertise of the National Strategies was invaluable in helping to set up the forum on the NS website. A summary of the main views expressed is printed below. The extent of interest generated in the P4C forum prompted the setting up of an action research project. The e-forum continued to be used to share concerns and successes as teachers began to develop P4C in their classrooms. The forum proved to be an excellent means of instant communication and had the benefit of being accessible at all hours and not requiring teacher cover!

Summary of P4C posts on the Reading e-forum, April 2009

What it was about for those who missed the training session

- The basic process involves picking a stimulus, e.g. a picture and then working in groups developing questions that the one might be able to ask. The skill is giving the group the opportunity to pick up on the pertinent questions and this is another major theme. The group is encouraged to select the questions they want to debate and offer opinions on. The responsibility is with the pupils which makes it excellent to develop all pupils as well as the G&T. It requires direction from the teacher and children need to be taught to respect and value opinion. Ultimately it's about building questions/thinking and not deciding what's wrong/right or most popular/fabulous for a great many children and encourages all sorts of transferable skills.
- Key concepts are talk partners, feedback (both positive and developmental) and the transfer of responsibility for learning.
- Stimulus. A "toolbox" can be used containing a group of objects for a certain purpose, i.e. things that have helped me to appreciate poetry. The objects could be real or virtual. Photographs are good as a stimulus for P4C
- P4C has been linked to the use of AFL and has been part of a WEC project across primary schools in Reading as part of the raising standards agenda. Part of this process has been the use of students work as a starting point, midpoint and end point for learning. This approach has grown with some action research with Shirley Clarke.

How it's being used in school

- We ran a series of Friday afternoon P4C activities last year instead of Golden Time - across KS2 mainly - physical thinking skills (developing team work approaches to physical problems), mathematical puzzles (we have bought a huge resource box of 3-D and other puzzles) and a literacy based philosophy session using the Robert Fisher books - worked well, children enjoyed it, although we found planning time consuming, especially for the physical bit. The challenge we face is time. There just isn't enough time to do the things we want to do with the pressures we face in raising standards at KS2!
- P4C and questioning. Something we've done before is question trails - start off with a theme and children are only allowed to ask questions. For example, I led a session on the theme of 'love'; first questions were fairly predictable 'what is love', 'what does it look like' etc, but as time went on the questions became more and more profound and thoughtful - what does it feel like to have your heart break, what colour is love, does love look different to different people etc. We then chose one question to talk about further - can't remember which one. The quality of the children's questions/comments was absolutely incredible.
- In West Berkshire, several schools are making use of P4C in the teaching of English. In particular, one school has made P4C integral to their KS4 programme in which pupil independence is being nurtured, with outstanding results. One example: the year 11 class had been studying their AQA B poetry, focusing on the love poems in their anthology "Best Words". The teacher had asked all students to bring in an object that they associated with love for their next lesson. The objects were displayed (as in the P4C process) and an enquiry around their different concepts and definitions of love followed. The teacher suggested students could also make references to the poems the group had studied, and modeled this during the enquiry, but did not insist upon this dominating students' explorations of the theme. The teacher reports that student essays on the subject of love poetry have greater variety and originality than she has come to expect, and knows that P4C has given students an independent voice and a breadth and depth of understanding. In the same school, students in year 10 are having a discussion this week on Stevenson's Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde with an enquiry question focused on how far good defeats evil in that novel.
- However, student independence (and engagement) is not the only triumph to be celebrated following the development of P4C as part of the English department's repertoire. When P4C based lessons are observed, the teachers are regularly judged to be outstanding. This is no surprise, as a swift perusal of the outstanding column in the CQS reads, in many respects, like a description of a P4C enquiry. Senior staff in the school are recognising the invaluable contribution that P4C is making to the quality of teaching and learning.
- Would P4C have more value if it started in the classroom?
- My hunch is that it must be MUCH easier in science, history and English than in MFL and maths, for example. But how would it relate to ICT??

- Training. There are a number of accredited trainers who will train teachers in a school or local authority. The standard of training is superb, and, quite naturally, the accredited trainers for SAPERE are keen to develop P4C using tried and tested processes. SAPERE are particularly specific about the role of the teacher in the discussion process - teacher as facilitator.
- P4C is something to develop across a whole school as one of the ways in which students expect to learn.