

# Thinking together, living fully. Experiencing philosophy with children

## *Pensar en común, vivir en plenitud. La experiencia de la filosofía con los niños y niñas*

Paolo SCOTTON, PhD. Assistant Professor. Universidad Pública de Navarra ([paolo.scotton@unavarra.es](mailto:paolo.scotton@unavarra.es)).

### Abstract:

Philosophy with children is an ambitious pedagogical project based on a structured meditation on the conditions that make it possible and the object and aims of the educational process. This article presents a systematized overview of the main features of Philosophy for Children (P4C), considering it to be a multifaceted and plural approach that, despite the different theorizations proposed, still possesses some basic common traits. Starting from a review of the academic literature on the topic, this article presents some of the main conceptual and practical limitations of P4C, in relation to its theoretical insight and its practical implementation. These are potentially damaging criticisms, which, if not given serious consideration, could invalidate this educational approach. After a

critical discussion of the weak points of P4C, this article shows the need to reframe clearly the nature of educational practice in general and how philosophical reflection in particular can contribute to it. Accordingly, educational experience is thought to be a radical process of creation of shared meaning by a community of inquiry involved in a shared rational and emotional search for truth. Consequently, this article proves the profound value of this educational approach, which can foster a well-rounded education of people and their full integration into the social and cultural context, enabling them to enjoy a flourishing and authentic life.

**Keywords:** educational philosophy, educational theories, educational methods, thinking, critical sense, moral education, social education.

---

Revision accepted: 2019-10-03.

This is the English version of an article originally printed in Spanish in issue 275 of the **revista española de pedagogía**. For this reason, the abbreviation EV has been added to the page numbers. Please, cite this article as follows: Scotton, P. (2020). Pensar en común, vivir en plenitud. La experiencia de la filosofía para los niños y niñas | *Thinking together, living fully. Experiencing philosophy with children*. *Revista Española de Pedagogía*, 78 (275), 103-118. doi: <https://doi.org/10.22550/REP78-1-2020-06>

<https://revistadepedagogia.org/>

ISSN: 0034-9461 (Print), 2174-0909 (Online)

revista española de pedagogía  
year 78, n. 275, January-April 2020, 103-118



## Resumen:

La filosofía con los niños representa una ambiciosa propuesta educativa que se basa en una articulada reflexión acerca de las condiciones de posibilidad, el objeto y las finalidades del proceso educativo. Este artículo presenta de forma sistematizada los rasgos principales de la filosofía con los niños, considerándola como una propuesta con múltiples facetas la cual, sin embargo, posee algunos elementos comunes a todas sus distintas vertientes. A partir de la revisión de la amplia literatura existente sobre el tema, se presentan algunos de los límites conceptuales y materiales más significativos de la filosofía con los niños, relacionados tanto con su marco teórico como con su implementación práctica. Se trata de unas críticas potencialmente demoledoras que, si no son tomadas en cuenta de forma adecuada, pueden poner en riesgo la validez misma de esta propuesta educativa. Después de una discusión crítica de los puntos débiles de la fi-

losofía con los niños, el artículo demuestra la necesidad de replantear con claridad la naturaleza de la práctica educativa en general, y la aportación que a la misma puede ofrecer la reflexión filosófica en particular. Este replanteamiento abre el camino a una redefinición de la experiencia educativa, entendida como proceso radical de creación de sentido compartido por parte de una comunidad de indagación involucrada de forma conjunta, racional y emocionalmente, en la búsqueda de la verdad. Consecuentemente, el artículo demuestra la profunda actualidad de esta propuesta educativa, capaz de fomentar una educación integral de las personas, y su plena integración en el tejido social y cultural, haciendo posible el florecimiento de una vida auténtica.

**Descriptor:** filosofía de la educación, teorías de la educación, métodos educativos, pensamiento, sentido crítico, educación moral, educación social.

## 1. Introduction

It is 45 years since Matthew Lipman (1923-2010) published the second revised version of his book *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery* (1974). This is a significant date, as in the same year, the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children was founded as part of Montclair State College, New Jersey. And so Philosophy for Children — and adolescents — (P4C) started to take shape as the result of a process of research this American philosopher and

educationalist had been pursuing since the late 1960s (Naji & Hashim, 2017).

The basis of the P4C project was a profound and explicit theoretical reflection on the nature of the process and practice of education and the function of education for both the individual and society. Indeed, Lipman was convinced that schools should be concerned with ensuring children could think critically, both individually and as a group, rather than

teaching children specific content and evaluating them on the basis of how well they could reproduce it. In his own words, «education is the outcome of participation in a teacher-guided community of inquiry, among whose goals are the achievement of understanding and good judgment» (Lipman, 2003, p. 18). To achieve this aim and so lay the foundations for what he called the new «reflexive paradigm» in education, Lipman believed that there was no more effective tool than philosophy, as it could promote the development of true critical thinking. Based on this consideration, throughout the 1970s and 1980s Lipman dedicated himself to making a series of theoretical contributions and writing educational books that strengthened the principles and practice of philosophical work with children in the classroom. His aim was that of turning them into critical thinkers who can make productive judgements, being guided by rational criteria and standards, sensitive to context, and able to correct themselves (Lipman, 2003).

Since then, P4C has been constantly evolving thanks to the important work of Lipman's collaborators and the numerous contributions from its supporters and detractors. In the field of academia and in popular culture alike, especially thanks to the success of the documentary *Socrates for 6-Year Olds* broadcast by the BBC in 1990, P4C has become ever more important and is now a reality for students, education professionals, and researchers. P4C associations and centres have been formed in much of the USA, Europe, Australia, etc., and P4C programmes are

in place in over 60 countries around the world, including Spain, where it is also known as *Filosofía 3-18* (3-18 Philosophy) because of the age range of the students it covers.

P4C has also caught the attention of international bodies thanks to its good results with regards to improved academic performance (García Moriyón, Robello, & Colom, 2004; Trickey & Topping, 2004, 2007; Gorard, Siddiqui, & See, 2015; Tian & Liao, 2016), capacity for critical reflection (Soter et al., 2008; Murphy, 2009), and transference of these skills to the social setting (Reznitskaya et al., 2012; Gorard, Siddiqui, & See, 2017). For all of these reasons, it is regarded as an educational practice that effectively cultivates democratic citizenry that is able to meet the demands of the times (Makaiau, 2015; Echeverría & Hannam, 2017). This is demonstrated by the fact that, as long ago as 2007, UNESCO recognised the importance of introducing philosophy into schools to encourage critical thinking, educate children about life in society, and promote genuine democratic education. At the same time, it offered to contribute to the development of a movement that was gaining ever more recognition and popularity (UNESCO, 2007).

However, despite the enthusiasm surrounding this pedagogical project, a more measured examination of P4C shows it to be a complex phenomenon with internal differences, something that is subject to criticisms and has possible incongruities, a proposal in a continuous process of creation and self-correction. All of this makes this approach a fertile ground for

philosophical and pedagogical experimentation, which is a very interesting area for exploration in order to question the meaning of educational practice at all levels. To define the basic aspects of P4C, the article first presents its different forms (§1), opting for a conceptual categorisation rather than a generational one. Next, it briefly sets out the criticisms directed at this movement, both in relation to its philosophical aspect (§2) and its pedagogical principles (§3). Taking these critical voices into account, some possible responses are profiled, from a theoretical and practical perspective (§4). These observations inspire a reappraisal of the function of education and philosophical reflection in the pedagogical sphere, where P4C is seen as an intellectual and emotional adventure, an experience of a fulfilled life, and a driving force for social changes that can create a more humane world, with a shared meaning (§5).

## 2. Philosophies and childhood

According to Reed and Johnson (1999) and Vansielegheem and Kennedy (2011), two different generations can be discerned in P4C. The first dates back to the works of Lipman and Sharp, and is characterised by being primarily interested in the development of children's critical thinking. It regards children as potentially rational beings who develop in a social setting where they can, if guided correctly, develop their capacity for critical judgement. The second generation, which started with the work of Matthews in the early 1980s, eschews this pure ideal of rationality and reflexivity to which Lipman

partly aspired, instead seeing P4C as a creation of spaces for dialogue where the children's own voices could be heard (Matthews, 1982). Philosophy *for* Children thus becomes Philosophy *with* Children, giving more importance to the creative moment and no longer having a primarily instrumental role in developing reasoning. This second generation has a clear ethical intent, as children would be able to develop their moral reflection through dialogue. At the same time, the fact it defends the validity of philosophy done by children would open the path to a new way of conceiving the very meaning of philosophical practice. In Murriss's words, «philosophy as a discipline could learn something from children engaged in philosophical enquiry» (Murriss, 2000, p. 271).

According to Johansson (2018), a third generation can be seen in addition to these two generations. This third generation is characterised by hybridisation with critical pedagogy, thus foregrounding P4C's questioning of the social context in a more or less critical way (Kohan, 2014). In this regard, Jordi Nomen (2018) refers to the need to combine «careful thought» with speculative thought, which he defines as: «that thought which is concerned with the correctness of our thought from the point of view of our values, and which emphasises an active commitment between thought, word, and action» (Nomen, 2018, p. 77). The Catalan educator therefore proposes «opening up spaces for quality participation that empowers children and allows them to expand their comfort zone» (Nomen, 2018, p. 79). More radically, in

his recent studies of the value of P4C in multicultural contexts, marked by situations of violence and marginalisation, Arie Kizel (2016, 2017, 2019) turns the doubt children express into the basis for questioning reality and the motor that provides the impetus for action that is committed to the surroundings and so makes real change in society possible.

The generational divide can, however, cause misunderstanding if it is conceived as a contrast between different eras. In fact, this division cannot be understood as the expression of a progressive path or as a juxtaposition of watertight compartments. On the contrary, instead of generations we could speak of different sensibilities, which currently contribute unevenly to the composition of the complex prism P4C represents. To account for the diverse nature of this pedagogical perspective, it seems more appropriate to move from a chronological categorisation, suggested in various studies, to a conceptual division.

According to this perspective, within the diversity of P4C, different forms of philosophical discourse would coexist: a) logical-pragmatic; b) anthropological; c) moral; d) political. Clearly, none of these categories is exclusive in character, and from a philosophical and a pedagogical viewpoint alike, they can all, in principle, coexist within the same theoretical perspective and a specific educational practice. Nonetheless, it is easy to note the prevalence of some authors over others among the different ones associated with this pedagogical current.

Far from being a problem, this diversity seems to be a strength for P4C: a flexible proposal that is constantly open to listening to different contributions and seeks out convergences between perspectives without artificially reducing them to oneness. As José Ortega y Gasset argued, philosophical diversity is not a problem in itself, but becomes one insofar as: «It is a sign of the condition of disassociation, of insufficient cohesion in the social body», or reveals a radical «incompatibility» between different approaches (Ortega y Gasset, 2010). Therefore, analysing the criticisms aimed at P4C has a dual objective: on the one hand, understanding how far these derive from a radically different vision of the mission of education and, on the other, clarifying the possible internal incoherencies and aporias in P4C itself.

### 3. Criticisms of P4C

This section attempts to clarify some of the most problematic aspects of P4C in relation to the theoretical prerequisites that implicitly or explicitly form the basis of this educational proposal.

#### 3.1. Self-referential play

One of the most noteworthy aims of P4C, according to the founder of this pedagogical movement, Matthew Lipman, is to offer children useful and appropriate tools to formulate a correct judgement (Vansieleghem & Kennedy, 2011). Philosophy is necessary to achieve this aim as, according to Wittgenstein's teachings, it is a struggle against the sorcery of the



intellect through language (Wittgenstein, 1971). In other words, clarifying the meaning of words and the logical relationships created between them would help clarify the meaning we attribute to the phenomena of which we speak. And so, clarifying the meaning of our common language creates the possibility of establishing criteria and standards that help determine the correctness and validity of one argument against another, rejecting discourses that do not respect these norms.

The criticism of this way of interpreting philosophy as a logical-argumentative resource that would be responsible for producing the correct discourse dates back as far as Plato. Plato was aware of the existence of the view of philosophy as a desire to defeat one's opponent by having the best argument, without truly wishing to understand, and he advised avoiding teaching philosophy to the young, for: «lads, when they first get a taste of disputation, misuse it as a form of sport, always employing it contentiously, and, imitating confuters, they themselves confute others. They delight like spies in pulling about and tearing with words all who approach them» (Plato, 1967-1979, VII, 539b). In this way, philosophy would become a mere word game, a sophisticated struggle concerned only with being right and not with seeking a shared rationality. An activity that puts aside the existential requirement to escape from the linguistic game to take an interest in what is happening outside it. Quite the opposite of what Plato claimed true philosophy should be, namely a practice

of shared conversation that creates vital energy and passion. As Plato wrote in his famous seventh letter: «As a result of continued application to the subject itself and communion therewith, it is brought to birth in the soul on a sudden, as light that is kindled by a leaping spark» (Plato, 1967-1979, 341d-e).

### 3.2. The impossibility of meta-cognition

The second criticism relates to children's cognitive development and so to the anthropological sphere of P4C, in the broad sense. Based on Piaget's observations on the developmental stages of human psychology, children would not have the capacity to reflect critically and self-critically on the actual content of their own thought. As philosophy is an eminently reflective activity, students' cognitive limitations will have a significant effect on the potential success of this practice (Kitchener, 1990; White, 1992). This criticism is based on a position that regards philosophy as the highest expression of human rationality, which is the capacity to abstract essences based on specific cases, achieve suitable generalisations, and reflect self-critically on the cognitive processes that lead discourse towards a certain conclusion (Pritchard, 1998). This is a criticism that mainly affects what is described as the first generation of P4C above, which is predominantly concerned with making children into perfectly rational beings, according to a perspective that apes adult rationality, turning children into the ideal «abnormal child» (Murreis, 2015).

### 3.3. Relativism or absolutism

From the moral perspective, P4C has been subjected to conflicting but similarly harsh criticisms. A first criticism can already be detected in Aristotle's work. He claims that ethical knowledge differs from intellectual knowledge; the former is a type of practical knowledge, not theoretical, that is the product of experience and constant action (Aristotle, 2014, II, 1103a-b). Consequently, practical wisdom can only be fully developed in older people and not among children and youths, who would still be morally inexperienced (Berti, 2015).

Furthermore, even accepting the possibility of acquiring a form of moral wisdom during childhood and adolescence, two important criticisms relating to the content of this moral education are directed at P4C. On the one hand, the open inquiry P4C sets out to perform with children without first presenting answers and without attempting to inculcate any type of prejudgement regarding the questions posed, would open the door to possible moral relativism (Coppens, 1998). In Lipman's own words, P4C «is concerned not to inculcate substantive moral rules, or alleged moral principles, but to acquaint the student with the practice of moral inquiry» (Lipman, Sharp, & Oscanyan, 1980, p. 60). And so a lack of positive ethical principles would seem to open the path to possible moral relativism. Relativism, according to Adela Cortina's definition (1998, p. 25), is the position that «states the impossibility of recognising a universality, whether it be formal or in

terms of an aspiration», with regards to formulating value judgements. Therefore, claiming that P4C leads to moral relativism involves supporting the idea that subjecting our moral convictions to critical evaluation makes it impossible to judge their validity, to find an agreement on the foundation of our very knowledge.

Conversely, the constant attention P4C pays to the education of children as moral agents, individuals who are epistemologically responsible for their own actions (García Moriyón, 1999; Prichard, 2013; Gasparatou, 2017) has been the object of the opposite criticism. Namely, that trying to instil certain moral values in children usurps their parents' educational prerogative (Law, 2008; Gregory, 2011). The argument that it is necessary to question the validity of our beliefs and our cultural and moral taboos would make for an approach that is unquestionable, imposing a non-neutral compromise regarding the relationship between educational practice and its social environment. Furthermore, this hidden curriculum would exclusively reflect the dominant values of Western culture (Vaidya, 2017), as P4C only includes philosophical referents from the Western tradition, favouring a particular idea of philosophy, rationality, and morality, and excluding contributions from other cultures.

### 3.4. Oppression and conservatism, anarchism and activism

The criticisms above, relating to the logical-pragmatic and moral spheres, are also reflected in the political sphere. On the one hand, the risk of an excessively

guiding presence of teachers with the aim of controlling how the students think (so-called reasonableness), and the manipulation of the children's moral judgement owing to the hidden dogmatism that transmits a given value system, would result in limitation of the children's freedom of expression. Consequently, the vertical system of power that characterises traditional teaching, and which Lipman himself rejected, would be reproduced. So, philosophy would become a mere instrumental activity and not a vital endeavour, resulting in what Freire called «humanitarianism» which, ultimately, «maintains and embodies the oppression itself» (Freire, 2005, p. 54). From a political viewpoint this would therefore end up supporting the conservation of the *status quo*; if the aim of the philosophy of P4C is only to construct citizens who are rational, competent at a cognitive level, and morally educated in regards to some basic shared values, then the philosophy of P4C would be just another tool at the service of the effectiveness of the current educational system and of the social context in which it is positioned.

On the contrary, the risk of falling into moral relativism by promoting children's moral inquiry would, in the political field, lead to a possible rejection of traditional morals. This would still have significant consequences from the social perspective, even accepting the conclusions of Burgh (2010) and Sprod (2011; 2014), according to whom moral relativism would not in any way be a possible outcome of the debate in a community of inquiry (CoI), where what would ac-

tually take place would be a critique of the fallibility of the values themselves. That is to say, admitting possible fallibility would lead to the absolute validity of the social system being questioned and to criticism of obvious injustices and so would encourage a call for radical social transformation.

## 4. Criticisms of the pedagogy of P4C

Criticisms of P4C not only relate to its philosophical facets — in other words, the what, why and what for of that which this practice sets out to transmit or create — but also the method and the process through which this content is created, that is to say, the how. In other words, P4C also has some problematic aspects as a pedagogical practice, which are discussed below.

### 4.1. Instrumentalism

In relation to pedagogical discourse, the critique of self-referentiality typical of the philosophical logic of P4C has recently been interpreted by Gert Biesta (2017) as risk of instrumentalisation of the purpose of the actual educational process. According to Biesta, philosophical work with children would end up being of instrumental value in developing their critical thinking, but it would not truly reach their hearts and would not touch their souls (Biesta, 2017). Consequently, concentrating on logical aspects and the limited consideration of the experiential side of the educational process would conceal from children the complexity of their relationship with the world as human be-



ings who live in it and so prevent them from really questioning their own purpose (Biesta, 2017). In this way, from a pedagogical viewpoint, P4C would be a mere tool in favour of a concept of learning aimed at optimising success, achieving pre-established outcomes while minimising teachers' input and accomplishing the ideal of an intelligent system that continuously adapts to its environment. According to Biesta, education should have an existential value rather than an instrumental one and so lead towards an adult existence in which we critically ask ourselves, thanks to an induced suspension of the adaptative model, whether «what we desire is desirable for our own lives and the lives we live with others» (Biesta, 2019, p. 58).

#### 4.2. Exclusion

Another open question relating to the pedagogical character of P4C is the possible risk of excluding people. P4C theorists maintain that thanks to the dialogue that takes place in CoIs during philosophy sessions, there is real inclusion of all students' voices. In particular, this relies on the fact that in CoIs, the voices of those people who generally speak least are heard (Grusovnik & Hercog, 2015), and an ideal of shared authority results in real democratisation of the learning process (Michaud & Väitalo, 2017). Thanks to all of these elements, those people who are in disadvantaged circumstances achieve better results in oral and logical comprehension (Gorard, Siddiqui, & See, 2015). However, the high logical-linguistic standard to which P4C aspires and the limited importance of the experiential aspect

of educational practice could be a barrier for those students who have some kind of cognitive limitation on joining in with a dialogue of this nature. Consequently, P4C would separate those who can reflect and so be future rational citizens from those who are unable to take part in this practice because they cannot adapt effectively to this world. In other words, the distinction between persons and non-persons popularised by Peter Singer (1993) in relation to the anthropological and moral sphere would be reproduced.

#### 4.3. Lack of integration in the curriculum

Another pedagogical problem relating to implementing P4C in schools derives from its own purpose in the curriculum. The question many P4C theorists raise is whether this educational practice should be promoted as an independent subject, obligatory or optional subject (Splitter, 2006), or if it should form part of the school curriculum as a whole in a spread-out and cross-sectional way (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2011; Lewis & Sutcliffe, 2017). In the first case, a possible conflict would open up with other subjects which have traditionally had a central position in the moral education of students (civic values or religion). In the second, the transversality of the discipline would be problematic both in relation to its content (would schools teach philosophy or, for example, would they teach mathematics through philosophy?), and in relation to the specific preparation that all teachers, without distinction, would need to implement a spread-out and interdisciplinary P4C practice.

## 5. Saving P4C. Dialogic thinking and communities of inquiry

As a result of this discussion about the limitations of P4C, it is clear that the criticisms directed at this didactic practice, at both a philosophical and pedagogical level, are sometimes very cutting, sometimes unproblematic, and sometimes even contradictory. It is significant that these contradictions coexist at present. This apparent incongruence is for two main reasons: 1) the different sensibilities of P4C's detractors; 2) the plurality and diversity that characterises P4C theorists.

For example, some supporters of P4C claim there is a need for inquiry directed explicitly at action and resisting social injustices, while others regard this political commitment as something that goes beyond the limits of actual P4C. Returning to Ortega y Gasset's invitation, it appears to be necessary to find out what the reason for this diversity is and how much of a problem it is. On the one hand, rather than reflecting a lack of coherence in the academic community engaged in discussing the principles and practice of P4C, this diversity of perspectives can be characterised as a distinctive feature of this pedagogical movement, which continues to develop through accumulation, taking different forms in different settings.

However, it also seems clear that this diversity can lead to aporetic incongruencies since privileging one position over another entails a radically different conception of both the role and the function of philosophy and the very aims of education. In light of this problem, this

article argues that to be able to respond to all of the criticisms mentioned above, it is necessary first and foremost to articulate clearly the concepts of philosophy and education used when speaking of P4C and CoIs, taking care to avoid potential incongruencies between their content and aims.

This means, firstly, that philosophy cannot merely be understood as a logical-argumentative tool, but rather as an experience that involves each individual's thought and emotions, engaging human beings in a genuine search for meaning, not so much of the words that are outside of the individual but rather the ones the individual uses insofar as they serve to define him or herself. In other words, philosophy is primarily an attempt to understand ourselves, as rational, feeling, corporal beings by understanding our presence in the world. The *positivity* of philosophy (Reed-Sandoval & Sykes, 2017), is, therefore, existential rather than political, and this answers the logical-pragmatic criticism (§3.1). Furthermore, it is important to recall that philosophy is always born and carried out in relationship with others, for the simple reason that human beings are relational beings. Consequently, this dialogic relationship is not simply external, but rather it determines a change in the specific inner thought of each person and can never, therefore, be understood as a monologic process (Wegerif, 2018). Aristotle said that human beings live with the aim of being happy and so nothing gives greater happiness than spending time with friends and practising philosophy

together (Aristotle, 2014). Philosophical dialogue enables us to discover the world, illuminate it, experience it in our own flesh, imagine it, recreate it, and modify it (Wegerif, 2010, 2011).

For this reason, the P4C philosophy cannot be reduced to mere content, or to a working method, or to engaging in debate. It must be understood as a way of existing and of being in the world, with it and against it, as what is in play is the comprehension and realisation of our authenticity. In this context, there cannot be a condition of relativism or absolutism at a moral level (criticism §3.3), nor of passive conservatism or political anarchism (criticism §3.4). And this insofar as the real, responsible, and friendly interest (Reed & Johnson, 1999) that unites human beings who are involved in the search for meaning prevents them lapsing into a lack of ethical commitment to reality (relativism) and into a devastating criticism of socialisation itself (anarchism). In addition, the need to follow closely the road towards discovery of the moral basis of things prevents there from being some kind of external imposition (heteronomous morality), or a mere acceptance of the socio-political situation (conservatism). For this reason, CoIs would have to carry out a form of philosophising-together (*sumphilosophhein*), which is primarily and above all an existential experience (Oliverio, 2017). It does not, therefore, matter if this *sumphilosophhein* is done in a way that an external observer to the actual dialogue would have hoped. Of course, its success cannot be measured with an external tool, with an ideal

of pure adult rationality (criticism §3.2). In other words, it does not make sense to concern oneself with the result regardless of the process going on in the head and the heart of each individual who participates actively in it and who does not have to share the same way of arguing as people who do not participate in this dialogue (Agúndez-Rodríguez, 2018).

This concept of philosophy, transferred to the pedagogical field of P4C, involves a specific way of understanding the role and function of education. In contrast with the instrumental vision, criticised by Biesta, the idea of education within which this practice is framed is an education that aspires to promote critical thinking among students, not as an end in itself but as a rational and experiential means of understanding reality. A critical comprehension that shakes their comfort zone (Shea, 2017), that pushes for action, and that takes charge of the radicality of human life as a life project to be sketched constantly, without conceiving it as a preestablished set of guidelines (criticism §4.1). Education must form people who are agents of their destiny and know how to take an interest in the destiny of others. There is, therefore, no possibility of excluding anyone from this joint path. Education must always be for everyone; its aim should not be to build people who are suited to the needs of society but to lay the foundations so that, together, it is possible to build a society that can respond to everyone's vital needs and existential questions (criticism §4.2). CoIs can be the practical realisation of this pedagogical ideal. Spaces where this shared

inquiry becomes an event that gives not just rational meaning but also emotional meaning to the lives of those who participate in it (Costa Carvalho & Mendonça, 2017). What is needed to promote this type of education is not therefore to find more or less space for P4C in the curriculum (criticism §4.3), but to oppose radically, coherently, and particularly an educational paradigm that focusses stubbornly on the efficiency of the system.

## 6. Living Philosophy. Conclusions

In conclusion, we should note that P4C has some important limitations. However, at the same time, from both the theoretical and practical perspectives, it is a potentially very productive reality as it relates directly to the most important problems that affect the educational process. In view of the considerations set out above, it is possible to highlight five particular important conclusions regarding P4C:

- 1) Discussing the different versions and nuances of P4C means discussing essential questions relating to philosophical reflection on the phenomenon of education. Indeed, some of the most controversial and highly criticised aspects of P4C reveal possible incongruities regarding the meaning given to the very concepts of philosophy and education, with little uniformity within the very academic community that is striving to define it. For this reason, it has been necessary first to clarify the meaning of these concepts, before responding to the main criti-

cisms aimed at the content and educational process promoted by P4C. This path has made it possible to trace a theoretical framework that can give coherent meaning to this practice of thinking together.

- 2) Far from being just one didactic intervention among many, albeit one that is useful and effective for encouraging critical thinking in children and educating them to be responsible citizens in future, P4C has been shown to be more valuable when understood as a practice that can give anyone who takes part the experience of a true intellectual and emotional adventure, when it makes them savour the beauty of encountering the other, our own inner life, and the lives of others, when it enables each individual to be a constituent and indispensable part of building a shared sense of reality.
- 3) Experiencing philosophy in one's own flesh creates a force that pushes towards action, towards the realisation of possible social changes, thanks to the implementation of a process of awareness-raising in which the community of inquiry involved in this path of mutual comprehension plays the most important role. Consequently, CoIs are the appropriate space and time for significant educational moments to occur, in which each individual in their own individuality and each group as a group, tackle social problems that go beyond the walls of the classroom, seeking together the deep meaning of existence.

- 4) Since this activity is so intimately linked to human existence, philosophy and education cannot be directed solely at a specific group of people, namely school-age children and adolescents. On the contrary, P4C must be the starting point for a Philosophy for Society, starting by constructing moments of philosophical interchange within educational communities themselves, with collaboration between parents, pupils, and teachers. And so the search for meaning, the comprehension of existential and social *positionality*, should be the main preoccupation of not just children but all educational agents.
- 5) Schools currently have a great opportunity and a great responsibility: to offer each person the necessary tools to make sense of reality, to build a world where we can find ourselves and our authentic destiny. For this reason, P4C is undoubtedly a powerful invitation to redefine our educational paradigm.

## References

- Agúndez-Rodríguez, A. (2018). Programa de Filosofía para Niños como propuesta de educación moral: análisis comparado con otros enfoques de la educación moral. *Childhood & Philosophy*, 14 (31), 671-695. doi: 10.12957/childphilo.2018.34305
- Aristotle (2014). *Nicomachean Ethics*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co.
- Berti, E. (2015). ¿Sabiduría o filosofía práctica? *Disputatio. Philosophical Research Bulletin*, 4 (5), 155-173.
- Biesta, G. (2017). Touching the Soul? Exploring an Alternative Outlook for Philosophical Work with Children and Young People. *Childhood & Philosophy*, 13 (28), 415-452. doi: 10.12957/childphilo.2017.30424
- Biesta, G. (2019). What is the Educational Task? Arousing the Desire for Wanting to Exist in the World in a Grown-up Way. *Pedagogía y Saberes*, 50, 63-74.
- Burgh, C. (2010). Citizenship as a learning process: Democratic education without foundationalism. In D. R. J. Macer & S. Saad-Zoy (Eds.), *Asian-Arab philosophical dialogues on globalization, democracy and human rights* (pp. 59-69). Bangkok: UNESCO.
- Coppens, S. (1998). Some ideological biases of the Philosophy for Children curriculum. *Thinking. The Journal of Philosophy for Children*, 14 (3), 25-32.
- Cortina, A. (1998). ¿Qué es ser una persona moralmente educada? In F. García Moriyón (Ed.), *Crecimiento moral y Filosofía para niños* (pp. 15-33). Zarautz: Desclée De Brouwer.
- Costa-Carvalho, M., & Mendonça, D. (2017). Thinking as a community: reasonableness and emotions. In M. Gregory, J. Haynes, & K. Murris (Eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of Philosophy for Children* (pp. 127-134). London-New York: Routledge.
- Echeverría, E., & Hannam, P. (2017). The community of philosophical inquiry (P4C): a pedagogical proposal for advancing democracy. In M. Gregory, J. Haynes, & K. Murris (Eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of Philosophy for Children* (pp. 3-10). London-New York: Routledge.
- Freire, P. (2005). *La pedagogía del oprimido*. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI.
- García Moriyón, F. (1999). Inteligencia emocional y educación moral. Emociones, sentimientos y vida afectiva. *Aprender a pensar*, 19-20, 61-69.
- García Moriyón, F., Robello, I., & Colom R. (2005). Evaluating Philosophy for Children: A meta-analysis. *Thinking. The Journal of Philosophy for Children*, 17 (4), 14-22.
- Gasparatou, R. (2017). Philosophy for/with Children and the development of epistemically virtuous agents. In M. Gregory, J. Haynes, & K. Murris (Eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of Philosophy for Children* (pp. 103-110). London-New York: Routledge.
- Gorard, S., Siddiqui, N., & See, B. H. (2015). *Philosophy for Children. Evaluation report and executive summary*. Durham: Durham University Press.



- Gorard, S., Siddiqui, N., & See, B. H. (2017). Can 'Philosophy for Children' Improve Primary School Attainment? *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 51 (1), 5-22. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9752.12227>
- Gregory, M. (2011). Philosophy for Children and its critics. A Mendham dialogue. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 45 (2), 199-219.
- Grusovnik, T., & Hercog, L. (2015). Philosophy for Children as listening. Avoiding pitfalls of instrumentalization. *Synthesis Philosophica*, 30 (2), 307-317.
- Johansson, V. (2018). Philosophy for Children and children for philosophy. Possibilities and problems. In P. Smeyers (Ed.), *International Handbook of Philosophy of Education* (pp. 1149-1161). Cham: Springer.
- Kennedy, D., & Kennedy, N. (2011). Community of philosophical inquiry as a discursive structure and its role in school curriculum design. In N. Vansielegem & D. Kennedy (Eds.), *Philosophy for Children in transition: Problems and prospects* (pp. 97-116). Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Kitchener, R. F. (1990). Do children think philosophically? *Metaphilosophy*, 21 (4), 416-431.
- Kizel, A. (2016). From Laboratory to Praxis: Communities of Philosophical Inquiry as a Model of (and for) Social Activism. *Childhood and Philosophy*, 12 (25), 497-517.
- Kizel, A. (2017). Philosophic Communities of Inquiry: The Search for and Finding of Meaning as the Basis for Developing a Sense of Responsibility. *Childhood and Philosophy*, 13 (26), 87-103.
- Kizel, A. (2019). Enabling Identity as an Ethical Tension in Community of Philosophical Inquiry with Children and Young Adults. *Global Studies of Childhood*, 9 (2), 145-155.
- Kohan, W. O. (2014). *Philosophy and Childhood: Critical Perspectives and Affirmative Practices*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Law, S. (2008). Religion and philosophy in schools. In M. Handand & C. Winstalney (Eds.), *Philosophy in schools* (pp. 41-57). London: Continuum.
- Lewis, L., & Sutcliffe, R. (2017). Teaching philosophy and philosophical teaching. In M. Gregory, J. Haynes, & K. Murris (Eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of Philosophy for Children* (pp. 200-207). London-New York: Routledge.
- Lipman, M. (1974). *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery*. Montclair, NJ: Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children.
- Lipman, M. (1998). *Pensamiento complejo y educación*. Madrid: Ediciones de la Torre.
- Lipman, M. (2003). *Thinking in education. Second edition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lipman, M., Sharp, M. A., & Oscanyan, F. S. (1980). *Philosophy in the Classroom*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Lipman, M., Sharp, M. A., & Oscanyan, F. S. (1992). *La filosofía en el aula*. Madrid: Ediciones de la Torre.
- Makaiau, A. S. (2015). Cultivating and nurturing collaborative civic spaces. *C3 Teachers*. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2PhxtH1> (Consulted on 2019-11-11).
- Matthews, G. B. (1982). *Philosophy and the young child*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.
- Michaud, O., & Väitalo, R. (2017). Authority, democracy and philosophy: the nature and role of authority in a community of philosophical inquiry. In M. Gregory, J. Haynes, & K. Murris (Eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of Philosophy for Children* (pp. 27-33). London-New York: Routledge.
- Murphy, P. K. (2009). Examining the effects of classroom discussion on students' comprehension of text: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 101 (3), 740-764.
- Murris, K. (2015). The Philosophy for Children Curriculum: Resisting 'Teacher Proof' Texts and the Formation of the Ideal Philosopher Child. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 35 (1), 63-78. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11217-015-9466-3>
- Murris, K. (2000). Can children do philosophy? *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 34 (2), 261-279.
- Naji, S., & Hashim, R. (2017). *History, Theory and Practice of Philosophy for Children*. London-New York: Routledge.

- Nomen, J. (2018). *El niño filósofo. Como enseñar a los niños a pensar por sí mismos*. Barcelona: Arpa.
- Oliverio, S. (2017). Parallel convergences: thinking with Biesta about philosophy and education. *Childhood & Philosophy*, 13 (28), 589-603. doi: <https://doi.org/10.12957/childphilo.2017.29953>
- Ortega y Gasset, J. (2010). *Obras Completas*. Madrid: Taurus.
- Plato (1967-1979). *Plato in Twelve Volumes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Prichard, D. (2013). Epistemic virtue and the epistemology of education. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 47 (2), 236-248.
- Pritchard, M. (1998). Desarrollo moral y filosofía para niños. In F. García Moriyón (Ed.), *Crecimiento moral y Filosofía para niños* (pp. 69-112). Zarautz: Desclée De Brouwer.
- Reed, R. F., & Johnson, T. W. (1999). *Friendship and moral education. Twin pillars of Philosophy for Children*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Reed-Sandoval, A., & Sykes, C. A. (2017). Who talks? Who listens? Taking positionality seriously in Philosophy for Children. In M. Gregory, J. Haynes, & K. Murris (Eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of Philosophy for Children* (pp. 219-226). London-New York: Routledge.
- Reznitskaya, A., Glina, M., Carolan, B., Michaud, O., Rogers, J., & Sequeira, L. (2012). Examining transfer effects from dialogic discussions to new tasks and contexts. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 37 (4), 288-306. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2012.02.003>
- Shea, P. (2017). Do we put what is precious to us at risk through philosophic conversation? In M. Laverty & M. Gregory (Eds.), *In community of inquiry with Ann Margaret Sharp. Childhood and education* (pp. 161-173). London-New York: Routledge.
- Singer, P. (1993). *Practical Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Soter, A. O., Wilkinson, I., Murphy, P., Rudge, L., Reninger, K., & Edwards, M. (2008). What the discourse tells us. Talks and indicators of high-level comprehension. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 47 (6), 372-391.
- Splitter, L. (2006). Philosophy in a crowded curriculum. *Critical and Creative Thinking: The Australasian Journal of Philosophy for Children*, 14 (2), 4-14.
- Sprod, T. (2011). *Discussion in Science: Promoting conceptual understanding in the middle school years*. Camberwell: Australian Council for Educational Research.
- Sprod, T. (2014). Philosophical inquiry and critical thinking in primary and secondary science education. In M. R. Matthews (Ed.), *International Handbook of Research in History, Philosophy and Science Teaching* (pp. 1531-1564). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Tian, S., & Liao, P. (2016). Philosophy for children with learners of English as a foreign language. *Journal of Philosophy in Schools*, 3 (1), 40-58.
- Topping, K. J., & Trickey, S. (2007). Collaborative philosophical inquiry for schoolchildren: Cognitive gains at 2-year follow-up. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 77 (2), 787-796. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1348/000709906X105328>
- Trickey, S., & Topping, K. J. (2004). Philosophy for Children: A systematic review. *Research Papers in Education*, 19 (3), 365-380. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267152042000248016>
- UNESCO (2007). *Philosophy, a school of freedom: teaching philosophy and learning to philosophize, status and prospects*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.
- Vaidya, A. J. (2017). Does Critical Thinking and Logic Education Have a Western Bias? The Case of the Nyāya School of Classical Indian Philosophy. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 51 (1), 132-160. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9752.12189>
- Vansieleghe, N., & Kennedy, D. (2011). What is Philosophy for Children, what is Philosophy with Children – After Matthew Lipman *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 45 (2), 171-182.
- Wegerif, R. (2010). *Mind Expanding. Teaching for Thinking and Creativity in Primary Education*. Glasgow: Open University Press.
- Wegerif, R. (2011). Towards a dialogic theory of how children learn to think. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 6 (3), 51-70. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2011.08.002>
- Wegerif, R. (2018). A dialogic theory of teaching thinking. In L. Kerslake & R. Wegerif (Eds.), *The Theory of Teaching Thinking. International Perspectives*. London-New York: Routledge.

- White, J. (1992). The roots of philosophy. In A. P. Griffiths (Ed.), *The impulse to philosophise* (pp. 73-88). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wittgenstein, L. (1971). *Philosophische Untersuchungen*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

## Author's biography

**Paolo Scotton** has a PhD of History of Political Thinking from IMT Institute for Advanced Studies. He is currently Assistant Professor of Theory and History of Education, in the Department of Human and Educational Sciences at the Universidad Pública de Navarra. His main research interests include philosophy of education, history of education, educational policies, and education for democratic citizenship.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3553-8076>

# Table of Contents

## Sumario

### Mathematics teaching issues

#### ***Cuestiones de enseñanza de las matemáticas***

Wendolyn Elizabeth Aguilar-Salinas, Maximiliano de las Fuentes-Lara, Araceli Celina Justo-López, & Ana Dolores Martínez-Molina

A measurement instrument for establishing the algebraic skills of engineering students on a Differential Calculus Course in engineering  
*Instrumento de medición para diagnosticar las habilidades algebraicas de los estudiantes en el Curso de Cálculo Diferencial en ingeniería*

5

**María Burgos, Pablo Beltrán-Pellicer, & Juan D. Godino**

The issue of didactical suitability in mathematics educational videos: experience of analysis with prospective primary school teachers  
*La cuestión de la idoneidad de los vídeos educativos de matemáticas: una experiencia de análisis con futuros maestros de educación primaria*

27

### Online training in the world of education: experiences from the United States *La formación online en el mundo de la educación: experiencias de los Estados Unidos*

Gerald LeTendre, & Tiffany Squires

Integrating online and residential master's programs in education  
*Integración de programas de máster online y presenciales en educación*

53

**Laurence B. Boggess**

Innovations in online faculty development: an organizational model for long-term support of online faculty  
*Innovación en la capacitación docente online: un modelo organizacional para brindar apoyo a largo plazo a la docencia online*

73

**Brian Redmond**

Shared team leadership for an online program  
*Liderazgo de equipo compartido de un programa online*

89

## Studies and Notes

### Estudios y Notas

---

**Paolo Scotton**

Thinking together, living fully. Experiencing philosophy with children

*Pensar en común, vivir en plenitud. La experiencia de la filosofía con los niños y las niñas*

103

**Manuel Delgado-García, Sara Conde Vélez, & Ángel Boza Carreño**

Profiles and functions of university tutors and their effects on students' tutorial needs

*Perfiles y funciones del tutor universitario y sus efectos sobre las necesidades tutoriales del alumnado*

119

## Book reviews

---

**Luri, G. (2019).** *La imaginación conservadora: una defensa apasionada de las ideas que han hecho del mundo un lugar mejor* [The conservative imagination: A passionate defence of ideas that have made the world a better place] (Enrique Alonso Sainz). **Quigley, C. F., & Herro, D. (2019).** *An educator's guide to STEAM. Engaging students using real-world problems* (Juan Luis Fuentes). **Prince, T. (2019).** *Ejercicios de mindfulness en el aula. 100 ideas prácticas* [Mindfulness exercises for the class. 100 practical ideas] (José V. Merino Fernández).

145

### Call for papers

*Solicitud de originales*

157

This is the English version of the research articles and book reviews published originally in the Spanish printed version of issue 275 of the **revista española de pedagogía**. The full Spanish version of this issue can also be found on the journal's website <http://revistadepedagogia.org>.



ISSN: 0034-9461 (Print), 2174-0909 (Online)

<https://revistadepedagogia.org/>

Depósito legal: M. 6.020 - 1958

INDUSTRIA GRÁFICA ANZOS, S.L. Fuenlabrada - Madrid