Philosophy for Children Teachers Guide

Oxfam have collaborated with SAPERE, the *Society for Advancing Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education*, leading specialists in Philosophy for Children (P4C). Together we have formed a brief guide to using P4C in the classroom.

What is Philosophy for Children?

Philosophy for Children is a way of learning and teaching, where children become more thoughtful and reflective and go beyond information to seek understanding. Children learn how to participate in meaningful discussions, where their ideas and those of others are valued and listened to. Children ask and discuss philosophical questions in a structured context.

Connection with citizenship

The dispositions and skills highlighted above are especially relevant to children growing up in a pluralist, democratic society. This is explicitly recognised in the citizenship brief of the curriculum, where a main requirement is the development of 'the skills of enquiry and communication' and 'of participation and responsible action'.

Summary of the Process

- Sessions start with a stimulus. This can be a story, case study, photograph, podcast, artifact or anything else that will engage the children in a philosophical questioning. Children have some initial thinking time to clarify their thoughts and ideas.
- In small groups children create philosophical questions that are inspired by the stimulus.
- The community chooses one question to be the focus of a philosophical enquiry (usually by voting)
- The group (or community) meets regularly. The questions get deeper and more thoughtful, the discussions more focused, yet, at the same time, more imaginative. Members learn to recognise differences of meaning and opinion, but explore them constructively. They show more care for each other, as well as caring more about what is said.

Examples of ways that the teacher/facilitator can elicit a considered response

1. **Questions** (What don't we understand here? What questions do we have about this?)
2. **Hypotheses** (Does anyone have any alternative suggestions or explanations?)
3. **Reasons** (What reasons are there for doing that? What evidence is there for believing this?)

4. **Examples** (Can anyone think of an example of this? Can someone think of a counter-example?)
5. **Distinctions** (Can we make a distinction here? Can anyone give a definition?)
6. **Connections** (Is anyone able to build on that idea? or Can someone link that with another idea?)
7. **Implications** (What assumptions lie behind this? What consequences does it lead to?)
8. **Intentions** (Is that what was really meant? Is that what we're really saying?)
9. **Criteria** (What makes that an example of X? What are the things that really count here?)
10. **Consistency** (Does that conclusion follow? Are these principles/beliefs consistent?)

How it works with Oxfam's resources:

We want children to explore their thoughts and ideas about issues connected to Oxfam's work. We want children themselves to generate discussions about poverty and suffering and become critical thinkers about the development process. Philosophy for children gives teachers the opportunity to use Oxfam's work as a stimulus for creative, pupil led discussion.

An Oxfam lesson plan using P4C:

http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/p4c/files/maternal_healthcase_Sierra_Leone.pdf

Search our resources to find more lessons on P4C:

http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources

Further information:

SAPERE – Society for Advancing philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education
http://www.sapere.org.uk/default.aspx?tabid=162

P4C Video Clip
http://www.sapere.org.uk/default.aspx?tabid=189

National Curriculum objectives that can be met:

KS2	**Citizenship**
	Developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities
	a. talk about their opinions, and explain their views, on issues that affect (global) society
	Preparing to play an active role as citizens
	a. discuss and debate topical issues
	Developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people
	b. think about the lives of people living in other places with different values and customs
	English
	Speaking
	1. To speak with confidence in a range of contexts, adapting their speech for a range of purposes and audiences
	c. choose material that is relevant to the topic and to the listeners
	e. evaluate their speech and reflect on how it varies
	Listening
	2. Pupils listen, understand and respond appropriately to others
	b. ask relevant questions to clarify, extend and follow up ideas
	e. respond to others appropriately, taking into account what they say.
	Group discussion and interaction
	3. To talk effectively as members of a group
	a. make contributions relevant to the topic and take turns in discussion
	deal politely with opposing points of view and enable discussion to move on
KS3	**Citizenship**
	2.1 Critical thinking and enquiry
	a. engage with and reflect on different ideas, opinions, beliefs and values when exploring topical and controversial issues and problems
	2.2 Advocacy and representation
	Pupils should be able to:
	a. express and explain their own opinions to others through discussions
	2.3 Taking informed and responsible action
	a. explore creative approaches to taking action on problems and issues to achieve intended purposes
	b. work individually and with others to negotiate, plan and take action on citizenship issues to try to influence others, bring about change or resist unwanted change, using time and resources appropriately
	English
	2.1 Speaking and listening
	Pupils should be able to:
	a. present information and points of view clearly and appropriately in different contexts, adapting talk for a range of purposes and audiences, including the more formal
	c. engage an audience, using a range of techniques to explore, enrich and explain their ideas
	d. listen and respond constructively to others, taking different views into account and modifying their own views in the light of what others say
	e. make different kinds of relevant contributions in groups, responding appropriately to others, proposing ideas and asking questions