Self-directed learning is the focus of Philosophy with Children.

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Abstract:

This essay offers a theoretical framework for comprehending the utilization and importance of philosophy with children within and beyond educational institutions as a means for self-directed learning in the context of current advancements. This paper outlines six distinct approaches to implementing Philosophy with Children that deviate from typical classroom practices. Additionally, it advocates for the adoption of a "pedagogy of searching" as a substitute for the prevailing "pedagogy of fear" commonly observed in traditional educational frameworks. More specifically, it incorporates the concepts put forth by Matthew Lipman, widely recognized as the pioneer of Philosophy for Children, and his extensive examination of the notion of meaning.
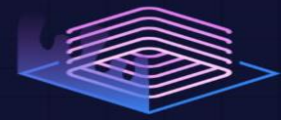
Introduction

In contrast, the self-determined approach places emphasis on the learner's autonomy. According to Hase and Kenyon (2007), the learner assumes the role of the primary agent in their own learning process, which is facilitated by their personal experiences. As to Ricci and Pritscher (2015), the value of a student's chosen learning pursuits lies in their utilization of their physical, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual faculties to explore their desired areas of knowledge (p. 4). The individual engaged in the process of learning must possess the capacity to effectively adjust and accommodate themselves to novel circumstances and concepts as they emerge. Currently, the emphasis lies on the acquisition of competence, introspection, metacognition (the awareness of one's own learning process), as well as the utilization of double-loop and nonlinear pedagogical approaches (Blaschke, 2012).

According to the writers, contemporary education places greater emphasis on academic performance and credentials rather than fostering inquisitive, self-motivated individuals with a genuine passion for acquiring knowledge. This perspective challenges the prevailing notion that sole responsibility for educating students rests with the teacher (Ricci & Pritscher, 2015, p. 4). The objective is to promote the concepts of "transformative learning" and "emancipatory learning and social action" as discussed by Merriam (2001, p. 9). As individuals progress in age and engage in introspection on their past actions, held beliefs, and made choices, their perspective undergoes a transformation (Mezirow, 1997).

According to Brandt (2013), self-directed learning provides students with opportunities to enact positive transformations in their life, as well as contribute to the betterment of society at large (p. 111). The current approach to student learning exhibits notable distinctions from historical methods. Frequently, rapid changes occur within the realm of business. Organizations express a desire for and commend individuals who possess the ability to effectively utilize their acquired knowledge in practical settings, exhibit critical and creative thinking skills in the face of challenges, and communicate their ideas in a coherent and succinct manner (Hart Research Associates, 2013). It is advisable for recent graduates to promptly commence their employment in their respective positions. Furthermore, individuals must possess the capacity to rapidly acquire new knowledge and retain it over an extended period. According to Blaschke (2014), individuals employed in the contemporary workforce must possess a diverse array of cognitive and metacognitive abilities in order to thrive in the intricate nature of the present-day professional environment. Included in this set of talents include, but not exclusively, inventiveness, self-directedness, resourcefulness, and awareness of one's preferred learning style. According to
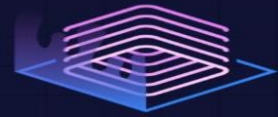
Gerstein (2014), contemporary students are required to possess a multifaceted skill set that encompasses multitasking, critical thinking, empathy, curiosity, innovative problem-solving, and effective communication through both oral and written means. It is imperative for students to possess the ability to discern the accuracy and use of the knowledge they encounter on the internet. It is imperative for individuals to possess the knowledge and skills necessary to verify information from credible sources, evaluate and analyze arguments, and discern the distinction between correlation and causation.

This article examines the evolution of Philosophy for Children over the course of four decades, transforming into Philosophy with Children, a comprehensive framework that promotes autonomous learning. The objective is to foster the development of critical, empathetic, and innovative cognitive processes by integrating philosophical concepts with an understanding of socioeconomic factors. After gaining knowledge about the educational and philosophical aspects of the movement, Mathew Lipman, its founder, extensively contemplated the notion that it promotes and fosters self-directed learning (Kennedy, 2010, pp. 69–80).

The practice of engaging children in philosophical discourse, known as Philosophy with Kids, transcends traditional classroom settings by offering opportunities for philosophical thought and exploration in various contexts. There exists a distinction between Philosophy for Kids and the philosophy curriculum often offered at educational institutions at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. This lifestyle encompasses both a philosophical orientation and an educational method. Nevertheless, the inclusion of philosophy as part of the curriculum in educational institutions, particularly in high schools, is increasingly prevalent. The practice of introducing philosophy to children, both as a subject of study and as a collaborative endeavor, has emerged as a pedagogical approach that fosters the development of individuals who engage in introspection and contemplate existential inquiries pertaining to their own identities, the external universe, and their immediate environment, starting from an early stage of their cognitive and emotional development (Kohan, 2014).

According to Lipmann, Sharp, and Oscanyan (year), children are inclined to pose profound inquiries, such as the existential query of "What is the fate of individuals following their demise?" as discussed in their publication Philosophy with Children. Is one's online identity truly representative of their true self? This is the reason why discussions pertaining to "profound metaphysical matters" are introduced (1980, p. According to Lipman et al. (1980, p. 29), children initially possess a strong desire for comprehensive explanations. It is deemed condescending to neglect assisting them in cultivating notions that are as comprehensive as the inquiries they pose. According to Lipman et al. (1980, p. 29), Matthew Lipman, the director of the Institute for the
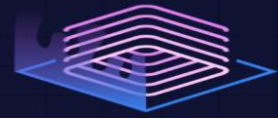
Advancement of Philosophy for Children at Montclair College, has long asserted that inquiries beginning with "why" serve as the initial stage in a child's philosophical development. The individual exhibits a pervasive curiosity and an insatiable desire for knowledge across a wide range of subjects. The individuals in question consistently exhibit a propensity for posing novel inquiries and display a persistent dissatisfaction with the responses provided.

In order to foster a sense of community and inquiry inside the classroom, it is now recognized that students demonstrate a heightened appreciation for and utilization of their peers' ideas. They actively seek explanations for viewpoints that lack empirical support, collaborate in deriving conclusions from shared discourse, and endeavor to discern the underlying assumptions made by others. Lipman expanded upon the foundational work of Charles Peirce regarding the scientific community of inquiry, so formulating this concept. According to the source from 1991, on page 20.

The students are arranged in a circular formation and engage in the act of reading or observing a text, such as a movie or photograph, that elicits a sense of curiosity and prompts them to formulate inquiries. This methodology has been empirically documented and is implemented in secondary schools worldwide. Collectively, the individuals engage in a democratic process to choose the agenda, actively engage in attentive listening and generate novel ideas, and benefit from a climate characterized by trust and empathy.

Children and adolescents frequently engage in self-organized philosophical communities of inquiry in the absence of adult guidance or institutional backing. These can be established independently, as components of a youth movement, or within an educational institution. An environment is established to provide adolescents with a secure space for engaging in discussions with both adults and peers regarding challenging subjects.

According to Lipman, classrooms have the potential to transform into communities of inquiry, wherein students engage in active listening, critical thinking, and respectful disagreement as they strive to enhance their understanding of their own perspectives ("communities of inquiry").

According to scholarly discourse, the Community of Inquiry approach is purportedly distinct from a child-centered approach as it does not prioritize the teacher or the student as the central focus. Collaborative thinking and discourse play a crucial role in fostering enhanced comprehension and robust perspectives. According to the source cited on page 4 of the publication from 2012. According to Splitter and Sharp (1995, pp. 17–18), a community of inquiry possesses both immanent and transcendent qualities. It functions as a pervasive framework within the everyday lives of its participants, while also serving as an ideal to aspire towards. In accordance with the
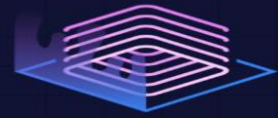
findings of Gareth Matthews (1994), it has been observed that parents and teachers often prioritize their roles as caregivers and educators, inadvertently overlooking the distinctive moral perspectives that children possess. The significance of Bruner's (1987) concept of constructivism as a process of "worldmaking" and the role of narratives in shaping one's life, as highlighted in the context of children engaging in philosophical debates, becomes increasingly apparent.

The participation of children in inquiry groups exposes them to narrative-philosophical environments that require a perspective that rejects objectivity and embraces ambiguity. Narrative discourse serves as an effective means of acquiring self-knowledge. When individuals contemplate the concept of care quality, they engage in introspection to ascertain their own identity and discern the fundamental principles that define the collective.

Alternatively, the self may be influenced by external manipulation, wherein the group's recounted historical events, even if occasionally fictionalized, are utilized to construct a truth that incorporates overtly inaccurate elements. These elements are not effectively filtered or regulated by the self during the process of constructing one's identity. Nevertheless, the development of children's philosophical sensibility, encompassing their capacity to comprehend abstract concepts related to human existence, can be fostered by engagement in a community of inquiry that prioritizes philosophical discourse (Kizel, 2015b). This facilitates the analysis and understanding of essential philosophical attributes within various contexts.

In juxtaposition to the prevalent emphasis on a competitive mindset and the promotion of competition within contemporary educational institutions, communities of inquiry prioritize cooperation and collaboration as means to cultivate self-directed and collective learning. According to Sharp (1988), educational settings characterized by reduced levels of rivalry tend to cultivate inclusive, cooperative, and collaborative atmospheres that are conducive to effective learning. These attributes cultivate the requisite conditions for the emergence and, at times, fruition of philosophical concepts. Parents can contribute to the preservation of prevailing beliefs within their communities by imposing limitations on their children's participation in forums that facilitate the expression of personal viewpoints.

In his book "Philosophy with Children," Lipman introduced a categorization of philosophy into three distinct subfields: historical philosophy, scientific philosophy, and religious philosophy. Gareth Matthews was first skeptical about the critical thinking abilities of children, but this experience ultimately persuaded him to engage in collaborative efforts with them. In his study conducted in 1994, Matthews observed that upon initial interaction, the individuals in question had not just a keen interest in philosophical matters but also demonstrated their ability to engage with
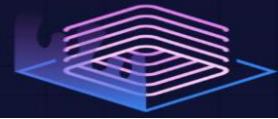
profound topics. Contemporary global research consistently indicates that young individuals possess the ability and propensity to actively participate in creative cognitive processes. Through active participation in philosophical communities of inquiry and cultivating a propensity for critical questioning (Cam, 2013; Garca-Moriyón, Rebollo, & Colom, 2002; Gérard, Siddiqui, & Huat, 2015), individuals can enhance their capacity for creative and empathetic thinking. Indeed, instead than impeding their advancement in many domains of knowledge, these factors just contribute to the refinement of their skillsets.

One initial philosophical recommendation for children is to prioritize the acquisition of knowledge through a series of inquiries rather than a collection of definitive solutions. The second perspective revolves around a diverse cohort of educators who are advocating for the implementation of democratic classroom techniques. Furthermore, instead of assuming the role of an authoritative figure, the coordinator actively engages in the learning process. The fourth aspect of the study involves the comparison between our current knowledge and the potential advancements that may be achieved in the future. The sixth argument supports the utilization of improvisation as a pedagogical approach within educational settings, as opposed to relying solely on the dissemination of written materials. The sixth perspective posits that education liberates the student from the constraints of societal conformity. All six views share the view that the primary focus of philosophy with children is the exploration of meaning, which is regarded as a pedagogical technique that promotes personal growth, as well as the development of autonomy and competence. The approach described stands in stark contrast to the fear-based pedagogy commonly observed in traditional educational environments, as noted by Kizel (2016a), which imposes excessively demanding requirements on students. It diminishes her capabilities, reduces her inclination to engage in risky behavior, and increases her dependence on an authoritative figure as a guide.

1.1. Acquiring knowledge from a collection of inquiries rather than a store of solutions.

When engaging in the instruction of philosophy to children, it is imperative to acknowledge and respond to the innate inquiries that arise inside them. When adults, who are affected by the classical school paradigm, attempt to present a predetermined set of responses that are expected to be unquestioningly reiterated, it might elicit feelings of anxiety among children. The cognitive endeavor necessitates a reexamination of fundamental concepts and a readiness to establish an environment conducive to the uninhibited exploration of individual viewpoints on many aspects of existence, localities, and the global sphere, devoid of apprehension regarding mockery or retribution. This is an appeal directed towards adults occupying educational and parental positions, urging them to eschew adult colonialism and instead prioritize the preservation of juvenile
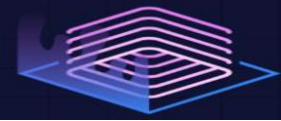
innocence in its spiritual and existential essence. The state of purity facilitates the emergence of a philosophical sensitivity that is characterized by a lack of naivety, yet remains optimistic about the potential of inquiry to contribute to human well-being and the pursuit of knowledge.

Conclusion

Philosophy programs designed for children offer a platform for engaging in discourse about existential quandaries, including those that pertain to urgent societal issues. As previously mentioned, philosophical communities of inquiry exhibit six dimensions that foster and encourage autonomous learning within and beyond institutional settings. The pedagogical technique employed in teaching philosophy to children is rooted in the concept of inquiry, particularly the meaning-seeking methodology advocated by Matthew Lipman. In order to liberate education from the pedagogy of fear and effectively address children's inquiries, a significant conceptual transformation is necessary. Many adults perceive the proposal to incorporate existential inquiries into the existing educational framework, as opposed to the existential certainties they uphold, as an act of rebellion. It is imperative to return to the initial stages and demonstrate a willingness to provide children with a complimentary and safe educational environment. In this area, they can freely inquire about many aspects of their lives, their immediate surrounds, and, notably, the ever-changing world, utilizing their inherent creativity. Hence, it promotes the rejection of adult dominance in favor of embracing a youthful state of immaturity, while acknowledging an inherent innocence that nurtures a philosophical sensitivity. This sensitivity is imbued with the aspiration that the inquiries pursued will facilitate and authenticate personal development and exploration.
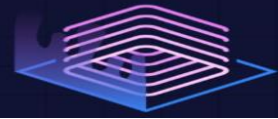
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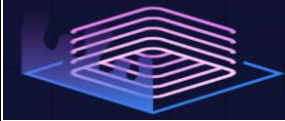
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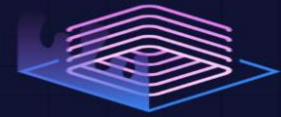
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