

Philosophy for Children: Some Assumptions and Implications

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Here we present one of the last papers authored by Matthew Lipman (?2010). Editors

It is a pleasure to be able to thank the editors of *Ethik und Sozialwissenschaften* for inviting me to write this paper about the Philosophy for Children program, [buy more about](#) with which I have been associated since it began at the end of the 1960's.

As readers of this periodical are probably rather familiar with the educational approach in question, [troche](#) based on the 1993 discussion with Mr. Horster, I have decided to deal only briefly with the curriculum and other inner workings of Philosophy for Children, and to devote most of the article to a consideration of some of the assumptions on which the program rests as well as some of the implications that can be drawn from the way it works in the classroom. Some of these assumptions and implications were evident from the very beginning of the program's dissemination; others have only more recently come to light. Even the developers of the program themselves could not be sure, when it was introduced, just what it would do and just what it would make possible. It would not be amiss to say that it has lived up to our expectations, but more than that, it has made possible educational criteria that only a few decades earlier it would have been foolhardy to articulate:

- how children's judgment can be sharpened and strengthened;
- how children's reasoning can be improved;
- how conceptual analysis may be fostered;
- how interpersonal communication may be perfected;
- how children can engage in more effective deliberation;
- how the inquiry process can be better taught to and by teachers, etc.

These and other criteria, previously unrealizable, are now beginning to settle into place, and the conventional complacency about today's education is beginning to appear more and more untenable. In the inquiry that is likely to emerge in the coming years, I hope that these assumptions and implications will play a significant role.

1. Philosophy for Children: Some Background Considerations

In the second quarter of the 20th Century, a prevalent theoretical understanding was that young children were so deeply mired in concrete thought ? meaning their sensations, perceptions, perspectives on action and to some extent their emotions ? that it was a waste of time trying to reach out to them by means of abstract concepts. It was well-known that children who were *perceptually* deprived were compelled to suffer adverse neurological consequences, but it was thought that depriving children of abstract concepts, such as highly general and important but ill-defined ideas, would produce no adverse effects. There could be no comparison with the kitten whose eye had been sewed up by researchers at birth, and who after six months had lost its sight in that eye due to lack of optical stimulation. Intellectual malnourishment was not believed to result analogously in cognitive underdevelopment.

Nowadays, with Vygotsky's star in the ascendancy, with his convictions contrasting sharply with Piaget's, some educators are beginning to scramble about frantically to find ways of exposing children's minds to abstract ideas, which are acknowledged to be needed for the child's cognitive development. But what was to be the source of these ideas? For children to understand, wouldn't the ideas have to be extremely simple, specific and well-defined? If so, that would seem to rule out philosophical concepts, which are notoriously complex, general and ill-defined, and which are (like *good, right, true, fair, and should read, and so on*) among the most important concepts in the language.

As it turns out, the vocabulary of very young children contains many of the very terms utilized by philosophers, which suggests that the two groups may have interests in common, particularly in language. Since Philosophy for Children is very much a language-based curriculum and pedagogy, it is not far-fetched to imagine it as indispensable to a discourse-based ideal society, and in particular to a discourse-based ethics.

(1) How it Began

Among the background considerations to be taken into account are those that are strictly historical. What follows, therefore, is a quick review of the circumstances that prevailed just prior to the writing of the first book in the Philosophy for Children curriculum and that contributed to its composition. These considerations are largely autobiographical.

Upon emerging from military service in 1946, I enrolled as a philosophy major in Columbia University. Columbia was just where I'd hoped to study, once I'd learned that John Dewey had taught there. By counting a year of studies at Stanford that had been taken earlier, I was able to get a bachelor's degree from Columbia in 1948, and defended my doctoral dissertation, *Problems of Art Inquiry*, in 1950. Later that year I received a Fulbright grant to the Sorbonne.

I stayed on in Europe for another year, passing the last semester in Vienna. Then in 1954, I began teaching at Columbia, eventually becoming a full professor of philosophy there. During the 1950's, I had no particular interest in education, but when I did discover it, in the 1960's, I fell in love with it, just as earlier on, while I was still in military service in World War II, I had fallen in love with philosophy. It is not strange that I should have wanted to bring the two disciplines together somehow. In any event, it was while in Europe that I discovered Continental philosophy, but it was not until later, when I was back in the United States, that I found analytical philosophy to be more than Ryle, Austin and Wittgenstein.

During the 1960's, I began to be involved in a series of conversations about children, art and education with Joseph D. Isaacson of the Child Study Association. These talks were topped off by the university riots of 1968. Neither the Columbia University administration, nor the faculty, nor the students came off particularly well: they seemed bewildered and unreasonable. I wondered what they should have done or have experienced earlier in their lives, to be more reasonable now. They had all passed through the school system. Could that be the locus of the problem? If so, could the Logic and Critical Thinking course I offered to adult evening students be revised so as to make children think more reasonably, more reflectively, more critically? I was skeptical about the possibility of using something as dry and colorless as Logic to improve children's cognition. How could it be made inviting to youngsters? A colleague suggested that the logic be somehow concealed in a children's story, so I promptly wrote a very short story ? fictional, narrative, dialogical ? about a middle-school child who discovers the logical principle of conversion, which I had long suspected to be the main building-block of Aristotelian logic. I chose this logic, despite its reputation for being old-fashioned, because it was closely coordinated with language. In other words, it was language that had not yet lost its connections with meaning. Children were bound to appreciate this, I thought. Even the child's name, ?Harry Stottlemeier,? was a pun on ?Aristotle.? As for the little story, it would be useful, I reflected, only if it were the beginning of a much longer work in which Harry and his classmates would discover under what circumstances the inferences we draw are guaranteed to be valid. Little did I know how miniscule such a project was, in comparison with the work that lay ahead. It was 1969.

After writing another two or three chapters, however, I began to develop some doubts. I began to suspect that the students would be responsive to the story only if it provided them with provocative ideas to discuss. Such ideas ? contestable and important ideas ? could be found by the heap in philosophy. I rapidly added a chapter that dealt with some issues in the philosophy of education, followed by chapters on the philosophy of mind and the philosophy of the social sciences. This approach seeming to be sound, I subsequently added chapters dealing with issues in the philosophy of religion, the philosophy of science, and the philosophy of inquiry. A bit later, an additional chapter was added on conditional reasoning and two more on critical thinking.

Throughout the writing of *Harry*, I tried to see to it that virtually every event in the story reverberated with ideas or fragments of ideas from the history of phi-losophy. I didn't recruit these ideas in an orderly, systematic way. Instead, they showed up as a result of my own free associations. An incident in the narrative might remind me of a comment in Plato's *Meno*, or of a remark by Leibniz in a letter to a correspondent, or of a line by Fontenelle quoted by Diderot. This was the rich background of ideas from past and present day philosophy that accompanied the story line of the activities of Harry and his companions. These ideas were not in historical order or any other kind of order, for that matter. They were there for children to pick up and examine, if they cared to, much as if they were so many pretty shells on the beach. The young readers of the story would be free in turn to select for discussion what interested them and, together with the others in the class, to puzzle over it. Interest in the story would assure their encounter with the phi-losophy, which in turn would guide their formulating their questions and initiating their conversations. A continuous strand of interest would lead them to their subsequent judgments and understandings. Eventually I finished the writing of *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery*, and for the next four years wondered what to do with it.

(2) Enter the IAPC

In 1970 I conducted a 10-week experiment with *Harry*, and with randomly selected experimental and comparison groups. What showed up was a sizeable gain in reasoning, based on the 5th-grade students' pre- and post-test performances on a reasoning test I had constructed. There was also a significant impact on other achievement areas, and the effects lasted for at least two years. There the story seemed to terminate. For the next three years I sought a publisher for *Harry* but could find none. It looked like the end of the road for *Stottlemeier*.

Fortunately, in 1972, Montclair State University (then Montclair State College) offered to establish a Philosophy for Children institute on its campus. The following year I was joined by Prof. Ann Margaret Sharp, of Montclair State's Foundations of Education department, and together we founded the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children. The chief tasks of the Institute are the writing and publishing of curriculum materials, the organization of experimental research, and the preparation of teachers or, to put it more broadly, the dissemination of Philosophy for Children in schools throughout the world. Our initial impulse was to try to equip existing teachers (those already in the classroom) with sufficient understanding of

the program to begin teaching it immediately. In this way we were able to provide in-service preparation for thousands of teachers over the next few years. In most countries, for the time being, this is the only avenue open. Our long-range goal, however, is to concentrate more on pre-service teacher preparation, so that those who are just beginning their education as teachers would study elementary school philosophy as a regular and required part of their professional preparation. In 2000, the Institute merged with Montclair State University's College of Education and Human Services, thereby greatly multiplying its capacity for pre-service teacher preparation. It is our hope that the expanded College of Education will serve as a model for schools of teacher education everywhere, and that the IAPC will also expand its role as the international center of Philosophy for Children.

2. Remaking the Disciplines

Of all the disciplines, philosophy and education are among the oldest. Both of them are proud of their traditions, a fact which often proves to be one of the major obstacles to their further integration. An additional difficulty is the widespread perception that philosophy is all a matter of theory while education is all a matter of practice, with the result that they appear to have little in common. If theory and practice could be understood as needing to be in full reciprocity with one another, it might more readily be seen what changes would have to be made in both disciplines in order that they might work harmoniously together. In the case of Philosophy for Children, both disciplines have been modified with this reconciliation in mind.

(1) *Redesigning philosophy for children's use*

Between 1974 and 1976, philosophers at the IAPC constructed a model philosophy program for 11- and 12-year-olds. The revisions they made were guided firstly by the promise of the new version to be able to reorient students away from their strictly knowledge-seeking motivation and towards an inquiry-based orientation in its place. Rather than conceiving of education as the committing to memory of mountains of information (supplied by teachers as well as by texts), the educational experience was conceived of as starting with the student's awareness of the problematicity of the subject-matter. Without such problematicity, it is difficult to generate student interest, and lacking such interest, the educational process grinds to a halt. What can make a situation problematic? A minor but noticeable anomaly or discrepancy, a failure instead of expected success, some evidence of malevolence, a small but disturbing error: there are countless ways. And of course any particular situation may be problematic in not just one but in a variety of ways. A problematicity in the subject-matter is likely to breed perplexity in the student, and that perplexity is likely to express itself in the form of a question. But now it is the student questioning the text directly, rather than the teacher raising questions about the text and directing them at the class, thereby essentially doing their thinking for them. Each question raised by a student is like the tip of an iceberg, only that in this case the iceberg is the process of inquiry. If the efforts of the class are attempts to capture and formulate the problematicity of the situation at the start of the inquiry process, the ensuing discussion tends to generate hypotheses which suggest how the problematicity can be overcome through a modification of certain parts of the situation or through its transformation as a whole.

These three phases of the educational process ? reading, questioning and discussion ? suitable for use with Philosophy for Children presuppose the existence of an already redesigned discipline of philosophy. This difference has to do mainly with the textual setting of the philosophical work. The traditional philosophical work assigned to college or university students for study is an article, a speech or a book. Infrequently, it is in dialogue form; even less frequently it is in the form of a drama or a poem. Occasionally it is found in the form of a novel, and this is the format of the Philosophy for Children texts. The characters are children who have found that they can objectively discuss with one another the everyday problems of their lives. Although they have markedly different opinions about many matters, they are determined to engage in inquiry until they have discovered reasonable solutions to or settlements of the problems they pose to themselves.

Although there is a certain amount of narrative in each of the novels, what stands out is the prevalence of dialogue, for the fictional children serve as models for the live children in the classroom. They demonstrate how and when one may contribute to the ongoing discussion, while at the same time they are models of thinking.

Now philosophy has long had a reputation, at least in some quarters, of being dedicated to the care of and advancement of thinking, so it should come as no surprise that proponents of Philosophy for Children are often concerned about the conceptions that prevail in the schools with regard to what thinking is and what it ought to be to accommodate philosophical thinking. Increasingly, in recent years, educators have been advocating what they call ?higher-order thinking,? a triangular affair with *synthesis* and *analysis* at its bases and *evaluation* at its apex. The current trend is to replace synthesis with *creative thinking*, replace analysis with *critical thinking*, and to lack a credible replacement for evaluational thinking. It seems to me that the third leg of the higher-order thinking tripod should be a name that suggests a responsiveness to *values*, a sense of what is involved in an *appropriate* application of theory to a practical situation, an understanding of the cognitive role of the *emotions*, particularly those that are social in character, such as trust, considerateness and compassion, and a recognition of the thinking that actually takes place when we *appreciate* a work of art, survey a landscape, examine a snail's shell, discriminate barely distinguishable differences, and examine our own mental acts and states. I have proposed that the third leg of the tripod be *caring thinking*, with the understanding that caring thinking here encompasses thinking that is *concerned* (with the predicaments others are in), *appreciative* (of every arrangement of parts and wholes), *normative* (suggestive of what ought to be

done in moral situations) and *deliberative* (in that it seeks to weigh all the factors and take the context into account before judging).

The Philosophy for Children program takes these three criteria seriously. The IAPC novels are replete with examples of critical, creative, and caring thinking. The fictional characters discover logical reasoning, they engage in self-correction, they try to see matters in context, particularly when issues of an ethical nature are concerned. And finally, they are considerate of one another, of the child whose father has died, of the child who was born blind, of the child who has been accused of vandalizing the school. They console each other, support each other, provide one another with ideas to build upon or to criticize. The instructional manuals, on the other hand, are filled with exercises and discussion plans which correspond on a 1 to 1 basis with the concepts hinted about in the novel. Each manual contains hundreds of questions but no answers (except when it is a matter of formal logic). The philosophical exercises help the teacher pinpoint an issue, and tend to emphasize the importance of thinking critically. On the other hand, discussion plans can be used to provoke dialogue and to explore the range and configuration of the concepts under consideration.

So long as the criteria for higher-order thinking are maintained, it seems to matter little that some children like to work with small, manageable projects. It is far better for the mosaic of philosophy to be studied one stone at a time than for it not to be studied at all. At the same time, we must keep in mind that there is a profound symmetry between philosophy and childhood, but this remains largely inoperative until language comes along and provides mediation (as well as some alienation) between the two. Perhaps it is a symmetry born of the notion that Philosophy for Children seeks to find the roots of one's being and thinks it has found it in childhood, while children seek to discover the core meaning of their being and think to find it by means of philosophy.

Children not only enjoy philosophy as inquiry, or "doing philosophy" or narrative, dialogical, dramatized philosophy? whatever the name may be by which Philosophy for Children is identified? but they also find it useful. It seems to meet some of their needs and to provoke their interest. When they confront the problematic issues in their lives, they appreciate the power and relevance of improved reasoning and judgment. They come to recognize and to cherish the utility of concepts, the value of ideals, the applicability of method, the benefits of consistency and coherence, the ways of making words work for them, the guidance they receive from logic, the thrill of theory, and the sense of liberation which only imagination can provide. There was a time, if I am not mistaken, when it was considered unnecessary to prescribe pain-killers to suffering children and animals because "they don't feel pain, at least not the way we do." This is the other side of the coin of denying children cognitive pleasures on the ground that "they can't utilize abstract ideas." It was as if an outrageous wall had been erected between children and thought-provocative concepts. By redesigning the discipline of philosophy so as to prepare it to assume a respected place in the schools as an essential part of the core curriculum, we go far towards tearing down that obnoxious wall.

The criteria that philosophy tries to live up to remain little changed by its redesign. An example is the consideration that it is largely a *normative* rather than an *informative* discipline. That is, it looks for circumstances in which it can say that this is how things *ought to be* rather than that this is how things are. (In this respect, it more nearly resembles the arts rather than the sciences.) One of the advantages of philosophy's being normative is to be found in the domain of curriculum construction. Current practice in this area involves first constructing descriptions of fairly typical child behavior at each age level, and then building a curriculum that corresponds to these atomistic descriptions. There is little continuity from stage to stage, and little that reflects the aims of education, which would be normative in character. By giving the curriculum a philosophical spine, as it were, the aims of education can be introduced at every stage, and the curriculum as a whole can be both continuous and rational. This permits the transition from stage to stage to be logical rather than problematical; it allows for a distribution of philosophical moves and philosophical exercises that build on one another, and it moves the students in the direction of higher-order thinking.

This particular remodeling of philosophy so as to ready it for children's uses is not without its costs. Gone, for the time being, are the great philosophical movements and systems, gone are the debates, gone the names and dates, gone the instructors flaunting their omniscience. In their place, however, we find communities of inquiry characterized by non-adversarial deliberations, shared cognition and distributed thinking, the cultivation of literary/philosophical imagination, the encouragement of deep reading, and an enjoyment of dialogical texts. Besides, the losses are only temporary. Eventually, what has been lost will be found again, in secondary and tertiary education, thereby providing some students, this time around, a decidedly *déjà vu* experience.

(2) Renovating education: the community of inquiry

The reconstruction of philosophy required that large blocks of philosophical thought be broken down into constituent ideas which were then reset in the context of children's stories so as to make them more digestible for elementary school students. The remaking of education? of its curricular assumptions and pedagogical practices? required that the classroom be converted into a community in which friendship and cooperation would be welcomed as positive contributions to a learning atmosphere, rather than the semi-adversarial and competitive conditions that prevail in too many early childhood classrooms. There are, however, communities and communities? thinking communities and unthinking communities, communities that are reflective and self-corrective and communities that are not. What Philosophy for Children requires, obviously, are *communities of inquiry*,

often grouped with, but not the same as, ?communities of scholars,? ?communities of learning,? and the like. Not all schooling is inquiry ? far from it. For there to be inquiry, there must be some doubt that all is well, some recognition that one?s situation contains troubling difficulties and is somehow problematic. There must be self-correcting investigation that takes all considerations into account and constructs alternative hypotheses as ways in which the problem can be resolved. This conception of inquiry requires participants who cultivate the version of higher-order thinking sketched earlier. Above all, inquiry involves questioning, more narrowly a quest for truth, more broadly a quest for meaning. Here are some additional features of communities of inquiry:

1. *Inclusiveness.* Communities may or may not be internally diversified ? the participants may or may not be of one religion, or one nationality, or of one age level ? but within a community no one is excluded from internal activities without adequate justification.
2. *Participation.* Communities of inquiry encourage but do not require participants to participate actively, and as equals. There is a sense in which a community, like a book, is a cognitive schema. Schemata are Gestalt-like structures of relationships that draw participation out of participants the way an interesting book won?t allow its reader to put it down. The fact that the children?s reader, in *Philosophy for Children*, is a novel makes the students all the more anxious to read the next page and the next, to find out what will hap-pen.
3. *Distributed Thinking.* In a prolonged session of private reflection, an individual will engage in a series of mental acts aimed at penetrating and analyzing the matter at hand. Thus one will engage in wondering, questioning, inferring, defining, assuming, supposing, imagining, distinguishing and so on. In distributed thinking, the same acts are engaged in, but by different members of the community. One person raises a question, another objects to an underlying assumption, still another offers a counter-instance. The intellectual distance traversed may be the same, but the second illustration demonstrates how there can be a thinking community.
4. *Face-to-face relationships.* These relationships may not be essential to communities of inquiry, but they can be very advantageous. Faces are repositories of complex textures of meaning which we constantly try to read and interpret. These meanings are produced by the highly animated features of the face which are in close proximity to one another. This is why executives meet around conference tables, so as to join the meanings of the facial expressions to the meanings to be derived from the conversation. Children can do the same.
5. *The quest for meaning.* Children are avid for understanding, and as a result try to squeeze the meaning out of every sentence, every object, every experience. Communities of inquiry are therefore meaning-seeking in somewhat the way that intensive care units in hospitals are life-preserving.
6. *Feelings of social solidarity.* Young children are often found to bond together in intense but inarticulate friendships. Some teachers are inclined to find such classroom friendships a bit threatening to their authority, with the result that they adopt a divide-and-rule strategy. However, classroom communities and friendships should be defined and understood in such a way that no intensification of the one need be perceived as a threat to the other.
7. *Deliberation.* This involves a consideration of alternatives through examination of the reasons supporting each alternative. Since the deliberation usually takes place in preparation for the making of a judgment, we speak of the process as a ?weighing? of the reasons and the alternatives. Deliberation can be usefully contrasted with debating, inasmuch as debaters need not believe in the position they are trying to get others to accept, while deliberators need not try to get others to accept the position they themselves may believe.
8. *Modeling.* In *Philosophy for Children*, each class of fictional children offers itself to the live children in the classroom as a model of philosophical inquiry. Contrast this with the traditional elementary school pedagogy, which claims that the teacher serves as a model for the students. One can test this claim by considering the important philosophical move of questioning. The students may be inclined to presume that the teacher who questions wants answers, not further questions. It is likely, therefore, that children prefer fictional children, as models, to live adults.
9. *Thinking for oneself.* The possibility that the community may become conformitarian, hostile to independent thinking, is not to be taken lightly. The powerful schemata that are at work in the community may demand both closure and agreement, as they do in a jury, and the opinion of the individual may become a mere echo of the opinion of the majority. Nevertheless, it is possible to get students to take pride in the originality of their responses. The opinions of others need to be respected, but they do not have to be mimicked. In a healthy community of inquiry, students learn to build on each other?s ideas, although not necessarily with identical architecture. They also learn that, in a community that urges the discovery of the other side of the question, there are many occasions on which one may well be proud to be on that other side.
10. *Challenging as a procedure.* When children argue among themselves, it is not uncommon for them to challenge one another, sometimes quite intensely. They demand to know the reason supporting this judgment, or the meaning of this expression. If they challenge heatedly, it is because they don?t know any other way to challenge. The community of inquiry experience teaches them that challenging is good, but it need not be heated. It is just one more cognitive procedure that the participants need to perform in the course of their inquiries. Children are usually relieved to find this out: adults are not the only ones who aspire to be reasonable.

3. Preparing the Philosophical Experience

For many people, the discovery of philosophy has been an unsettling, if exciting, experience. (Needless to say, for many others it has been nothing of the sort, and has merely confirmed them in their opinions.) As we go about getting philosophy ready to enter the elementary school on a regular basis, we must consider various ways of presenting it so as to increase its desirability in the eyes of teachers and students alike. Here we take note of three crucial phases in the development of the philosophical experience.

(1) The reading

A class session in Philosophy for Children aims at inducing the members of the class to be reflective: to engage in reflective reading, reflective questioning and reflective discussion. To the extent that we are successful with any of these, it is likely to promote reflection in the other two. This means that each session should begin with a procedure or incident that can be counted on to provoke the quest for meaning? something controversial perhaps, or something already rich in meanings that much be sought out and uncovered, and held up for consideration. In this sense, reading a philosophical text for the first time is analogous to viewing a painting for the first time, or listening to a piece of music for the first time. One must observe what is there to be observed, appreciate what is of value, understand what is stated, figure out what is assumed, infer what is implied, grasp what is suggested, and surmise what is being attempted. This is *deep reading*, as contrasted with superficial reading, and it is a goal for students to aim at.

We encourage having the children one at a time read the text aloud. Having them read it singly is of some ethical value in demonstrating sequential sharing to them. Moreover reading it aloud? a practice not in great favor in reading departments? assists the children in appropriating the meanings of the text to themselves. Also, it is an opportunity to correct their tendency to read monotonously and inexpressively, a practice responsible for a considerable loss of meaning. A colorless reading fails to ignite in the reader those emotional responses that lend significance to the finer nuances and discriminations that the text aims to suggest. Finally, reading aloud lends support to the practice of careful, attentive listening, a prerequisite for accuracy and precision in thinking.

(2) The questioning

With the completion of the reading of the episode in the text, the teacher customarily invites those students who are puzzled or perplexed to formulate their puzzlement in the form of a question. These questions are then written on the chalkboard, each followed by the name of its contributor. (Many children have not previously seen their names on the chalkboard, especially as a contributor of something of assistance to the work of the community. It is a moment of which they are deservedly proud.) Completed, the list of questions on the board represents the various interests and perspectives of the members of the community in the topic to be discussed. It also represents a possible agenda for that discussion.

This is a pivotal moment. If the teacher selects the questions to be discussed, the students are likely to interpret that act as a vestige of the old authoritarianism. Fortunately, a number of alternatives compatible with democracy are available. The order of questions to be discussed can be determined by voting, by lot, or by asking someone who didn't submit a question to make the necessary choice. In any event, this recognition of the elevated status of the question (and the reduced status of the answer) will help the students remember that questioning is the leading edge of inquiry: it opens the door to dialogue, to self-criticism and to self-correction. Each question has a global potential of putting a portion of the world in question, and this helps pave the way to fallibilism, the practice of assuming one's incorrectness in order to discover errors one didn't know one had made. To question is to institutionalize and legitimize doubt, and to invite critical evaluation. It hints openly of new options and fresh alternatives, in contrast to the stale dichotomy of true/false answers. One must constantly be on the lookout for new ways of encouraging student questioning, not as a matter of habit, but because many practices and institutions, while poorly justified and of dubious, questionable merit, can be found out only by creative questioning.

An important type of questioning is follow-up questioning. The most noteworthy example of a follow-up question (once the lead question has been asked and answered) is "What do you mean by _____?" Skilled interviewers, such as experienced reporters, are able to ask follow-up questions one after another until the topic is exhausted. Teachers and students of philosophy are wise to seek the same expertise.

It is not usually a simple matter to surmise the purpose or intent of a questioner. Often a question serves as a lure to make students aware of an underlying problem. The problem is, in a sense, the iceberg and the question is the visible tip of the iceberg. Earlier, however, it was suggested that questioning is the leading edge of inquiry. The equivocation is instructive, for both are correct. The question puts doubts in our minds and doubt is the beginning of inquiry.

(3) The Discussion

The discussion often begins by turning to the person who posed the question which the community decided should be discussed first. This student may be asked to say a few words about the sources of the question, the reasons for raising it, and why it seems important. With the student's reply, others join in so as to articulate their agreement or disagreement with what is being said.

In all probability, more than one line of reasoning will open up, as the reading and questioning have stimulated a variety of interests among the students, and they will want to follow up on these. The teacher may be able to juggle or orchestrate these different lines of inquiry, which usually seem to be more vexing to adults than to children, who are evidently capable of participating in several lines of inquiry simultaneously⁴. Nothing improves cognitive skills like discussion. This is probably true in all disciplines, but it is particularly true with regard to classes in philosophy and critical thinking. In a best case scenario, the discussion involves one's colleagues discussing a controversial issue of some theoretical importance. This is when they employ their best reasoning, make use of their most relevant knowledge, and display their most reasonable judgment. The situation is not really different in a children's community of inquiry. The problems they discuss may be trivial but they may also involve concepts of a considerable degree of abstractness. And they too try to employ their best reasoning, their most relevant knowledge, and their most reasonable judgments, because all of this is happening publicly, in front of their teacher and their peers. Seated in the circle of chairs, face to face with their classmates, they try to be at their best, employing the same cognitive skills and cognitive tools (such as reasons and criteria) that they have seen others employ.

The discussion provides a setting for the negotiation of understandings, for deliberation about reasons and options, for the examination of interpretations. For children, it is the climax of the philosophical experience. It can indeed be exciting, and many young people understand philosophy to be identified with just this discussion phase.

4. The Ethical Dimension

No portion of a new and different elementary school curriculum is likely to receive closer scrutiny than the pages it devotes to ethics. Whether or not this is for the best is a moot point: these are our children and we want only good things to happen to them, just as it is our hope that the upbringing and education they receive will assure that they will be good people, both cognitively and affectively.

There is one sub-program in Philosophy for Children that is devoted specifically to ethics, and that is *Lisa*, the instructional manual to which is entitled *Ethical Inquiry*, the manual carrying the same name as the approach. And yet, there is hardly a page in the other sub-programs in which some moral issue is not likely to come up, hardly a page in which some conflict of values is unlikely to rear its head.

The ethical inquiry approach aims at more than the development of virtuous individuals, for it also seeks to contribute positively to the making of a truly democratic society. This is hardly the aim of an authoritarian ethics, whose indoctrinational approach is generally considered incompatible with the democratic spirit, just as a well-functioning democracy is alone able to provide the atmosphere of freedom that inquiry requires.

The ethical inquiry approach is centered on the cultivation of rationality tempered by judgment, or *reasonableness*. The judgment referred to here may be the collective judgment of the community acting as a whole (as in a referendum) or the distributive judgments of the members of the community acting as particular individuals. As for the term 'reasonable' it is to be distinguished from both 'rational' and 'prudential' each of which relies heavily on the notion of self-interest. The term 'reasonable' in contrast, presupposes that ethical inquiry will result in a settlement that takes the interests of *everyone* in the community into account, including, of course, one's own. In many instances, judgments are settlements, products of arduous negotiation, compromises. These need not be unreasonable, so long as they do not involve a significant loss of self-respect.

To be reasonable indicates that one has the capacity to employ rational procedures in a judicious manner, in the sense that, say, a hospital physician dealing with a highly contagious patient must make reasonable judgments as to the employment of standard medical procedures. On the other hand, to be reasonable can refer not just to how one acts, but to how one is acted upon: it signifies one's capacity to listen to or be open to reason. Both senses of the term are important.

In one respect, ethics for children is very different from ethics for adults. Adults are often treated as if age were irrelevant, or as if most adults were the same age. But children's age differences are recognized in Philosophy for Children, so that the approach that is appropriate for one child's age level may be inappropriate for nine other levels. This should help to explain why this statement concerning philosophical ethics does not rule out, say, deontological ethics at the expense of teleological ethics: there may be a plurality of situations that call for one or the other of the two. The same is true of consequentialist vs. non-consequentialist ethics, good reasons vs. virtue ethics, realist vs. idealist ethics, etc. (Thus, the parent who gives as a reason for an order to his or her very young children, 'Because I said so' may draw some snickers from bystanders, but analysis of the context may reveal the remark to be a bit more reasonable than one would have thought.)

Any of these ethical styles then can qualify as ethical inquiry if it pursues an investigation of a morally problematic situation in an impartial, open, self-corrective, and contextualistic manner. It is inquiry if it seeks to render a problematic situation no longer problematic. Success in problem-solving, then, is the criterion that unites the various approaches that can be integrated into a single, philosophical, primary school curriculum. The relevant methodology of problem-solving can be formulated as a *paradigm*, based on the one offered by Dewey in *How We Think*. Acceptance of the paradigm is largely equivalent to acceptance of an assumption of Philosophy for Children. Here is a modified version of it:

Pre-reflective situation: situation presumably acceptable as it is.

Felt discomfort, not yet intellectualized.

Doubt that certain of one's beliefs are functioning adequately.

Formulation of the problem as one of blocked conduct.

One's mind offers *suggestions of desirable ends* that might be sought.

One seeks out all relevant *considerations*; decisive considerations become *criteria*.

Ends become more tentative and realistic *ends-in-view*; means become more practical *means-in-view*, compatible with ends-in-view.

Certain *considerations* turn out to be alternative *hypotheses* for resolving the problem.

Ranking of alternatives in terms of feasibility.

Continuation of inquiry, following *the unique quality of the situation*.

Discovery of *working belief* to replace non-functional belief. Felt discomfort removed. (If war-ranted assertibility can be substituted for truth? functional conviction? may be substituted for working belief?.)

Post-reflective situation: transformed situation is found acceptable. *The entire situation has been changed*, and not just our understanding of it.

In Philosophy for Children, various strands from different ethical approaches are braided together in ways that conform loosely to the problem-solving paradigm. The logic and language of ethical discourse are emphasized throughout; the discussion of ethical ideals is stressed with 10-year-olds, while more formal uses of logic are presented to the 11- and 12-year-olds. Continuous attention is paid to the tools of moral reasoning to be worked with by 6- to 9-year-olds (distinctions, connections, comparisons, reasons, judgments, etc.).

Another underlying assumption of the Philosophy for Children approach (in addition to the problem-solving heuristic) is the *scenario*. A scenario is an underlying assumption of a curriculum developer. Once again, conformity to it may involve nothing more than touching lightly on some of its points rather than all. Here is an example of a scenario having to do with the role of education:

The children who are down at the bottom of the heap, so to speak, including those who are neglected or abused, tend to feel that their situation is hopeless and that "nothing matters." Consequently, they tend to be uncaring and indifferent with regard to values that many other people consider important. One of the first steps to be taken with them is to show them that some things do, in fact, matter to them. For example, they have certain preferences, and these are, at least initially, their values. As they begin to acknowledge what they care for and care about, one may be able to get them to express their opinions about what they consider to be right in contrast to wrong, or important in contrast to unimportant. Perhaps one can help them to find bases of comparison among their values. Gradually they come to realize that their opinions don't count for much unless backed up by reasons, and that even reasons may at times have to be backed up by other reasons. This can provide an opportunity to explain how a criterion functions, and how it can serve as a reason for a reason, thereby helping us to sort out reasons that are relevant to our purposes and those that are not. Children can be helped to discover the origin of criteria by having them first identify all the relevant considerations they can find, and then identify those that are decisive. All this time it has been dawning on them that they are engaged in an inquiry into what counts as a good reason. They will still have to examine the other side of the case, as well as the reasoning that supports it. Eventually they may discover that their inquiry may never end, that the truths they think they seek may never be finally arrived at, although real progress in the quest can definitely be made.

This scenario is one which the curriculum developer may follow in the making of exercises and discussion plans in which the methodology of Philosophy for Children can be implemented. It is also one which the teacher follows in selecting activities for the classroom that point in the direction of reasonableness. The scenario, then, offers general pedagogical guidance with regard to the direction the inquiry should be headed in order to achieve the educational aims of the community of inquiry.

Still more specific is the set of pedagogical recommendations contained in the script. The early elementary moral education teachers employing the ethical inquiry approach understand the importance of good reasons to that approach. By what conversational tactics can that centrality be emphasized? What the script does is keep the focus on the reason rather than on the wrong-doing, on the reasoning rather than on the rule-breaking.

I have said that the teacher's status as a professional is no different from that of other professionals, such as doctors, architects and engineers: they all rest on demonstrated professional judgment. Here then is an opportunity for the teacher to demonstrate not so much the authority of the rule-enforcer as the sagacity of the expert in pedagogy. Consider this script:

Karl, apparently without provocation, hits Horst. The teacher might ordinarily have angrily scolded him: "Don't you know hitting is forbidden in this school?" as she metes out his punishment. All the while, the class observes the scene impassively. It knows it is not in its power to intervene when higher authority is being exercised. It suspects that the teacher might have conducted more of an investigation, but it also realizes that the teacher is using the incident in order to teach it the class a lesson. However, today things unroll differently. When the teacher asks, "Why did you hit Horst?" Karl replies, "I didn't like the look on his face?". To the astonishment of the class, the teacher makes no comment, in effect waiving her right to lecture the class on good vs. bad conduct. She merely turns to the class and asks, "What Karl just said is that a good reason?". The students are relieved not to have been asked to intercede with regard to the hitting issue. They merely have to offer an opinion of an abstract

nature. "Noooo!" they chorus loudly. "That's not a good reason!" One student even volunteers that it's the kind of reason a gangster might give for hurting someone. The class laughs. Even Karl and Horst laugh. The teacher relaxes. A lesson has been taught and learned without an indoctrinational lecture on morality. She has successfully shifted the focus from the rule-breaking to the reason-giving, from the retaliation to the lack of justification. The community has assumed at least part of the moral authority; it is no longer her responsibility alone.

Of course, scenarios and scripts like these are of little value unless they are backed up by relevant curriculum materials. In Philosophy for Children, the stories that are narrated, the activities and discussion plans that are provided, all work together in the deepening of moral awareness, in the appreciation of moral strengths, and in the strengthening of moral judgment. Paradigms, scenarios, and scripts represent broad hints that universal moral judgments are available, but for the most part, it is hints that they remain. The community of ethical inquiry, beginning as it does with the study of morally significant incidents in the literature of Philosophy for Children, has its focus on the particular case rather than on the universal rule. If there are general rules, it is because they are derivable from these individual instances.

In any discursive approach to the improvement of children's ethical thinking, provision must be made for the strengthening of a variety of cognitive competencies that are indispensable to all inquiry and not just the ethical. Examples of some of the things I have in mind are:

- components of higher-order thinking (critical, creative, and caring thinking);
- modes of cognitive practice (conceptualization, reasoning and communication);
- modes of human judgment: (making, saying, and doing).

These are only some of the families of competencies that human beings must organize and perfect in order to deal with problems as subtle as those calling for moral reasoning. This is why, to prepare early elementary students to think in the disciplines, a discipline no less complex than philosophy itself is required.

It can be maintained that, by having children *do* philosophy in the setting of a community of philosophical inquiry, by having them govern their communication so that it is in accord with the precepts of rational discourse and not just the rules of grammar, a systematic discourse ethics can be worked out by each community. One can observe how the cultivation of imagination that characterizes the teaching of creative thinking proceeds to permeate the analogical reasoning of the students, and thus, in turn, their moral reasoning. And as creative thinking empowers the imagination when it comes to artistic production, appreciative (i.e. caring) thinking empowers the feelings and emotions, making possible delicately nuanced value judgments which critical thinking alone may not be in a position to provide.

The reference to discourse ethics is not fortuitous. Educators who have observed Philosophy for Children in practice have reported numerous improvements in the cognitive and systematic aspects of the children's work and play. Youngsters doing Philosophy for Children, it is maintained,

1. state their opinions more readily and more easily;
2. display greater ability to find reasons and engage in reasoning;
3. articulate their disagreements with one another;
4. utilize discussion as a tool for conflict resolution;
5. become more able, both as individuals and as a community, to correct themselves;
6. listen to each other;
7. develop greater tolerance of one another;
8. help each other in discussions and build on one another's ideas;
9. gradually show a greater balance of boys and girls participating;
10. more readily formulate their perplexities as questions;
11. recognize in themselves a need to clarify ill-defined and blurry but important concepts;
12. display greater proficiency in expressing reflective judgments and in organizing arguments.

What, then, of the claim that Philosophy for Children improves children's ethical judgment? What are the implications for that claim of the foregoing review of the methods and instruments of ethical inquiry? In view of the many contrasting types of judgment? classificatory vs. evaluative, rule-guided vs. non-rule-guided, etc.? a single statement regarding the sources of the improvement can hardly suffice. One can say, nevertheless, that insofar as the students have become more adept in the major cognitive skills? e.g., questioning, defining, classifying, distinction-making, reason-giving and identifying ambiguities? the judgments they make with the assistance of those skills are likely to be stronger.

There are, however, a large proportion of judgments that are sometimes labeled "intuitive" because they are not accompanied by justifying reasons. Nevertheless, students in Philosophy for Children are so often confronted with the need to make choices and decisions which are then evaluated by their classmates that we must acknowledge the strengthening of such judgments to be based on experience rather than on reasoning. In each instructional manual, there are hundreds of philosophical questions for which the manuals provide no answers, and the children must do their best with such philosophical wits as they possess. So these judgments are not based solely on explicit reasons but on philosophical practice. Philosophy is thus a way of greatly

increasing the energy level with which the student confronts the school curriculum, for it offers both instruments and experiences that are needed to help them become better citizens and more reasonable persons.

In many respects, the community of philosophical inquiry approximates the condition of an ideal speech situation, in which participants have equal chances to assume dialogue roles, employ speech acts, initiate discourse, call matters into question, and give reasons for and against statements, explanations, interpretations, and justifications. Under such conditions, which almost any students in a Philosophy for Children session would be familiar with, excellence in argumentation would be decided by the ?formal properties of discourse? rather than by more traditional criteria, assuming that the twelve cognitive behaviors just cited are similar to or identical with the ?*formal* properties of discourse.? This is not to say that Philosophy for Children approximates only the ideal of Habermas?s speech situation, for it equally approximates the ideal of Dewey?s ?thinking classroom.? It puts into living practice what would otherwise be austere, abstract theory. As the practitioners and the theorists begin to understand each other better, we can expect theory and practice to move more closely towards one another and to interanimate each other until the distances between them are eliminated and the spirit of educational inquiry that informs them at the same time comes to fully animate the children in the classroom.

5. A Few Illustrations

(1) *Pixie*

Here are some samples of the Philosophy for Children curriculum. The episode below is from *Pixie*, a 98-page novel for 9- or 10-year-old children.

Pixie is written in conversational form, so as to help provide children with a model of philosophical dialogue. It is also a way of avoiding having an invisible narrator with an adult point of view.

On Saturday afternoon, my father and mother had to go visit my father?s boss, who was in the hospital. They said they didn?t want to take Miranda and me with them, and we said, ?Fine, we?ll stay home! We didn?t want to go anyhow!?

As they were leaving, my mother said, ?Remember, now, you?ll be here alone, and I don?t want you to let anyone in. That?s a rule you mustn?t break!?

They said they would be back in two or three hours. Daddy patted me on the head, and they were gone.

I did a little dance around the kitchen table, and Miranda said,

?What?s with you??

?We?re free!? I yelled. ?The house belongs to us!?

?You?re crazy,? said Miranda. ?Nothing?s changed. You know perfectly well that there are family rules, and they stay the same whether Mom and Dad are here or not.?

?Free, free, free,? I sang. ?Free, free, free! Everything?s possible!?

Miranda wrinkled up her nose, like she always does, and said, ?You?re disgusting!?

I said, ?I?m going right to Momma?s closet and put on her good dress that comes down to the floor.?

?It?ll swallow you,? said Miranda. ?But maybe that?s good!?

Just then there was a knock at the door. I didn?t take off the chain; I just called out, ?Who?s there?? and I heard Isabel say, ?It?s Isabel ? and Connie.?

Miranda said, ?Pixie, you heard what Momma said. We?re not supposed to let anyone in. Rules are rules!?

?But Momma didn?t mean we should keep out people we know!? I insisted.

Miranda said, ?There are lots of kooks we know that Momma wouldn?t want us to let in.?

Just then Isabel called from the other side of the door, ?Pixie, don?t worry about us. We just stopped by to say hello. See you tomorrow!?

I didn?t want a big argument with Miranda. So I went up to Momma?s closet, and sat down on the floor, among the shoes, and thought about my mystery creature and my mystery story. I grumbled to myself, ?Can you imagine, this is the only place I can be free to be me!?

The exercises that follow can be helpful to children in understanding a concept as vast and unwieldy as *freedom*, by suggesting how it might be viewed from a number of different points of view. At this point in their development, the children do not need to know that many of these perspectives are associated with different philosophers. But many years later, when studying Hobbes, Spinoza, Kant and so on, this may come back to them as a *déjà vu* experience. Because classroom dialogue can become too multifarious or too diffuse for the participants to handle, it is well to be able to have recourse to the instructional manual, which contains a great many exercises and discussion plans similar to those shown here. What they provide is focus: they try to simplify and make more relevant the issues that are generally raised by this episode. Philosophically, of course, the episode deals with the notion of freedom rather in the manner of Dostoyevsky and Sartre: when the rule-givers, the parents are away, the children think they are at liberty to do as they please.

From an educational point of view, the exercises below may be viewed as practice in the making of rule-guided and non-rule-guided judgments. But, of course, virtually all the exercises in the manuals are like this: they contain questions without answers,

and they are intended to accustom the child to the idea that philosophical inquiry aims at improving above all the penetrating value of one's questioning, as well as the sagacity of one's judgments.

EXERCISE: Freedom (Pinie: Page 49, line 13)
Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? If you agree, why? If you don't agree, why not?

	Agree	Disagree	?
1. We are free if no one tells us how to live.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. We are free if we make up and follow our own rules for how to live.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. We are free when nothing gets in our way.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. We are free if we think we're free.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. We are free when we can do what we think best.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. We are free if we are healthy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. We are free if we are intelligent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. We are free only when everyone is free.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. We are free if we are ourselves.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. We are free when all the above statements are combined.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

EXERCISE: Rules (Pinie: Page 49, line 8)
Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? If so, why? If not, why not?

	Agree	Disagree	?
1. All families have the same rules.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Rules are made only by parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Children sometimes invent rules.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Only parents can enforce rules.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. It is never right to break a rule.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. If a person is unwilling to obey a rule, the rule applies to him just the same.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. If a person is unwilling to obey a rule, the rule doesn't apply to him.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Family rules remain the same, whether or not adults are present.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Some rules are imposed on us by others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Some rules we invent and impose on others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Exercises: *Freedom & Rules*



Matthew Lipman enjoying the company of children

(2) *Kio and Gus*

Kio and Gus are a boy and a girl of about 7 or 8 years of age. Gus has been blind since birth, and she is desperately eager to find out what the world is like and how things hang together. In this summer, she and Kio happen to meet on a nearby farm. In their numerous conversations, she explains a great deal to Kio about how the blind experience the world, just as he explains to her the experience of those who are not sight-deprived. (The descriptions of works of sculpture by the blind and how they may be made are taken from Munz, *Plastische Arbeiten Blinder* and from Viktor Lowenfeld, *The Nature of Creative Activity*.) Over the past half-century, a number of psychologists have become interested in the contrast between the perceptual experience of the inside of the body vs. the outside of the body, as reported by children. (See, in particular, Paul Schilder, *The Image and Appearance of the Human Body*.)

And of course philosophers have employed the inside/outside dichotomy in a variety of ways, such as to illustrate the subjectivity/objectivity distinction, the nature of intuition, and so on. Thus Buber, Bergson, and Sartre talk of intuition as a kind of knowing something ?from the inside? while ordinary sight knows only from the outside. And Mark Johnson, in *The Body in the Mind*, considers the inside/outside distinction as one of the major schemata by means of which we organize and process experience.

?Kio?, I say, ?my father and mother got me some real clay. I've already made a cat, like Roger. Do you want to try it out??

?Sure?, Kio says. I take him to my room and give him my clay cat. ?You make something!?, I say to him.

?What should I make?? he says. ?I know! I'll make a peach!?. He rolls some clay in his hands until he has a round ball, then he gives it to me. ?There!?. he says. ?A peach.?

?That's silly?, I answer. ?Look, let me show you.?. I take a bit of clay and roll it into a little ball. ?That's the pit?, I say. Then I add some more clay around it. ?That's the part you eat?, I say. And then I wrap another layer of clay around the whole thing. ?That's

the skin.?

Kio says, ?All I see is the skin.?

?Sure, maybe that?s all you see?, I say, ?but you know that what I made is really like a peach and yours isn?t. Mine?s a peach all the way through!?

Kio doesn?t answer for a moment. Then he hands me some clay and says, ?Make a head.?

So I do, and I explain it to him while I work. ?See, first I make the inside of the throat and the mouth. Then I put the tongue in, then I add the teeth, all around the gums. Then I put the lips over the teeth. Then I put the top on the head, push the nose out from the inside, and make the eyes with my fingernails. Then I add the hair, and there it is.?

?I start from the outside and you start from the inside?, he says.

I answer, ?But you never get inside! You just stay on the outside! That?s not the way to make a head!?

?It?s the only way I know,? Kio says.

?It was the only way you know? I answer. ?Now you know two ways.?

Children can be induced to reflect upon inside/outside experiences and their implications, as in this discussion plan accompanying the episode from Kio and Gus:

DISCUSSION PLAN: Making things from the outside and from the inside

(Kio and Gus, page 14, lines 1-14)

1. How do you eat a peach, from the inside out, or from the outside in?
2. If you wanted someone to explain to you how your body works, would you want to know what goes on inside of you?
3. When a peach tree produces a peach, does it start from the outside or from the inside?
4. If you sympathize with your friend, does that mean you have the same feelings as your friend?
5. If you sympathize with your friend, does that mean you understand your friend ?from the inside? as well as ?from the outside??
6. If Gus makes the peach from the inside and Kio makes it from the outside, does that mean that Gus understands the peach more than Kio does?

(3) *Portrait of a Girl with Counter-example*

The class has been reading Kio and Gus, an IAPC text for children of 8 or 9 years of age. They come across Kio?s remark, ?I take ketchup with almost everything. Don?t you?? In the ensuing discussion, someone turns this into ?What if everything were ketchup?? One girl comments, ?If our brains were made of ketchup, we would be able to think only of ketchup.? Another girl replies, ?But our brains are made of some stuff, and we don?t just think of that.?

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* The original reference: Matthew Lipman, *Philosophy for Children: Some Assumptions and Implications*. Ethik und Sozialwissenschaften. Streitforum für Erziehungskultur EuS 12 (2001) Heft 4 / Number 4, 405-416 (<http://iug.upb.de/ewe>).

1. This observation is supported by many students being able to remember what was said and what they agreed with considerably more accurately than adults. ([context](#))