

Continuity and change in Philosophy for Children¹

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Abstract

Now that the original Philosophy for Children curriculum materials devised by Matthew Lipman, Ann Margaret Sharp, and their colleagues have entered the digital commons, it is timely to look back at them, in terms of the history of both theory and practice in Philosophy for Children and what we may still learn from them going forward.² Looking back, we can see the influence of John Dewey on the model of inquiry-based learning embedded in these materials, how Lipman seeded philosophy into his novels, how he and his colleagues sought to structure classroom discussion, and how and why they placed so much emphasis on developing a range of skills and abilities. Looking forward, there are lessons in all this about what to look for in stimulus materials, the role of questions and questioning in conducting discussion, the emphasis on combining social and intellectual skills, and what we should aim for by way of educational outcomes.

Key words

inquiry, stimulus materials, questioning, conducting discussion, skills, abilities

Looking back at Lipman³

1. Lipman and Deweyan inquiry

Lipman, Sharp, and their colleagues at the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC) ran residential workshops for students, visiting scholars and educators, at a retreat house on the outskirts of Mendham, a township in

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² Thanks to the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children at Montclair State University, the materials are accessible at the following address:
<https://digitalcommons.montclair.edu/iapc/>

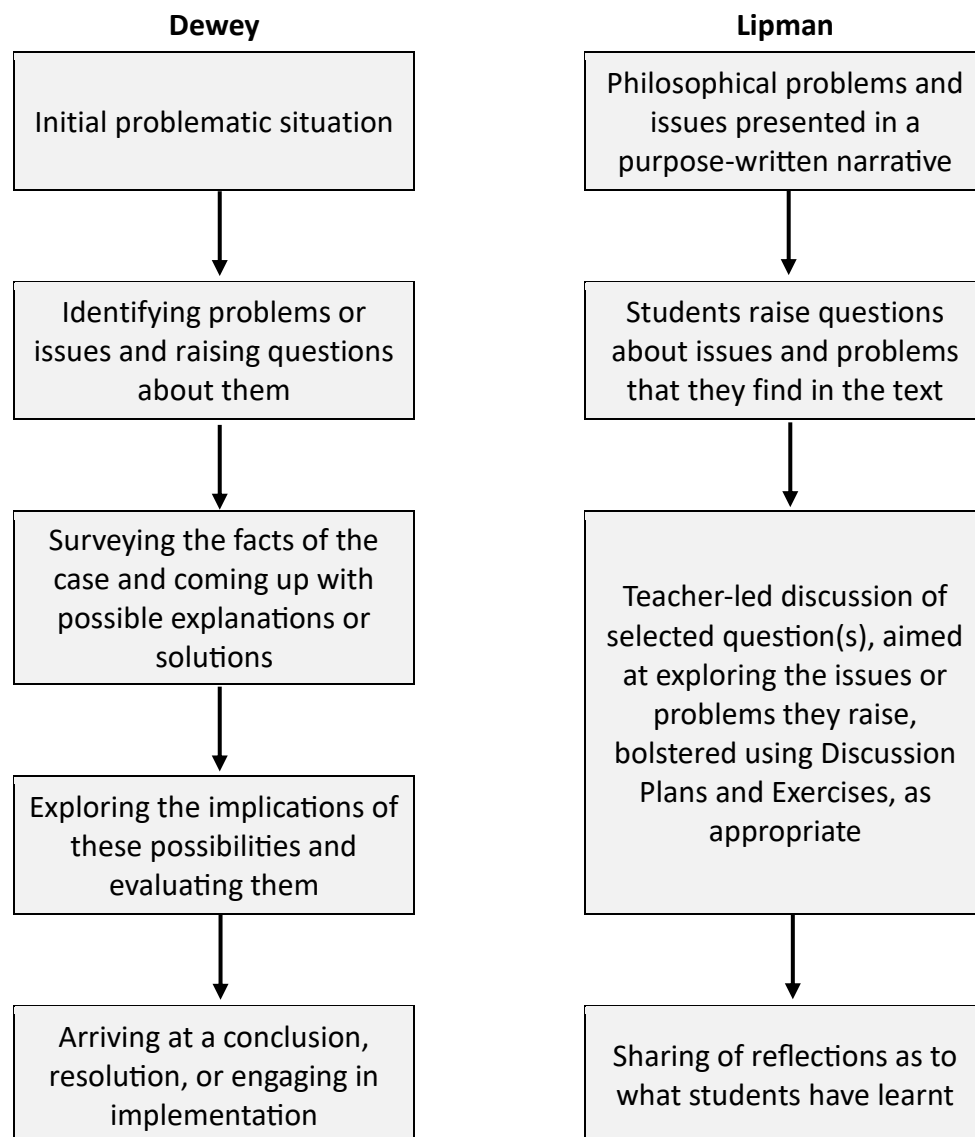
³ For a brief account of the life and work of Matthew Lipman, see Cam (2013).

New Jersey, over many years, and which the IAPC continues to run today. Most of the sessions at these workshops were devoted to Lipman's programs for schools. The teaching materials for a session consisted of one of Lipman's philosophical novels for children and the accompanying Instructional Manual developed by Lipman and his collaborators. Sessions with these materials generally proceeded in the way that Lipman and Sharp envisaged them being used in the classroom. Representatives of the IAPC would model their use in some sessions, but everyone would end up running a session under their tutelage. Thus, the Mendham workshops were largely devoted to learning to use the IAPC materials to teach *Philosophy for Children*.

A typical workshop session with these materials would proceed as follows:

1. Reading a chapter of one of the novels around in a circle, with each participant taking a paragraph in turn.
2. Participants raising questions that the readings provoked, either individually or in small groups, and writing them up on the board.
3. Going over the questions, perhaps asking for clarification, and sometimes grouping them.
4. Selecting a question, or a group of questions, for discussion, often based on a vote by the class.
5. The beginnings of discussion led by whoever was conducting the session.
6. The use of a related Discussion Plan, Exercise, or Activity from the relevant section of Instructional Manual to structure and extend the discussion.
7. A round robin of evaluative comments and reflections at the end of the session.

It is not difficult to see that what we have here is a version of inquiry-based teaching and learning. No more is needed to bring this out than to compare Lipman's methodology with the pattern of inquiry set out by that founding figure of inquiry-based education, John Dewey, in *How We Think* (1910/1991), a book that he wrote with teachers in mind more than 100 years ago. Even before we come to the details of what goes on in a philosophical discussion à la Lipman and Sharp, the comparison is obvious when we place the outline of his teaching method alongside the model of inquiry proposed by Dewey.

Figure 1: Comparing Lipman with Dewey on the pattern of inquiry

For Dewey, inquiry begins in what he calls a problematic situation, such as an unexplained occurrence, a puzzling result, or an issue or problem that needs to be addressed. For Lipman, inquiry takes the form of philosophical problems and issues that he has seeded into his materials.

As Dewey makes clear, it is one thing for a situation to be problematic and another for us to identify the fact and ask the questions that we need to address if we are to resolve it. So too for Lipman. Following the shared reading around in a circle, students are given time to puzzle over it, to identify issues and problems embedded in it, and formulate questions about them.

In Dewey's scheme, inquirers first survey the facts of the matter and then scout around for answers to their questions, by way of possible explanations, viable solutions, desirable outcomes, and the like. They attempt to clarify their ideas where necessary, and tease out the implications of the possibilities that present themselves. They test them against the evidence, engaging in such further observations or probes as required, all the while being mindful of the criteria that any satisfactory result must satisfy. Much the same happens in Lipman- and Sharp-style discussion, except that it tends to concentrate on reasoning and conceptual exploration. The reason for this is not hard to find. Dewey was intent on establishing ways of thinking in school education that generalise on scientific method, so he had empirical investigation very much in mind, whereas Lipman and Sharp are dealing with philosophical inquiry, with its traditional emphasis on conceptualisation and reasoning. This is not to disregard the gathering and assessment of evidence, of course, which plays a role in most philosophical discussion.

At this point, it is important to be clear about the IAPC's reliance on Discussion Plans. They are there to help students explore the subject matter under discussion. While matters of this kind do not appear in the flow chart of Dewey's process of inquiry, he has a good deal to say about how much subject matter the teacher should present to pupils and to what purpose it should be done. This is not the place to go into that at length, but the nub of what he has to say is that teachers should introduce as much subject matter, and in such a manner, as is needed to stimulate and deepen inquiry. The use of Discussion Plans as an adjunct to Lipman's philosophically charged texts follows the same precept.

Much the same can be said about the use of Exercises. They are there to help students hone the skills needed to more deeply inquire into the matters under discussion – and, in the long run, develop their overall capacity to inquire.

For Dewey, an inquiry comes to an end, or at least a temporary resting place, when we reach some kind of resolution that enables us to go forward: having examined the case, we have arrived at a conclusion; things that seemed all awry now hang together; we have devised a practical solution. In Lipman's case too, students should have made progress with the matters under discussion by the end of the session. Coming into the round robin, they should have gained a better understanding of them, or even arrived at conclusions, however tentative.

2. Lipman's stimulus materials

There is no better place to sample Lipman's philosophical stories for children than turning to *Pixie*, a novel for middle primary education (see Lipman 1981). Its first-person narrator, Pixie, undertakes to tell us how she came to make up a story about a

creature that you would find at the zoo. Each student in the class was to secretly choose their creature prior to a trip to the zoo, which would form the basis of the mystery creature stories that they would tell when they were back at school. Pixie chose a mammal as her secret creature, thinking it was an animal that she would come across in the zoo in the same way that you might come across a lion or a tiger. This category error, of representing something as belonging to one logical category when it belongs to another (in this case conflating a class with a species), is a conceptual confusion well-known to philosophers.⁴

Lipman is quick to link conceptualisation with metaphysical matters. Sparring with her sister Miranda, Pixie says that she does not *want* to be Miranda's sister, to which Miranda responds:

'We've got to be sisters, because we have the same parents. Gee, you sure need to study family relationships some.'

Pixie replies:

'What difference does it make? If you can't see or touch something, it can't be real. And everybody knows you can't see or touch relationships. That means they can't be real.' (Lipman 1981, p. 23)

Still arguing with her sister, Pixie adopts a similar attitude toward space and time:

Space! It's just a word! It's just emptiness! People talk about it as if it were something, but it's really *nothing*.

'Time!' I yelled at her. 'That's just like *space*! It's just a word!' (Lipman 1981, pp. 30–31)

While vehement in response to her sister, these matters are elsewhere explored by Pixie and her classmates. They make good progress too—although Lipman is careful to leave the reader with a continuing sense of philosophical puzzlement and more work to do.

Pixie can be forthright, even acerbic, and yet Lipman presents her as also curious and questioning. She becomes puzzled when her arm goes to sleep, for instance, and the loss of sensation leads to her musing:

⁴ Lipman is inclined to approach metaphysical matters in terms of conceptualisation and language use, in a way that echoes Gilbert Ryle (1973), who claimed that category errors are the main source of the mind-body problem in traditional metaphysics.

Isn't it weird? It's like it doesn't even belong to you! How could part of you not belong to you? All of you belongs to you!

But you see, that's what puzzles me. Either my body and I are the same, or they're not the same.

If my body and I are the same, then *it* can't belong to *me*.

And if my body and I are different, then who am *I*?

It's beginning to sound like *I'm* the one who's some sort of mystery creature. (Lipman 1981, pp. 5–6)

Once again, in a skip and a jump, Lipman has moved from a commonplace experience of a person's arm going to sleep into philosophy, raising the mind-body problem and questions of personal identity.

3. Discussion plans

The most prominent feature of the IAPC approach to discussion is its focus on questions. Having initiated discussion through children raising questions, the curriculum supplies teachers with Discussion Plans in the form of runs of questions for teachers to help students further explore some the matters that have been raised.

In a Lipman- and Sharp-style discussion, the need for this is obvious. We could hardly expect novices to ask just the right question at every turn as an inquiry proceeds. Suppose, for example, that students picked up on Pixie's puzzle about her identity and raised questions about it. They may express various thoughts about what makes a person the person they are, and at an appropriate point in the discussion, the teacher might make use of the following Discussion Plan:

DISCUSSION PLAN: What is it that makes you you?

Would you still be you if:
you had a different name?
you had a different face?
you had a different body?
you had a different mind?
you had different fingerprints?
you had different parents?
you had different grandparents?
you were born and raised in China?

everyone in the world thought you were someone else?

(Lipman & Sharp, 1984, p. 23)

It is worth reflecting on the general character of the process that is engaged in here. Since to inquire is first and foremost to question, children need to be treated as questioners if they are to enter into inquiry-based discussion. The solicitation of children's questions honours this fact. It also initiates a mode of thought altogether different from that in which students are treated as the answerers of questions that have preset answers, which they are expected either to know, look up, or work out by means of such routines as elementary calculation. It involves probing and questioning as opposed to recollection or routine.

As a series of questions, the Discussion Plan helps to maintain this inquiring mode of discussion, which is the mainstay of the lesson. As it proceeds, not only do teachers question children, but children question one another, probing each other's suggestions and reasoning and arguing about them. The kind of discussion we are dealing with here is effectively a dialogue that starts with children's questions, is bolstered by the those to be found in the Discussion Plan, and continues in the interrogative mode as it strives to address them.

Students come to internalise this interrogative way of proceeding as they become familiar with it. They learn to find their way about, becoming more able to go on probing and questioning with fewer teacherly challenges and prompts. In short, the interrogative mode of speech and thought is the key that opens the way to inquiry for Lipman. Such a momentous shift from the time-honoured uses of question and answer in school education had earlier beginnings,⁵ but it is Lipman who had the insight to apply it to philosophical inquiry with children, and to provide teachers with Discussion Plans that enable them to engage in that mode of questioning.

4. Exercises

Lipman and his colleagues went to great lengths to provide students with Exercises in addition to Discussion Plans. They did so because philosophical inquiry calls for an assemblage of skills, particularly those dealing with reasoning and conceptual exploration. Reasoning involves everything from reason-giving and inference-making to the analysis and development of complex arguments, just as conceptual exploration

⁵ The debt to John Dewey's work on inquiry-based thinking in education is especially of note. See Dewey (1991), first published in 1910. The distinction that we noted between traditional teacherly questions and those that are meant to stimulate thought and inquiry is also to be found in Dewey. For example, see Dewey (1966, pp. 154–155).

extends all the way from making a distinction or a connection to the analysis and construction of complex concepts.

Lipman and Sharp were in no doubt that children gain competence in these skills simply by engaging in well-managed philosophical inquiry. Even so, they clearly thought that, so far as the attainment of skill is concerned, engaging students in philosophical inquiry is not much different from engaging them in sport. The ability to engage in a sport such as football or basketball comes in part simply from participating in matches, but additional practice is needed if players are to make the most of their potential. Ditto for the skills involved in philosophical inquiry.

Accordingly, many of the Exercises in the IAPC Instructional Manuals target specific skills, as in the following:

EXERCISE: Hoping

What is the difference between *hoping* and:

1. wishing?
2. believing?
3. expecting?
4. awaiting?
5. trusting?
6. suspecting?
7. doubting?
8. foretelling?
9. wanting?
10. predicting?

(Lipman & Sharp 1984, p. 59)

Here children are invited to practise distinction-making by looking for differences between hoping and an array of other mental acts that have things in common with it, but are significantly distinct. Distinction-making is, of course, just one skill from an array of conceptual skills that a program such as *Pixie* is designed to develop.

Some lessons from Lipman

1. *Stimulus materials*

In the IAPC curriculum, philosophical inquiry is stimulated by problems and issues that are woven into Lipman's novels, but we may define stimulus materials as anything that can be used to initiate philosophical inquiry in the classroom. When considering what to use for this purpose, there are lessons that can be learned by looking back at Lipman.

In Lipman's narratives, philosophical puzzles and problems are there to be found. They lie on or near the surface rather than being buried in the text. The presumption is that children's native curiosity and sense of wonder about the world makes them ready for philosophy, but they should not be forced to go digging too far for it when they are only just beginning to discover what it is. Whatever advantages other materials may possess, they have a serious downside if whatever is philosophical in them is virtually indiscernible to all but the practiced eye.

By the same token, materials that present philosophical problems and issues in a straightforwardly didactic fashion deprive students of the opportunity to search them out. To learn to discern such problems and raise questions about them is a vital part of becoming an inquirer, at least in Lipman and Sharp's (and Dewey's) scheme of things. We deprive students of the opportunity to become more inquiring if teachers and texts are forever doing that work for them.

As we have seen, by having philosophical problems and issues surface in his novels without explicitly identifying them as such, Lipman has found a way of enabling students to discover them for themselves. The lesson here is clear. For stimulus materials to arouse philosophical curiosity and questioning, the problems embedded in them need to be accessible to students, but not so fully articulated as to present them with yet more teacher-set problems to address.

One of the strengths of purpose-written materials is that they can be constructed with this in mind. Not that this tenet is always adhered to, particularly at the senior secondary level, where it is all too tempting to favour the standard textbook approach of explicitly presenting philosophical problems and issues. That may be appropriate in some contexts, but not if we want students to learn to identify such problems and articulate them for themselves.

This leaves us with the question of what other kinds of materials are likely to preserve this feature of Lipman's work. The most obvious source is children's literature. That is particularly true when it comes to ethics. Problems and issues of a broadly moral nature are a common source of narrative interest in children's literature. While there

is a genre of stories for children explicitly designed to teach a moral, the problems and issues to be found in children's literature are for the most part presented in such a way that children can both relate to them and deliberate about them. Happily, too, attention to the motivations of characters, the consequences of their actions, and aspects of their character, provide ample opportunities to explore different ways of thinking about ethics. In sum, children's literature is a rich resource of raw materials for ethical inquiry, where the problems and issues are both highly visible and ready for philosophical engagement.

Children's literature is also a source of material for the broader class of philosophical social inquiry, including problems and issues related to such matters as justice, discrimination, rights, and the environment. Other areas of philosophy, such as metaphysics and epistemology, are far less well represented, and I well recall the years when many middle and upper primary school teachers in Australia used Jenny Wagner's *The Bunyip of Berkley's Creek* to stimulate discussion about existence,⁶ while teachers of very young children commonly relied on Eric Carle's *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* to examine questions of identity over time and change. Metaphysical issues can be picked up in other works, of course, but they are not often to the fore.

Another source of ethical and social problems and issues that are suitable for philosophical engagement is to be found in students' lived experience. It has the obvious benefit that it enables the teacher to teach to their context. Much depends upon the teacher's ability to frame these matters in a way that opens them up to thoughtful deliberation, of course, and care must be taken when dealing with live problems, whether amongst students or in the wider community. That said, engaging students in considered discussion of topical problems and issues can be a powerful way of bringing out the benefits of a philosophical approach to these matters and is likely to have a lasting influence upon the way that students approach such concerns in their lives.

This still leaves us with a preponderance of discussion confined to the social and ethical domains, whereas when we look across Lipman's corpus, we find a wide variety of philosophical subject matter, from logic and reasoning, to social and political philosophy, ethics and aesthetics, the philosophy of nature, and of language and literature. So, we would hardly be honouring the Lipman tradition unless we did the same. This presents a problem for those teachers who have little or no formal acquaintance with philosophy, but it is not an insuperable one. While it often may not be practicable for teachers to enrol in a general introduction to philosophy through a

⁶ The title of Wagner's story alludes to Bishop Berkeley, of course, and the author makes good use of his theory that *to be is to be perceived*, which neatly combines metaphysical and epistemological matters.

local institution, there are any number of readily available books for beginners on the market. While they may not be written with the school classroom in mind, they can be an inspiration in the hands of an imaginative teacher, suggesting all kinds of topics for which materials can be pressed into service. Here are a few from one such book on my shelves:

Where did the universe come from?

Is time travel possible?

Could a machine think?

Does God exist?

But is it art?

Why expect the sun to rise tomorrow?

Do we ever deserve to be punished?

What is knowledge?

Should you be eating that?⁷

2. Identifying problems and issues

In Dewey's scheme, as you will recall, the inquirer responds to an initial problematic situation by identifying problems or issues and then raising questions about them, whereas Lipman and Sharp have students raise problems and issues directly in the form of questions. The difference is worth teasing out. The questions that help to set up an inquiry identify the things that we need to address if we are to solve the problem or resolve the issue that has arisen. This should not be taken to imply that we first need to clearly identify the problem or issue and only then think about what questions it raises. Asking questions can be a way of helping to identify the nature of an issue or a problem. Are we headed for a cost blowout? Could that SMS be a scam? Is that a crack in my tooth?

For Lipman and Sharp, question formation is the natural way to raise problems and issues that arise out of narratives, especially those of a more general kind that characterise philosophy. Let us suppose, for instance, that a character in a story has told a lie because they did not want to hurt someone's feelings. Did they do the right thing? It is arguable that much would depend on the details of the case, but it is also possible to maintain that it turns on matters of principle. This suggests the following

⁷ See Stephen Law (2003).

general questions: Is it ever right to tell a lie? If not, why not? If so, when and why? Here the line of questioning moves from what was immediately felt to be a problematic incident in a story to a matter of more general moral concern, which paves the way for philosophical deliberation.

To reinforce this point, Lipman and his colleagues commonly had their students look for connections between questions that typically centred on one or another problem or issue. As this demonstrates, traditional IAPC practice was content to have the identification of problems and issues arise out of questions, rather than the other way about. Moreover, the practice of grouping questions can help bring out their philosophical underpinnings. While students begin by responding to problems and issues in the specific form in which they appear in the stimulus materials, by grouping their questions they are brought to reflect on what is more generally at stake in them.

Digging down into topics through question formation is not the only way to unearth the philosophical in them, but it is well worth preserving. It works with just about any kind of stimulus material and preserves Lipman and Sharp's insistence on treating students as inquirers.

To treat students as questioners is perfectly consistent with teachers asking questions. We have only to recall the IAPC's use of Discussion Plans, of which their teacher's manuals were full. Mapping out the subject matter in this way is a standard part of lesson planning in their scheme of things. The caveat on the use of teacher's questions is, of course, that they should not be used in place of having students respond to the subject matter with questions of their own.

3. Conducting discussion

The chief characteristic of the IAPC way of conducting discussion is its continual use of questions. In addition to the questions that set the subject matter to be inquired into, this approach depends heavily on the use of procedural questions. By this, I mean questions that ask for a particular move to be made by way of response, such as to offer an example, provide clarification, or give a reason. Procedural questions act as prompts to make such moves, thereby assisting the inquiry to move forward.

In the longer run, it is not just a matter of making progress in that discussion, of course, but of teaching students to make these moves in their thinking. So, while teachers begin by posing such questions when they are called for, they are also modelling the use of questions with the aim of having students question one another in this way

without the need for teacher intervention. Indeed, Lipman and Sharp want students to be prompted by such questions when thinking on their own: Have I made myself clear? Where could I find a good example of that? Have I provided sufficient evidence for my claim? Does my argument really stack up?

The maintenance of what we may call the interrogative or questioning mode of thought is essential to the process of inquiry and indispensable in Philosophy for Children in any form that cares to honour its roots. It is always there in such things as being prepared to look at other points of view, considering alternatives, looking at suggestions, or evaluating an argument. It is part and parcel of the way that students are expected to treat their subject matter.

This focus on the procedures of inquiry means that teachers conducting IAPC-style discussion must be mindful of the skills and abilities that they are trying to develop. This approach to philosophical inquiry in the classroom involves a combination of two sets of skills and abilities. There are those to be found in philosophical inquiry regardless of teaching methods, and those that reflect the kind of engagement that students are expected to have with one another in the Community of Inquiry. While I can do little more than mention these attributes here, a comprehensive list would include the following:

General philosophical inquiry skills and abilities

- Formulating questions
- Making suggestions
- Clarifying
- Justifying
- Explaining
- Identifying alternative possibilities
- Weighing reasons and evidence
- Making distinctions
- Identifying differences of kind
- Identifying differences of degree
- Classifying
- Defining

- Formulating and applying criteria
- Using examples
- Using counterexamples
- Constructing thought experiments
- Using conditional reasoning
- Making deductive inferences
- Making inductive inferences
- Identifying premises
- Identifying assumptions
- Identifying conclusions
- Constructing and evaluating arguments

Skills and abilities specific to the Community of Inquiry

- Actively listening
- Contributing to discussion
- Taking your turn
- Allowing others to have their say
- Inviting others' contributions
- Acknowledging others' contributions
- Building on others' contributions
- Assisting others to make inquiry moves
- Showing respect for others' viewpoints
- Helping to evaluate others' contributions
- Engaging in the give-and-take of reasons
- Exploring disagreement respectfully
- Conceding mistakes
- Acknowledging a change of mind

- Asking procedural questions
- Helping to synthesize suggestions
- Working effectively with a partner
- Playing an assigned role in a small group
- Playing an assigned role in class discussion

Much could be said about each of the items listed here, but in the present context I will restrict myself to just one overarching comment. In Lipman and Sharp's scheme of things, students' inquiry skills and abilities develop in tandem with their social skills and abilities. Far from being an incidental feature of his way of proceeding, its social and intellectual dimensions complement one other, with intellectual acts prompting social ones, and vice versa—or, more properly speaking, the whole process being an amalgam of the two.

Teachers who are following the IAPC tradition will incorporate many of these things into their overall program and a selection of them into their plans for individual lessons. They will also attend to them in the flow of discussion when an opportunity presents itself or the need arises. In fact, the great bulk of teacherly interventions during discussion will be to prompt students to attend to items on these lists. That demands both skill and mindfulness on the part of the teacher, which for most of us is a learning journey, and a reminder that the teacher is also a learner, whose conduct provides a model for students.

Targeting skills in this way is one of the strengths of the IAPC approach, for which the development and strengthening of such skills is a core educational outcome. That work is made easier if the tools students are learning to use are introduced to them in clear and explicit ways. This is especially true of the general tools of inquiry, for which targeted exercises are a most effective addition and true to the original IAPC practice. While there are published resources of this kind available, it is worth learning to construct exercises for your own cohort, which enables you to tailor them to their knowledge and background.⁸

A great deal more could be said about conducting inquiry-based discussion in ways that are faithful to the spirit of philosophy in the classroom as it comes down from Lipman and Sharp, but if you are able to develop and establish a questioning attitude in the classroom and foster the skills and abilities that students need in order to make progress in discussing the questions that arise, then you will have preserved the core components of Lipman's approach. That is a good deal to ask when you come down

⁸ For an introduction to this art, see Cam (2020).

to it, requiring courage and perseverance—but then, as teachers know only too well, it goes with the profession. Learning to teach, and to do it well, requires courage and perseverance in just about any field of education that you care to mention.

4. Educational outcomes

When thinking about educational outcomes, we may begin with the big picture and work our way back to see how everything right down to the aims of individual lessons fall within its scope. For Lipman and Sharp, this top-down approach begins not so much with knowledge of the topics to be covered, as with the skills and abilities that engaging in philosophical inquiry is designed to promote. This is not to suggest that Lipman's use of philosophical subject matter in his curriculum materials is incidental, or without intrinsic interest, but to acknowledge that to inquire into these matters is to engage in ways of thinking that incorporate these skills, and that becoming able to deploy them in thinking about all manner of things is the chief educational benefit of engaging in this kind of educational practice.

When it comes to individual lessons, let us not forget that Lipman and Sharp are very much working within the paradigm of inquiry that derives from Dewey. As Dewey had it, an inquiry comes to an end when the problematic situation that stimulated it has been resolved—or at least, when inquirers have done all that they can do to resolve it. The need to follow timetables and to get on with other matters imposes limits on classroom inquiries, of course, but a an IAPC-style program will never succeed unless students make visible progress with the matters into which they inquire. Since progress with a given problem or issue depends upon engaging in the ways of thinking that have been identified, the associated skills and abilities must be placed to the fore. In fact, philosophical inquiry is philosophical subject matter in motion, as it were, animated by the deployment of those skills and abilities. This means that, when it comes to the outcome of any lesson, those who follow this approach need to keep an eye on the skills and abilities required to make progress with the subject matter.

To reiterate, this is not to downplay the value of developing a philosophical understanding of ethical, social, and other subject matters. To stress the importance of the skill-base is rather to acknowledge that you cannot develop such an understanding without being able to think about these matters in the ways that have been mentioned, and that these ways of thinking are useful in so many other contexts as to be of general educational value.

Finally, the practice of having participants share their reflections at the end of a session is just one of a variety of ways in which students can focus on the outcomes of the work that they have been undertaking. Natural extensions of this practice include reflection logs and other forms of record keeping, as well as schoolwork that builds

upon the topic discussed and the skills being developed. The general point is that, as in other forms of teaching and learning in school education, systematic growth in students' knowledge, skills and abilities needs not only to occur, but to be clearly visible to both the teacher and the students. So, having students attend to what they have learnt in an individual lesson is not just a rounding out of the lesson, but a means of taking stock of what has been learnt as a basis for further learning and consolidation.

Closing remarks

My aim has been to examine the traditional pedagogical basis of Philosophy for Children as it came from Matthew Lipman, Ann Margaret Sharp, and their colleagues, as a reminder of its foundations for those who seek to build upon them. We have seen how their use of classroom discussion follows the basic paradigm of inquiry to be found in Dewey, and how they used philosophical problems and issues as a basis for it. We looked at how they treated students and teachers as questioners, both in terms of raising matters for discussion and in the way that the discussion proceeds. We took especial note of the skills and abilities, both intellectual and social, that they sought to develop through philosophical discussion, which have such wide application as to form significant educational objectives.

These are the things that matter in the IAPC tradition, irrespective of the use of purpose-written novels, instructional manuals, and constant reliance on a set lesson format. This means that we may clothe them in any way that fits the contexts in which we find ourselves. What better way could there be to honour this marvellous educational innovation than by being inventive in this way ourselves?

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