Philosophical Teaching-and-Learning and the Valuing of Virtues

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Abstract: This piece maintains that, despite 50+ years of successful practice and development, Philosophy for Children (henceforward, P4C) is undervalued—but that, suitably re-presented, it may yet become the most important agent of educational change of the 21st century: a change that is essential, if not existential, given the challenges facing humanity. The recommendation is to present P4C not so much as a specialised practice, but rather as the basis for a general pedagogy, suitable for teachers of any subject or age. This pedagogy is given the name 'Philosophical Teaching-and-Learning' (PTL), because its 6 interweaving strands draw on the tradition of philosophy itself—as well as on P4C practice. The article gives an overview of, and rationale for, the pedagogy, then focuses particularly on the 6th strand—'virtues-valuing'—as being the most encompassing, but also the most exigent. If every teacher, pre-service and in-service, were introduced to P4C and then committed to developing these strands—especially the 6th one—in their teaching, humanity might just have the makings of an educational system fit for purpose.

Preface: The 4Cs of the Modern Apocalypse? – A Personal View

Having spent the larger part of my life in what may come to be seen as the heyday of human social and technological progress, I have not given much thought to the ancient Christian metaphor of the 4 Horsemen of the Apocalypse, representing Conquest, War, Famine and Plague. But there are now 4Cs threatening human civilization: **Consumerism**, and its various exploitations; **Conspiracy theories**, and diminishing trust in governance and international institutions; **Climate change**, and environmental degradation; and **Covid**, and possibly worse pandemics.

The parallel is striking, even if it does not persuade one to believe they are all part of a divine plan. And how should humanity face these threats? How should we educate the young people who will have to deal with their worst consequences?

I don't believe that more STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) is the solution, though, if these subjects are taught wisely, they may be part of it. Frankly, I don't believe that philosophy, as usually taught, is a big part of the solution either, despite its root meaning and purpose, 'love of wisdom' and 'pursuit of good life'. The challenges are so great and complex that no single educational intervention will provide the panacea. So, I'm certainly not going to claim that P4C (Philosophy for Children / Communities) is all that is needed. But I do think it contains the potential for a significant leaven(ing) of education.

The potential lies in its leading to a greater emphasis on the education of *skills* and of *dispositions or virtues* (personal, social and intellectual qualities or strengths) that would, more than anything else, give the young people of today the best chance of living flourishing lives into the 22nd century. And

the most important skills and dispositions are ones that can be related not just to the practice and principles of P4C but to those of philosophy itself.

I hope to demonstrate this in a moment but, given my reference to 4Cs above, I should more immediately reference the 4Cs of P4C: Creative, Critical, Caring and Collaborative thinking. These, of themselves, could provide an excellent framework to leaven the teaching of STEM and all other subjects, but they essentially point towards general modes or 'moods' of thinking, rather than towards specific pedagogical approaches.

My demonstration, by contrast, evinces a powerful pedagogical approach, consisting of 6 'strands': *Inquiry, Concept-construction, Dialogue, Reasoning, Reflection and Virtues-valuing*, which are drawn from P4C and the philosophical tradition, but are also consonant with some of the key developments in education in the late 20th and early 21st century. Together, these strands make up the pedagogical framework that I call 'Philosophical Teaching-and-Learning' (PTL).[1]

Drawing Inspiration from P4C

Four of the six strands were actually pointed to by Ann Margaret Sharp in her fine account of the aims of P4C: "Philosophy for Children aims not only to strengthen good reasoning, inquiry and concept-formation[2] but to cultivate an intellectual and social virtue. Another way of saying this is to say that Philosophy for Children aims at the cultivation of wisdom" (Sharp, A.M., 1993, *The Ethics of Translation*, p. 11).

Here we see explicit reference to: reasoning, inquiry, concept-formation and cultivating virtues. To these I have added: dialogue and reflection. I believe these strands are as characteristic of P4C as the 4 identified by Sharp. Its core practice—Community of Inquiry—is driven by public dialogue and is rich in private reflection.

The Six Strands Are Inherently Philosophical

But, indeed, I hold all six to be characteristic of the practice of philosophy itself since its inception in Ancient Greece. Socrates was not the first, nor the only, philosopher to be continually questioning, and to see reasoning as essential to the pursuit of inquiry; and philosophers down the ages have provided some of the best examples of dialogue and reflection about important concepts.

[1] I usually abbreviate this to 'Philosophical Teaching', but the full, hyphenated phrase of 'teaching-and-learning' is not an affectation. It reflects the belief that one can hardly separate good teaching practice from good learning practice: that the practices modelled and encouraged by a philosophical teacher—inquiry, concept-construction, dialogue, etc.—are the very practices that a philosophical learner internalises so as to become, in effect, a self-didact. See John Hattie, *Visible Learning*, p. 245: *'The aim is to help students learn the skills of teaching themselves – to self-regulate their learning.'*

[2] I have preferred the phrase 'concept-construction' because it points to the constructivist theory of learning, which PTL espouses. But, in case that word sets off alarm bells, I would emphasize that the best framing is that of co-construction, whereby good instruction by the teachers is integral to good construction by the learner.

Granted, many of them may have failed consistently to practice many of the **virtues** they might have been advocating. But it seems to be a common human trait to value a general way of being without quite living up to the particular virtues that it requires. Whether or which, a good deal of philosophizing, ancient and modern, sound and silly, has been directed towards the concept, if not the practice, of virtuous action and living.

The Six Strands are also Inherent in Good Teaching and Good Learning

From another point of view, a good deal of *teaching* also involves each of the 6 strands to some extent.

Surely, indeed, every teacher worth the title tries to promote:

- questioning / **inquiry** (though they may well have a tendency to prioritise their own questions above their students)
- knowledge and understanding / **concept-construction** (though they may prioritise the presentation of brute facts rather than the complex formation of student comprehension)
- student articulation and responses / **dialogue** (though they may prioritise written communication to the detriment of oral)
- argumentation / **reasoning** (though they may need to be more analytical—even critical—of student thinking than they are)
- review and metacognition / **reflection** (though they may need to be yet more focused on the processes, as well as the content, of student learning)

And most, if not all, of them surely try to nurture healthy **virtues**[3] (or qualities or strengths) for learning and life. The lively educational discourse around 'qualities of character', such as resilience, self-control, optimism and conscientiousness,[4] as well as 'growth mindsets,'[5] bears witness to that. The pity of it is that whereas such qualities were once consciously conceptualised as 'virtues', that concept —and the very word itself—is less commonly used nowadays, and may even be consciously avoided. An important part of the project of PTL is to rehabilitate the concept in educational, if not ordinary, discourse.

[3] At this point, I should acknowledge that the concepts of 'virtues' and 'virtuous' are problematical and contestable, both within the tradition of philosophy and in society at large. But this piece is not the place to address the problems. So, for now, I propose a simple working synonym for 'virtue', namely 'strength' (especially of character and mind), which is close enough to its root meaning in Latin and Old French - https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=virtue.

[4]This list is taken, but slightly adjusted, from an influential book: Tough P. (2012) *How Children Succeed*. Boston: Mariner Books. 'Resilience' is a more common and accepted version of what Tough called 'Grit'.

[5]This concept—essentially the belief that intelligence and intellectual capacity is not fixed and can grow with effort and application—was proposed in Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. New York: Random House.

The Six Strands Constitute a Modern, Holistic Framework

But before focusing on the need for a better valuation of virtues, there are two, more important, points to be made about the six strands: that they correlate with six of the most significant developments in late 20th / early 21st century education; and that they complement each other. This is quite a claim, of course, but here is the mapping:

Inquiry correlates with **Inquiry-based learning** (IBL)—the 'constructivist' pedagogical approach that is, for example, at the heart of the most successful international curriculum, the International Baccalaureate[6]. There is, as hinted at in footnote 2, an increasingly polarised and politicised dispute around the value of Inquiry-based learning, as compared with that of 'direct instruction' (sometimes associated with a 'core knowledge curriculum'). One does not need, however, to enter into this discourse to appreciate that it is verging on the perverse to think of inquiry as inimical to the development of knowledge. The *very purpose* of inquiry—especially philosophical inquiry—is to develop better understanding, based on sound knowledge. Equally obvious, good teaching would be useless if learners could not construct their own sense of it; whilst, on the other hand, learners would struggle to make sense of their random observations and experiences if they were deprived of intelligent instruction.

Concepts are also central to the IB curriculum, but curricula in general are paying more attention to the key role that concepts or 'big ideas' play in mastery of different subjects. For example, '*big ideas that shape the world*' is a telling expression introduced to the 'Big Picture of the Curriculum'[7], a seminal document created for the New Labour government and the English curriculum (QCA, 2007). The concept maintains its centrality in the English School Inspection Handbook:[8] '*Teachers consider the most important knowledge and concepts pupils need to know and focus on these.*' There is not a generally recognised term for this focus on big ideas or concepts, but **'Concept-centred Curriculum'** captures it quite well.

Dialogue in teaching-and-learning was the burning idea in Paulo Freire's radical work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968), which still influences formal as well as informal education to the good.[9] A more recent pedagogical approach, based on socio-psychological research and gaining traction in the UK and beyond, is **'Dialogic Teaching'.**[10] Neither approach is quite the same as the Communities of Inquiry approach in P4C—slightly different concepts of 'dialogue' are at play—but there is much commonality.

Reasoning can be understood as a merely formal practice—nothing other than logical argumentation—but the concept and practice of reasoning in P4C has always been wider, richer and

[6] The IB, coincidentally, was conceived at around the same time as Lipman was conceiving P4C – the late 1960s.
[7] It continues to be of worldwide influence via the work in 20+ countries of The Curriculum Foundation - https://www.curriculumfoundation.org/.
[8] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif/school-inspection-handbook
[9] https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/the-continued-relevance-of-freires-pedagogy-of-the-oppressed
[10] https://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/research/programmes/camtalk/dialogic/

more humane. Its development has parallels with that of the **Critical Thinking Movement**, though importantly Lipman complemented the idea of critical thinking with that of caring (or 'valuational') thinking, and Ann Margaret Sharp related the practice especially to critical feminism (1993) and ethical global education (1995).

Reflection is so fundamental to good educational (and professional) practice that pretty much every developed theory of education values it, whether the approach is conventionally 'instructional' or 'constructivist'—or even radically 'child-centred'. Whilst, again, one cannot point to a single approach or movement known as 'reflective' pedagogy or education, the notion of 'reflective teaching' is now widespread in teacher education. Perhaps, in turn, the ideal of the 'reflective learner' will assume ever greater importance in a world that has suddenly recognised the dangers to young people's mental health of too much pressure and not enough 'time to think' and 'time to be'. (The growing practice of mindfulness in schools is a welcome antidote to such pressure, but of course **mindfulness** is only one instance of the wider, richer concept of reflection; **metacognition**—roughly, 'thinking about thinking'—is also rightly coming more to the fore.)

Finally, **virtues-valuing** is related, of course, to that aspect of education that comes and goes in fashion, but (rightly) never disappears: moral education. Whether we are talking of the moral agenda of adults (often hidden, even from themselves), or the more explicit teaching of generally accepted values in schools, moral development (and, sadly, moral damage) will always be inherent in educational systems. But the case for educators to nurture healthy attitudes, principles and practices in young people only grows in a world of competing ethical and political claims. The **Values-based Education**[11] movement is one of many modern approaches to this challenging yet vital task. But a good starting point for any such approach is to focus on—and value!—virtues.

Any single one of these above-named pedagogical approaches is worthy of mention, if not study, in any teacher education course. But given that PTL references and, to some extent, draws on them all, it could well be the best starting point for every such course—at least those that properly aim to give aspiring teachers, of whatever subject or speciality, a broad review of best modern practice.

The PTL (six strand) Framework Has Its Own Originality and Integrity

It is important to emphasise, though, that the PTL framework is not merely a pointer to other established practices. Whilst it draws on those practices—just as it draws on P4C itself—it has an integrity of its own, because it presents a fresh, and at times radical, account of each of the strands, not least drawing attention to how they support or interweave with each other. This is not the place for a full account, but here is an outline.

Inquiry is a broad concept and can be practised in different ways and contexts—with more, or less, integrity. Even purported 'inquiry-based' teaching can lack integrity. If all the questions in a session derive from the teacher, or from a planned curriculum, students will not be inspired to propose and pursue their own inquiries. Curiosity—which should be a habit for life—is stunted in the

[11] www.valuesbasededucation.com

very environment where it should be cultivated. The P4C approach, made even more of in PTL, is precisely to give students the opportunity—indeed, the encouragement—to ask their own questions. This is why PTL actually prefers the notion of **'inquiry-inspired learning'** rather than 'inquiry-based learning'.

The concept of '**concepts'** is widely mistaken, even in the IB curriculum, to be mainly, if not entirely, to do with abstract nouns. Classic examples—anger, beauty, culture, democracy, education, freedom, etc.—are deemed especially 'philosophical'. To its credit, P4C considerably extended the range of concepts that are deemed fit for philosophical inquiry, but PTL extends the range even further, to include all the concepts, big and small, that appear in every subject. By this account, learning about the world, whether through science, history, music or even sport, is a matter not just of learning new facts, but of continually expanding the schema, or conceptual frameworks, by which we make sense of the world. Every new piece of information (or, for that matter, misinformation) changes how we think of the world—our concept of this, that or the other—even if only to a minor extent. Understanding the centrality of concepts and finding ways of helping students construct them are key foci of PTL.

Dialogic Teaching was referenced earlier, but the approach taken in PTL is both more deeply rooted—in philosophical construction of the concept of dialogue—and more expansive. In short, it is explicit and emphatic in maintaining that dialogue is a reciprocal and moral process: teachers and learners are in a relationship whose success depends on responsiveness and *mutual interests*.

The PTL approach to **Reasoning** is also expansive and humane—more so than many Critical Thinking programs. Lipman introduced the concept / practice of Caring Thinking precisely to balance an over-emphasis on 'rational' argumentation and rhetoric—an emphasis espoused by the Sophists in Ancient Greece, and which Socrates himself argued against. Recent socio-psychological research into cognitive bias reinforces the broader appreciation of the relationship between thinking and feeling that PTL encourages.

As indicated earlier, **Reflection** is another rich concept / practice that every good teacher values. But this richness is often reduced to simple review of 'content' of learning. The slogan is 'Review, Review, Review', but it is the quality of review that counts as much as the quantity. This is why PTL turns attention to reflection on the *cognitive and affective processes* involved in 'deep' learning—in short, on metacognition and self-management. The former is considerably assisted by Thinking Moves A – Z: Metacognition Made Simple,[12] a comprehensive scheme for teaching and managing thinking.

How the PTL Strands Thread through the Curriculum

As indicated, there is scope for every teacher and learner to develop their practice of each of the strands, but perhaps a couple of examples of their use in specific subjects would be useful. (Be advised, however, that we are talking here about small steps in teaching and in learning, not systematic programs that have been the subject of large-scale research.)

[12] Sutcliffe, R., Buckley J., and Bigglestone T. (2019) *Thinking Moves A – Z*, DialogueWorks: London.

Inquiry: A simple generic step is to establish the KWL routine—*what do we Know? what do we Want to know? and what have we learnt?* –at the beginning and end of a topic but with two important additions. The first is for each student to have a **question book** for recording the *'Want to know'* questions of the class. The second is to extend KWL to **KWLS**—*what do we Still want to know?* –so that questions are recorded at the end of topics as well as the beginning, signalling the value of ongoing or lifelong learning. No matter that not all questions can be answered within the timetable constraints! The message is that there is always more to learn. This routine can be used to good effect in most subjects, but is specially relevant to the Sciences and Geography ('worlds to explore') and to IT.

An even more significant addition would be the co-construction by teacher and students of an **'essential question'**[13] (sometimes described as a 'big' question) for each topic. Such questions are not run-of-the-mill (but respectable) '*Want to know*' ones, as might easily be triggered by Spencer Kagan's Q (Question) Matrix,[14] and there is certainly an art to constructing them. However, any teacher or student familiar with P4C would recognise their nature, and after a little induction and modelling by the teacher the very co-construction of such questions by students would develop their curiosity, just as it does in P4C. The value of the questions goes well beyond that, though, since they become both *motivators and measures* of meaningful learning throughout the exploration of the topic. They serve this purpose in any subject, but in my view are particularly valuable in History and Social Sciences.

Dialogue: Again, there have been few attempts to develop systematic subject-based programs that give special emphasis to dialogue.[15] The positive results that Alexander's 'Dialogic Teaching' approach had on student mathematical attainment, for example, were due to changes in the pedagogy rather than any significant change in the content of the curriculum. But that points precisely to the value of improving dialogue wherever one can in the classroom. To give a specific example in Maths, however, here is an extract from a web blog by Maths teacher Amir Saei titled, *'Dialogue and mathematical understanding - what is it?'*

> I gave the class a starter of calculating the midpoint of 8 and 11. Then I asked students to provide some answers to the whole class. Student A answered 9.5. I asked him to explain his answer, he told me "you just add 8 to 11 and then divide by 2". When I asked why that is the midpoint he could not explain. At no stage, did I inform him or the class if his answer was correct. Student B answered 9. Again, I asked him to explain his answer. He said: "the distance between 8 and 11 is 3. The midpoint is equal in distance from both 8 and 11. 3 divided by 2 is 1.5 so the midpoint is 9.5." The student ended up providing the correct answer.

[13] Essential Questions are the vital ingredient in an approach to teaching and learning called 'Understanding by Design', created by McTighe and Wiggins. They deserve more space than can be given here, but it is enough to say that they constitute an almost perfect way of transferring the skill of asking philosophical questions into productive practice within a 'knowledge-based' curriculum.

[14] Wiederhold C., Kagan S. (1998) *Cooperative Learning and High-level Thinking: The Q-matrix*, Hawker Brownlow Education Pty Ltd

[15] One that approaches a systematic program is *Thinking through Geography* (2005) Stevenage: Badger Publishing. But many modern approaches to Mathematics talk about the importance of student dialogue and expression of their thought processes. Here, for example, is a web article titled, 'Discussion is a key step towards maths mastery': https://www.headteacher-update.com/best-practice-article/discussion-is-a-key-step-towards-maths-mastery/221726/

If I can put it this way, the student, encouraged to enter into dialogue, literally talked himself into understanding. Similar points apply to the other strands: they have not been converted into grand programs to be promoted in specific subjects; they simply provide separate foci for self-development, encouraging and expanding repertoire of generic strategies and devices, small and large, for improved teaching and learning. The sixth strand, however, should be construed as rather more than that. It certainly provides another focus for self-development, but effectively brings the other five strands together, as well as extending their scope.

How the Virtues-valuing Strand Consummates the Other Strands

This is best shown by relating the other strands to the intellectual virtues that they most obviously develop: **curiosity** and **attentiveness** (through inquiry), **creativity** and **thoughtfulness** (through concept-construction), **communicativeness** and **open-mindedness** (through dialogue), **criticality** and **reasonableness** (through reasoning), **considerateness** and **reflectiveness** (through reflection).

The importance of such virtues for progress in life, as well as at school, is surely obvious, and they should be cultivated in education (including teacher education) at all levels. That is the logical conclusion of the growing argument for educators to focus as much on developing skills as on increasing knowledge. But there is little value to young people in either skills or knowledge if they do not have the motivation and the mind to apply them. Cognitive skills, particularly, need to become *dispositions or habits of mind*–intellectual virtues–which, along with other virtues, should be among the ultimate aims of education. That was surely what John Dewey was suggesting when he wrote: "*If we are willing to conceive education as the process of forming fundamental dispositions, intellectual and emotional, toward nature and fellow men (sic), philosophy may even be defined as the general theory of education*"[16] (Dewey, 1933: 358).

How the 21st Century Is Beginning to Catch up with Dewey

If we step back a moment, we can observe that there has been talk in the business world for many years about coming to terms with 'The Information Age' or the 'Knowledge Economy'. Already, though, the Knowledge Age is giving way to the Data Economy and the (Artificial) Intelligence Age, with an even greater imperative to adjust the aims in curricula and the pedagogies for achieving them.

The challenge to teachers might have been conceived, within the old educational framework, as trying to balance an increasing emphasis on skills, attitudes and aptitudes with an ever-growing human knowledge base. The Big Picture of the Curriculum, indeed, pointed the direction by establishing 3 'foci for learning' in what I call the ASK framework: *Attitudes and Aptitudes; Skills; and Knowledge and Understanding.* (It was in the 3rd focus that Waters talked about 'big ideas that shape the world'.) Since then, two highfliers, one from business and the other from academia, have addressed this imperative in similar ways.

[16] Dewey, J. (1933) *Democracy and Education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. New York: Macmillan.

The World Economic Forum, and 21 Lessons for the 21st century

At the 2018 World Economic Forum, Jack Ma (of Alibaba), talking about how to transition from 19th and 20th century education to 21st century (not to mention 22nd century) education, said: "*We cannot teach our kids to compete with machines;*"[17] and he put forward 5 foci of his own for future education:

- Value
- Believing
- Independent thinking
- Teamwork
- Care for others

He did not explain or justify these foci, and the second seems very much in need of explanation, but the others seem good for lifelong learning—indeed, for life as well as learning.

Meanwhile, Yuva Noah Harari had been developing his own 21 Lessons for the 21st century[18]. After an analysis / synthesis of the ever-accelerating developments in human societies, he turned his attention to the role of education in helping people, young and old, meet such challenges. "Besides information," he said:

> most schools also focus too much on providing pupils with a set of predetermined skills such as solving differential equations, writing computer code in C++, identifying chemicals in a test tube or conversing in Chinese. Yet since we have no idea how the world and the job market will look in 2050, we don't really know what particular skills people will need. We might invest a lot of effort teaching kids how to write in C++ or how to speak Chinese, only to discover that by 2050 AI can code software far better than humans, and a new Google Translate app enables you to conduct a conversation in almost flawless Mandarin, Cantonese or Hakka, even though you only know how to say "Ni hao".

His recommendation?— "Many pedagogical experts argue that *schools should switch to teaching 'the four Cs'–critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity*. More broadly, schools should downplay technical skills and emphasise general-purpose life skills."

The Gift of the 4Cs of P4C, especially Caring Thinking

For those familiar with the 4C model of P4C (Critical, Caring, Collaborative and Creative thinking), Harari's list[19] looks like a strong endorsement. But a significant difference is Lipman and Sharp's proposal of, and preference for, Caring thinking—rather than Communication or any other C.

[17] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rHt-5-RyrJk&t=12s
[18] Harari, Yuval Noah. *21 Lessons for the 21st Century.* Spiegel & Grau (2018), p. 262.
[19] This list can also be found in Trilling, B., & Fadel, C. (2009) *21st Century Skills: Learning for Life in our Times, Jossey-Bass/Wiley,* p.49

It was in 1995 that Lipman published his masterful article, 'Caring as Thinking,'[20] which added a whole new dimension, not just to philosophy for children, but potentially to the entire curriculum. In short, he added the essential value(s) dimension (cf. Ma's list). In the article, Lipman asks, "What aspect of higher-order thinking is especially concerned with the dimension of values?" (p. 6) His answer is, of course, is 'caring' thinking, which he considers as important as, if not more important than, the conventional doublet of 'critical and creative' thinking.

If I were to take one shot at a summary of his construct, it would be that it is as non-sensical to say, 'I care about X, but I do not value X', as it would be to say, 'I value X, but I do not care about it'. Or, put even more simply, 'to care is to value and to value is to care'. In Lipman's own words: "Without caring, higher-order thinking is devoid of a values component. If higher-order thinking does not contain valuing or valuation, it is liable to approach its subject matters apathetically, indifferently, and uncaringly, and this means it would be diffident even about inquiry itself" (p. 12).

This is not, I think, simply to say that inquiry—and higher-order thinking in general—needs to be done carefully if it is to be done well. (That is a message that many a P4C practitioner has taken to heart, emphasising that caring thinking involves taking care in what you think and say, and not just taking care of other people and their interests. Actually, of course, the latter could be said to entail the former.) It is, I think, to say that *inquiry itself is an expression of care***:** that we should perceive care in inquiry as well as promote care about inquiry. That, at any rate, was the sentiment I expressed myself in an article, titled 'Is philosophical inquiry virtuous?,'[21] which I wrote comparatively early in my acquaintance with P4C. Philosophical inquiry, I maintained, springs from a deep care, somewhat in the sense of worry[22] about things, to understand the nature of the world, including the people around oneself.

I take this need—to make sense of things—to be the very driving force of philosophy and philosophical inquiry; and insofar as inquiry (of any sort) helps meet this need, I take it to be virtuous[23] (and, for that matter, philosophical). It is virtuous in the minimum sense of conducing to better understanding of the world—a necessary condition of judging and acting well. But, insofar as making sense of 'things' includes, as it regularly does in communities of philosophical inquiry, making sense of each other—recognising others' concerns, interests and perspectives—it has the virtue of inducting participants into a *moral* community.

Ann Sharp and Laurance Splitter put it this way (1995): "The classroom community of inquiry is much more than a tool for the teaching of thinking. It is a form of life for the children who participate in it… a form of ethical practice in which care, trust, respect and good thinking are equal partners" (p. 20).

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[20] M. Lipman, "Caring as Thinking," *Inquiry: Critical Thinking Across the Disciplines*, Volume 15, Issue 1, Autumn 1995.
[21] R. Sutcliffe, "Is philosophical inquiry virtuous?" *Thinking*, Volume 12.1, 1994.
[22] 'care' derives from Old English carian, cearian "be anxious or solicitous; grieve; feel concern or interest," - https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=care
[23] To say that a practice is virtuous is not, of course, the same as to qualify a person who practises it as virtuous. The bar for that description is much higher, though I am not sure it is easy to define it. Someone may practise various virtues without being virtuous in the round.

This is the sort of classroom that is needed in a world where neighbours are divided and neighbourhoods despoiled; and—it is time to shout it! —no practice comes close to P4C in its capacity to create it. Before reiterating this point, I will just elaborate a little on the VV (virtues-valuing) strand of PTL, since this is the strand that explicitly and most effectively focuses on the moral or ethical dimension of P4C and philosophical inquiry in general.

Differentiating Fundamental Dispositions—the PSIQ Framework

Dewey's characterisation of some dispositions as 'emotional' needs a little refinement, especially in the light of modern, often 'psychological', ways of thinking about human beings and behaviours. They might now, for example, be correlated with 'emotional intelligence', or separately labelled as intra-personal (or 'character') and inter-personal (or 'moral') dispositions or habits, or virtues or strengths. In PTL, the preferred categorisation of the different sorts of dispositions or virtues (loosely based on Aristotle's distinction between moral and intellectual virtues) is **Personal, Social and Intellectual Qualities (or PSIQs).** This not only trips off the tongue, but also reduces the unease some people have with language such as 'character', 'moral' and 'virtue(s)'. There are, of course, hundreds of words we use for such virtues or qualities, and differentiating them further is a challenging task for philosophical teachers or schools, who periodically revisit and reprioritise their 'set' of values and virtues. So PTL has a recommendation for three core qualities or virtues in each category:

- **Personal**[24]: courage, confidence, commitment[25]
- **Social**: compassion, collaboration, consideration[26]
- **Intellectual**: curiosity, criticality, creativity[27]

The virtues-valuing strand (and therefore practice) of PTL encompasses these and the many other behaviours and conscious goals or values that different people—but especially teachers—may espouse,

[24] The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues — https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/ —labels this category 'performance' virtues, giving examples of *confidence*, *motivation* and *teamwork*. Apart from confounding an inter-personal virtue (teamwork) with intra-personal ones (confidence and motivation), this categorisation also has unfortunate connotations with 'putting on a performance', either in a self-advancing sense, or in a self-denying sense. So, the preferred category in the PSIQ framework is that of 'personal' virtues even though, admittedly, the whole set of virtues might equally be regarded as 'of the *whole* (or rounded) person'. But this narrower category of 'personal' can simply be focused on *intra*-personal virtues, sometimes thought of as strengths of character or the 'inner' person.

[25] There could be slightly more nuanced entries into this list—for example, I might have favoured *self-respect* over confidence, *fortitude* over courage, and *resilience* or *thoroughness* over commitment. But the list has been carefully constructed with a number of criteria, including ease of understanding and recollection.

[26] The same goes for this list: I might have favoured *empathy* over compassion, or *respect* over consideration.

[27] And for this list, e.g. *reasonableness*, *judiciousness* or *good judgement* over criticality. Incidentally, with criticality and creativity in this category, and collaboration as a social virtue, it might be wondered why three of the 4Cs of P4C are represented in this list, but not care or caring thinking. The simple answer to this is implicit in my earlier remarks about caring and valuing, and the 'gift' of caring thinking. To be explicit, this list represents some fundamental virtues to be valued. But since care underpins all valuing, and it amount to a 'super' virtue—or perhaps I should say *the fundamental virtue*. There is, of course, much more to be said about this, including the relationship between care and appreciation or gratitude, but I must postpone it to another time and article.

so that it arguably amounts to a complete account of the purposes of education.

Relating the PSIQs to P4C and to the Curriculum in General

In what sense(s), though, can the PSIQs be described as 'core' virtues or values? One sense is that they bear comparison with the set of values that Matthew Lipman, founder of P4C, listed as inherent in P4C practice. From the very start, articulated the aim of P4C as: "the aim of a thinking skills program such as P4C is ... to help children become more thoughtful, more reflective, more considerate and more reasonable individuals."[28] Thoughtfulness, reflectiveness, considerateness, reasonableness—these are paradigms of virtues.

Later, in 1991, in a recorded interview,[29] he was invited to talk about 'the values' of P4C and he listed the following: *open-mindedness*, ***curiosity***, *fairness*, *tolerance*, ***respect***, *attentiveness*, *persistence*, *seriousness*, ***collaborativeness***, *and democracy*. As well as calling them values, Lipman gave them the nice designation, 'commitments'; but all of them, save the last,[30] are of course classic virtues. The virtues in the core PSIQ list that Lipman does not mention specifically are the Personal ones (*care, courage and confidence*) and a Social one (*compassion*).

There are just two things to say at this point without going into a detailed discussion of which virtues are core to P4C, or what other candidates there might be for the recommended core in the PSIQ framework. The first is that this framework, like the PTL one of which it is a part, results from a systematic analysis and evaluation of P4C and of broader educational objectives emerging in the last 50 years, in a way that Lipman's earlier writing and later, spontaneous, interview were not. It may not be perfect or to everyone's taste, but it is presented in good faith, and in the belief that such a framework is desirable and even necessary if the project of valuing virtues more in education is to be realised.

The second is that each virtue chosen as 'core' naturally has its justification, but the framework as a whole is much more important than the justifications of its elements. A general justification for them is that they all play a vital part in what anyone would regard as 'success', not only in learning but also in life. This is especially true, though, of the intra-personal qualities. Without the fundamental virtues of ***commitment*** (*the will to do something*), ***courage*** (the *heart* to do it, which underpins determination, persistence, grit, resilience, or any other fashionable quality of character) and ***confidence*** (the *belief* that one can do it) an individual is going to struggle to attain their personal goals—or even to set any goals in the first place. It is well appreciated, of course, that social virtues are also vital to a fulfilling life for all but the most happily hermitic. And it may hardly need emphasising that cognitive / intellectual virtues are essential for any successful project, not least in relation to school and to lifelong learning.

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[28] Lipman, Matthew (1977) *Philosophy in the Classroom*, Temple University Press, p. 15

[29] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUNzXRklKKI

[30] Democracy is a value—an ideal state of affairs, albeit one hard to define—not a virtue in itself, and one that may have fallen into some disrepute or at least disuse. But, insofar as the ideal remains desirable, it surely calls for a range of virtues to be exercised, not least *respect* and *tolerance*. Put another way, as we have recently and ironically seen in the USA, it is threatened by the opposite of virtues: vices such as *arrogance*, *anger*, etc.

This, then, has been a general justification of the core PSIQs, and I hope it might be enough to persuade teachers (and parents and carers) to give more consideration to their value in the daily and future lives of the children in their care. Such ideal attitudes and behaviours—such virtues—are among the most vital and urgent for young people (but also their elders!) to develop, and, as I said before, P4C cultivates them like no other practice. But, curiously, this is a message that is still not getting through to most curriculum designers and managers.

P4C Is Admired but Undervalued

Let's look back a little to get some perspective on this. P4C was launched 50 years ago with Lipman's publication in 1971 of '*Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery*'[31]. Since then, plenty of evidence[32] has accrued that Lipman's program, and its various spin-offs, help young people achieve conventional educational targets in areas ranging from literacy and numeracy, to reasoning and creative thinking. It also contributes, in less measurable ways, to their confidence, patience and self-esteem[33]. Many teachers can also attest to its constructive impact on their pedagogical, and even practical, development. Achievements of this sort are rightly valued today by educational leaders and curriculum developers, and many of them have indeed become explicit aims in the rhetoric of various curricula. Yet it remains the case that only a small minority of leaders have invested in P4C, despite its being a clear pathway to any and all of these attainments. P4C is not embedded in any large-scale school systems, nor properly represented in any significant curricula. It is undervalued and underachieving. Its potential to stimulate and support a healthy shift of focus in education remains largely unfulfilled.

There may be many reasons for this, including the very title, 'Philosophy for Children', which could suggest that it is a 'subject' (over)simplified for pre-secondary 'delivery'. Other reasons might include the perception that it is 'just talk', and 'not connected with the main curriculum', etc. These all misrepresent the practice, of course, but it clearly has not been presented to best effect. I conclude, then, with the belief that it should be re-presented as the foundation for the wider implementation and development of a pedagogy fit for the 21st century—PTL. To this end, I propose an ambitious 5–10 year plan for P4C to become central to any healthy school and educational system.

P4C as Foundational, and Philosophical Teaching-and-Learning as Transformational

First, given the capacity of P4C to cultivate 4C thinking and PSIQs in general, P4Cers should campaign for P4C to be an entitlement for every young person: at least one session per week, conducted by a trained P4C facilitator. This is easy to program into elementary school timetables, and not so difficult for secondary schools either: each department in turn could run one P4C session (or week) focussed on a philosophical (typically, ethical) dimension of their subject. This would amount to one or two sessions per department per term.

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[31] Lipman, Matthew. *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery* (NJ: IAPC, 1974).

[32] The best collation of evidence can be found on the website of the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC), beginning on this page: https://www.montclair.edu/iapc/research-in-philosophy-for-children/research-on-cognitive-skills/.

[33] www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects/philosophy-for-children

Second, obviously this proposal would ultimately require all teachers at all levels to be trained in P4C. Individual schools could arrange this on a rolling basis over a number of years. Meanwhile, P4C training should be mandatory for all those in teacher education colleges.

Third, as well as focussing on the development of skills and virtues in dedicated P4C lessons, schools should encourage all their teachers, i.e., of every subject and age, to become more philosophical in their approach / pedagogy.[34] If they have trained in P4C that incorporates the PTL framework, this would be a natural extension into all their lessons.

Fourth, for those teachers who may never have the opportunity to train in and practice P4C, it remains possible for them to develop as philosophical teachers, if they set, monitor and achieve simple goals within their general teaching, asking themselves the following questions, using metacognitive vocabulary from the Thinking Moves A – Z:

1. **Inquiry:** *Am I encouraging my students / children to* ***formulate*** *more and better questions in P4C, and in other lessons?*

2. **Concept-construction:** *Am I helping my students to* ***keyword*** *big ideas in P4C, and in other lessons, and* ***connect*** *them with previous learning and experience?*

3. **Dialogue:** *Am I helping my students to* ***listen*** *and* ***respond*** *thoughtfully to each other's ideas in P4C, and in other lessons?*

4. **Reasoning**: *Am I modelling careful* ***explanation*** *and* ***justification*** *for what I say and do, and calling on my students to do the same, in P4C and at all other times?*

5. **Reflecting**: *Am I creating enough opportunities for my students to think* ***back*** *and* ***weigh up****, privately and publicly, in P4C and in other lessons?*

As to **Virtues-valuing**, this requires rather more detailed guidance than can be condensed into this piece, but here are a few general pointers. Firstly, let me reiterate that some people (not just philosophers) publicly espouse some 'values', whilst privately, and actually, valuing something quite different, or even opposite. Part of my argument for better valuing of virtues is that many curricula rhetorically espouse certain values, such as 'balance' or 'deep learning', but their systems of implementation practically hinder the attainment of such ideals. In effect, those responsible for the systems do not sufficiently practice the virtues necessary to realise their professed values. This may partly be due to their failure to recognise the fundamental importance of virtues—a failure which this article and the PTL project is hoping to turn around. But partly, of course, it may be due to pressures which divert them, or partly to simple weakness of will, from which we all suffer.

[34] Presenting P4C as a general pedagogy, with the name 'philosophical teaching-and-learning', does not detract from, nor denigrate, the expertise of teachers in any given subject. One can be a philosophical science teacher, or a philosophical history teacher, etc. But it does offer a sense of 'value-added': a philosophical science teacher will be a better science teacher for being philosophical.

The same might be said of those, including myself hitherto, who in their promotion of P4C have held up certain values, especially virtues, but in practice have not valued them sufficiently. I maintain again that *to value is to care* and, furthermore, *to care is to act*. So, we need consciously and systematically to value, cultivate and celebrate virtues. It is very important, then, to keep one's eyes / mind on the task in hand, and this is not the least reason for constructing a clear list of your own—preferably balanced between personal, social and intellectual virtues—that you consciously aim to nurture. Here, then, are other simple suggestions, directed mainly at teachers:

- Make your list known to your students, perhaps even displaying it publicly.
- Be honest that it is aspirational—for you as much as for your students.
- Find time to talk about the behaviours that might be associated with those virtues, best of all in dedicated inquiries. (These can be linked with curriculum topics, especially notable characters in history or literature, or even in science.)
- Commend actions of your students that seem to display particular virtues—especially if they are part of a habitual pattern that you are trying to nurture.
- Remember the adage that virtues may be 'caught not taught'—and that consistently practicing the virtues yourself (kindness, say, or composure)—may be as important as 'teaching' them. But be kind on yourself, too!
- Finally, consider joining my online course: 'Whole School Values, Whole Person Virtues.'

I end with a note of caution (to myself, as much as to others). There is another generally recognised problem with the curriculum: that if the focus of assessment is too narrow or its mode too inhumane, fine ambitions in the curriculum may come to little. The more holistic and more humane the ambitions, the greater the danger from assessment that is not fit for purpose. Assessment, in other words, should not become the enemy of advancement. But again, I urge optimism, balanced with realism. Systems can and do change. We must try to effect changes in the assessment of the curriculum, as well as in the curriculum itself. It cannot be beyond the wit of humankind to find a humane and fair way of assessing, or just validating, the sort of qualities that we all know are needed to meet the challenges of the 4Cs of the modern apocalypse (and probably many other challenges besides). Science and the arts may provide some of the means to meet those challenges, but philosophy provides the best practice and development of the necessary wills, skills and virtues.

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