

THE IMPORTANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN IN TODAY'S SOCIETY

LA IMPORTANCIA Y LA APLICABILIDAD DE LA FILOSOFÍA PARA NIÑOS EN LA SOCIEDAD ACTUAL

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Abstract: Should Philosophy be made accessible and applied to children? In what way can Philosophy for Children help children/youngsters to think better? How can we learn to think? This article shows what Philosophy for Children is meant to be, pointing out its real impact in a society where we increasingly find children and youngster gravitating towards “standardized” [“patterned”] behaviours, opinions, attitudes, and values, who lack their own opinions, don't want to waste time thinking, and without the awareness of how important thinking is to their lives, thus stifling the natural curiosity that is a quality of every human being, and so are alienated from society's real consciousness. It is necessary to predispose children and young people to stop and think, to know how to listen and make themselves heard, to contemplate the unknown with serenity and to enjoy it as something wonderful and undiscovered. Philosophy can be applied to children. We must put the natural and spontaneous restlessness of children to use. Philosophy for Children can aid children and youngsters in developing their reasoning, can teach them to think how to think better, leaving them more critical, argumentative, creative, inquisitive, introspective and with their own opinions.

Keywords: Philosophy, children, thinking, reasoning.

Resumen: Deberá la filosofía volverse accesible y aplicarse a los niños? De qué forma la Filosofía para niños puede ayudar a los niños/jóvenes a pensar mejor? Cómo podemos aprender a pensar? Este artículo demuestra lo que es la Filosofía para niños, realzando su real importancia en una sociedad donde cada vez hay más niños y jóvenes que se limitan a estandarizar comportamientos, opiniones, actitudes y valores, que no tienen opinión propia, que no quieren perder su tiempo pensando, que no tienen conciencia del pensar en sus vidas, matando así la curiosidad natural que persiste en todo el ser humano, y por eso alienados de la conciencia real de la sociedad. Es necesario preceptuar los niños y jóvenes a parar para más piensen, a saber oír y a hacerse oír, a contemplar y mirar el incógnito con placidez y a apreciarlo como algo maravilloso y por descubrir. La filosofía puede aplicarse a los niños. Tenemos que usar la inquietud natural y espontánea de los niños. La filosofía para niños puede ayudar a los niños y a los jóvenes en el desarrollo del razonamiento, puede enseñarlos a pensar cómo podemos pensar mejor, volviéndolos más críticos, argumentativos, creativos, preguntones, reflexivos y con opiniones propias.

Palabras clave: filosofía, niños, pensar, raciocinio.

Introduction

The paradigm of modern society presents a challenge to parents/educators/pedagogues: the nurturing of subjects capable of metamorphosing information into knowledge and knowledge into effective actions.

School has cooperated in the development of children, but in some aspects has become a form of reclusion, and the student has become a mere recipient. A school, and education, should not be restricted to that. A child thirsting for knowledge and discovery, would thus be as a captive, stunting his or her natural inquisitiveness under restriction of the imposed norms and obligations.

Os profissionais de educação afirmam, de forma explícita, que se interessam (...) pela “formação” (...); que a escola se propõe não só, ou não especificamente, a transmitir conhecimentos, mas antes que outras coisas, formar pessoas, produzir certos tipos de subjetividade¹

The intention is to stimulate the student - the child and the young person - to select and face his or her challenges, to think skilfully.

Education currently occupies a prominent positions in this new subject. Basic propagation of knowledge is no longer enough. Education must now equip individuals with competences which allow them to, from what had already been taught, generate new knowledge, expand their creativity, face new challenges, connect information and extend their limits.

Philosophy cannot and must not deny children access. Lipman

incomodava-lhe o modo como os filósofos tinham sistematicamente fechado as suas portas às crianças. Considerou este impedimento insensível e injusto. Lançou a ideia de que as crianças podem e merecem ter acesso à filosofia²

“Todos somos filósofos”, não como especialistas em filosofia, mas como necessários “amantes da sabedoria (Sócrates)”³

¹ KOHAN, Walter: *Infância, entre Educação e Filosofia*, Autêntica, Belo Horizonte, 2003, p. 77.

² Cf. KOHAN, Walter O., WAKSMAN, Vera: *Filosofia para crianças na prática escolar*, Editora Vozes, Petrópolis, 1999, p. 9. Beyond casting the idea, Lipman also developed a set of methods and instruments so that Philosophy for Children could be put into practice, at the same time creating the IAPC – Institute for Advancement of Philosophy for Children in 1974. After the IAPC achieved international success, he created the ICPIIC, the International Council for Philosophical Inquiry with Children, in 1985.

³ Cf. KOHAN, Walter O. - LEAL, Bernardina: *Filosofia para crianças em debate*, Editora Vozes, Petrópolis, 1999, p.27.

All children are entitled to know the distinct possibilities, before selecting which meaning to apply to words. Philosophy for Children⁴ intends to initiate children and youngsters in the quest for free and co-operative organization of senses. Thinking, speaking, and acting are taken, essentially, as novel ways of being and acting. The purpose is to help them become Men capable of their own enriching individual contribution towards the ongoing construction of essential driving references of human existence.

One does not aspire for children to merely learn and act according to facts taught by their parents, educators, and teachers,..., but rather that, necessarily, children be able to cogitate on their own, for cogitating is what allows us to ultimately generate meaning.

Cogitating is an innate ability, integral to any human being. However, it must be spurred; cogitating is exhibited by individuals adept at it, with different approaches available.

In this sense, the Philosophy for Children Program intends to spur the cognitive, emotional, and social progress of children through practice of dialogue (Socratic method), with the goal of perfecting the critical, creative and ethical thinking in a conscious and responsible way, but also playfully, in a deep relationship between thinking, acting, and talking, working towards transversal competences. According to Matthew Lipman, this process should begin in the earliest opportunity.

The Philosophy for Children this philosophical dialogue is seen as crucial to development and structuring of critical, caring and creative thinking. (...) Fundamental to both programme is the development of a 'community of enquiry' with the ground roles developed by the children to provide a safe, co-operative, and collaborative context whereby differences of opinion openly expressed are seen as developmental opportunities⁵

⁴ Sometimes the term Philosophy with Children is substituted for Philosophy for Children. Some researchers declare that in Philosophy with Children, children acquire knowledge as they philosophise. Philosophy for Children seems to associated with the knowledge that the facilitator is transmitting to the child; children develop their capacity to critique, to ask, to discover paths. I have opted to use Philosophy for Children throughout the paper, as in appears in this form in virtually every published theory.

⁵ HARDMAN, Margaret, DELAFIELD, Barbara: "Philosophy for Children as dialogic teaching" in LITTLETON, Karen; HOWE, Christine: *Educational Dialogues: Understanding and Promoting Productive interaction*, Routledge, London, 2010, p.152.

According to Lipman, in order to better cogitate, we should pay particular attention to logics, for through it we reach structured cogitation, differentiating the logic value of propositions and any statements we are exposed to. Poor cogitation is increasingly found in children, and thus a fundamental transformation is needed so as to allow them to think independently and error free.

Similarities between a child and a philosopher

How can we associate philosophy and children? What is the common ground between a child and a philosopher? Could the child be a miniature philosopher? Or could children use philosophy for their own benefit?

One needs to know how to think and to think properly, to know which choices we are given and cultivate our imagination, to perhaps indicate new options. We must be critical, examine the institutions present in society and inquire into how these fulfill their function.

Children must learn that words and sentences proffered in our daily lies are common to all humans, and these can be questioned and prone to controversy. It is very serious that children grow up to continue using words for which they don't know the meaning, hence the major importance of PFC.

All of us, who deal with and know of children, know that they are curious by nature. How many of us have not felt the nuisance of a child's insistent questioning? What children really want for themselves are the answers and meanings of everything that surrounds them. But this attitude of questioning, of amazement before the unknown, is it not a trait of philosophy?

Children ask questions, all kinds of questions and these usually are important questions:

- Why does Man exist?
- What is life?
- Why do we live?
- Why do we die?
- What is death?
- Why is life hard?
- How can we have a happy life?
- Does god exist?
- Who is god?

De (...) entre as suas perguntas, algumas dizem respeito, por exemplo, ao facto de pensar e da existência das coisas, às situações que envolvem noções de

certo e errado, justo e injusto, bem e mal, (...), essas são questões, entre muitas outras, que fazem parte privilegiada das investigações filosóficas⁶

Though a child is extremely delicate, has little experience and needs plentiful care and attention, he/she is not at all lacking in character and potential. Just like any one of us, a child does not grow out of nothing, he or she grows into and is influenced by society and its traditions, habits, as well as by his/her experiences and the way he or she relates to others.

o desenvolvimento de certas maneiras de raciocinar e aprender sobre as coisas é produto direto das interações espontâneas e planejadas entre a criança em desenvolvimento e os membros (...) da sua comunidade⁷

A child is a naturally inquisitive being, who searches knowledge and is constantly learning and evolving. Some authors approximate children to philosophers, precisely because they possess such an inquisitive soul and aptitude to admire, and be in awe of reality.

According to Lipman, what children and philosophers have in common is the disposition to be amazed before what is around them, the world.

As crianças devem ser estimuladas – deve ser-lhes ensinado o mais possível o mais cedo possível⁸

Children ask questions which may be considered philosophical. The questions are synonymous with wanting to know more, to go farther in knowledge, to the wish to acquire more knowledge and to wanting to understand what is incomprehensible for them. The more bountiful and diverse are the possibilities experienced by the child in their permanent quest for knowledge, the greater the probability of developing real and solid bases for subsequent learning, even into adulthood.

Of the particulars with greatest impact in parents, teachers, educators, and thinkers about the possibility of Philosophy for Children is that children are perhaps not old enough to be able to access philosophy. Is it really so? Is not that many of a child's attitudes are deeply philosophical?

⁶ LORIERI, Marcos A.: *Filosofia: fundamentos e métodos*, Cortez, São Paulo, 2002, p. 42.

⁷ FONTES, Martins: *Como aprendem as crianças a pensar*, Livraria Martins, São Paulo, 1996, p.27.

⁸ BLACKEMORE, Sarah - Jayne, UTA, Frith: *O cérebro que aprende*, Gradiva, Lisboa, 2009, p.12.

According to Lipman, children can and should have access to philosophy, being of the opinion that philosophers should not bar children the access to philosophy. There are various everyday situations and experiences which allow us to compare philosophers with children. Everyday we experience, while in contact with children, these attitudes and behaviours without realising it.

Example one:

Mother: Maria, granny has died.
Child: Why has granny died?
Mother: Because she was sick.
Child: Why don't we take granny to the doctor to make her better?
Mother: We can't now, she's gone to heaven.
Child: But how do we get to heaven? When we die we go to heaven? How?

Children's' questions are cohesive. What, for us, is obvious, for them is incomprehensible and awe-inspiring, leading to questions so as to try and understand that which is not understood. And now we are in the realm and *arché* of philosophy. As Aristotle said in *Metaphysics* and Martin Heidegger in *O que é isto - a filosofia?*, the *arché* of philosophy is amazement and admiration. Children are amazed, doubts turn up and consequently children ask questions. The spontaneous emergence of these questions indicates that from an early age, children have an appetite for knowledge. A child looks for an explanation of what is incomprehensible for him or her, just like philosophers.

O olhar de admiração do filósofo é parecido com o olhar infantil: não se trata de uma visão de raios X, capaz de penetrar os mais sólidos obstáculos, mas de um olhar espontâneo, irreverente. O modo infantil de olhar está apto a vislumbrar o que todos podem ver, mas não conseguem por causa do hábito, do medo, ou da preguiça⁹

Throughout their lives, human beings meet both very good, and very bad and frightening situations. How often do we find ourselves thinking how different things could be. How often we fail to ask "Why?". Just like in children, this happens because we are disillusioned, misunderstood by the world around us or by someone in particular. What is obvious for all others, can be dark and

⁹ FEITOSA, Charles: *Explicando a Filosofia com Arte*, Ediouro, Rio de Janeiro, 2004, p.30.

unsettling for us, which leads us to doubt and self-questioning. However, the adult is much more passive than the child.

Philosophy for Children can help children to think for themselves, to achieve their own autonomy, to be more responsible and more conscious...

Children may use philosophy to “liberate” themselves. Let’s look at another example:

Example 2:

Let us imagine two young girls, Clara and Matilde, playing during recess. Clara says:

- Your dress is ugly. I really don't like it.

Matilde, who is startled and saddened, asks: Why?

(...)

Here too the question is coherent. The inquisitiveness demonstrated by Matilde reveals amazement, for the child does not understand the reason why her colleague dislikes her dress. But, as we know, children do not understand many things, and yet, they seek to find out how things happen, trying to find meaning (that is what Matilde did when questioning Clara.)

Matilde was sad, perhaps because she does not understand how an individual's taste is subjective, controversial, and arguable. It is neither correct nor just to deny children the fact that there are many different ways of thinking about things and words.

We must bear in mind that, for children to experience improved learning, they need to be exposed to different situations, new and innovative, which prove to be motivating for the individual. Incentives may not be repetitive nor dull, there must be novelty and creativity, otherwise the child will lose interest, loosening his or her focus. Suffice to look at the effect of a new toy on children. A child must be interested, a child is always looking for new adventures.

Qualquer testemunho de Filosofia para Crianças deverá basear se numa conceção otimista de que o ser humano já traz em si as potencialidades de reflexão crítica e aplicação prática das virtudes morais, bastando desenvolver-las à luz de uma orientação pedagógica adequada¹⁰

In Philosophy for Children one does not teach children the history and thought of the great philosophers. What children are led to, with aided by didactics from

¹⁰ GONÇALVES, Daniela, AZEVEDO, Cláudia: “O valor e a utilidade da Filosofia para Crianças”, in *Cadernos de Estudo*, number 4, Porto, 2006, p.103.

Socratic dialogue, is to philosophise, commencing the progress of intellectual dexterity and aptitude, that they already possess, and which are the support for critical reasoning. They establish analogies, execute inferences, and expose suppositions,... and end up training those competences needed for reasoning and thinking which are the basis of philosophical thought.

According to Walter Omar Kohan and Vera Waksman, this attempt to bridge the gap between Philosophy and Children, was built around an idea and a practical application. On the one hand, bringing Philosophy to Children (its history, methods and problems can be experienced by children) and on the other, making available all that is needed to achieve that effect (methods, materials,...).

There are many things that children do not understand, for which they don't know the meaning, and thus make an effort to unearth what each thing is and how these happen in the world.

Something must be done to enable children to acquire meaning for themselves. They will not acquire such meaning merely by learning the contents of adult knowledge. They must be taught to think and, in particular, to think for themselves. Thinking is the skill par excellence that enables us to acquire meanings¹¹

Children are permanently looking for the meaning of things or words that adults constantly use. Children think and question as naturally as they speak and breathe. Children philosophise.

A child is awed and curious before anything, be it grand and extraordinary phenomenon or something common and ordinary, just like philosophers who are amazed by everything. It is also necessary for a child to demonstrate the will, interest, and capacity to learn.

Grande parte da aprendizagem da criança ocorre espontaneamente (...) enquanto ela brinca, observa, faz perguntas, faz experiências e confere sentido ao mundo que a rodeia¹²

Matthews believed interrogations and speculations typical of children are philosophy by themselves, and bases these assertions on some authors.

Dúvida e admiração estão intimamente relacionados. Aristóteles diz que a filosofia começa pela admiração. Bertrand Russel diz que a filosofia, “se não

¹¹LIPMAN, Matthew, SHARP, Ann M., OSCANYAN, Frederick S.: *Philosophy in the classroom*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1980, p.13.

¹² FONTES, Martins: *Como aprendem as crianças a pensar*, Livraria Martins, São Paulo, 1996, p.27.

consegue responder a tantas perguntas quantas gostaríamos, tem pelo menos o poder de formular perguntas que aumentam o interesse pelo mundo e revelam a estranheza e a admiração por trás das aparências, até mesmo nas coisas mais comuns da vida diária”. Aristóteles também afirma que a admiração que dá início à filosofia tem semelhança com a dúvida. Wittgenstein diz: “um problema filosófico é expresso na forma: “não sei qual é a saída””¹³

The idea of bringing philosophy to children is neither light-hearted nor illogical.

Os filósofos sempre fizeram filosofia do conhecimento, da moral, da linguagem; as suas teorias assentam num questionamento e investigação sobre o mundo físico e (...) sobre a existência do ser humano. Sempre (...) trabalharam com conceitos como: verdade, justiça, bem, mal, absoluto, múltiplo e uno, felicidade, belo, (...); daí dizer-se que a filosofia é a ciência dos conceitos. Conceitos que, também, fazem parte da vida das crianças. (...) Se os filósofos ao filosofarem estão a pensar criticamente, utilizando critérios válidos e lógicos, então porquê não partilhar essa forma de pensar com as crianças?¹⁴

But how can we help children achieve better thinking?

Education must be concentrated on thinking rather than standardized rote teaching/learning. Lipman perceives a debilitated teaching method, unable to shape citizens capable of thought, declaring that one needs elements essential to thought in our curricula. For this reason, he defends the teaching logics, reasoning, the art of thinking, and the training of thought. Lipman defends that using logics as vehicle, the human being can examine and decode thesis and arguments, also increasing his creativity.

Supported by vast argumentation, Lipman testifies that the best path for an adequate childhood education is philosophy. Lipman created *Philosophy for Children* which aims to¹⁵:

- activate in each student the aptitude towards formulating problems, recognizing and conceiving different viewpoints;
- trigger acknowledgement and respect for themselves and others, turning them into analytic, creative, and critical thinkers;
- increase research and deconstruction of arguments;
- allow identification of criteria;

¹³ MATTHEWS, Gareth: *A Filosofia e a Criança*, Martins Fontes, São Paulo, 2001, p.4.

¹⁴ LIMA, Denise Maria Domingues: *Filosofia para Crianças: uma Abordagem Crítica dentro da Filosofia da Educação*, Universidade do Minho, Braga, 2004, p.141.

¹⁵ ASSUNÇÃO, Susana: *Filosofia com Crianças e Jovens – uma proposta de Educação do pensar como um lugar-comum*, Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto, Porto, 2010, p.10.

- foster imagination.

It was fundamental that something were found for the stimulation of children towards expressive interest, something that would motivate them while at the same time contributing positively to their relationship with school materials.

Philosophy for Children

Matthew Lipman felt extremely bothered by the fact that philosophers invariably close their ranks to children. So much so that he cast the idea that children should indeed have access to philosophy. Lipman did not stop there, for he also developed an institution and created curricula and methods, so that the reality of philosophy became accessible to children, an education geared towards active thinking. Philosophy is, in itself, educational, and because of that the initiation into philosophizing must occur as soon as possible¹⁶.

The Philosophy for Children program appeared in the USA by the hand of Matthew Lipman, who saw the goal of education as “helping students to cogitate”.

No final dos anos 60, o programa de Filosofia para Crianças de Matthew Lipman foi formado apontando para uma Educação para o Pensar, enaltecendo o papel do raciocínio/pensamento, tendo como intuito desenvolver competências cognitivas, utilizando uma metodologia específica para que o aluno consiga pensar melhor tanto nas ciências, enquanto áreas do conhecimento, como na busca de significados sociais, morais e culturais para as suas vidas¹⁷

According to Lipman we must pay close attention to some of the typical specifics of children and youngsters, such as spontaneity and the willingness to accept new things, and from these aid and stimulate the cognitive development.

A Filosofia é educativa em si mesma e por isso mesmo o ingresso ou a iniciação no filosofar deve ocorrer o mais cedo possível tendo em vista o seu valor educativo intrínseco¹⁸

¹⁶ LORIERI, Marcos António: “Perguntando por mais um dos pressupostos educacionais do programa Filosofia para Crianças de Matthew Lipman” in KOHAN, Walter O., LEAL, Bernardina: *Filosofia para crianças em debate*, vol.IV, Editora Vozes, Petrópolis, 1999, p.49.

¹⁷ ELIAS, Gizele G. P.: *Matthew Lipman e a Filosofia para Crianças*, Universidade Católica de Goiás, Goiânia, 2005, p.66.

¹⁸ LORIERI, Marcos António: “Perguntando por mais um dos pressupostos educacionais do programa Filosofia para Crianças de Matthew Lipman” in KOHAN, Walter O., LEAL, Bernardina:

Lipman was inspired to create such a programme because he thought that schools were failing to teach students to think. For him evidence of this lay in the low level of thinking skills exhibited by college students attending his courses at Columbia University, (...) ¹⁹

In 1969, Lipman, as teacher in the University of Columbia, and while lecturing the chair of Logics to university students, found himself thinking whether students acquired any benefit from studying the rules to determine the validity of syllogisms or by learning how to build propositions. Fundamentally, he was trying to understand whether the teaching of logics would help students to reason better. He questioned whether linguistic and psychological habits were so engrained that any teachings regarding reasoning now arrived too late.

Matthew Lipman noticed that his university students were not able to think for themselves; they exhibited frailties in the development of reasoning skills, which prevented them from attaining a satisfactory cognitive output. While teaching, Lipman noticed serious flaws in his students with regard to reasoning.

Lipman noticed that his students showed high memorization skills, repeating everything he taught, but the final product was not promising. Students knew the rules of logics and expressed them correctly in examinations, but had difficulty in identifying and applying those same rules in their daily lives. Students exhibited difficulties in reading and interpreting texts, which for Lipman evidences feeble reasoning aptitudes, which consequently prevented students from having sufficient cognitive output. At this point it was perhaps too late to correct long-standing flaws.

A study was performed by the University of New Jersey with students of different ages in order to ascertain their primary reasoning skills. According to Lipman, this investigation allowed the comparison of performance by students of different ages ²⁰. Lipman notices that, while university students were performing university-level tasks, they were using reasoning skills not far beyond those used by infants. This study did, once more, bring out difficulties shown by students in terms of reasoning skills, alerting to the importance of developing educative strategies that could enable students. Lipman studied the flaws in the way his

Filosofia para crianças em debate, vol.IV, Editora Vozes, Petrópolis, 1999, p.49. Initiation to philosophising is, to some extent, taken to be the mere attitude of keeping alive questions pertaining to the meaning of the world, of human existence, of society, of culture, of knowledge, and of values, and concurrently, in a creative, critical and introspective thinking.

¹⁹ FISHER, Robert: *Teaching Thinking: Philosophical Enquiry in the Classroom*, Bloomsbury Academic, United Kingdom, 2013, p. 27.

²⁰ LIPMAN, Matthew: *O pensar na educação*, Ed. Vozes, Petrópolis, 1995, p.17.

students thought, convincing him that the ideal would be to stimulate reasoning in the younger age groups (through PFC).

Aside from poor results in tests, parents would constantly bemoan their children's lack of studying habits, even the ability to doubt and would only study on the eve of said tests.

It was necessary to make the students “think logically”. It was fundamental to provide the students the means to develop their reasoning before they arrived at the university level. Once at university it was no longer feasible to learn how to think properly, Lipman thus concluded that perhaps this should be done from a tender age. Lipman attested that children should be introduced to the world of logics much sooner, for that would allow them to think much more rationally, critically and introspectively, and hence develop their reasoning.

What Lipman ultimately proposes isn't to use the “real impetus” of philosophy, but rather its words and its viewpoints; Lipman intended to, through characters in children's stories, impart the teachings of Aristotle, Marx, Russell, Socrates, ... Lipman believed that when children read these stories, they would find out the philosophers' ideas and investigate these along with friends; the philosophers were thus expressed in the voices of children. In PFC what matters is the development of reasoning skills rather than learning the thoughts of great philosophers.

A “Filosofia para crianças” se constitui originariamente como um programa educacional que “cultiva o desenvolvimento das habilidades de raciocínio através da discussão de tópicos filosóficos”²¹

What Lipman had in mind was to convert the living room into a research community, where a child's emotional, cognitive and social intelligences are developed. The universe we inhabit contains ever more difficulties, and for that very reason we need to every time think more, not only about what is, but about what should be, and for that to be possible imagination is indispensable. A child must learn to conceive and engender new meanings and significates. Society increasingly forces it upon us.

So according to Lipman, we must teach children to think from the moment they learn to speak, and not only after they turn eighteen. Teachers and educators must not be too focussed on the curricula being passed on, they must start to think about thinking itself; in effective emotions and good social relations.

²¹ KOHAN, Walter O., LEAL, Bernardina: *Filosofia para crianças em debate*, vol.IV, Editora Vozes, Petrópolis, 1999, p.31.

In order to bring Philosophy to Children, Lipman resolved to write a story, based on his own children and bearing in mind that children are always listening to stories.

Lipman created in 1969 the first material piece of Philosophy for Children by writing the philosophical novel titled, in its English original, *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery* – translated in Portuguese to – *A descoberta de Ari dos Telles*²² (meant for children from 11 to 13); something children were able to piece together by themselves; children should establish a small research community, where each one could participate in a cooperative effort and in the discovery of more effective ways to think.

Esta história tem a forma de diálogo nas salas de aula e fora delas e as personagens são apresentadas como modelos de crianças intelectualmente inquietas, judiciosas, preocupadas em conhecer e interessadas em envolver-se num diálogo construtivo a respeito dos problemas que as inquietam. (...) A espinha dorsal da novela constitui-se de um conjunto de regras e princípios do pensar que as próprias crianças vão descobrindo através do diálogo²³

A Philosophy For Children lesson or series of lessons (Lipman recommends two one-hour sessions a week) might include the following elements –the reading of an episode from a Lipman novel, followed by questions raised by students and discussion by the group of their chosen topic. The teacher might extend this discussion with questions from a discussion plan, or a prepared exercise exploring a particular philosophical issue²⁴

Lipman began by writing children's stories in which, through realistic and everyday situations for them, children were driven to reflective thought, to formulate problems. Using the stories, Lipman uses the vast number of typical ideas of philosophy, thus embracing the most diverse fields. All stories were created according to specific precepts, such as the target audience, the aptitude of children to perform mental operations, as well as the capacity to examine a particular subject and interpret meanings.

All the stories created by Lipman were meant to foster free, creative, and critical cogitation, and so to teach the learners to think, to acquire logical rules and a better understanding. PFC aims to:

²² Cf. LIPMAN, Matthew: *A descoberta de Ari dos Telles*, v. 1 e 2, Difusão de Educação e Cultura S/A, Coleção Filosofia para crianças, São Paulo, 1987.

²³ KOHAN, Walter Omar, WUENSCH, Ana Miriam: *Filosofia para Crianças - A tentativa Pioneira de Mathew Lipman*, vol.I, Ed Vozes, Petrópoles, 1998, pp.85-86.

²⁴ FISHER, Robert: *Teaching Thinking: Philosophical Enquiry in the Classroom*, Bloomsbury Academic, United Kingdom, 2013, p. 30.

formar hábitos para que as crianças aprendam a ouvir-se mutuamente, a perceber outras dimensões do mundo social, a fazer cada vez perguntas mais complexas, a conceitualizar, a reconhecer pressupostos, a fundamentar os seus pensamentos, a extrair inferências, a estabelecer, a confrontar e valorar critérios, a refletir sobre o ambíguo e o provável, a trabalhar com hipóteses, a construir um espaço físico, intelectual e afetivo seguro para a investigação²⁵

PFC looks at education itself in a distinctly versatile manner. The facilitator (educator) and the child (learner) intermingle in a classroom context, as if part of a group. Lipman allows himself to be influenced by Piaget, who said that the subject played an active part in his own development: for Lipman, too, the student must have an active role, the right to participate, with the instructor playing the part of a mediator rather than a lecturer. Lipman stands by an interactionist/constructivist approach, believing that the subject's action is essential to his development.

As propostas de Matthew Lipman (...) encontram rescaldo no *construtivismo* piagetiano. Jean Piaget (...) enfatizava a importância do trabalho em equipa e cooperação para o desenvolvimento da inteligência. (...) O professor deixa de ser um conferencista para “estimular a pesquisa e o esforço ao invés de se contentar com a transmissão de soluções já prontas”²⁶

Dewey is also a representative of constructivism, knowledge is formed from experiences and known facts that actively mingle, it is built upon reflection over actions. According to Dewey, instructors and learners have unique experiences which are an asset to the teaching-learning process. For him, as well as for Lipman, the important thing is not to transmit knowledge, but to encourage the child to develop upon his or her own natural aptitudes.

Following the Socratic method, through raised questions and the answers to these can we thus develop reasoning, build arguments between different participants in a dialogue, always with the objective of searching for the truth. This method of discussing and arguing is called dialectics. Socrates is known for possessing the art of dialectics.

In the Socratic method, as is in Lipman, the intention is that the subjects dialogue, discussing their statements, with the aim of forcing them to reflect

²⁵ Cf. KOHAN, Walter O., WAKSMAN, Vera: *Filosofia para crianças na prática escolar*, vol.II, Editora Vozes Petrópolis, 1999, p.12.

²⁶ KOHAN, Walter O., LEAL, Bernardina: *Filosofia para crianças em debate*, vol.IV, Editora Vozes, Petrópolis, 1999, p.31.

upon those. What Socrates intended is for the subjects to perform a self-examination, through maieutics (of questioning,) to convince themselves of their own ignorance, to become aware that what they believe they know is no more than an assumed reality (doubt is cast over the subject's knowledge, shaken by astute and precise questions which receive feeble answers.) Socrates never imposed his ideas. Socrates' goals:

não eram de humilhar ou desconcertar. Ele propunha-se descobrir a verdade, não como matéria de pura especulação, mas que servisse para viver como deve ser²⁷

Sócrates ocupa uma posição contrária aos sofistas. Ele não tem soluções prontas para as questões, deixa os problemas em estado de aporia. (...) Observa-se em Sócrates o surgimento de uma dialética que tem origem na pergunta e na resposta do diálogo conduzido, ao mesmo tempo, por procedimentos “técnicos”, mas também por um *a priori* filosófico, como é o caso da verdade em si, da justiça em si, da beleza em si²⁸

Socrates did not want for some to be winners over the losers; his purpose was for both to follow the path to truth.

Sócrates, o mestre que nada sabe ("só sei que nada sei", repete-se constantemente nos testemunhos chegados (...) assume perante o discípulo uma posição distanciada relativamente ao saber que se pretende; por princípio ou por rigorosa impossibilidade, não o transfere a ninguém, antes procura obtê-lo de outrem através do seu método favorito, assente no sistema da pergunta/resposta — a dialéctica²⁹

Socrates seeks, through dialogue/dialectics and questioning/maieutics, a way to reach the truth. A truth not shared with others is not really true. Socrates, in his dialogues, assumed the role of interrogator (facilitator in PFC), assuming an attitude of constant doubting: “all I know is that I know nothing”. According to Socrates, education must not be reduced to a mere transmission of facts, but to awaken the knowledge living inside each of us, particularly through introspection (this is one of the purposes of PFC).

²⁷ MOURÃO, Catarina: *Sócrates e Platão – Vida, Pensamento e Obra*, Editora Planeta Agostini S.A., 2004, p.44.

²⁸ PAVIANI, Jayme: *Filosofia e Método em Platão*, EDIPUCRS, Porto Alegre, 2001, p.33.

²⁹ AZEVEDO, Maria Teresa Nogueira Schiappa: “Da maiêutica socrática à maiêutica platônica”, In *Humanitas*, vol.LV, Coimbra, 2003, p. 265.

Through PFC is therefore possible to instruct and nurture human beings capable of real thinking, is possible to teach how to think better, fomenting the taste for knowledge, inquiring and seeking for the truth.

PFC, through an investigative community, allows children to discuss and meet new concepts, many of which across different school subjects.

The subjects of thought, and the investigative community

Cogitation is something inherently natural to all human beings. One should note, however, that cogitation must be urged. According to Lipman, in order to sport a more efficient thinking we should use the principles of logics, so as to achieve better organized thoughts, and thus allow the individual to ascertain the logical value of stated inferences.

The development of the capacity to think lays the path for better presumptions/attitudes by the subjects, hence the importance of PFC being started as early as possible. If students are more accustomed with the raising of questions and formulation of problems, this makes them more capable across different levels. The student can thus question himself, and no longer will it be the teacher asking the questions, leading to the instructed thinking for themselves rather than being led by the instructor, as is usually the norm. Such takes place through dialogue, providing the instructed with autonomy and allowing others to see him as he truly is. Dialogue is fundamental for a student to understand and gather knowledge. It is through dialogue that different students and the teacher build a rapport, sharing ideas and acknowledging each other.

At the heart of philosophy is...dialogue... This is why education cannot be divorced from philosophy and philosophy cannot be divorced from education³⁰

It is almost impossible to separate dialogue from thought (here, opinions may differ), that is to say, during dialogue we necessarily use thought. Dialogue may not be established without using thought. Dialogue leads to reflection. When we engage in dialogue we must ponder, reflecting over what we express, over what we will express, what others are expressing, and in that sense we are in constant reflection, cogitating.

Dewey believes that the capacity to reflect frees us from routine and exclusively impulsive action³¹. According to Dewey, reflection is a method

³⁰LIPMAN, Matthew, SHARP, Ann M.: *Growing Up With Philosophy*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1978, p.259.

which allows the subject to develop investigative and critical attitudes. Both Lipman and Dewey point out the importance of reflection and of cooperative work within a community in order to be able to recognize the conundrums and find the solutions. According to Dewey,

a reflexão não é apenas uma sucessão e, sim, uma série lógica de ideias, de modo que cada um engendra a seguinte como a sua consciência natural e, ao mesmo tempo, articula-se com a ideia precedente³²

os aspetos existentes em toda a operação reflexiva. São eles: a) um estado de perplexidade, de hesitação ou dúvida; e b) actos de pesquisa ou investigação tendo o fim imediato de descobrir outros factos que sirvam para corroborar ou destruir a convicção sugerida³³

Qualquer sugestão, qualquer conclusão, é examinada com o fim de descobrir-se a sua conveniência ao problema que nos está a interessar. A espécie de perplexidade de que desejamos sair determinará a espécie de investigação a proceder. (...) O problema a resolver determina o objetivo do pensamento e este objetivo orienta o processo do ato de pensar³⁴

Dewey states that the purpose of introspective thought is to stall and prevent premature conclusions, allowing for a sustained investigation.

Lipman upheld that introspective thought brings the subject a better knowledge of himself, and that this renders him more capable of thinking and investigating other issues.

The introspective process is closely linked with the act of thinking. Is the subject thinks introspectively, it means he is conscious of what he is about to do or say, allowing better self-knowledge, besides the fact that he becomes better at analysis, critique, and finding solutions for whatever troubles him. Introspective thought is a result of mixing logical/coherent reasoning with cogitation on a subject matter. Introspection should become a habit for each one of us.

Philosophy for Children uses thinking skills (reasoning, comprehension, analysis, explanation, research,...) and social skills, acquired in everyday life, to solve conflicts and search for a concept's meaning. These are useful to the human

³¹ Cf. DEWEY, John: *Cómo Pensamos - Nueva exposición de la relación entre pensamiento reflexivo y proceso educativo*, Paidós Ibérica S. A., Barcelona, 1989. Dewey believes that introspective thought is indispensable before any and every human action. He recognizes three essential attitudes for the teaching of introspection: an open mind, responsibility, and a heart.

³² DEWEY, John: *Como Pensamos*, Companhia Editora Nacional, São Paulo, 1953, pp. 4-5.

³³ *Ibidem*, p.11.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p.14.

being as a strategy to achieve and build knowledge. These skills (social and intellectual) are constantly being increased and perfected, through the meditative and investigative mechanisms.

According to Lipman, these cognitive skills/competences can be aggregated in four groups³⁵:

1- The ability to reason: to build judgements and arguments; to recognize similarities and disparities; to identify fallacies;

2- Aptitude for questioning and for research: investigating; analysing; hypothesizing; checking out and confirming;

3- Ability for form concepts: to establish relations; delineate distinctions; specify analogies, similarities;

4- Aptitude for translation: to listen to others; to be empathic; to accept differences; to respect other; to dialogue;

Lipman adds that social aptitudes are concerned with our relations with others in society. It relates to our capacity to emote and understand others; the way we react before our feelings and emotions; our actions before the set of society's norms.

Philosophy for Children is an astute and fruitful way to develop these skills, though the didactics of the research community, the didactics of learning to cogitate cautiously, critically and creatively.

Presently, we are more conscious of the gap between how schools prepare the instructed for cogitation, and the importance of cogitation for our day-to-day lives.

The solution does not involve teaching students about good thinking or reasoning skills through prepackaged programs with workbooks and worksheets, nor does it mean structuring the curriculum only around student's interests. To address problems in engagement and reasoning, the curriculum must encourage students to personally construct meaning through the practice and improvement of their thinking and reasoning; enter Philosophy for Children³⁶

School, in what concerns education, must turn to critical thinking. Lipman associates the unease of critical thinking with the search for knowledge, for wisdom.

³⁵ The main cognitive skills focused on under Philosophy for Children are: reasoning; questioning and investigation (research); development and formulation of concepts.

³⁶ MILLER, Chad: "The Impact of Philosophy for Children in a High School English Class" in SHEPHERD, Daniel: *Creative Engagements: Thinking with Children*, vol. 31, Inter-Disciplinary Press, Oxford, 2005, p.82.

In this way, Philosophy for Children is unequivocally justified, and additionally is centred around transversal, interdisciplinary subjects.

Every person should be capable and willing to make self-corrections to one's thinking.

According to Lipman, the best methodology for a human to learn how to think is the didactics of the research community, and this should be encouraged from an early age.

Converting the classroom into a community of inquiry in which students listen to one another with respect, build on one another's ideas, challenge one another to supply reasons for otherwise unsupported opinions, assist each other in drawing inferences from what has been said, and seek to identify one another's assumptions³⁷

The didactics is based in learning to think well through investigative dialogue. To cogitate is a holistic interdisciplinary action.

O diálogo socrático desenvolve-se por refutação ou interrogação (pergunta e resposta) investigando uma determinada tese. (...) O dialogar é uma forma de meditar, de refletir sobre uma série de problemas comuns³⁸

Through dialogue, and through reasoning, students build logically valid arguments. The student is led to cogitate for himself, in the various experiences of his daily life and whenever he is confronted with a problem, thus leading to questioning. Seeking answers for the emerging questions, the class/group in question is transformed in the "research community", thus allowing the students/subjects to expand and stimulate their capacity to cogitate imaginatively and critically.

The learner must take conscience that he is a part of a whole (class, working group,...) where he must respect others and be respected, to listen and to make himself heard, to be condescending, and thus his social life becomes much more pleasant.

To Lipman, through the "research community", subjects have the possibility of playing an important role, with social relations as a constant background. Lipman believes that following a "community", one develops group working skills, group cogitation, learns with the others, share reflections and values, form paradigms and models.

³⁷ LIPMAN, Matthew: *Thinking in Education*, Cambridge University Press, United States of America, 1991, p.15.

³⁸ PAVIANI, Jayme: *Filosofia e Método em Platão*, EDIPUCRS, Porto Alegre, 2001, pp. 40, 42.

Os valores individuais e coletivos, o diálogo, a solidariedade, a tolerância, o respeito, a ação e o trabalho em comunidade são conceitos sempre presentes na Filosofia com Crianças e Jovens³⁹

The research community should serve to encourage in subjects the competences which allow them to cogitate, critique, and question themselves, in a correct and assertive – though civil – way. Children are perfectly willing to dialogue, to converse, to communicate, and to laugh, but sometimes speak simultaneously, and might not hear what others are saying. Sometimes, even when children are speaking in an orderly manner, they might not listen to what others are saying. The research community helps/teaches subjects to question themselves and interact with each other's so as to listen and to listen knowingly, to respect each other, and always keeping in mind that all elements have a right to intervene.

But how should this research community be built? There are some key elements:

- cogitation;
- readiness for reasoning;
- mutual respect between all the participants;
- dialogue amongst the participants.

Without a properly consolidated community, it is not possible to ensure the steadiness of every child, adding to the fact that dialogue and discussions will be rudimentary.

The research community intends to create conditions for all participants to express their ideas and feelings, to listen and accept the judgements of others, which may differ from their own.

Through dialogue, the research community will, little by little, consolidate. And yet, one must pay attention as to how dialogues are established, that is, to be aware of when a child expresses his or her own opinions, when he or she merely copes others' attitudes and actions, giving up on itself and being completely influenced by others.

As Habermas states:

A insistência no termo “dialógico” provém do facto de ser condição *sine qua non*, a fim de que todos os afetados tenham um lugar na ação comunicativa; a participação no diálogo (...) é constitutiva da racionalização que se consegue através dele. (...) uma norma só pode aspirar ter validade quando todas as pessoas que afecta conseguem pôr-se de acordo⁴⁰

³⁹Ibidem, p.15.

⁴⁰ Coutinho, Maria de Sousa Pereira: *Racionalidade Comunicativa e Desenvolvimento Humano em Jürgen Habermas*, Edições Colibri, Lisboa, 2002, p. 310.

A proposta de Habermas aponta (...) para a participação de todos no discurso, dando importância fundamental à busca discursiva do melhor argumento: buscar a atitude realizadora de um participante na argumentação, tendo em vista a busca solidária de objetivos comuns. Isto é possível graças ao exercício de uma racionalidade reflexiva, crítica, comunicativa e solidária⁴¹

Habermas believes that one needs situations where all the participants have equal possibilities to take part in the discussion. It was fundamental to find a regulatory model that would force us to explain our beliefs to the widest possible audience, thus supporting the need for regulatory principles on our discussions. Habermas adopts a (re)constructionist point of view on the concept of understanding and states that:

os participantes podem se entender por cima dos limites dos mundos da vida divergentes, porque eles, com a visão de um mundo objetivo comum, se orientam pela exigência da verdade, isto é, da validade incondicional das suas afirmações⁴²

It is important that the different participants understand the rules for the Philosophy for Children session to be fruitful and function correctly. The Philosophy for Children session must be a place of excellence for debate where all participants intermingle, all play an active role and participate independently, while respecting and listening to others opinions'.

What we intend Philosophy for Children to be able to do is, through the research community⁴³, is to develop the introspective spirit of students/children, towards becoming freer, more independent, capable to think for themselves, cementing their own ideas and fostering critical judgements. The child mustn't be limited to copying others' behaviours and opinions; and should think for him or herself, effecting his or her own appreciation of things, and developing his or her thought, which will reflect on how the child sees the world, the others and his or herself.

Finally, one aims for the human being to think for itself, to face the community as a whole, where all play an active part, mutually respecting differences, and solving conflicts through previously pondered discussion which

⁴¹ Ibidem, p. 336.

⁴² HABERMAS, Jürgen: *Agir comunicativo e razão descentralizada*, Tempo Brasileiro, Rio de Janeiro, 2002, p.47.

⁴³ The Research community, as proposed by Peirce, also intends to expose subjects to error, so they may help each other with corrections. As Peirce argued, the critique mentality allows one to discover what is in error, showing us what is in fact correct. The critique mentality gives the human being better evaluation and investigation skills, allows greater knowledge and further competences.

aim to be understood by everyone. The goal is also the help the human being to reflect, to build judgements and decisions, that the subject may act better and with solid basing.

Usefulness of Philosophy for Children

Everything has a purpose, everything has a meaning. We all quest for a purpose. Things only have meaning for us after we get to know them, understand them, when they inhabit our mind and allow us to build and rebuild the puzzles we create at every moment. The unknown is an obscure and elusive place. We are all born ignorant; who amongst us cannot remember a time when we found objects around us and the deprivation this feeling entailed.

Nowadays we face a world in constant change, full of expectations, indetermination and perturbations. In this same world the importance of philosophy is increasingly questioned. However, philosophy emerges to clear our doubts and to fight conformity, leading to analysis, reflection and critique. Education must revolve around the philosophical attitude: and attitude of seeking, of discovery, of investigation, of problematization, attributing subjects an active and convincing role in society.

Falar sobre o pensamento reflexivo no quotidiano escolar se constitui, atualmente, em um viés dos pensares e fazeres educacionais que se tornou mais urgente e necessário nos tempos de transição que se vivencia na sociedade contemporânea, pois, faz-se necessário pessoas cada vez mais capazes de pensar de modo reflexivo a realidade na sua diversidade e complexidade, para a construção de uma prática educativa fundamentada, contrária àquela guiada pelo impulso, tradição e/ou autoridade⁴⁴

Today most countries are a democracy, and this brings out the need for critical thought in our subjects, the future citizens of society, and is therefore necessary for them to cogitate flexibly and consciously.

According to UNESCO, philosophy fosters democracy, is beneficial to society, contributes to peace and progress, and in that sense should occupy a prominent position in our educational system.

⁴⁴ MAZAI, Norberto: “*O Pensamento Reflexivo e sua Práxis no Cotidiano Escolar: uma aproximação entre Dewey e Lipman*”, p.1, available in www.derphilosopher.supralus.com/_in/articles.htm (last access May 23rd, 2013).

Sendo que uma Democracia, no verdadeiro sentido do termo, depende exclusivamente dos seus cidadãos, torna-se necessário, desde tenra idade, iniciar os indivíduos neste domínio, mostrando-lhes e demonstrando-lhes o seu papel na sociedade, possibilitando um maior e melhor desenvolvimento não só ao nível intelectual como também ao nível pessoal. O aluno aprenderá que faz parte de um grupo de trabalho dentro da sala de aula, na qual ele tem de escutar e ser escutado, respeitar e ser respeitado, (...) e aprender assim a viver em democracia⁴⁵

Philosophy, the activity of a critical mentality and autonomy, is essential to the search of stable answers to peace and development; philosophy builds relations between subjects and different cultures, and enables quality education for all.

a interação social e a comunicação desempenham um importante papel no desenvolvimento do pensamento e da aprendizagem infantis. (...) as interações sociais (sobretudo as que ocorrem entre as próprias crianças) podem facilitar o progresso no desenvolvimento, na medida em que a criança toma contato com outros pontos de vista e ideias conflituantes que talvez a levem a rever ou repensar as próprias ideias⁴⁶

We increasingly find amongst children a poverty in cogitation, and is urgent to encourage children and youngsters to think independently and without error.

Philosophy grows from a subject's ability to reveal his thoughts, motives, ideas, judgements, and behaviours, acting as further incentive for the subject to actively participate in social relations.

A filosofia ajuda-nos a entender o nosso lugar no mundo e a forma de o tornar mais justo e solidário. (...) O desenvolvimento do indivíduo e da sociedade também passa pela forma como construímos o nosso pensamento e a nossa linguagem. Para eles, o exercício de uma educação filosófica permite, desde cedo, preparar as crianças e os jovens para uma participação competente na sociedade, sustentada na promoção e valorização de um pensamento *crítico, criativo e eticamente responsável*⁴⁷

⁴⁵ ASSUNÇÃO, Susana: *Filosofia com Crianças e Jovens – uma proposta de Educação do pensar como um lugar-comum*, Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto, Porto, 2010, p.15.

⁴⁶ FONTES, Martins: *Como aprendem as crianças a pensar*, Livraria Martins, São Paulo, 1996, p.28.

⁴⁷ GUEDES, António José Oliveira, REGO, Miguel Ángel Santos: “Filosofia para Crianças no Contexto Educativo Português”, *Revista Ibero-americana de Educação (RIE versão digital)*, Boletín 58/3, 2012, PP. 4-5, available in www.rieoei.org/deloslectores/4377Oliveira.pdf (last access February 23rd, 2013).

And so one wants to jostle educational habits towards thinking introspectively, towards a more critical education, freeing the instructor and placing the instructed not merely as a spectator, but as an active and cooperating participant in society. The teacher should bring the subjects under study closer to the day living of students, and to the reality which they live in.

Hence the importance of Philosophy for Children, in the sense of having children and youngsters more capable of cogitation, of thinking for themselves, and it is, ultimately, not to merely seek to consolidate the cognitive potential of children, but to, at the same time, foster the development of more capable human beings, as a prelude to a better thinking of, and towards, the future, so turning them into humans which are more prone to spend time thinking, who are more communicative, more introspective, more responsible as citizens and with a better deliberation skills.

We increasingly find children's and students' behaviours to be standardized.

What the school does succeed in introducing into the child is (...) a distrust of any intellectual powers of his own other than what it takes to cope with problems formulated and assigned to him by others (...) The child distrusts not only his own intellectual capacities, but those of his classmates as well⁴⁸

It is urgent to implement into educational fields the germ of philosophy, where the child/student and the instructor both play an active, creative, free and independent role in the edification of thought and knowledge, and the earlier it is done, the bigger and better will be the achieved results.

The school performance of students is drifting towards the unreal and, beyond that, one sees that school seems to be getting worse at preparing students for the different obstacles in society. It is rarer to find amongst students acts of citizenship. Philosophy for Children seeks to negate these deficits, leading the students to live their citizenship ever earlier, to play an active role in the construction of society, to question themselves, to present solutions, to reflect, to learn others' points of view, to respect and accept differences, to listen and to make themselves heard; to avoid imitation and conformance "just because".

Schools are currently working with overloaded classes, exhausted teachers, desperate parents. What can philosophy do here? We must re-think the kind of society we want to live in, lest the democratic/egalitarian society be at risk. We must raise children, tomorrow's adults, to be more introspective, freer, to have

⁴⁸ LIPMAN, Matthew: *Thinking Children and Education*, Kendall Hall Publishing, Iowa, 1993, pp. 376/377.

their own voice, to take chances, to think for themselves, to be unafraid of “ridicule”. Wonsovicz states that:

temos de ir à praça pública, de ouvir o ruído do mundo e submeter-nos à prova da comunicação; precisamos correr o risco de nos expormos, de intervir no mundo como sujeitos pensantes e, quando necessário, de tomar partido, sobretudo quando a justiça, a liberdade e a verdade estiverem ameaçadas ou desrespeitadas⁴⁹

The subject must leave the comfort zone, to alienate himself, to abstract from his usual perception schemes, and to listen to others. All this is possible through Philosophy for Children.

Education is in a crisis. The media reminds us of this every day with stories documenting recent test scores, annual yearly reports and teacher layoffs. However, the problem is much larger than these reported or any that lie in problems of funding, standards implementation or literacy scores. Classrooms around the country are filled with bored, apathetic and unmotivated students who see little meaning or usefulness in school. The purpose of school has become solely an extrinsic one; “I have to go to school so I can get a good job.” Schools must move from being institutions that give students extrinsic meanings to institutions that provide students with the necessary circumstances and tools that will allow each to personally construct meaning in their own learning and lives⁵⁰

The paradigm of today's society is turning out to be a challenge to parents/educators/ teachers: the upbringing of subjects who are capable of crystallizing information into knowledge and into subsequent actions.

Elementary propagation of knowledge is no longer enough. Education must now provide subjects with competences with which, from what has been done before, can form new knowledge, expand their creativity, face new challenges, cross-reference information, and push back their limitations.

There is a need to discover circumstances and possibilities which will allow children, with their instinctive curiosity and natural desire for meaning and for knowledge, to acquire the predetermined trail, finding by themselves the

⁴⁹ Wonsovicz, Silvio: “Algumas reflexões sobre o ensinar a pensar, por meio da Filosofia, no Brasil” in KOHAN, Walter O., LEAL, Bernardina: *Filosofia para crianças em debate*, vol.IV, Editora Vozes, Petrópolis, 1999, p.261.

⁵⁰ MILLER, Chad: “The Impact of Philosophy for Children in a High School English Class” in SHEPHERD, Daniel: *Creative Engagements: Thinking with Children*, vol. 31, Inter-Disciplinary Press, Oxford, 2005, p. 81.

meaning of a given reality. What one aspires to is not for children to limit themselves to act and grasp the meaning of things according to facts presented by instructors, parents, educators,..., but rather that, necessarily, children are able to cogitate by themselves – for cogitating is the main enabler for the discovery of meaning.

Philosophy for Children intends to initiate children and youngsters in the battle for free and cooperative organization of meanings. Thinking, talking, and acting are taken, essentially, as new ways to be and to be part of the world. The purpose is to help them become Men capable of offering their enriching individual contribution towards the constant edification of the fundamental references for human existence.

Present reality leads to clashes of a cultural, political, social, religious,..., nature. We should actively participate in the resolution of these conflicts rather than just wait for others to do it for us. Children intuitively and spontaneously question themselves about everything around them, in an effort to find meaning for reality (and here we see evidence of the typical philosophical attitude.) Through this process they can more easily prevail and conquer these battles.

The overly obvious connection between philosophy, education, and children, should cause a justified change in society's educative context, so as to make this union stronger and even more obvious.

A filosofia ajuda-nos a entender o nosso lugar no mundo e a forma de o tornar mais justo e solidário. (...) O desenvolvimento do indivíduo e da sociedade também passa pela forma como construímos o nosso pensamento e a nossa linguagem. Para eles, o exercício de uma educação filosófica permite, desde cedo, preparar as crianças e os jovens para uma participação competente na sociedade, sustentada na promoção e valorização de um pensamento *crítico, criativo e eticamente responsável*⁵¹

PFC in centred, as previously stated, around an education towards thinking. Why is such an education pertinent in modern times?

What we want if for children to participate in the world as authors, not merely as readers; to be free and independent thinkers, to cogitate by themselves, to not “just copy others”. As stated by Wonsovicz:

⁵¹GUEDES, António José Oliveira, REGO, Miguel Ángel Santos: “Filosofia para Crianças no Contexto Educativo Português”, *Revista Ibero-americana de Educação (RIE versão digital)*, Boletín 58/3, 2012, pags.4/5, available in www.rioei.org/deloslectores/4377Oliveira.pdf (last access February 23rd, 2013).

a filosofia é o que permite desenvolver melhor a mente através do raciocínio aperfeiçoado e da formação de conceitos; pensar com melhor qualidade significa pensar melhor a linguagem, aprimorar o raciocínio⁵²

a filosofia é indispensável para o desenvolvimento criativo, crítico, criterioso e questionador das crianças⁵³

The purpose, and what we want from schools/society for our children and youngsters is to produce thoughts qualitatively. Educating towards thought, towards the edification of citizenship, is possible only through questioning, analysis, research, searching and discovering.

A escola deve assumir-se como o lugar privilegiado para promoção e construção dessa cidadania que se vê reforçada pela inclusão da Filosofia (...). A alfabetização da cidadania e o seu amadurecimento, constrói-se pela consolidação progressiva de um conjunto de destrezas cognitivas, relacionais e afetivas que são promovidas pela Filosofia para Crianças⁵⁴

Philosophy for Children intends to help children and youngsters to live in society democratically; it drives subjects to question about fundamental values.

É um projeto que tem suscitado um interesse e um desenvolvimento quantitativo constante no campo educativo, desde que surgiu a primeira novela filosófica; (...) uma oportunidade para pensar a filosofia e a educação. A filosofia, o exercício do questionamento em investigação, é uma necessidade de todos, isto é, ensinar e aprender a problematizar o que parece evidente; (...) é um projeto que deseja fundamentar o sentido da vida na sua plenitude⁵⁵

In PFC, our ambition is to adequately expand reasoning skills and the student's ability to perform good judgements/evaluations as early as the first years of school.

⁵² Wonsovicz, Silvio: "Algumas reflexões sobre o ensinar a pensar, por meio da Filosofia, no Brasil" in KOHAN, Walter O., LEAL, Bernardina: *Filosofia para crianças em debate*, vol.IV, Editora Vozes, Petrópolis, 1999, p.254.

⁵³ Ibidem, p.256

⁵⁴ Ibidem, p.5.

⁵⁵ LIMA, Denise Maria Domingues: *Filosofia para Crianças: uma Abordagem Crítica dentro da Filosofia da Educação*, Universidade do Minho, Braga, 2004, pp.146-147.

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