

Philosophy for children in South African schools: its role for citizens-in-waiting

Abstract

Historically, the concept 'child' has a Lockean (1960) connotation, as empty slates new born infants, are considered weak and helpless, until the improvement of growth and age has removed this deficient state of childhood. In modern societies, including South Africa, children are still viewed as citizens-in-waiting, and as citizens who need to be inducted into their future role. This deficit model of childhood is reflected in the construction of democratic citizenship education in post-apartheid South Africa. In this article we present a theoretical justification for Philosophy for Children (P4C) as an avenue to individual enlightenment i.e., education that entails the development of a child's mind, of rationality or the capacity to think. In the light of a Philosophy for Children agenda as an educational pedagogy, we argue that doing philosophy with children starting from an early age has a special significance in education for democratic citizenship in post-apartheid South Africa.

Keywords: philosophy for children, education, democracy, citizenship, deliberation, community of enquiry

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Introduction

There can be no [...] liberty without virtue, no virtue without citizens; create citizens, and you have everything you need; without them you have nothing but debased slaves, from the rulers of the State downwards. To form citizens is not the work of a day, and in order to have men [and women] it is necessary to educate them when they are children (Rousseau, 1996a, p. 147).

Rousseau presents an argument for the need to Educate for Citizenship starting from an early age whether in well-established democracies, or in those societies in transition to democracy. Put differently, the inability to ‘develop’ a citizen, a child’s ability and inclination to *act* for him-/herself gives rise to slavish obedience to the state. In South Africa’s Constitutional Democracy, the term citizenship reflects two distinct formulations; citizenship as a legal status (to be a citizen) and citizenship as a practice (to act as a citizen). In other words, to be a child means to enjoy the rights, privileges and benefits of citizenship. An objection might be raised that children are young with an insufficiently developed sense of responsibility to participate in political and socio-economic issues on equal terms with adults, but here is a powerful statement by Rousseau in support of Education for Citizenship from childhood onwards. Education for democratic citizenship is not concerned with the nature of adulthood *vis-à-vis* childhood or adolescence. Instead its concern is with the Republic of South Africa’s Constitution’s (1996) provision for every citizen (this includes both children and adults) the right to, access, defend and preserve individual liberties and appeal to the public good. In the light of Rousseau’s assertion, this article discusses, not only, Philosophy for Children as a vehicle to create democratic citizens, but it also addresses philosophical and pedagogical questions:

- What are the primary aims (and conceptions) of education – and by implication of citizenship education?
- What can Philosophy for Children offer as an educational pedagogy that emphasises democratic principles?
- In the case of South Africa, is post-apartheid education for democratic citizens able to foster active, critical and inquiring children between the age of 7 and 18?
- What can Philosophy for Children contribute to build, strengthen and consolidate common South African citizenship?

Aims and conceptions of education: problems and virtues

What should be the aims and conceptions of education, and, by implication, of democratic citizenship education? According to Hamm (1989) there are three distinct, but intertwined understandings of the concept of education:

1. The sociological view of education places an emphasis on socialising the child into the existing culture, e.g. family norms and practices;

2. The institutional notion refers to the development of a person, as a result of influences from schools and other formal institutions, e.g. whatever goes on in schools is something that exists in tandem with the official goals of schooling; and
3. The general enlightenment idea, which does not necessarily refer to socialisation or the attendance of formal schooling.

Instead, education is a form of human achievement involving the development of the mind. Hamm's conceptions of education are exemplified by Plato's (1994) political authority, Locke's (1960) family authority and Mill's (1989) universal position, which is concerned with general enlightenment. According to Plato (1994), the State uses its political authority to educate the child (referring to education for guardianship) to desire not only what is good for themselves, but for their society, so as to pursue the good of all people. Plato (1994) writes that it is one of the State's chief responsibilities to inculcate in school children loyalty to the values of the State so that they "hear only morally sound stories, which will help them gain the appropriate social attitudes, such as [...] the desire for political unity", and so on (p. 70).

In South African schools, the State as the 'political' parent of all its school children (7 to 18 years of age), hopes to foster good citizenship, and what the former Head of State Thabo Mbeki called a 'new patriotism' (Department of Education, 2001, p. 15). As this article will show, when the State School Pledge² works explicitly with the values enshrined in the Constitution it speaks to children of their duty to obey, and claims also its right to rule them. The School Pledge creates the conditions under which its children are bound to honour and obey the State. In so doing, the State claims its right to rule over South African children. Plato's political authority and its notion of education for citizenship are open to a number of objections in the South African context; 1) the difficulty in determining the best constitution for a South African society, and the correct conception of 'good' for its children; 2) the State's position as sufficiently wise and conscious to define the common good; and 3) its power to promote individual autonomy, a citizen's ability and inclination to 'act' for him-/herself. Let us turn our attention to Locke's ontological claim, and his argument that children are not born in a state of freedom and equality.

John Locke's (1960) utilitarian theory places educational authority exclusively in the hands of parents. The state of nature, says Locke, is first a state of perfect freedom where people are in

[...] possession of their Strength and Reason [...] capable to provide [their] own support and preservation, and govern [their] actions according to the dictates of the Law of Reason which God had implanted in [them] (p. 305, addition ours).

Second, it is a state of equality where "power and jurisdiction is reciprocal – [there is] no relationship of subordination or subjection" (p. 304). According to Locke (1960), children are not born in this state of equality because they are deemed newborn infants, helpless and weak. However, our definition of school children as free, equal participants is different from Locke's deficit model. To counter the defects of this

imperfect state all parents are, by law of nature, under an obligation to preserve, nourish and educate their children, by taking care of their offspring during the imperfect state of childhood. In turn, children have a perpetual obligation of honouring their parents. According to Gereluk (2010) three common arguments are given for increasing natural parental rights in their children's schooling:

- Parents are the best in protecting their own children's interests;
- Parents have a natural right to raise children congruent to their norms and values; and
- If the State believes in freedom of the individual, then it must not interfere with the rights of parents to pass their values and beliefs on to their children (p. 126-128).

There are weaknesses in Locke's parental theory:

1. Parents might not have the necessary knowledge and skills to preserve, nourish and educate their children; and
2. Parental power might also minimise a child's exposure to alternative values, beliefs and experiences that are essential for the child's development; education not controlled by parents can provide opportunities for the development of deliberation and critical judgement to occur;
3. Parental rights are likely to breed sectarianism, as well as localised and isolated forms of knowledge and education; and
4. This parent-child relationship is likely to create and promote forms of inequalities, which is particularly problematic in South African schools given the country's past. Let us turn our focus to Mill's (1989) universal education standards that sought to develop a child's mind, through rationality or the capacity to think.

John Stuart Mill's (1989) theory refuses to rest educational authority in any hands without the assurance that the choices of children will not be prejudiced in favour of some ways of life as opposed to others. At the centre of Mill's theory of education is the liberty principle, which holds that the individual is not accountable to the State or Society for his/her actions, in so far as these concern the interests of no person but himself/herself:

It is in the case of children, that misapplied notions of liberty are a real obstacle to the fulfilment by the State of its duties [...] so much less do the generality of mankind value liberty than power [...] that to bring a child into existence without a fair prospect of being able, not only to provide food for its body, but instruction and training for its mind, is a moral crime, both against the unfortunate offspring and against society; and that if the parent does not fulfil this obligation, the State ought to see it fulfilled, at the charge, as far as possible, of the parent (p. 105).

There are three points worth noting about Mill's liberty principle. Firstly, children (human beings in general) have absolute individuality and absolute freedom; ought to be able to do, pretty much, whatever they desire. Secondly, a parent is to be compelled to guarantee a child's right to education, in order to develop children into rational and

moral human beings. Thirdly, the overarching aim of education is the development of children, which entails the development of the mind, of rationality and other receptive forms that distinguish one as being human. Furthermore, either State or parental power can be justified on the basis that they promote children's natural liberties in the medium to long-term.

However, it is our contention that Education for Democratic Citizenship that conditions, indoctrinates and brainwashes school children is ruled out on ethical and reasonable grounds because it is likely to dispel any hope of:

- Safeguarding liberty principles in schools, a child's ability and inclination to act for him-/herself; and
- Infringing upon a child's growth and development i.e., the mind, rationality or the capacity to think; and creating communities of enquiry – 'free public spaces' where deliberators are moral and political equal agents.

On this basis, we make the assertion that the principal concern of education, and by implication Education for Democratic Citizenship in South African schools, should be the development of the mind, i.e. the capacity of children to think, reason and act by themselves. In Hamm's (1989) words,

[...] education is the achievement of a desirable state of mind characterised by knowledge and understanding in breadth and depth with cognitive perspective and by corresponding appropriate emotions and attitudes, these brought about, deliberately in a manner not to infringe upon the voluntariness and wittingness on the part of the learner (p. 38-39).

In other words, Hamm's basic aim of schools is the pursuit of general enlightenment. At the same time, we note that State schooling and parents' obligation to take care of their offspring during the imperfect state of childhood can indeed contribute to children's education as a form of general enlightenment. For example, one can go to school without acquiring any knowledge or understanding. Again, one can also grow up in a particular traditional form of life without the person developing a broader sense of the reality of life. In brief, the primary aims of education and, by implication, education for democratic citizens are to; 1) promote children's autonomy, as well as their ability and inclination to 'act' for themselves; and 2) guarantee children the freedom to opt out of State or parental conditioning, indoctrination and brainwashing. The aims and conceptions of education, whether State, parent or individual choice should place the development of democratic citizenship at its centre.

Philosophy for Children: Its role in democratic participation

Historically, Philosophy for Children has served to foster a progressive educational agenda, and thinkers in support of it have often argued that it seeks to prepare children for citizenship within a democratic society (Fisher, 2007; Vansieleghem, 2005). Matthew Lipman has posited that, as a programme, Philosophy for Children aims at improving the conditions of teaching and thinking in educational systems (1991). He

has also suggested that the goal of the program is helping children learn how to think by themselves. Lipman (2003) declares:

If the schools could do more than teach children to exercise better judgement, it would protect them against those who would inflame them with prejudice and manipulate them through indoctrination. It would make them better producers and consumers, better citizens and better parents (p. 273).

In effect the central focus of doing philosophy with children is improving reasoning ability, developing creativity and augmenting critical thinking. This assertion is in line with Hamm's primary purpose of education, that is, the pursuit of general enlightenment. Like Dewey (1966), Lipman emphasises that introducing children to the activity of philosophising strengthens thinking ability and prepares children to function in a democratic society where they will deal with problem-solving, making intelligent and informed decisions and acting autonomously. In addition, it is by engaging in a communal search for understanding, based on a belief that mutual understanding of community members across differences of opinion and diversity of interest through dialogue and discussion (Vansieleghem, 2006), that a democratic ethos is fostered in children at an early age. Such a background has driven the declaration that

[...] the community of enquiry reflects democracy and initiates children into the principles and values of this paradigm. [...] By exercising in school freedom of thought and action, democracy will become their way of living when they become active adults within their society (Sharp, 1999, p. 12).

Doing philosophy with children is a holistic dynamic approach, which promotes active, critical and inquiring minds. To that end, in order to achieve these goals, schools should involve building what Charles S. Peirce coined a 'community of inquiry'. By community, Dewey (1966) refers to a group of like-minded but diverse individuals who come together around a common concern over time. Such a community is a democratic society of members who, together figure out challenges, plan and solve problems that arise from their world. Schools form one of those communities wherein children can be encouraged to think for themselves. As Vansieleghem rightly puts it, "philosophy offers the possibility to think autonomously by supplying instruments which enable the individual to question the others and the self" (2006, p. 177). As Lipman and his contemporaries in the Philosophy for Children field have recommended, in order for children to do philosophy they should be a community of inquirers in which individuals develop caring, reasonable, and autonomous interconnectedness with others; a small community characterised by a dynamic peer co-operation (Daniel, 2001; Schleifer, Daniel, Lafortune & Pallascio, 1999) in which autonomy leads up to interdependence. Referring to community, Lipman (1995) explains that 'community' in community of inquiry stresses,

[...] the social, affective, and creative aspects of the process. Social because the community's members recognise their interdependence, and at the same time acknowledge each other's distinctive points of view and perspectives. Affective, because participants in such communities care for each other and for the procedures of inquiry and creative because such communities encourage participants to think for themselves-independently, imaginatively, and with originality (quoted in Schleifer, 1996, p. 97).

The introduction of Philosophy for Children through the pedagogy of community of enquiry has the potential to develop in young citizens the attitudes, orientations and dispositions that will enhance their lives as democratic participants, by encouraging their active engagement in communal life. Philosophy for Children is a pedagogy that integrates the methods and content of philosophy and the pragmatist ideal of the community of enquiry, in order to facilitate reflective thinking skills, as well as the social skills and attitudes necessary for democratic citizenship. According to Lipman and Naji (2003), community of enquiry is a

[...] methodology, involving mutual criticism and scrupulously careful voicing of opinions and judgement, which educators recognise as an educational approach that prepares children to become citizens in a democracy (Lipman & Naji, 2003, n.p.).

By drawing on Dewey's notion of community, as depicted in this section, we hope – in the process of this article – to lay the basis for building classroom communities of inquiry appropriate to the South African context. We propose a more democratic way of making democracy the prevailing doctrine in South Africa by adopting this notion of the community of enquiry. At this point, the attention turns to the modern theories of democracy that shed light on the educational benefits that comes with treating children as fellow citizens or members of democratic societies.

In *The Social Contract*, John Rousseau's (1968) theory of participatory democracy is designed to develop the personal and public dimensions of Education for Democratic Citizenship in three ways; 1) participation increases individual freedom by enabling the child to be (and remain) his/her own master; 2) a participatory process ensures that all children are equally dependent on each other and equally subject to the law; and 3) participation has an integrative function; it increases the feeling among children that they belong to their community. The major implication of Rousseau's theory of participatory democracy for the education of children is that it promises to teach them how to preserve individual liberties and appeal to the public good. This implies that unless children are educated to contribute both to their personal and public dimensions of citizenship, i.e. to develop their characters along with taking part in matters concerning the State the realisation of their status as citizens will remain a mirage. Rousseau's argument, which centres on the pursuit of the public good and individual freedom, had an influence on a number of theorists.

In his essay 'Representative Government' (1975), Mill claims that it is only within a context of popular participatory institutions or large-scale society that one sees an active type of character fostered:

The active, self-help character is not only the best, but is the likeliest to acquire all that is really excellent. The private citizen is called upon to weigh interests not his own; to be guided, in case of conflicting claims, by another rule than his private partialities to apply at every turn, principles and maxims which have for their reason of existence the common good. He is made to feel himself one of the public and whatever is for their benefit to be for his benefit (Mill, 1975, p. 340-341).

For this reason, Mill's preferred form of government is to be judged by its effects on citizens, including children, by determining whether they are able to transcend their subjective, self-regarding perspective and take the public interest into account. For example, the South African Schools Act (1996) allows children to participate in school governance. Although she is not writing about South Africa, Pateman (1970) maintains that a democratic institution is more than likely to force an individual "to widen his horizons and take the public interest into account" (p. 30). There is a stress here on practising popular government at local level, as an enabling condition for participation on a large scale. Although Rousseau and Mill are not writing about Philosophy for Children, their proposal that participation of children in school government is likely to develop active characters, is an assertion that is compatible with the philosophy for children agenda. Drawing from Rousseau and Mill's work, the connection between 'philosophy' and 'children' becomes evident given that participatory institutions are able to foster active, critical and inquiring children able to contribute to the general good. This personal development from egoism to autonomy enables children to become free and fulfilled beings. It is necessary, as this juncture, to evaluate recently proposed compulsory citizenship education initiatives, aiming to promote the development of democratic children in South African schools.

Philosophy for Children: Critical analysis of education policy

The Bill of Responsibilities³ (2008) stipulates the following:

The right to citizenship expects that each of us will be a good and loyal South African citizen. This means that we are responsible for: obeying the laws of our country, ensuring that others do so as well, and contributing in every possible way to making South Africa a great country. [...] I accept the call of this Bill of Responsibilities, and commit to taking my rightful place as an active, responsible citizen of South Africa. By assuming these responsibilities I will contribute to building the kind of society, which will make me proud to be a South African (Department of Education, 2008, p. 4-5).

The Bill seeks to inculcate in school children loyalty to the values consistent with the Constitution of Republic of South Africa. However, Education for Democratic Citizenship approach is also likely to promote loyalty using democratic means. In addition, the Bill's concept of 'good' and 'loyal' citizenship paints the picture of a child who, in the absence of explicit exhortation, is incapable of acting in a socially and morally responsible manner. The language of 'obedience' is highly revealing given that the words 'good' and 'loyal' are not defined or elaborated upon. Furthermore, school children are urged to accept and commit themselves to what is, in effect, an impoverished sense of citizenship. On the whole, the language of 'expectation', 'acceptance' and 'commitment' manifest in these prescriptions is not appropriate for a democratic South Africa. The Bill is likely to make South African schools the instruments of slavish obedience to the State, as Rousseau cautioned us. In his article, 'Schools are bad places for kids', Holt (1974) asks whether schools "are trying to raise sheep – timid, docile, easily driven or led – or free men?" (p. 43). With regard to South Africa, we see the Bill is intended to make school children "a flock of sheep

innocently nibbling the grass side by side” (Mill, 1975, p. 345). If what the DoE desires is sheep, namely docile and unquestioning dependents, the Bill as part of a compulsory curriculum subject would be the appropriate way of preparing South African children for citizenship. It follows that the Bill of Responsibilities is inclined to demand, if not dictate, unquestioning obedience from learners in South African schools. The Bill is not a democratic approach to cultivating democracy, while by using Philosophy for Children methods Education for Democratic Citizenship is a democratic undertaking. We maintain that although the Bill claims to promote an ‘active, responsible citizen’, in the final analysis it sets out to foster inactive, obedient and passive South African schoolchildren. The national Schools Pledge (2008) has been proposed for daily recitation at assemblies and memorisation in classrooms.

The national School Pledge (2008) reads:

We, the youth of South Africa, recognising the injustices of our past, honour those who suffered and sacrificed for justice and freedom. We will respect and protect the dignity of each person and stand up for justice. We sincerely declare that we shall uphold the rights and values of our Constitution and promise to act in accordance with the duties and responsibilities that flow from these rights. !ke e: / xarra // ke [written in the language of the /Xam San people, which literally means, diverse people unite] Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika [God bless Africa] (Department of Education, 2008, addition ours).

The School Pledge is noble and inspirational in that firstly, it calls on the children to acknowledge the injustices of the past; and secondly, honours the heroes and heroines who endured suffering and sacrifice for justice, democracy and citizens’ rights in South Africa. Against this background, the words of the Pledge are meant to evoke national pride and promote nation-building and common South African citizenship. In terms of citizenship, it might be said that the document is crafted with the aim of producing informed and thoughtful South African children. In support of this claim, alongside the vow of allegiance, the national anthem is taught and sung in South African schools. However, similar to the Bill, the patriotic School Pledge is likely to promote obedience, if not unquestioning loyalty because mere repetition of lines contained in the Pledge does not teach democracy.

The most notable objection is that school children will have to recite and memorise the Pledge. It would appear, then, that the mere recitation of the Pledge’s words undermines the central focus of doing philosophy with children, that is, improving reasoning ability, developing creativity and augmenting critical thinking among children. Although he does not write about the South African pledge, the School Pledge infringement with individual autonomy is succinctly evoked by Gatto (1993) when he writes:

Our system of government school destroys both mind and character. It prevents the formation of the most precious resource of all – a self. To have a self you can trust it must be singular, it must be bold, it must be brave, resourceful, strong, self-reliant, unfettered. Does anyone [...] think government schools teach such things? (cited in Davie, 2005, p. 18).

Gatto’s quotation alerts us to a system of government that lacks a holistic approach to educate its citizens, school children to be precise, about what it means

to be democratic. In South Africa, as elsewhere, a government's holistic undertaking would include an Education for Citizenship that seeks to develop active characters that contribute to the common welfare of South African society. The well-rounded South African citizen of the future is not merely a historically aware child, but an active, informed and critical individual. On the contrary, the pledge is likely to lead to unreflective socialisation through the teaching of social honour in South African schools. A more damaging outcome would be the reinforcement of an unquestioning and uncritical attitude to the values that guide South African social interaction, which will amount to a socialisation into unthinking compliance, if not unreflective patriotism. We contend that the values which South Africans, in general, and school children, in particular, have desired for generations – freedom, independence and critical thinking – are not consistent with children repeating lines in an habitual manner. This conception of learning endorses rote compliance to the detriment of a free, independent and critical society towards which South African people aspire. If we are to reify our Constitution and our Bill of Rights rather than just hear it interpreted for school children, the DoE's responsibility will be to teach South African children to think, and not to impose rote compliance or to indoctrinate them. The values prescribed and enforced in the Bill of Responsibilities and the School Pledge run the risk of closing down, rather than opening up, a meaningful debate about values that South Africans have desired for generations, and still aspire to.

In Benhabib's (1996) deliberative model of democracy public dialogues result from free and unconstrained deliberation about matters of common interest. According to the deliberative model of democracy:

The institutions of this polity are so arranged that what is considered in the common interest of all results from processes of collective deliberation conducted rationally and fairly among free and equal individuals. The more collective decision-making processes approximate this model the more [it] increases the presumption of their legitimacy and rationality (Benhabib, 1996, p. 69, addition ours).

Similar to the Peirce notion of community of inquiry, Benhabib's model seeks to educate citizens by promoting public dialogue among free and equal deliberators. In other words, Philosophy for Children in South Africa can promote the development of democratic citizenship by teaching children to talk, given that talk is fundamental to democratic citizenship. Benhabib's version of deliberative democracy promises to educate children by: 1) treating all school children as moral and political equals. 2) teaching them practical reasoning; moral equality, freedom and respect among deliberators; 3) learning to speak across the age divide; and 4) building friendship and active, viable communities. Benhabib's deliberative model of democracy is likely to promote active, critical enquiring children in South Africa. Sadly, post-apartheid education for democratic children, is unlikely to promote the development of democratic citizenship, at least not by means of the 'tools' discussed above (the Bill of Responsibilities, the Schools' Pledge, etc.). If this is correct, what can Philosophy for Children contribute to build, strengthen and consolidate common South African citizenship?

Philosophy for Children: The community of inquiry for democracy⁴

There appears to be a general agreement among scholars in Philosophy for Children that one of the virtues of a community of inquiry as an educational pedagogy, is that, it promotes democratic behaviour in learners, thus it deserves to be considered an adequate form of democratic education (see Sharp, 1994; Lipman, 1998, Splitter, 1997). While the approach has been tried and tested in a number of countries outside Africa, its application remains to be empirically explored in the South African context. Such a strong presupposition deserves our careful evaluation and this is the ultimate purpose of this section. Lipman (1998) and Sharp (1994) contend that building classroom communities of inquiry engages children in an educational process that enhances democratic behaviour and disposition and in the process the community of inquiry becomes a proper model of democratic education in South Africa. Based on the foregoing we propose that the list of values and behaviours below will serve the minimalist conception of the philosophical community of inquiry. But the question is: what can the philosophical community of children as inquirers contribute in fostering democratic principles in the classroom and in South African society at large?

Values and corresponding behaviours of the community of inquiry

Community	Inquiry
Basic values:	Basic values:
Participation	Curiosity
Respect	Creativity
Empathy	Reasoning
Equality	Freedom
	Pluralism
	Fallibility
Corresponding behaviours	Corresponding behaviours
Sharing experiences and thoughts	Questioning
Actively listening	Minimising irrational moves
Being civil	Expressing one's belief and opinions
Showing support	Being open-minded
Communicating with all participants	Being tolerant
Trusting	Self-correcting
	Striving for clarity

(Adopted from Cevallos-Estarellas, P. & Sigurdardottir, 2000, p. 45).

The above summarises what goes on in an inquiring community especially in a classroom setting. But, how does one get children to participate in classroom communities of enquiry? Within a classroom context, communities of inquiry require that while a teacher is responsible for opening up dialogue among children, every

member of the community has the right to question, to interrogate and to open debate or determine the agenda about matters of common concern. Although the author is not writing about South African schools, Sharp (1994) maintains that “[...] the classroom community of inquiry is an educational means of furthering the sense of community [...] a precondition for actively participating in a democratic society” (p. 31). In a community of inquiry, learners are taught to use logic and evidence to produce a rational position, to present their positions to their (presumed equal) peers, to exchange views fruitfully with them, and to come to a considered conclusion as a result of the evaluation of competing propositions.

The table above is designed to show that at the centre of the community of inquiry are values committed to the possibility of discursive inquiry in which members freely and collectively work together to deliberate on matters that affect them be they social, practical or purely intellectual. Such experiences of participation in classroom communities of enquiry are especially empowering for children, helping them to understand that participation is a worthwhile effort. The deliberation process approved by participatory democracy also prepares a common ground for different individuals with different interests, aptitudes and persuasions, it challenges the world and searches for meaning for the betterment of human life. In both well-established and newly formed democracies, there is a need for children to experience the educational benefits of deliberative democracy as part of democratic citizenship education in South African schools. In those countries facing internal conflict and tensions that threaten democracy, such experiences take on an even greater significance. Children need opportunities to learn what their rights and duties are, how their freedom is limited by the rights and freedoms of others and how their actions can affect the rights of others.

We take a more cautious approach to this assertion although we grant that the classroom community of inquiry is a relatively value-free setting, just like the conception of participatory democracy. The major point of separation between the classroom community of inquiry and participatory democracy is that the former tends to be purely intellectual with nothing in the larger society to act out. Yes the community might deliberate for purposes of conceptual clarification, or for discovering a new perspective, and yes sometimes the inquiry leads to a conclusion about the topic at hand (Lipman, 1991), but, what in practice the discursive classroom community of inquiry can offer remains an unanswered question and this is yet to be tested in practice.

We agree with Barber (1984) that activism is at the heart of participatory democracy and through it citizens must understand what they want their world to be like so that they can transform it and head towards their ideal world. In a similar vein, we attempt to make the case that through participation in a philosophical community of inquiry, South African children are familiarised with the deliberation process, although we argue that a proactive component needs to be added to it. South African children have to be shown how the process of inquiry should help them to take their places as democratic citizens. While this might sound a big challenge as critical analysis of South African education policy revealed earlier, philosophical community of inquiry

does not expect children to voice their views about how it should be run. On a small scale schools should initiate children in developing the virtues and dispositions of a deliberative democracy that the community of inquiry seeks to attain. Philosophy for Children provides tools to get children/learners to participate, to ‘open’ up, and to assume public and explicit ownership of thoughts, ideas and suggestions. For example the community of philosophical inquiry provides for the inclusivity of all children including the disabled, the hypersensitive and children in difficult situations or those who struggle at school. By allowing children as young citizens in deliberative moves as in a community of inquiry, it is hoped that they will be agents in promoting the growth and development of the young democracy South Africa is.

Conclusion

What are the primary aims of education, and, by implication, education for democratic children? In philosophy of education circles, the institutional, sociological and general enlightenment uses of education are not regarded as incompatible but, rather, as intimately and reciprocally linked. However, from a Philosophy for Children perspective, the primary purpose of education involves the pursuit of general enlightenment, i.e., the development of children, which entails the development of a child’s mind, of rationality or the capacity to think. Philosophy for Children as an educational pedagogy constitutes the potential to educate for citizenship in a democratic society, because through participation in it children found a ‘free space’ that is likely to produce active, informed and critical South Africa citizenry. Unfortunately, the Bill of Responsibilities and the national School Pledge conception of education for democratic children are likely to produce obedient and loyal citizens, not active, critical and inquiring South African citizens. Philosophy for Children as an educational pedagogy seeks to cultivate school children that acknowledge and practice deliberation in South African schools. Only Philosophy for Children through a community of enquiry classroom practice is likely to challenge the Lockean deficit model of childhood, as reflected in post-apartheid citizenship education policy. Philosophy for Children within the framework of modern theories of democracy, and its emphasis on the educative potential of learner participation, is better positioned to foster active, critical and inquiring school children able to build, strengthen and consolidate South Africa’s democracy.

Endnotes

1. According to the South African Constitution (1996, p. 14) a “child means a person under the age of 18 years”. Unsurprisingly, equal citizenship is emphasised, “all citizens [including children] are equally entitled to the rights, privileges and benefits of citizenship; and equally subject to the duties and responsibilities of citizenship” (Republic of South Africa, 1996, p. 3, addition ours). On the educational front, the South African Schools Act (1996) makes provision for compulsory schooling from Grade 1 to 9 (7-15 years) and non-compulsory from Grade 10 to 12 (16-18). The concept ‘child’ in South Africa reflects two distinct uses – child as a bearer of Constitutional status (to enjoy civil and political rights e.g. individual liberties) and child as a recipient/beneficiary of educational practice (to enjoy social rights e.g. doing

philosophy with children in schools and beyond). In this article, we adhere to this usage on the understanding that one could also employ the term 'child', to refer to 'potential citizen', that is, every child is entitled to education for democratic citizenship in South African schools.

2. The national Schools Pledge is not a new phenomenon in South Africa. The idea of the School Pledge was introduced by the Working Group on Values in Education (2000) as a starting point for a national debate on "the appropriate values South Africa ought to embrace in its primary and secondary educational institutions" (Department of Education, 2000, p. 1). The proposed Pledge did not see the light of day because the prevailing opinion was that it enforced unquestioning obedience and loyalty to the Republic of South Africa. The new national School Pledge was first raised by former President Thabo Mbeki in his State of the Nation Address in February 2008. Mbeki said that the government "should develop an oath that will be recited by all learners in their morning school assemblies" (State of the Nation Address, 08 February 2008). Similar to what undergirded the 2000 version, the national DoE seeks to require all schoolchildren to recite the pledge of allegiance to the Constitution and the Republic of South Africa.
3. The Bill was mainly the work of the National Religious Leaders' Forum (NRLF), which began drafting it in June 2007. Speaking on behalf of the NRLF, Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein said the idea behind the Bill was "to nurture a culture of giving, care, compassion, duty and responsibility in our youths" (Mohlala, 2008, p. 4). As a result, a joint initiative between the NRLF and the national Department of Education introduced the Bill of Responsibilities in South African schools with a focus on the 1996 Constitution and Bill of Rights. The assumption from the DoE is that through its curriculum, the Bill will ensure that there is common understanding of the rights and obligations of citizenship in South African schools. In short, the DoE hopes to convey to the youth that they have a responsibility to respect the right to equality, human dignity, life, family or parental care, education, work, freedom and security of the person, property, freedom of religion, belief and opinion, a safe environment, citizenship and freedom of expression. What is interesting for the purpose of this article is the inclusion of 'right to citizenship'.
4. Inquiry in the context of philosophical community of inquiry has as its basic values curiosity, creativity, reasoning, freedom, pluralism and fallibilism. Curiosity or the sense of wonder initiates inquiry by questioning and dialogue in search of meaning and truth. But as Lipman argues "[...] without creativity there is no source of surprise" (Lipman, 1991, p. 161). Inquiry also involves reasoning by following certain principles and freedom permeates all aspects of inquiry by allowing participants to freely ask questions, stating any objections and imagining all possibilities. Pluralism is a product of freedom of each community participant to develop and express his or her own ideas. Inquiry is a process, which welcomes all these different voices in a community where members are open-minded and tolerant toward what their co-inquirers bring to the table. Philosophical community of inquiry is the kind of philosophy of education that is relevant in South African schools.

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