P4C Efficacy and Agency: The Problem of Outputs in P4C Projects. A Case Study

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Abstract: This paper is a reflection on a recent project that was conducted using the Philosophy for Children (P4C) pedagogy to explore issues of climate justice with young people. Taking place in 2022 and 2023, the project, entitled *Fierce Close*, aimed to use the Community of Philosophical Inquiry as a space for young people to identify concepts germane to their experience of the climate crisis and formulate questions about these ideas that they answered together. At the end of the project, the participants created a podcast informed by their philosophical inquiries, now available as two "seasons." While it is true that Ann Margaret Sharp, in particular, allowed everything from "dance" to "creative work" as an emergent product of inquiry, the relationship between outputs and inquiry itself can become strained. Matthew Lipman characterized inquiry through the analogy of a "boat tacking in the wind," a kind of free progress towards a temporary destination. In this paper, we reflect on our experience of designing P4C projects that should result in a particular creative outcome and their relationship to the notionally "free space" of inquiry.

Key words: Philosophy for Children, P4C, freedom, inquiry, outputs, partnership, project design, instrumentalization

1. Introduction

In 2011, Gert Biesta warned against an "instrumentalisation of philosophy," where reducing the value of philosophy to measurable impacts, such as increases in literacy and numeracy, contradicts the spirit of philosophical inquiry, or what it means to be philosophical in a genuine sense.[1] At the same time, the funding landscape for the humanities, in general, can be barren, so capitalizing on support for public philosophy initiatives as and when they emerge is important for sustaining continuing practice. Oftentimes, this means applying for project funding from

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[1] G. Biesta, *Philosophy, Exposure, and Children: How to Resist the Instrumentalisation of Philosophy in Education*, "Journal of Philosophy of Education" 2011, Vol. 45, No. 2, pp. 305–319.

agencies and organizations or providing work packages for other publicly funded projects. In recent years, funders have introduced calls for projects that progress the United Nations (UN) sustainable development goals or that capture or focus on "the voice of the child."[2] In this paper, we explore the tension between these philosophical projects and the inherent freedom connoted in Matthew Lipman's metaphor of inquiry progress as "a boat tacking in the wind."[3] We ask how we can maintain the integrity of authentically participating in Philosophy for and with Children and Young People (P4C) if projects are focused on an end goal or output.

Engaging in this conversation matters for several reasons. In one respect, the move towards project funding appears to be an intractable state of affairs. This being the case, a clear vision of the tensions that face those designing projects in P4C, that is, academics and educators, will assist in developing best practice in this context. Beyond project design, this paper also addresses the value of philosophical inquiry and how much of this stems from the fact that the Community of Philosophical Inquiry (CPI) strives to be a free space for the offering of hypotheses, engagement with others and even the construction of the self.[4]

In answering this question, we chart the tension between mobilizing P4C in a space where it has relevance and potential effectiveness and the expectations of polished outcomes by funders, teachers and parents. We will present a case study of a project focused on climate justice. This project used P4C to articulate the concepts beneath young persons' experience of the climate crisis and formulate these as philosophical questions to investigate together. We will reflect on the "output" of the project, which was a podcast, led by the participants, and our thoughts on this method of capturing thinking.[5] In conclusion, we wonder whether partially

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[2] The project in focus here took place in Ireland. In the Irish context, capturing the "voice of the child" has become an explicit requirement in arts projects that are created for and with children and young people. This, in part, stems from a focus on children's rights to have their voices heard in the UN charter, as well as a focus on quality education within the UN sustainable development goals. Government of Ireland, *Creative Youth Plan 2023–2027*, Creative Ireland Programme, URL: https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/app/uploads/2023/03/Creative-Youth-Plan-2023-2027.pdf; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Goal 4: Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All*, URL: https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4.

[3] M. Lipman, *Thinking in Education*, Cambridge University Press, London 2003, p. 15.

[4] A.M. Sharp, *What Is a "Community of Inquiry"?*, "Journal of Moral Education" 1987, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 37–45.

[5] Galway Public Libraries, *Fierce Close: Climate in Crisis*, URL: https://open.spotify.com/show/15ZGxexu0Fi7wNkDiBLudL.

or potentially instrumentalized philosophy is preferable to no philosophy at all. The paper is structured as follows: first, a contextual note on the organizations involved in the project; second, an overview of the project's two iterations; third, a brief overview of the potential constraining effect of outputs on inquiry; and, finally, a discussion of the problem of instrumentalization. First, some contextual information will assist readers in understanding the case discussed here.

2. Context

Curo is a not-for-profit organization that provides philosophical inquiry opportunities for communities that want to think well together.[6] It was established by professional philosophers to maintain a space to experiment in delivery whilst remaining committed to the Lipman–Sharp principles of participant-directed rigorous inquiry into questions that matter.[7] In practice this translates into a commitment to allowing communities to create inquiry questions themselves in reflection of the commitment in the original P4C pedagogy to students creating meaning from their own experience.[8]

In the past, we have used creative or visual arts practices to support metacognition by creating a visual representation of thinking that has happened during an inquiry or to create metaphors for concepts as a means of building definitions or capturing examples for exploration during inquiry. For Matthew Lipman and Ann Margaret Sharp, the notion of children expressing their thinking in non-dialogical ways was unproblematic and consistent with the Deweyan heritage of their programme. (Especially given Lipman's interest in John Dewey's account of art as a consummative experience.)[9] This paper does not dispute the value of creative

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[6] Curo, URL: https://curothinks.wordpress.com/.

[7] C.W. Turgeon, *The Art and Danger of the Question: Its Place within Philosophy for Children and Its Philosophical History*, "Mind, Culture, and Activity" 2015, Vol. 22, No. 4, pp. 284–298, https://doi.org/10.1080/10749039.2015.1079919.

[8] While this is not universally the norm in P4C practice, in the Lipman–Sharp approach, the development of philosophical questions by the community is a part of the development of a "philosophical ear" that will support the use of the sensibilities that inquiry fosters in the lives of participants beyond the inquiry.

[9] S.B. Oral, *Can Deweyan Pragmatist Aesthetics Provide a Robust Framework for the Philosophy for Children Programme?*, "Studies in Philosophy and Education" 2023, Vol. 32, No. 4, pp. 361–377, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11217-012-9332-5.

activities as a means of articulating thinking, exploring concepts, or gathering evidence for the inquiry. Rather, it focuses on a certain tension emergent between systems of funding and curriculum demands that often focus on "outcomes" or "outputs" and the focus on process and incompleteness inherent in the work of the CPI.[10] For instance, within the CPI, acknowledging that any judgments produced are merely "resting places" and the ability to change one's mind when faced with compelling reasons or counter-examples are important markers of critical thinking in development. It is the experience of inquiry and the move towards living a "life of inquiry" and the benefits such a shift affords in terms of a thoroughgoing interrogation of the values one's actions express that Lipman and Sharp wanted to capture in their introduction of philosophy to the classroom.[11] Supported, of course, by well-honed critical skills that bolster such reflection.

The *Fierce Close* project has served as the stimulus for this paper. In the next section, we will give an overview of the project design and how the question emerged from our process in this project. *Fierce Close* is an inversion of a common idiom in the West of Ireland for a day with calm, clement weather. Galwegians[12] colloquially describe such days as "fierce mild." By contrast, the context young people find themselves in is profoundly different from this. The climate crisis presents itself much like a gathering storm. Urgent curriculum interventions reflect the rapid rise of sustainability on the public agenda.[13] Governments have recognized that educating our current children and young people in relation to sustainable living is one route to encouraging responsible consumption and greener living. However, in presenting this message there is a risk of a "Do as I say, not as I do" attitude emerging, or indeed indoctrination rather than free inquiry taking place due to the urgent nature of the environmental decline.[14]

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[10] Several organizations focus on the creative outputs that communities produce to "show their thinking." Brila's zine creation process is a good example here. See Brila, *Brila Philozine 32*, Issuu, 15.09.2021, URL: https://issuu.com/brilazines/docs/brilaphilozine32.

[11] A.M. Sharp, *What Is a "Community of Inquiry"?*, op. cit.

[12] Those from or living in Galway, Ireland.

[13] In Ireland, for example, Climate Action and Sustainable Development has been introduced as an assessed compulsory subject in the Leaving Certification, the exams students take at the end of high school. NCCA, *Climate Action and Sustainable Development*, URL: https://ncca.ie/en/senior-cycle/curriculum-developments/climate-action-and-sustainable-development/.

[14] G.C. Lockrobin, *In the End, It's Our Future That's Going to Be Changed: Enquiring about the Environment with Freedom and Responsibility*, "Childhood & Philosophy" 2013, Vol. 19, pp. 1–29, https://doi.org/10.12957/childphilo.2023.70406.

As a project taking place outside of an institutional educational context and built in collaboration with our long-term partner, the Galway Library Service, we aimed to use the CPI to hear the voices of young people, allow them to perhaps express their frustration at the hopeful message offered to them by a generation who have exacerbated the climate crisis through inertia. Funding for this project came from the Dormant Accounts Fund, an annual source of funding populated through underspending during the financial year.[15] This particular funding required specific outputs that might be evaluated and publicly shared to be included within the project design. As a result, creating a podcast to report on the tentative findings of the CPI was selected as something that would be flexible in terms of content and allow for the young people to address a wider public directly. The podcast was produced by Soundtrack & Podcast, who specialize in supporting groups to create audio outputs. The project has taken place twice, once in 2022 and in 2023.[16]

We noticed that other adults who communicated about the project reduced it to its outcomes (perhaps referring to it as "the podcast project" both to participants and as a shorthand when speaking about the initiative to other adults). Especially in the second iteration of the project the podcast dominated the philosophical work despite podcast planning and recording only representing three of the sessions across a ten-week project. This was frustrating for two reasons: (1) the quality of the thinking in the inquiry sessions was high despite it being the first time that this cohort had taken part in this kind of learning, and (2) the resulting podcast itself did not seem to capture the richness of these engagements.

3. Project Overview: Season One (2022) and Season Two (2023)

In the first iteration of the project, we engaged with two groups of young people: a group of 30 young learners aged between 9 and 12 in a primary school in County Galway,[17] and a group of 13 teenagers (aged between 12 and 15) in an after-school art class in Galway City.[18] The younger participants had engaged in CPIs

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15   B. Kelly, *Funding Awarded for 11 Library Support Projects in Galway*, "Galway Daily," 7.08.2022, URL: https://www.galwaydaily.com/news/funding-awarded-for-11-library-support-projects-in-galway/.

16   Soundtrack & Podcast, URL: https://www.soundtrackandpodcast.com.

17   Clontuskert.Scoilnet.Ie, URL: https://clontuskert.scoilnet.ie/blog/.

18   Just Art It, URL: https://justartitgalway.com/.

with a facilitator from Curo a few months previously, whilst the art class came to the CPI for the first time. A facilitator from Curo worked with each group, respectively, for one hour a week over a period of seven weeks (for the first four sessions communities were supported by two facilitators working together, the final three by one facilitator on their own). The sessions were designed to allow participants to identify, connect and problematize concepts and questions that concerned them, in the context of the climate crisis.

In the second iteration of the project, Curo engaged with two groups of teenagers. In the first group, based in Galway City, participants were aged between 15 and 17 and their numbers varied between 8 and 20. In the second group, based in Galway County, the young people involved in the project were aged between 13 and 17 and their numbers varied between 6 and 12. The same facilitator delivered all the workshops alone in Season Two.

There were a series of complications in Season Two of *Fierce Close*, which contributed to the project being reduced to the production of a podcast to a greater degree than in the first iteration, and stimulating the need for this present reflection. The participants were mostly from transition year – an optional year of school offered by some secondary schools in Ireland where learners are encouraged to take part in non-traditional extra-curricular learning experiences and work experience before embarking on their final exam years.[19] As such, timetables lack a sense of routine and individuals are given a lot of freedom as to where and when they present themselves. This meant there was a lack of consistency in week-to-week attendance in both settings.

Perhaps the most challenging issue for both participants and facilitator was the language barriers amongst the cohort in Galway City, where only seven participants spoke fluent English, with just three of these attending more than four sessions. Attendance and participation amongst the rest of the cohort was difficult to encourage and maintain. Many of these community members were recently arrived Ukrainian refugees who found it difficult to engage with the CPI for a plethora of reasons. If the emphasis had solely been on engaging with the CPI for its own merits, it may have been easier to recruit and sustain the interest of the group. However, other stakeholders, that is, teachers and youth workers, emphasized the production of the podcast more than philosophical engagement. Focusing on re-

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[19] NCCA, *Transition Year*, URL: https://ncca.ie/en/senior-cycle/programmes-and-key-skills/transition-year/.

cording spoken English was a potential deterrent especially for English as a second language participants and/or those newly arrived in Ireland. When less inhibited, the participants whose first language was not English engaged in many creative ways – through drawing and poetry, for example – and some deep philosophical work happened in the CPI in terms of interrogating the use of concepts in different languages and contexts (e.g., the community spent some time analyzing the concept of "right," in its uses as a direction in space and politics; to indicate something as correct; and to indicate something as good). It could have been a useful and focused exercise to develop this line of inquiry (investigating concepts from different language or cultural perspectives), serving as a constructive and meaningful community-building exercise. Some of the languages spoken by the group included Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish, and Arabic, as well as English and Irish. However, the emphasis other adults involved placed on the podcast meant that there was not space or time to explore this idea.

On reflection, it may be that the teachers involved did not understand the role of the CPI or the work of the facilitator, and a more thorough briefing around the pedagogy and facilitation norms would be useful in future.[20] In Galway County, teachers were quick to join in the CPI. While this is not a problem in and of itself, some of the contributions the teacher made misled participants about the nature of philosophy, for example, "There are no right or wrong answers!," or directly foreclosed on the freedom of participants, for instance, "You don't really think that, do you?"[21] In Galway City, teachers' interjections focused on discipline, at times displaying favouritism, or body language that undermined participants, such as eye-rolling and/or disrespecting participants' contributions by making asides. This, of course, was detrimental to participants' willingness to experiment with their thinking aloud, and potentially deterred community members from taking part in shared dialogue.

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[20] This is a potential weakness of project-based P4C interventions, but it cannot find space in this paper.

[21] These interjections were captured in the facilitator's evaluation note for each session of the project. Important to bear in mind is that, as several thinkers have observed, the claim that philosophy has no right answer is not part of our practice in any way. This latter kind of contribution is particularly relevant in relation to the reflections on the CPI as a potential space for free thinking and authentic communication.

4. Path of Workshops

Each iteration of this project was comprised of philosophy sessions and some pod-cast production workshops. Groups were recruited by Galway City and County Libraries, who were the funding awardees and coordinators of the project. The project's first and second iterations began with participants identifying assumptions they had encountered (amongst their peers, within themselves, or with relevant others) around young people, philosophy, and climate change. We then interrogated these assumptions, identifying those that the communities wanted to challenge, and those that the communities endorsed. This began the process of metacognitive skills-building – thinking about thinking. Next, inquiry questions were identified in contrast to other questions, and the issue of how they might help us to deepen our understanding of the climate crisis was explored. Stimuli in the form of objects and images in the second session initiated the creation of the first bank of concepts, which steadily grew over the coming weeks as the participants made and broke connections between their ideas. Later, this bank of concepts was used to build the questions that the communities inquired into.

In sessions three and four in Season One, concepts were organized as those that motivate us to act in the context of climate change, and those that stop us from acting. Facilitators modelled the potential coexistence of concepts in both categories through the example of autonomy. In one context it was a motivating factor in acting with conscience regarding one's climate impact (i.e., taking public transport and walking when possible, and the reticence to learn how to drive a car), and in the other context, how autonomy overrode the motivation to be climate conscious, that is, the endeavour to be autonomous led to potentially environmentally detrimental behaviour (i.e., driving a car). This exercise served to demonstrate the malleability of concepts in context.

This exercise evolved in Season Two. Once the bank of concepts had begun, participants were split into two groups. One group identified concepts that motivate action in the context of climate change, and the other those that hinder us from acting. In sharing their answers, the community demonstrated for themselves the malleability of concepts in context and the value of being precise with meaning when engaged in dialogue. Having investigated concepts, participants chose concepts they wanted to find out more about. They interviewed one another about their chosen concept using the following questions: What is the opposite of your concept? What can your concept not live without? What destroys

your concept? (One participant chose "Beauty." Their answers to the above questions were "Ugliness," "Perspective," and "Standards," respectively.) This further populated the "bank of concepts" allowing the community to demonstrate their thinking for one another, as connections between and amongst concepts were made and broken in different ways as participants presented their answers. These two exercises, the concept sorting and concept interview, allowed the communities to engage in critical, creative, and caring thinking together and to deepen their understanding of their own concerns and concerns held by the group.[22]

However, both communities were reluctant to engage in dialogue when sitting together as a full group. This could be attributed to language and cultural barriers in Galway City, and age differences in Galway County (in the latter setting, participants told the facilitator that they were too shy to speak in front of the older community members). In Season One, where the groups were much more homogenous and more comfortable with each other, enthusiastic and lively inquiries were in small groups as well as when all members were engaged. Season Two focused more explicitly on concepts, stretching and exploring possible connections between ideas. The talk that happened in small groups during conceptual analysis activities was creative and energized, but this excitement fell away when participants returned to the bigger circle. Philosophical inquiry happened and ideas were engaged with, and careful, deep thinking practised, but in a different way than expected or intended. So, to what extent (if at all) does this matter? In the following section, we consider the relationship between freedom and inquiry.

5. Freedom and Inquiry

In *Thinking in Education*, Lipman likens the movement of the inquiry to a "boat tacking in the wind"[23] – moved by its own energy, that of philosophical curiosity catalysed by the maieutic effects of collectively inquiring. Facilitators are thus presented with a particular challenge – to maintain the rigour of an unfolding conversation without explicitly guiding the talk towards a pre-determined conclusion.[24] To be "pedagogically strong, but philosophically self-effacing."[25]

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[22] M. Lipman, *Thinking in Education*, op. cit., p. 21.
[23] Ibid., p. 15.
[24] D. Kennedy, *The Role of a Facilitator in a Community of Philosophical Inquiry*, "Metaphilosophy" 2004, Vol. 35, No. 5, pp. 744–765, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9973.2004.00348.x.
[25] Ibid., p. 761.

Maintaining such freedom is essential for two things: (1) realizing the creative thinking capacities of the participants within the inquiry, and (2) the production of meaning that can relevantly belong to or be possessed by (at least for a time)[26] the members of the CPI.[27] In the examples described above, the myopic focus on the outcome, the podcast, by the other authority figures surrounding the project meant that students were in some cases potentially reluctant to voice their views or to experiment with ideas and their consequences, something vital for creative thinking.

6. Creative Thinking

Creative thinking is one of the "three Cs" that Lipman describes within his account of "multi-dimensional thinking" fostered through the P4C pedagogy.[28] As Roberto Franzini Tibaldeo notes, creative thinking gains much of its uniqueness in Lipman's account through its contradistinction to critical thinking.[29] Although Lipman's account of creative thinking shares much with criticality, the emphasis on possibility within creative thought means that, for Lipman, the capacity to think creatively is rule-defiant (while of course being curiously rule-dependent in that the existence of the tools and products of critical thought provides the necessary raw material for the creative thinker to transgress or think beyond).[30] It appears in Lipman's account of creative thinking that a feeling of freedom is important for the creative thinker to feel comfortable.[31] However, "trying on" ideas becomes much less appealing when there is a risk that one's participation in inquiry might be reduced to what might be an ambitious, unlikely or tentative position. Rhetorically productive manoeuvres, such as devil's advocacy, which

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[26] M. Gregory, M. Laverty, *Introduction: Philosophy, Education and the Care of the Self*, "Thinking: The Journal of Philosophy for Children" 2009, Vol. 19, No. 4, pp. 3–9, https://doi.org/10.5840/thinking200919422.

[27] D. Kennedy, *The Role of a Facilitator*, op. cit., p. 758.

[28] M. Lipman, *Thinking in Education*, op. cit., p. 255.

[29] R.F. Tibaldeo, *Matthew Lipman and Ann Margaret Sharp: Philosophy for Children's Educational Revolution*, Springer Nature, Cham 2023, p. 50.

[30] M. Lipman, *Thinking in Education*, op. cit., p. 251.

[31] Lipman states that creative thinking bears the following markers: originality, productivity, imagination, independence, experimentation, holism, self-transcendence, surprise, generativity. Ibid., p. 245.

can be useful in exploring the weaker features of a commonly held position, may be useful in generating diversity, but not something an individual inquirer might want to be held to. Creative thinking as maieutic and generative relies on creative thinkers' willingness to share ideas within the inquiry, modelling thinking for other members of the CPI so that they can internalize the characteristics of this form of thinking.[32] The addition of further ideas to the answers built in inquiry is productive of deeper meaning in the dialogue and allows for a more genuine testing of the implications of judgments made within the inquiry.

If freedom and meaning are coextensive within inquiry, the question of whether outcomes foreclose on freedom is salient. In the following section we think through two potential dangers. The first, considered with Biesta, centres on the character of philosophical inquiry itself as characterized by meaning emergent through a form of collective investigative freedom and the tension that is created when these energies are focused on a specific outcome. The second risk centres on the attempt of such outcomes as a means of "sharing" the thinking that happens in inquiry with interlocutors outside the process. Here we think not about the risk of instrumentalizing philosophy, but of instrumentalizing young philosophers and their work for the benefit of adults or the demands of curriculum or funding structures.[33]

7. Instrumentalizing Philosophy and Instrumentalizing Young Philosophers

We began this paper with a reference to Biesta's warning against the instrumentalization of philosophy in the way philosophical thinking is conducted with children and young people. In his paper, he questions the world-relations made available to participants in inquiry in the modes he has observed it being practised.[34] The instrumentalization of education (and especially philosophical edu-

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[32] M. Lipman, *Teaching Students to Think Reasonably: Some Findings of the Philosophy for Children Program*, "The Clearing House" 1998, Vol. 71, No. 5, p. 277.

[33] Of course, the demands of funding structures often stem from the issues present within a given society. As is evident in the current focus on climate education. Such a focus means that the CPI, when funded through these means, is often at risk of being put to work to solve problems created by either the action or inertia of adults today.

[34] G. Biesta, *Philosophy, Exposure, and Children*, op. cit.

cation) in the sense of creating citizens who will "solve" or at least emerge from the system readied (indoctrinated if not inspired) to solve current global problems is inherent in the emphasis placed on the UN sustainable development goals as a funding priority. However, this connection of philosophy to real-world issues might perhaps meet Biesta's concerns over the conflation of philosophical reflection with critical thinking skills, and the "mentalization" of philosophy, that is, its divorce from the world as met or encountered by children and young people.[35] We take these concerns as valid issues that face practitioners of philosophy for children. By focusing on using philosophy to meet the goals of the current curriculum, the needs of a present society or the crises brought about by a present adult generation, there may be a risk that philosophical inquiry forecloses on the possibility of radically reimagining the world.

We identify a further concern in the creation of outcomes from the CPI in terms of *who* such outcomes are created for? Might there be a risk that the creation of outcomes begins to overshadow the philosophical work itself or foreclose on freedom within the inquiry, relegating experimental or half-thought-out ideas or utterances in favour of something more communicable or consumable? In this sense outcomes, while often intended as motivational, empowering means of honouring the work that takes place in the CPI, can become oppressive or reductive. In the example discussed here, the podcast was originally intended to share the ideas and judgments generated by young people, who are often curiously absent from public discourse on the climate, even though it will acutely affect their futures. Of course, some practitioners may argue that including creative practices and activities might motivate participants to join P4C projects, bringing in philosophy "by the back door" as it were. However, this seems to be a counterintuitive claim. If the facilitator in a CPI is to be a member of that community and treat their participants with transparency, beginning with a distortion of project purposes is a suboptimal beginning. Thus, further examples of critically examined projects are needed to develop a means to share the outcomes of inquiry that capture the quality of students thinking without reducing their engagement to a small selection of utterances.

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[35] Ibid.

8. Conclusion

The above paper has worked to open a critical discussion about the design and delivery of P4C programmes and projects through reflection on a specific case. The question of outcomes from the CPI is neither one that can be settled easily, nor is it an issue that is likely to simply go away. On the one hand, taking time to create outcomes based on what emerges through inquiry can confer value on the knowledge produced via dialoguing together. On such a reading, the creation of outcomes that are something other than dialogue can allow for adults (such as parents) who are not present when philosophy unfolds to see the participating young people in a new light. In investing in creating something tangible and shareable from the process of inquiry, such projects avoid reducing philosophical inquiry to "thinking games" only, thus challenging misapprehensions of philosophy as divorced from life or an ivory-tower pursuit. When outputs are not based on language or the kind of language that emerges in interpersonal dialogue, learners who may have only listened during inquiry are welcome to contribute differently. In this sense, creative outcomes may be framed as an extension of the inquiry itself or a means of welcoming less vocal thinkers into this space. Conversely, if outcomes take precedence over the inquiry, then a challenge to the free exploratory character of the CPI may emerge. One core learning from the project in question here is that *how* philosophy is conceptualized matters, not only for the participants within a CPI (those doing the philosophy) but for the other authority figures and stakeholders (young persons' teachers, parents and youth workers). Other adults or observers may reduce the project only to this outcome, overlooking the inquiry as the primary outcome and returning to the very educational paradigms the practice of P4C seeks to frustrate or challenge.

This matters not only for those working outside of educational contexts. In classrooms, teachers using the CPI should be transparent with their communities about the aims of doing philosophy together, and careful about wedding the CPI too closely to curriculum content that rests on understanding a contestable concept in an overly circumscribed way.

If facilitators hope to use the P4C pedagogy to empower young people, critical reflection is essential from the project design stage through to delivery. Tantalizing though new funding means and streams might be, honesty about nature and purpose of philosophy is essential if the CPI and its members are to retain the freedom of thought and expression they need and so richly deserve.

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