

Creative Philosophical Enquiry

Twelve Tools for Talking & Thinking

A guide for teachers and practitioners working with KS1 - 4



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Foreword

+ IVE's mission is to prepare children to face the future with creativity and self-belief.

Since 1997 IVE (then known as CapeUK) has worked developing expertise as an enterprising creative research and development organisation. IVE's work is rooted in outstanding practice on the ground in Yorkshire and the North West, but also has a national and international reach, collaborating with others who share the vision from around the world.

Creativity is a core human capacity which can be developed and nurtured in all areas of life. Through developing programmes and working in partnership with others, IVE ensure that children have the opportunity to develop as creative human beings, actively engaged in shaping their lives and the communities around them.

IVE has managed a variety of Creative Partnerships¹ funded projects, in schools throughout Yorkshire, some of which have used philosophical enquiry to enhance learning. IVE projects, especially those discussed here, are very much in the spirit of this second generation of thinking about philosophy for/with children. They are informed by the academic theory and praxis that has gone before, but they also explore, expand and enrich the possibilities of philosophical enquiry with children.

This creative philosophical enquiry resource is part of IVE's diverse range of education focused work. This work aims to support teachers in their continuing professional development to bring the curriculum to life using creative conventions and stimuli and to encourage pupil led approaches to personal learning.

IVE

+ Philosophy can be a serious business.

Philosophical enquiry is a particular kind of careful, critical thinking; and although philosophers deal with some wacky ideas, it's not just a case of 'anything goes'. And yet, as soon as we give it a go, we realise that philosophical thinking is also inherently creative:

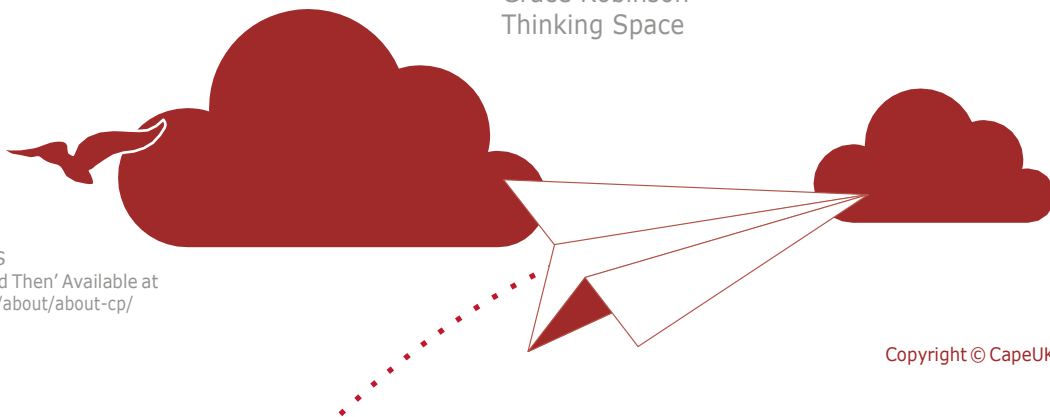
We ask irresistible questions, we form new and exciting ideas and offer reasons, we think up examples and counter-examples and we imagine weird and wonderful possibilities.

The creativity that characterises philosophical dialogue also has an important place in planning and facilitation of that dialogue. This creative practice is the focus of the resource. In writing it, I'm aware that it is sometimes difficult to realise.

Philosophy can seem intimidating and inaccessible it can also be tempting to reduce it down, to what appears to be, its more manageable parts. We concentrate on sitting children in a circle, ensuring everyone votes on a question and takes turns to speak. This is important stuff, but the danger is that we start to think that philosophy simply is the sum of these processes and procedures.

I hope to shine some light on this creative process by concentrating on the core features of philosophical enquiry that make it meaningful: questioning, reasoning and reflection. I also hope that this resource will inspire the confidence you need to take these components and play with them. There are many ways to bring about philosophical dialogue and enquiry; these are just a few ideas to get you started.

Grace Robinson
Thinking Space



1. CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

'Creative Partnerships: Now and Then' Available at www.creative-partnerships.com/about/about-cp/

Introduction

+ This resource has been designed with teachers in mind, but will also be of use to interested practitioners and arts organisations.

It consolidates some of the learning accrued across a variety of projects that have made use of philosophical enquiry in the past few years. These include, but are not limited to, approaches recognisable as typical 'P4C' (Philosophy for Children).

The resource will:

- **Support the exploration, extension and enrichment of current philosophical enquiry practice.**
- **Provide stimulus and ideas for those encountering philosophical enquiry for the first time.**

It is not intended to be a substitute for expert introductory training and we would warmly encourage anyone who finds this resource useful to explore some of the other training opportunities and resources mentioned at the back of this booklet.

This resource is informed by work that took place in the delivery of projects developed and managed by CapeUK, through Creative Partnerships funding, in nine schools between 2009 and 2011.

The defining characteristic of project activity was 'the collaborative partnership between creative professionals, classroom staff and young people and the ways in which this partnership helps to bring the curriculum to life, providing new ways for learners to engage with subjects and to develop increased motivation for learning.'²

Crucial to the success of these projects was the time built in to the project structure for in-depth planning, co-delivery and reflection. It is against this backdrop that the various philosophical enquiry projects mentioned in this resource have been conceived.

The delivery of these projects involved the work of Grace Robinson, Philosopher, and a number of creative practitioners and teachers.



Creative Philosophical Enquiry

✦ There is a growing interest in philosophical enquiry in schools worldwide. Educators, parents and children (and more recently academic philosophers, educational psychologists and policy makers) are coming to recognise the enormous potential of philosophy to foster the critical thinking and creativity we expect from a liberal education system alongside the caring and collaborative attitudes that we hope for in a liberal society.

Educational programmes, most notably 'Philosophy for Children' or 'P4C', have inspired this interest, illuminating the potential use of philosophical enquiry in schools and other settings. Over the past forty years or so, children and adults all over the world have experienced philosophical dialogue for the first time, more often than not, in the form of a 'community of enquiry'. Today, Philosophy for Children has evolved considerably from its more prescriptive roots where 'uniformity of approach' was emphasised among practitioners, to the current day where difference is welcomed 'as a principle of growth.'³

2. IBID

3. VANSIELEGHEM N., and KENNEDY, D., (2011) 'What is Philosophy for Children?' Journal of Philosophy of Education Vol. 45 Issue 2 Oxford, Blackwell. p. 172

What is Philosophy?

+ So what exactly is philosophy? While interest in philosophy in schools is rather new, philosophy itself has been around for thousands of years and during that time a lot has been said on the topic of what philosophy is and what it ought to do. There is no undisputed answer to this question but many accounts start by talking about what philosophers do and what kinds of things they take an interest in.

Philosophers are engaged in the activity of philosophising; thinking clearly and carefully about matters of fundamental importance such as:

- **What exists** (metaphysics)
- **What we can know** (epistemology)
- **How we should live** (ethics)

Philosophical thinking involves questioning, reasoning and reflecting about these matters and many more. In fact, wherever there is an issue of importance and interest (whose meaning is in some way indeterminate or controversial), there

is room for philosophical enquiry.⁴ At the same time, philosophers are also thinking about their thinking, a process known as meta-cognition. They reflect on how their beliefs about existence, knowledge or values have formed and they wonder whether they can be trusted.

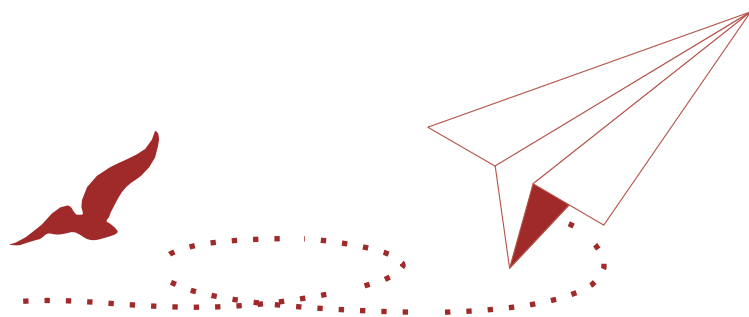
As an area of academic enquiry philosophy is enormous; the history of philosophy is one in which there is a spectrum of questions from those concerned with the ultimate nature of the universe e.g. "What is time?" to those concerned with fairness in football e.g. "Is there anything wrong with doping in sport?"



So what unites these seemingly disparate questions? Here is one account.⁵

Philosophy deals with questions that are:

- **Conceptual** – They are about ‘big’ ideas.
- **Common** – They bear on everyday concerns.
- **Contestable** – They elicit many different views and not everyone agrees about the answers.
- **Central** – They are at the heart of how humans think of themselves and their relations with others and the world.



These kinds of questions underpin every area of human enquiry yet none of us can say for sure that we have the right answer.

Unlike the questions of science, maths and logic, philosophical questions can't be answered by asking an expert, conducting an experiment, searching the Internet or applying a rule.

So why ask them?

As mentioned, philosophical questions require us to think clearly and carefully. Sometimes the product of this thinking is wisdom – although rarely in the form of a definitive answer upon which everyone can agree. Often philosophical wisdom means a deeper understanding of the subtleties and complexities of a still unsolved problem.

It can also take the form of self-knowledge; a deeper understanding of what you believe and why because philosophising requires you to think about your thinking.⁶

Philosophical Enquiry also draws us into dialogue; it naturally requires us to communicate our thoughts to each other, listening attentively to others in return. Philosophical dialogue allows us to see a problem through someone else's eyes and in doing so we better understand them as well as the problem. Many people consider the promise of social, as well as intellectual enrichment, to be one compelling reason to explore philosophy.

4. HONDERICH, T. ed (1995) 'Philosophy' The Oxford Companion to Philosophy (Oxford, Oxford University Press) p. 666 – 670

5. Account developed in conversation with Roger Sutcliffe of SAPERE, The Society for the Advancement of Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education. The website of SAPERE can be found at: <http://www.sapere.org.uk/>

6. HONDERICH, T. ed (1995) 'Philosophy' The Oxford Companion to Philosophy (Oxford, Oxford University Press) p. 666 – 670

Philosophy for/with Children

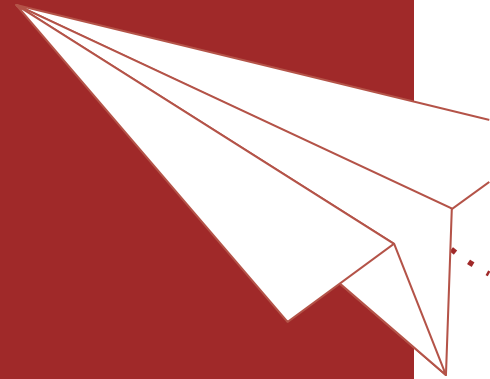
✦ ‘Philosophy for Children’ (or Communities) sometimes called ‘Philosophy with Children’ (and abbreviated as P4C or PwC respectively) is a pedagogy that was initially developed by American philosopher Matthew Lipman in the 1970s.⁷

He was convinced that learning to think critically, to enquire about philosophical questions and to form reasonable judgements should begin much earlier in life.⁸ The approach is now practised - in various forms - in schools, colleges, prisons, hospitals, community centres, pubs etc. across the world.

This approach focuses on building ‘A Community of Enquiry’: a group of learners who are willing and able to work together to explore issues of shared interest. Their shared enquiry is recognisable as:

- **Creative** – They generate new ideas, put old ideas together in new ways and see things differently.
- **Critical** – They pull ideas apart, scrutinize them and make judgements.
- **Caring** – They show sensitivity to the context of a discussion and to other people, investing in the outcome.
- **Collaborative** – They rely on others, learn from each other and support one another’s learning.⁹

The Philosophy for Children approach is recognisable by its use of series of steps which provide a framework for the facilitation of philosophical enquiry. The ‘Community of Enquiry’ framework used in P4C enables an enquiry to progress from the presentation of a shared stimulus to the formation of questions and the selection of a questions deemed to be philosophically interesting. From here the framework enables the exploration of that question through group dialogue and reflection on the discoveries made.



The Impact of Philosophy for Children.

A now famous piece of research by Dundee University, published in 2006, investigated the impact of philosophical enquiry in Clackmannanshire Schools. The study found that after 16 months of weekly enquiry, children made average gains of 6 standard points on a measure of cognitive ability.

After a period of just six months pupils increased their level of participation in discussion by half as much again and supported their views with reasons twice as frequently. In addition to this, teachers doubled their use of open-ended questions and both teachers and pupils 'perceived significant gains in communication, confidence, concentration, participation and social behaviour.'¹⁰

The Value of Philosophy for Children.

Although Philosophy for Children is known to bring about significant and measurable improvements in intellectual and socio-emotional skills, its value is not merely as a means to an end. Philosophical enquiry is about more than 'thinking skills'.

More often than not, participants, both adults and children, are invested in those things they enquire into; they care about the questions they ask and we sincerely want to find their own answers. Philosophical enquiry can help those taking part to find personal meaning in their lives about all sorts of important issues.

7. For more information see: LIPMAN, M. (1991) *Thinking in Education* (New York, Cambridge University Press).

8. LIPMAN, M., *A Life Teaching Thinking* (2008) Montclair, New Jersey, IAPC.

9. Here I use some of the language of SAPERE <http://www.sapere.org.uk/>

10. TRICKEY, S., (2007) 'Promoting social and cognitive development in schools: An evaluation of Thinking through Philosophy' in *The 13th International Conference on Thinking* Norrköping, Sweden June 17-21, 2007 <http://www.ep.liu.se/ecp/021/vol1/026?ecp2107026.pdf>





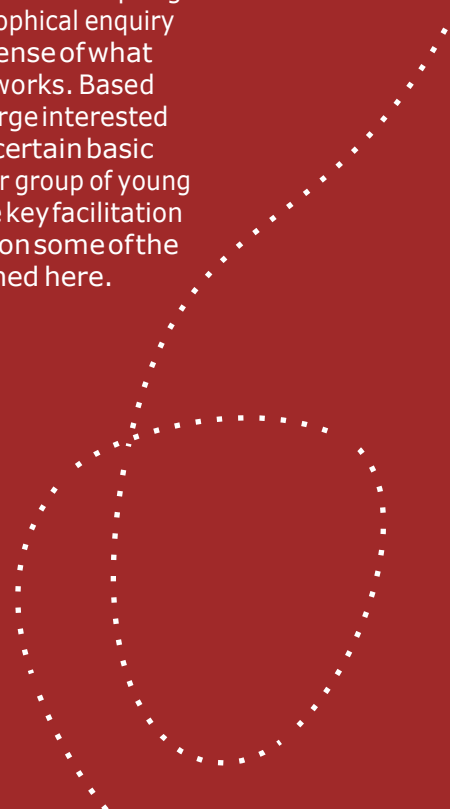
Before Getting Started

† There are now many schools practising some form of philosophical enquiry and as a consequence there will inevitably be a great deal of creative practice as the core methodology is adapted, experimented with and developed to fit the needs of particular schools.

Philosophical enquiry in a primary school may look very different from philosophical enquiry in a pupil referral unit and equally, an enquiry facilitated by a geography teacher might look quite different from one facilitated by a visual artist. This resource 'welcomes difference as a principle of growth' and invites you, once you're comfortable with the basics, to experiment with philosophical enquiry in new and interesting ways.

Though this resource aims to explore some creative ways to experiment with philosophical enquiry it does so mindful of the fact that there is a certain core of knowledge, skills and experience that make a solid foundation for more experimental practice.

One key piece of learning to come out of the various CapeUK projects that have involved philosophy is the problem of attempting to experiment with philosophical enquiry without having a good sense of what philosophy is and how it works. Based on this experience we'd urge interested colleagues to establish certain basic competencies among their group of young people and develop some key facilitation skills before embarking on some of the creative practices outlined here.



Asking a Philosophical Question

Facilitating a straightforward philosophical enquiry – if there is such a thing – relies on many competencies in a facilitator. The following summary is intended to provide context; it's not a substitute for professional training and of course, it's by no means exhaustive:

A facilitator must be able to recognise and support a community in their recognition of philosophical questions. A philosophical question is a question that is open-ended and cannot be settled by talking to an expert, conducting an experiment, applying a rule or formula, looking in a book, on the internet or by using our senses to perceive the answer in some way, i.e. by seeing that it is true. A philosophical question - in the context of a philosophical enquiry in schools - is a question for communal thinking.

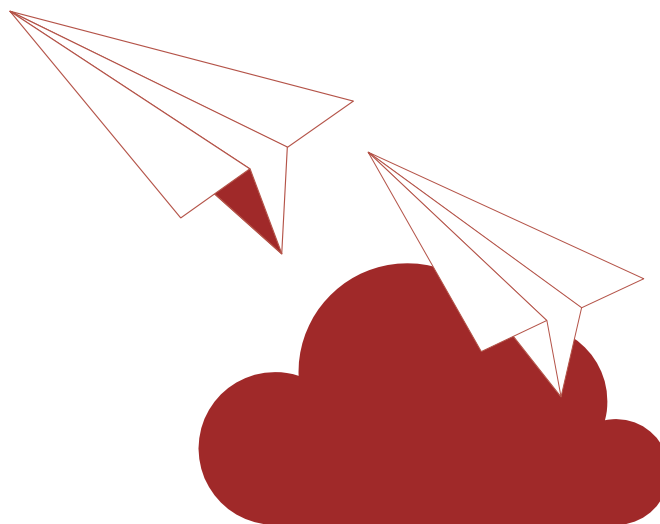


Yet not all questions raised in an enquiry circle and subsequently discussed are philosophical. Many early attempts at philosophical enquiries falter because, while the ingredients of a caring and collaborative community are in place and the critical and creative appetites of the enquirers are whetted, the question is simply not philosophical.

A question such as "Why is the Mona Lisa smiling?" is certainly intriguing; it's open-ended and you couldn't do an experiment to find out. But it is not a philosophical question and recognising this can help you avoid a false start.¹¹

The 'Question Quadrant' is a resource commonly used by P4C practitioners to help young people to identify philosophical questions.

¹¹. This question is highly speculative – the answers you give are the result of you using your imagination rather than your reason (which is more readily accessible to others). E.g. "She's smiling because she knows a secret." You can't necessarily justify this claim, more likely than not you're speculating or guessing rather than reasoning. It is also a highly specific question, it's about one painting in particular and the answer (if there is one) won't tell us anything about smiling, or painters or paintings more broadly. Philosophical questions tend to look more at issues that are generally or universally applicable. E.g. "What makes a painting beautiful?"



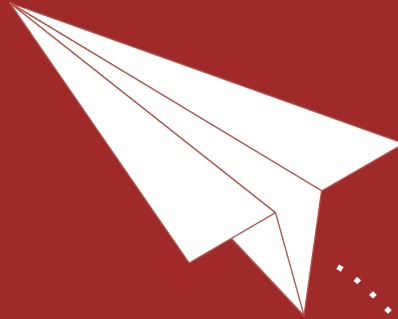
Question Quadrant

You can use this matrix to help children recognise and articulate the difference between philosophical and other types of questions. In early enquiries you might find it helpful to dedicate quite a lot of time to discussions that arise when question sorting. It is likely that children will disagree about the correct classification of questions; which is just as well since there is no agreed 'definition' of a philosophical question. Providing children are willing to give reasons in support of their judgements about questions I think these disagreements are great.

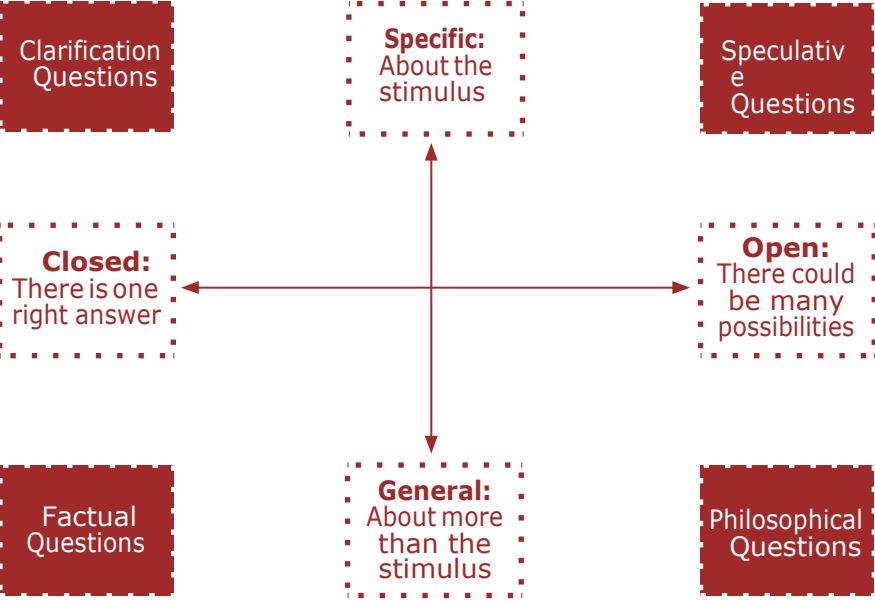
When attempting this exercise you may find that many questions have empirical, imaginative and philosophical aspects.

Where this happens encourage your students to qualify their judgement. E.g. I think the question "What happens when we die?" could belong in a few places, it depends how we read it.

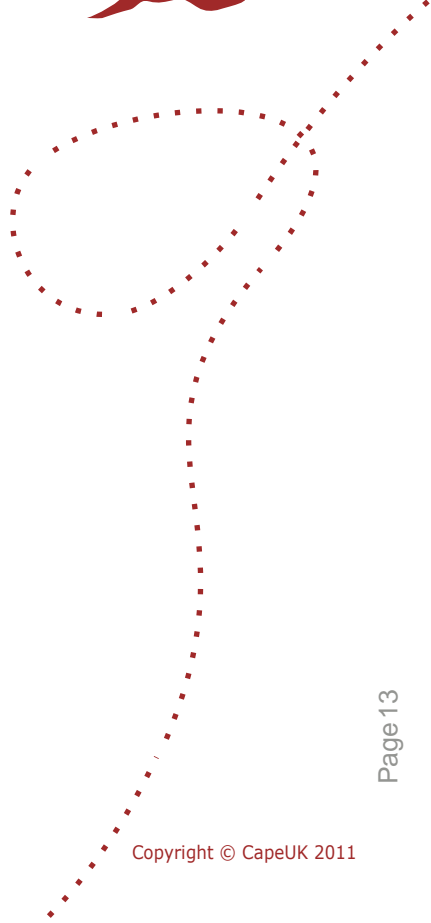
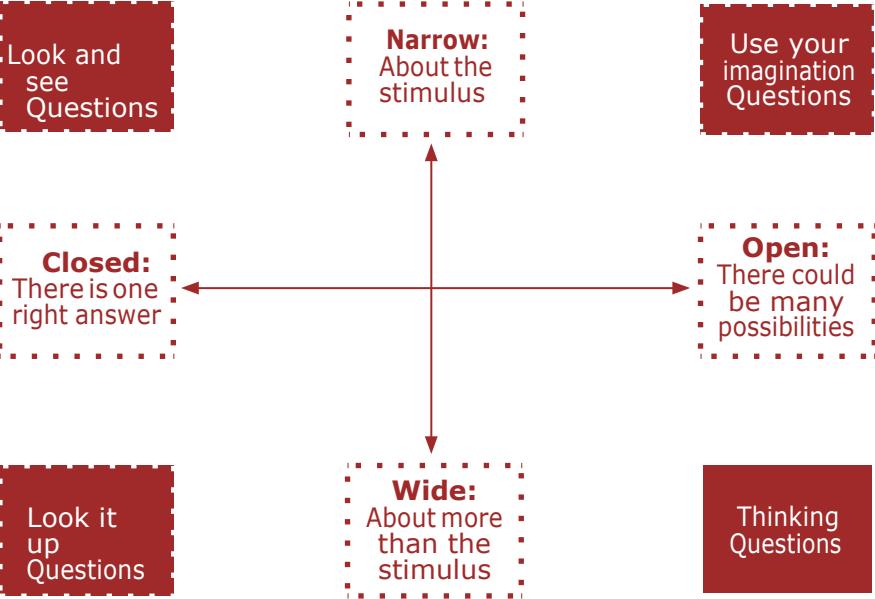
For example, it could address the biology of death (empirical); the imagined experience of death (speculative) and/or the possibility of after-life (philosophical).



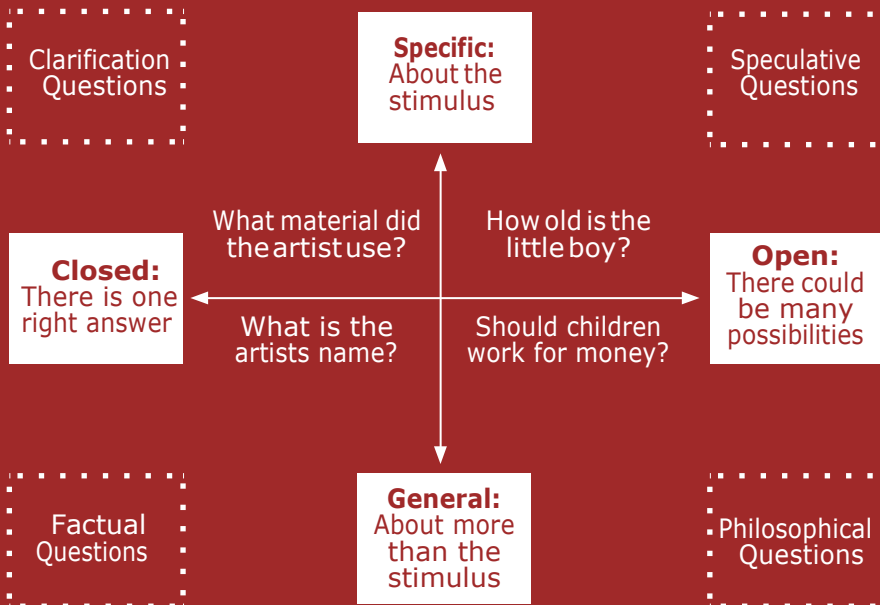
Question Quadrant for Adults (or Older Children)



Question Quadrant for Younger Children



An Example of the Question Quadrant in Use





The 'Community of Enquiry' Structure

The Community of Enquiry used in P4C has a structure consisting of ten steps: preparation, stimulus, thinking time, first thoughts, question forming, question airing, question selection, first words, dialogue and last words.

Many of the projects mentioned in this resource have been inspired by this structure but few use it faithfully as a blue print. Instead they might extend it, or focus on one particular area in greater depth. There are however some indispensable features of a philosophical enquiry – broadly understood - which are worth flagging up.¹³

12. BANKSY, Feed the World, Pen, Ink and Pencil. Location unknown. Available online at: <http://www.banksy.co.uk/indoors/rickshaw.html>

13. For alternative approaches to structuring philosophical enquiry look at the Philosophy Shop's PhiE method at: <http://www.thephilosophyshop.co.uk/about-us/philosophy-with-children/our-phi-e-method>.

- **A central philosophical question**
A discussion without a shared question lacks an objective and a yard stick by which progress can be measured. Without a question a conversation is possible, but an enquiry isn't.
- **Dialogue during which ideas are shared and explored**
Though we might engage with a topic through movement, drama or painting ultimately our higher order thinking is bound up in language. Dialogue (spoken or occasionally written) is an inevitable part of thinking which is why a philosophical enquiry needs words.
- **A period of reflection**
Even if we've thought in great detail about a topic, if we've neglected to think about how and why we have been thinking about it then we aren't philosophising. Thinking about our thinking is at the heart of philosophical enquiry.

Ten Steps

1: Preparation

A group activity such as a game, exercise or meditation that lays the groundwork for the enquiry, perhaps by breaking the ice for a new group or establishing a mood of calm for a group that is over-excited. A thinking game might be chosen because it explicitly develops certain skills such as reasoning, which will be useful during the enquiry. You can also use your preparation time to introduce a central theme, if your enquiry has one, or provide important background or contextual information that might be relevant.

2: Stimulus

A source of interest and intrigue. E.g. a picture, a story, object, piece of music or shared experience.

3: Thinking Time

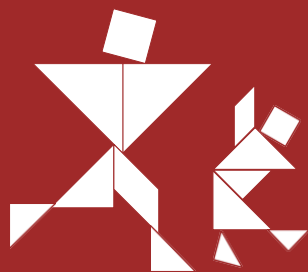
A minute or two for participants to think, in silence. This time can be completely free or it can be directed by the facilitator: e.g. 'What are the 'big ideas' in this stimulus?'

4: First Thoughts

An initial verbal response: an opportunity to contextualise the stimulus, ask comprehension questions and find out what other people made of it. Each person may want to share a single concept word. E.g. 'Hope'; 'fear'; 'lost' etc. Alternatively members of the group can share their first thoughts and feelings in discussion with the person sitting next to them.

5: Question Composition

In pairs or in small groups – often starting with one of the concepts identified previously – children form a philosophical question that captures what they found interesting or puzzling about the stimulus. To support this process you might want to go round the circle wondering aloud: 'I wonder...'. Some groups find it helpful to use one of the concepts identified previously in 'First Thoughts' as a central ingredient of the question they compose. E.g. "Should we ever give up hope?"





6: Airing Suggestions

This is a chance for each group to share their questions. Sometimes this is also an opportunity to 'question the questions', clarifying meaning and intention and considering connections and differences between them. In groups new to philosophy you might also spend time here sorting philosophical questions from non philosophical questions, making explicit the features that characterise those that are philosophical.

7: Selection

Typically this is done by voting; the children should apply criteria when they vote: E.g. 'Which question seems the most philosophically interesting?'; 'Which will really make us think?'

8: First Words

A chance for the children who composed the question to explain why it interested them and to share their tentative first thoughts.

9: Building Through Dialogue

The children build the dialogue by connecting their contributions to what others have said. A good device is to prefix what you say with "I agree or disagree because..." Each person who wants to contribute should signal (I show an open palm for example). A facilitator can select the next speaker or the person currently speaking can choose the next speaker. (Make the conventions clear at the outset.)

10: Final Words

Moving round the whole circle, everyone in the group is invited to reflect on the discussion and, they like, offer a final comment. Final words can be on the content of the discussion or on the process and the skills involved. Children can say anything at all, or the facilitator can offer them some guidance e.g. "Share one thing you found interesting"; or "What question should we ask next?" Children who prefer can choose to 'pass.'



Facilitation Questions for Philosophical Dialogue

+ Dialogue - as opposed to just chatting - is characterised by certain kinds of activities, for example: making judgements, asking questions, examining reasons, forming and testing hypotheses, giving examples, making connections and distinctions, and reflecting.

Straightforward enquires and those creative enquiries described in this resource share in common a store of questions which can be used by facilitators to help children engage in this kind of rich dialogue.

Inviting the expression of preferences, choices, decisions and judgements you might ask:

- "Which do you like most? Why?"
- "Which is the most important? Why?"
- "Should we try A or B? Why?"
- "Would you have done A or B? Why?"

To invite questions and further questions you might ask:

- "What do you wonder?"
- "Is there anything we understand here?"
- "What are we missing?"
- "What might your critic (or someone who disagreed with you) ask?"

To encourage students to form hypotheses you might ask:

- "What is our best answer so far?"
- "Could we write guidelines for situations like this one?"
- "Is there a rule of thumb we could formulate here?"
- "Does anyone have any alternative suggestions or explanations?"

To model or to ask for reasons you might ask:

- "You think that because...?"
- "And why do you think that?" (The 'second why')
- "What reasons are there for doing that?"
- "What evidence is there for believing this?"

Asking for (and providing) examples and counter examples:

- "Can anyone think of an example of this?"
- "Can someone think of a counter example?"
- "Is X an example of Y?"
- "If A = B does B = A?"

Identifying (and sometimes making) distinctions and connections:

- "Are X and Y different? How?"
- "Can we make a distinction here?"
- "Is anyone able to build on that idea?"
- "How does that relate to what you previously said?"



Facilitation questions for reflective thinking

✚ Thinking about our thinking is an essential part of philosophical enquiry and plenty of time should be dedicated to it whatever your approach.

- "What have we learnt today?"
- "Can we draw any conclusions?"
- "Can anyone sum up our discussion?"
- "What has been the most important factor/consideration/issue?"
- "Do you agree that X was the most important issue?"
- "Are we right to conclude that X...?"
- "What is more important X or Y?"
- "Place the following in order of priority..."
- "When were you thinking hard today?"
- "Was there a time when you weren't thinking very hard?"
- "Is there anything you could have done better?"
- "What interesting new ideas have you had?"
- "What interesting new ideas have you heard from someone else?"
- "Why have we been learning about X today?"
- "What was the point of our enquiry today?"
- "Tell me something your partner did well during philosophy today"
- "Tell me something you did well during philosophy today"
- "If we did this again, what would we do differently?"
- "What can we learn from our mistakes today?"
- "What will we do better next time?"

Using These Materials

+The Case Studies

The following case studies aim to put creative philosophical enquiry in context. The first two cases consider the role of some of these strategies in the curriculum:

Case Study 1

Looks at the uses of Thinking Diaries in primary literacy.

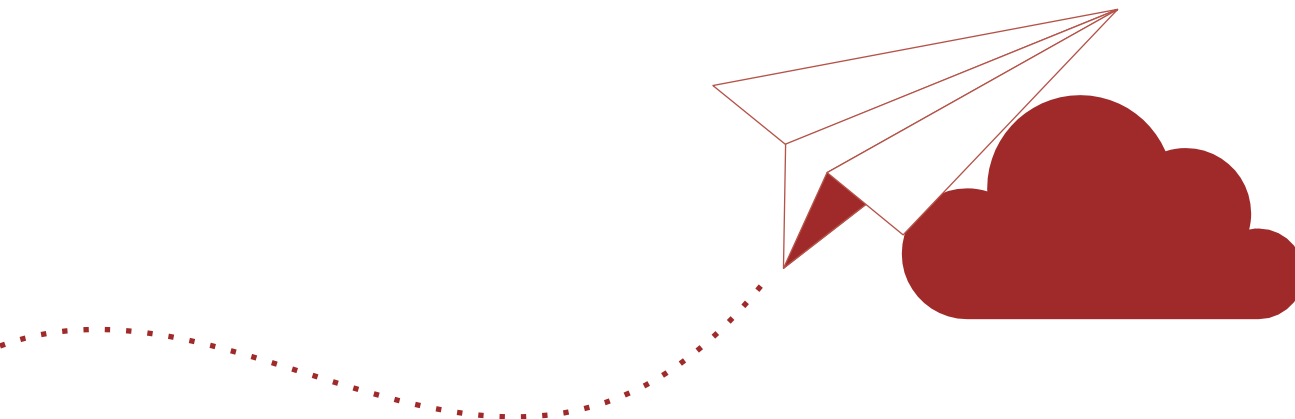
Case Study 2

Looks at the role of Enquiry Journeys as part of a creative curriculum in a secondary setting.

Case Study 3

Explores the use of creative enquiry beyond the curriculum as part of an initiative to address social and emotional issues among a group of children from a diverse range of backgrounds.





The Strategy Cards

The enclosed strategy cards in this resource have all been tried and tested by practitioners and teachers.

- Some employ useful tricks or tips within the familiar enquiry framework (see '**Thinking Diaries**' or '**Philosophising with Photos**').
- Some take key features of enquiry and explore them in greater depth (for example '**The Question Machine**' or '**Reflecting through Film**' which explore questioning and reflecting respectively).
- Other strategies consider ways to make philosophical enquiry experiences even more compelling (see '**Dramatic Enquiry**' or '**Enquiry Journeys**').
- Others suggest ways to embed philosophical enquiry for lasting change e.g. '**Philosophy Champions**'.

All of the Strategy Cards have been produced with ease of use in mind. Most are intended to offer simple, practical ways you can develop philosophical enquiry in your class straight away. However, several cards describe more complex approaches that will take time to implement.

In some cases, these particular strategies require a firm grounding in the study of philosophy especially those such as '**Dramatic Enquiry**' which are built around a central philosophical puzzle or problem.

Other strategies fuse philosophy with other practices and as a result require additional competencies, training or support. For example '**Philosophy meets Forest Schools**'. All Strategy Cards like this are clearly signposted and this resource includes details of practitioners you can contact to support you to make full use of these approaches.



Case Study 1:

Creative philosophical enquiry in practice

Improving KS2 literacy with 'Thinking Diaries'

Context

- **School:** Meynell Primary School, Sheffield, a school in an area of high economic and social disadvantage.
- **Project aims:** To improve standards in literacy, particularly independent writing at Key Stage Two.
- **Project leaders:** Pete Brshaw, an experienced Primary School Teacher and Grace Robinson, a community Philosopher from Thinking Space.
- **Participants:** 28 Year Five children of a marginally higher ability literacy group.
- **Timescale:** 8 months.
- **The approach:**
 - focused on promoting independent thinking to foster enthusiastic engagement in philosophical enquiry taking place during timetabled 'P4C' sessions.
 - to lay a firm foundation for follow-on writing activities initiated by the class teacher, using 'Thinking Diaries' to enable progression from independent thought to independent writing.

Project Activity

Overview

- Project partners devised a narrative context in which to place the project: A series of letters followed by emails, packages and visitor were sent to the children by a mysterious philosopher.
- We characterised the process of building a community of enquiry as a 'journey' and initial correspondence with the philosopher invited children to set out on this journey.
- Subsequent correspondence gave them the opportunity to develop as independent thinkers by asking questions, making meaningful choices, moving in interesting directions and reflecting on the distance they had travelled as individuals and as members of a group.
- The focus on promoting the children's intellectual independence predominantly through speaking and listening positively influenced their attitude towards and ability to write with greater independence.

Implementation – Phase One

- The first phase of delivery focused on introducing philosophical thinking, making explicit some of the skills necessary for deeper philosophical enquiry and inviting the children to invest in the process by reflecting on the nature of philosophical questions and their value.
- The process began with an unexpected visitor; the children met the practitioner 'in role' as a dog walker who had found a soggy envelope

addressed to the children earlier that morning. This letter introduced philosophy as an activity characterised by asking questions, discussing possibilities, giving reasons and reflecting. The first letter also shared philosophical questions with the children such as "Could a computer think?" and "What makes something beautiful?" In the letter the philosopher explained that the children would need to develop certain skills and dispositions in order to ask similar questions of their own.

- The mystery philosopher invited each of the children to write to her individually and each received a personal reply. The choice to communicate by letter initially was a very conscious one as the Year Five literacy focus was letter writing when the project began. This initial interaction gave the children's letters a sense of purpose and energy.
- The letters suggested that the children make their own 'Thinking Diaries', a private book for their personal wonderments. They could write in these books whenever they liked, they could take them home, share them with friends and family, use them to collect questions or cut out and stick stimulating pictures, stories or newspaper articles, thus generating a real sense of ownership of the diaries and as a result for some children the business of writing in them gained a special significance.

Project Activity (Continued)

Implementation – Phase Two

- In the second phase of delivery the stimuli were all carefully chosen to perform two functions:
 - to develop intellectual independence by introducing more challenging stimuli as the project progressed i.e. whilst earlier letters contained model questions or introduced specific philosophical ideas, later packages, were more ambiguous: a broken mirror, foreign currency, a book of Greek myths. Overtime children developed the ability to confidently compose, consider and select philosophical questions of considerable breadth and depth.
 - to intensify the drama, excitement and sense of anticipation connected with the philosophy sessions. The progress from letters, to emails, to text and voice messages, packages and finally visitors gave the process natural momentum.
- At the same time, we worked in response to the spring term literacy topics: letter writing, descriptive prose, written dialogue, improvised drama and biography; both the stimuli and the activities were chosen to complement the literacy curriculum. E.g. the letter writing element of the project required the children to engage in personal correspondence with the philosopher reading their individual letters independently,

drafting responses and responding to specific points in their replies. A philosophy session on personal identity formed the basis of improvised drama in which the children had a dialogue with their clone. Having used a picture by the famous photographer Kevin Carter in one of our enquiries we exploited the children's interest by encouraging the children to research the photographer's life as part of a literacy unit on biography.

- Several months into the project the 'Thinking Diaries' began to be used with increasing flexibility. We encouraged the children to include photocopies of correspondence they had had with the mystery philosopher and to include copies of all literacy work that had been stimulated by philosophy sessions. Peter sometimes recorded contributions made by individual children during enquiry discussions and made copies for them to include in their diaries. Some children took their diaries home and returned with lists of their own philosophical questions. Some used the diaries during discussions to make mind maps and formulate new questions. Some children took the latest enquiry question home to discuss with their parents - sometimes parents even wrote their own responses to questions in the diaries.

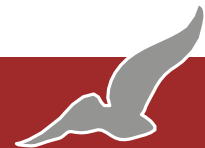
Impact

A recent Ofsted monitoring report made specific mention of the role of thinking skills in tackling writing. **'The whole school focus on improving writing is having a positive effect. The school has embraced a range of strategies to raise standards in writing. These include [...] the development of thinking skills and the encouragement of independent writing skills. [...] The increasingly creative curriculum enriches the life experiences of pupils by high quality visits and visitors. There is a greater enthusiasm for writing among pupils as shown in the quality and quantity of work in their books.'**

The value of the Thinking Diaries as a tool for promoting independent writing was underlined by the way the children spoke about their diaries afterwards. Many of the children considered their diary to be a keepsake which would remind them of the project when they were grown-up. We spoke about the diaries as symbols of their ability to continue to think and write independently in the future about things that interest them and capture their imagination.

Enabling Features

- Ensuring that the thinking diaries belonged to the children; letting them decorate them, take them home and decide when and when not to write in them.
- Ensuring that the diaries weren't marked by the teacher.
- Inviting family members to contribute to the diaries (with their child's permission).
- Using Thinking Diaries during enquires for mind mapping, question forming and note taking.
- Making time for children to read from their Thinking Diaries and celebrating their contributions when they did.
- Reminding children that they could use them before, during and after philosophical enquiry sessions.



Case Study 2:

Creative philosophical enquiry in practice

Philosophy as part of a creative curriculum at Rodillian

Context

- **School:** Rodillian School is a mixed Comprehensive in Lofthouse, West Yorkshire with Specialist Performing Arts College Status.
- **Project aims:** Through their involvement in the Creative Partnerships scheme, Rodillian wanted to understand better how PLTS and Learning to Learn programmes could be embedded in a Year Seven curriculum through project based work in the Humanities and Performing Arts.
- **Project leaders:** A core of eight teaching staff led by Lisa Singleton, collaborated with a filmmaker, Dawn Feather, a theatre director, Dan Mallaghan and philosophers Grace Robinson and Amber D'Albert. The Creative Partnerships Agent, Tim Appelbee was also very much involved in the project's inception.
- **Participants:** Year Seven students.
- **Timescale:** 18 months.
- **The approach:** This project was designed to engage Year Seven in a brand new creative curriculum. Subject teachers worked in multi-disciplinary teams to design and deliver sessions within an over-arching imaginary scenario. The premise for the project was that the children would be responsible for establishing life on a new planet. Philosophical enquiry in-role was used to enhance the reflective nature of the projects.

Project Activity

Overview

- Extensive consultation and discussion between creative partners, key members of the SLT and Governors resulted in a radical initiative to transform Year Seven curriculum.
- The project developed around a narrative entitled 'Operation: New Planet.' With the future of Planet Earth threatened, Children from Rodillian were told that they had been chosen to undertake an experimental project. Each class would travel to a new planet and try to establish a model of society that would allow the continuation of the human race.
- To prepare the young people they would receive visits from the Ministry by 'specialists', however the direction of the planet communities would be determined by the young people themselves.
- Philosophical enquiry was used to give the young people an opportunity every fortnight to engage with the project's many philosophically challenging themes including basic needs and religious freedom.
- The challenging nature of these sessions was intensified by planned dramatic interventions and philosophical reflection was supported by video dairies and film footage.
- With just four sessions of philosophical enquiry throughout the whole project, it was a challenge to bring the teachers and young people up to speed without the lengthy induction most will have into P4C. We tried to address this in a number of ways:
 - To support the teachers, philosophy practitioners worked in parallel with groups of 15, then invited the staff to observe the early sessions and participate in later sessions as they began to feel more familiar with the process.
 - To support the students the philosophy practitioners began by structuring the sessions around carefully chosen guiding questions e.g. "What do we really need in life?" These model questions (which were connected to the New Planet narrative) provided a useful model for the children which enabled them to ask rich, relevant questions of their own in later sessions such as "Should we ban religion?"

Implementation

At the beginning of the new term the whole year group was assembled in the school hall to watch a film. In the film, an actor in role as a representative of the 'The Ministry of Security and Defence' set the scene for the project and gave the students their secret mission.

Project Activity (Continued)

The subsequent delivery included weekly cross-curricular creative lessons delivered by teachers and philosophy and thinking-in-role sessions delivered by practitioners. The following are just a selection:

- **PHSCE & Drama activity:** Children thought about what personal and practical items they'd need to pack.
- **Drama, Art & PHSCE activity.** The students made ID badges and were encouraged to think about their individual strengths and how they might be used on the new planet.
- **Geography & Art activity.** The children made maps and considered their need for shelter, water, food and sanitation making plans for how they would address these things on the new planet.
- **PHILOSOPHICAL ENQUIRY SESSION:** "What do we really need in life?"
- **Music & English activity:** Composing planetary anthems.
- **History, English & PHSCE activity:** Children explored some of the ways in which countries are run and decided on a system of government for their planet. Officials campaigned and gave speeches and held elections. (History, Citizenship)
- **THINKING IN ROLE SESSION:** Drama intervention from a character challenging the value of democracy. (Citizenship)
- **PHILOSOPHICAL ENQUIRY SESSION** "Does the place where you live belong to you?"
- **Geography and PHSCE activity:** Students considered the importance of managing resources, recycling and climate control.
- **THINKING IN ROLE SESSION:** Drama intervention from a character suggested to the young people that they make others pay them for basic resources.
- **History, Geography and PHSCE activity:** The students decided on a system of laws that would govern their planets. (Citizenship)
- **PHILOSOPHICAL ENQUIRY SESSION** "Where does right and wrong come from?"
- **RE Activity:** The young people researched world religions. (RE)
- **THINKING IN ROLE SESSION:** Drama intervention from a character who suggested to the young people that they should ban religion on the new planet.
- **PHILOSOPHICAL ENQUIRY SESSION** "Should we ban religion on the new planet?"
- **Art, Music and Drama activity:** Students prepared for an event to celebrate their launch to the new planet, preparing planetary flags, practising their planetary anthems and rehearsing performances of drama music and dance. (Art, Drama, Music)
- **Performance:** Parents and other guests were invited to the launch assembly where the children performed and a film of the project was shown.

Impact

- Conversations with Year Seven pupils at the end of the programme revealed a high level of awareness of the importance of Guy Claxton's 5Rs REASONING, RESOURCEFULNESS, RESILIENCE, RESPONSIBILITY & REFLECTION. The pupils were able clearly to articulate how they had used the problems set by the New Planet Project to engage with problem finding and solving using the "Learning to Learn" framework.
- The young people undertook structured reflective activity throughout the project and in conversation they were able to demonstrate a thoughtful and reflective attitude towards the project. They were able to identify the benefits of active learning and contrast this with other approaches adopted elsewhere in the curriculum. They were able to identify where the skills and attributes they had developed in the project were of use to them in other lessons.
- They spoke positively of the impact of the project on their teachers and the practitioners, specifically on their ability to address new problems and challenges creatively, take risks and co-construct learning with young people.

Enabling Features

- The emphasis on learning by doing.
- The implementation of creative learning and teaching strategies.
- The time given to reflective learning.
- The quality of and attitude towards Inter-departmental partnership working.



Case Study 3:

Creative philosophical enquiry in practice

Challenging Ethnic Hierarchies at Tinsley

Context

- **School:** Tinsley Junior School, Sheffield Almost all pupils speak English as an additional language. The largest group is of Pakistani heritage. An increasing number of pupils are from Eastern or Central Europe, many of whom join during the year and are new to the country and to formal schooling.
- **Project aims:** To address some of the problems associated ethnic hierarchies among children observed by teachers in the Year Three classes.
- **Project leaders:** Carmel Page, artist and story-teller. Gemma Scott-Walker NQT, Cat Prescott RQT. All three were recently trained in P4C.
- **Participants:** 2 classes of Year Three children.
- **Timescale:** 6 months.
- **The approach:** The project combined creative activities with more formal P4C enquiries exploring identity, heritage and community.

Project Activity

• Revealing divisions

At the beginning we asked children to choose partners who could be mutually supportive, they were photographed with their partners and this became our baseline assessment of the project's impact. The children responded as expected i.e. most children quickly found a partner. It was notable that the Pakistani children grouped together and the Central and Eastern European children tended to be left out and reluctantly chose each other. Our task was to tackle these divisions to create a more cohesive group.

• Considering group dynamics

Children were put in groups and given "Dinosaur eggs" and material to make nests. Each group was a separate species. Next week some new eggs arrived of a different species; the children had to decide how these should be integrated. They began to discuss how it feels to be an outsider and said, "people from different countries are different colours."

• Exploring physical difference

The following week began with a P4C enquiry. The children were shown a photo of children who each had a different colour skin; red, green, brown, purple, blue and pink. They asked: "Is everyone the same inside?"

• Developing a vocabulary to express identity

Later children were taught to mix coloured paints. They used their new skills to produce a self

portrait carefully painted in their skin tones. It became clear that they had limited vocabulary for expressing racial and ethnic issues. We introduced new vocabulary e.g. migrant, native born, bi-lingual, multi-lingual and the names of religions. The children were very interested in the words and chose the appropriate ones to add to their portraits. Few of the Pakistani children knew they were Asian, believing they were White. Many of the children did not know where they were born or what nationality they were. They had poor understanding of how Britain and England related to each other and could not find Pakistan on the globe - teachers used this to develop their geography skills. We wrote out words relating to geographical locations, covering Tinsley and Sheffield, all the countries and continents the children's families came from, and the world.

• Considering attitudes to identity

We asked the children to stand by the word which was most important to them. They then looked at where other people had chosen to stand. The children voted to discuss the question, "Did anybody lie?" and had a very mature conversation about reasons why people might have lied such as other people laughing about their country. The children were encouraged to ask their parents about their nationality and ethnicity.

Project Activity (Continued)

- **Questioning difference and identity**
As an exercise to help develop the children's questioning skills we used The Question Machine with words relating to race and ethnicity. (See Strategy Card Three)
- **Promoting positive relationships**
Towards the end of the project, we noticed that although children were more willing to talk about issues of difference such as race, ethnicity, disability, gender and academic achievement; their increased understanding was not leading to radical changes in behaviour. It seemed natural that children would choose to associate with others who had similar background and

languages but we also felt the children lacked social and play skills that would help them to socialise more together. We came up with a range of activities based on helping them to value each other and work together. They had team tasks like making the smallest loop which a member of your team can fit through. The ability to tie knots and smallness were suddenly considered assets and some of the least popular children became sought after. We also gave instructions in Slovakian so that the children with English as an additional language could take the lead. The children also learned traditional playground game such as "What's the time Mr Wolf?" which are easy to play at break and help socialisation.

Impact

During the last week we again asked the children to choose supportive partners. There was a small but notable change in groupings and a number of pairs decided to make a three instead and invited a child from another racial group to join them. The teachers felt far more confident handling racial issues and admitted that, "in the past we only dealt with it when we had to, we never really discussed the nitty gritty. Now we are prioritising it as something we need to do at the start of term with our new classes."

At the end of the project the children were asked what they had learnt about their class, here are some of the things they said:

- "We all have different skin colours. It doesn't matter what colour your skin is. Everyone is different."
- "You shouldn't laugh at different countries. It's not respectful."
- "I've learnt to respect different religions."
- "We all can speak different languages."
- "Play fair and never give up. We should help each other and we don't be nasty to win we just have fun."
- "The class want to be treated nice and kind."

Enabling Features

- A review and planning meeting with all three leaders at the end of every session.
- Flexibility was the key. We started with definite aims but observed the children, recorded their comments and based planning on perceived need.
- The teachers picked up on gaps in the children's learning, such as their lack of geographical understanding, between sessions.
- Vocabulary which was taught in the sessions was included in lessons, e.g. when the children made a data base of class members' ethnic origin new vocabulary was included.
- There was an element of risk-taking in this project. Race and ethnicity are very sensitive subjects but become less sensitive because we were open about them. We always included our own ethnicity in explanations and made it clear that respect for everyone was important. Inappropriate behaviour was always challenged but also discussed and analysed.

Sustainability

+IVE can support you to develop Creative Philosophy projects, working alongside your school to develop a bespoke sustainable creative enquiry.

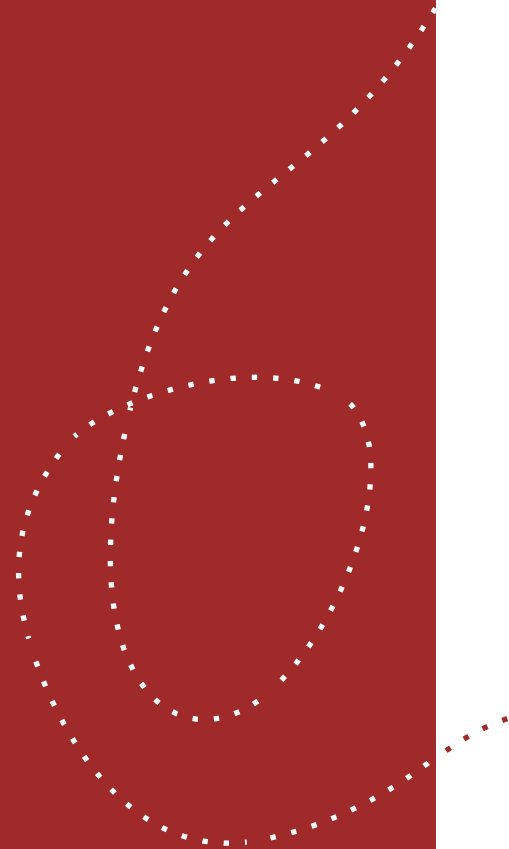
IVE also offers a range of creative solutions for schools including:

- Professional development for all staff working with children and young people
- Designing and delivering short and long term creative interventions to transform learning and teaching across your school community

Feel free to contact us to discuss which solutions would work for your school on:

0113 322 3050 or email hello@weareive.org

Or for more information visit our website www.weareive.org



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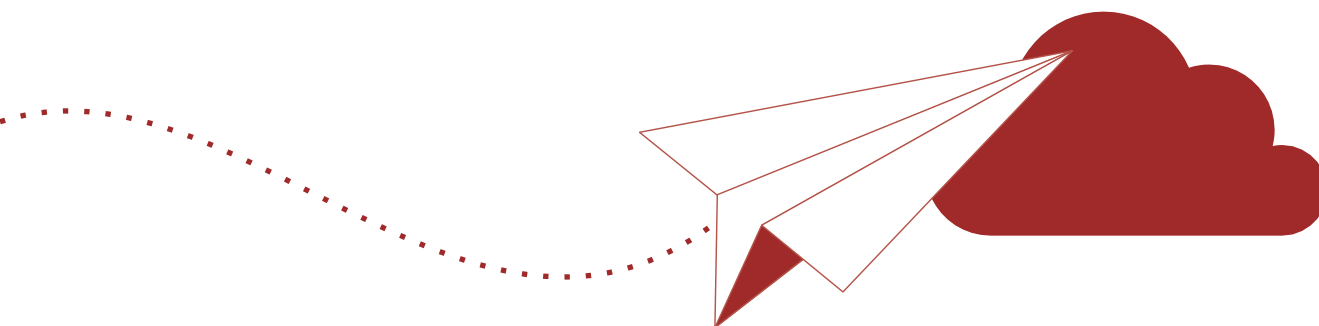
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Schools That Have Informed This Resource

Atlas Primary School, Bradford

A three-year project which explored the fusion of a range of art forms with philosophical enquiry including painting, sculpture, percussion, song writing, movement and drama. One of the highlights of the project was a multi disciplinary dramatic enquiry.

Brudenell Primary School, Leeds

A two-year intensive project that set out to introduce the school to two pedagogies; Philosophy for Children and Forest Schools. During the project, the whole school trained to level one in P4C whilst working closely with a SAPERE trainer and a philosopher to further develop their practice.

Chaucer Business & Enterprise College, Sheffield

Part of a three year project involved exploring whether strategies from enquiry facilitation could be used by teachers throughout the curriculum.

Darfield Foulstone School, Barnsley

A two-year project, part of which focussed on a small group of disengaged Year Ten students. These students had a range of enquiry-based learning experiences that were filmed; afterwards they worked with two philosophers to analyse the footage and address the question: what makes good learning?

Meynell Primary School, Sheffield

A one-year project for a Year Five literacy class with the aim of raising attainment in independent writing. During the project the children received letters from a mystery philosopher.

Parson Cross Primary, Sheffield

A one-year project for Year Two pupils developing questioning skills to enable them to follow their own lines of enquiry in individual learning. The project explored what impact this would have on their learning and the school's development of a creative curriculum.

Priory School and Sports College, Barnsley

A one-year project during which teachers designed brand new 'problem-based learning' lessons working with a group of Year Seven students. The student-voice group used philosophical enquiry to deepen their exploration of what makes a successful and worthwhile lesson.

Rodillian High School, Wakefield

A two-year project during which the school staff collaborated in inter-disciplinary groups to design a creative curriculum for Year Seven, working with a film maker, a theatre director and a philosopher to bring the narrative 'Operation: New Planet' to life.

Tinsley Junior School, Sheffield

A one-year project, during which each year group and their teachers collaborated with a practitioner to develop four separate enquiry projects focusing on movement, visual art, drama and peer learning respectively. They worked with a dance company, an artist, a philosopher and a writer.



Further Reading

Introducing philosophical ideas

- BAGGINI, J., (2005) *The Pig That Wants to Be Eaten: And Ninety Nine Other Thought Experiments* (London, Granta Books)
- CAVE, P., (2007) *Can a Robot be Human? 33 Perplexing Philosophy Puzzles* (Glasgow, One World Publications)
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- CAVE, P., (2009) *This Sentence is False: An Introduction to Philosophical Paradoxes* (London, Continuum)
- DUPRE, B., (2007 2nd edition) *50 Philosophy Ideas You Really Need to Know* (Quercus)
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- WHITE, D.A., (2000) *Philosophy for Kids: 40 Fun Questions That Help You Wonder About Everything* (Austin, Texas, Prufrock Press)
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- Resources for stimulating enquiry
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- PULLMAN, P., (2008) *His Dark Materials* (London, Scholastic Ltd.)
- SENDAK, M., (2000 Red Fox Edition) *Where the Wild Things Are* (London, Red Fox)
- SEUSS, Dr., (1998) *Horton Hatches the Egg* (London, Picture Lions)
- TAN, S., (2000) *The Red Tree* (Sydney, Lothian Children's Books, Hachette Australia)

Training

- **IPAC**
Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children
Based in the United States where P4C methodology was developed by Matthew Lipman.
Website: www.cehs.montclair.edu/academic/iapc/
- **SAPERE**
The Society for the Advancement of Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education
AUK charity specialising in training and resources for teachers.
Website: www.sapere.org.uk/
- **EPIC**
European Philosophical Inquiry Centre
Website of Dr Catherine McCall who collaborated with Matthew Lipman.
Website: www.epic-original.com
- **Thinking Space**
For Philosophical Dialogue and Enquiry
A Yorkshire-based education company offering philosophy training and resources for schools and communities by experienced philosophers and educators.
Website: www.thinkingspace.org.uk
- **The Philosophy Shop**
Thinking Changes
A London-based educational charity offering training, resources and specialist philosophy teachers.
Website: www.thephilosophyshop.co.uk/
- **DECSY**
Development Education Centre South Yorkshire
Based in Sheffield, DECSY offer P4C training focused on the global dimension of the national curriculum.
Website: www.decsy.org.uk/P4GC/index.html

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