



Hillcross Primary School

Parent Information on
Philosophy For Children

P4C

What is the P4C approach to the teaching of thinking?

P4C is short for Philosophy for Children, or in a broader context, Philosophy for Communities.

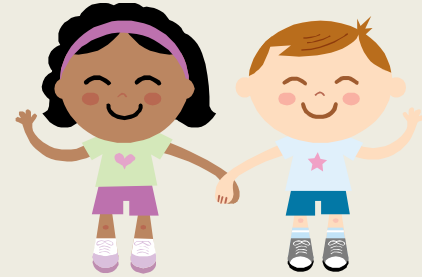


Key Principles of P4C

- The key practice that starts and drives the whole thinking process is enquiry (going beyond information to seek understanding)
- The key practice that results in significant changes of thought and action is reflection

P4C is all about teaching the children to ask questions. To find the answers for themselves, encourage them to question what we are telling them!

Philosophy for Children



P4C engages children in developing their own questions in response to a given stimulus. They then enquire thoughtfully, and collaboratively, into their choice of question, guided by the facilitator (the teacher). Finally they reflect on their thoughts and participation, and suggest how they could improve on their learning (skills and content) next time. Consequently, both the process and the content of learning are simultaneously developed.

P4C places emphasis on building social and emotional skills and dispositions over time, as well as cognitive abilities. Notable increases in respect, open mindedness, reasoning and reasonableness - in and out of the classroom – are common effects of P4C.

Participants create and enquire into their own questions, and 'learn how to learn' in the process.

The 4 C's

A working definition of a Community of Enquiry: A group of people used to thinking together with a view to increasing their understanding and appreciation of the world around them and of each other.

P4C focuses on thinking skills and communal dialogue ('philosophising'), and aims to build 'communities of enquiry' where participants develop the **4C's: creative, critical, caring and collaborative thinking skills.**

- 1. Caring** = listening (concentrating) and valuing (appreciating)
e.g. showing interest in, and sensitivity to, others' experiences and values
- 2. Collaborative** = responding (communicating) and supporting (conciliating)
(e.g. building on each other's ideas, shaping common understandings and purposes)
- 3. Critical** = questioning (interrogating) and reasoning (evaluating)
(e.g. seeking meaning, evidence, reasons, distinctions, and good judgements)
- 4. Creative** = connecting (relating) and suggesting (speculating)
(e.g. providing comparisons, examples, criteria, alternative explanations or conceptions)

Beginning P4C...

Basic principles:

These will need to be shared with the group and the children understand that these rules should be followed at each session.

- Each person is respected
- We listen carefully to each other
- We sometimes help other people express themselves
- Each person's views are taken seriously
- We challenge other peoples views respectfully
- We make sure everyone can contribute

Thinking Skills and P4C Together

Thinking Skills and Philosophical Enquiry

- Thinking skills, especially those relevant to creative and critical thinking, are rapidly being seen as such a good thing, because without them there is a danger of not applying one's critical faculties to the whole idea.
- Another critical point is that skills of any sort are worthless; if we don't use them. **We need above all, to help children develop the general disposition to think better.**
- In children, we need to develop thinking for themselves, questioning what is told to them and discussing others points of view.



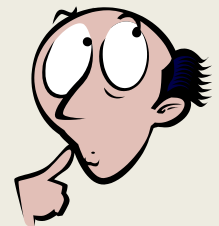
How Can We Develop Children's Thinking?



These aims and processes can be made more explicit if the teacher asks appropriate questions.

These can range from a general invitation (such as: Can anyone respond to that?) to more specific calls that require a considered response. There are ten key elements the teacher can introduce to 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?)



What Makes A Good Question?

- To begin with you may wish to have a question as a starting point for your P4C session. You could share a story or an image and then give the group a question to discuss.
- Philosophical questions are those open ended questions which will allow for a range of answers.

Where do thoughts
come from?

Can you lie without
meaning to do so?

What is the difference between
thinking and dreaming?

Where is a thing when we
can't see it?

Can your heart talk to your brain?

Can it be good
to get angry?

Don't forget to use your blooms taxonomy pyramid to help you in P4C
and planning