

Philosophy for Children and the Key Competencies - one unlocks the other!

(With thanks to Amy Eberhardt, Wairau Valley School and Mary Rea, AP, Balmoral School).

Managing self.

Participation in philosophical communities of inquiry develops skills of self management, through the implementation of core rules for collaborative inquiry, such as:

- We listen to each other;
- We think about and build on each other's ideas;
- We respect everyone's ideas;
- There may be no single right answer.

These rules provide an environment that is safe, tolerant and both socially and academically disciplined, and participants experience the benefits of managing their behaviour in the quality of the inquiry that results.

Thinking.

Students of all ages improve their critical thinking skills, logic, metacognition and reasoning. The explicit use of the thinking skills is essential to philosophical inquiry, making it rigorous and satisfying, and taking discussion beyond mere conversation. Students' intellectual curiosity is stimulated by the concepts and questions that are at the heart of philosophy, and the consistent practice of reflection develops responsibility for the quality of thinking.

Participating and contributing.

Philosophical exploration in the community of inquiry is a practice which engages both students and teachers, stimulating the desire to participate in meaningful discussion, and rewarding them with clarified values, examined ideas and views and an enthusiasm for lifelong learning. Skills of confident expression of ideas, and clarity in thinking, enable students to contribute effectively to other communities and prepares them for active citizenship.

Relating to others.

Doing philosophy in a community of inquiry gives all students a 'voice' as well as teaching them appropriate ways to express themselves and to have their contributions heard. The voices of all students are encouraged and included in classroom dialogue. A range of co-operative skills create a space in which students can interact with both gentleness and rigor. This in turn allows students to hear, appreciate and challenge each others' thoughts and perspectives, and often leads to a new valuing of classmates.

Using language, symbols and text.

Engaging students in philosophical discussions improves oral language, comprehension, and social skills. Vocabulary is extended both by the explicit use of thinking skills and by the wide variety of questions and issues which are addressed by the community. Use of philosophy journals also develops thoughtful writing, and precision of expression. The language of reasoning creates bridges between students, and between students, parents, teachers and the wider community, that can allow the growth of an intergenerational community of inquiry.

Excerpt from "About P4C" page on www.p4c.org.nz