

The Pedagogic Art of Philosophy

CHRISTINE DODDINGTON

University of Cambridge

Abstract

There are various programmes currently being advocated for ways in which children might encounter philosophy as an explicit part of their education. An analysis of these reveals the ways in which they are predicated on views of what counts as philosophy. In the sense in which they are inquiry-based, purport to encourage the pursuit of puzzlement and contribute towards creating democratic citizens, these programmes either implicitly rest on some of the work of John Dewey or explicitly use his work as the main warrant for their approach. This paper explores an alternative perspective on what might count as educational in the practice of children 'doing' philosophy, by reconsidering Dewey's notion of 'experience'. The educational desire to generate inquiry, thought and democracy is not lost, but a view that philosophy takes its impetus from wonder is embedded in what might count as educational experience and ways of approaching the fundamental philosophical question of 'how should we live?' This is proposed as a plausible basis for children's educational engagements and the relevance to pedagogy and children's experiences in school is considered.

According to a UK Education agency (QCA) and the National Foundation for Educational Research in the UK, a comparison of the curricular and assessment frameworks of twenty more economically developed countries shows that 'The overwhelming majority of children in Europe, North America and Australasia have no statutory or otherwise established entitlement to encounter philosophy during the period of compulsory schooling.' (Hand and Winstanley, 2008, p.xi) However, a brief trawl of the internet is enough to show that there are a whole range of initiatives involving and promoting children and philosophy across the globe. A closer look at a number of these programmes and the justifications put forward for their educational worth reveals that it is possible to categorise them in a number of ways. Firstly, in broad terms, there are versions that centre on engaging children in philosophy while other approaches are more concerned with instructing children in some of the 'great ideas of philosophers'. In the latter form, philosophical ideas and beliefs can be introduced to children under the guise of a humanities programme or through cultural or social studies. Jostein Gaarder has said that his popular first novel 'Sophie's World' arose out of his desire as a teacher to engage young adolescents in Norway during his standard curriculum teaching of philosophy as a history of ideas.

Robert Fisher distinguishes two ways of considering philosophy by the idea of formal/informal philosophy. Where 'formal' philosophy refers to the systematic, academic discipline, 'informal' philosophy is seen as the 'discursive or dialogic engagement with conceptual problems and questions of existential concern without recourse to the specialist resources of academic philosophy.' (Fisher, 2006, p.100) This paper will follow the notion of 'informal' philosophy and focus on the more common practice, at least in the UK, of children and students actively 'doing' philosophy. In this, the most prevalent way of philosophy finding a place within the curriculum is by advocating a distinctive form of discussion centred around particular philosophical questions or issues worthy of debate. Sometimes use of the term philosophy is avoided but a form of philosophising can also be seen to emerge in other curriculum proposals. It can be described as a category of 'thinking skill', embedded in courses designed to encourage critical thinking, or is part of what is presented as the general use of 'dialogue' in the classroom. To cover this range of curriculum proposals comprehensively is not possible within the constraints of one paper so my intention is to select from some of the writing of those who advocate particular views or methods for using philosophy with children and to focus on discussion in the classroom. I begin by initially comparing the basis for the

respective beliefs and conceptualisations of what might count as children engaging in ‘doing’ philosophy put forward in some recent work on philosophy in schools.

Explicit use of philosophy is present in various versions of programmes like Matthew Lipman’s ‘Philosophy for Children’ which aims to produce a Deweyan conception of a school-based community of inquiry. The influence of Lipman’s work is found in a number of programmes advocating philosophy for children. Examples found in the UK include the work of Karin Murriss, who trained with Lipman, and who has been influential in the use of picture books as a stimulus for young children doing philosophy (www.dialogueworks.co.uk) and The Society for Advancing Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection (SAPERRE) (www.sapere.org.uk) which aims to promote philosophical enquiry with children and communities. Another example is the work of psychologist Robert Fisher who has researched philosophy in primary schools and has been influential in promoting children philosophising through stories, poems and games. (Fisher, 2003)

While the idea of children doing philosophy generally focuses on discussion in groups or in circles, advocates articulate the purpose of the discussion differently largely dependent on their different conceptualisation of what counts as philosophy. In a thoughtful collection of chapters on Philosophy in Schools edited by Michael Hand and Carrie Winstanley (2008), Hand avoids arguing that children should do philosophy, but wishes to argue that children are capable of doing philosophy so he asks whether there is a philosophical method that is ‘i) central to the mainstream practice of philosophy and ii) capable of being understood and applied by children?’ (Hand, 2008, p.13) He suggests that any analysis of philosophical method in use today or in the past, offers ‘a plethora of methods and techniques of inquiry, not all of which are well understood or easily articulated.’ (Hand, 2008, p.13) However he selects just one familiar method that draws heavily on R.S. Peters’ conceptualisation. Peters saw philosophers as having essentially a spectator role on other practices and so Hand offers the basic view that philosophy is ‘concerned with forms of thought and argument expressed in “What do you mean?” and “How do you know?”’ (Hand, 2008, p.11). Hand explains this more fully by calling on Simon Blackburn’s description of a philosophy of any discipline which entails the ‘study of ‘the concepts that structure thinking’ within such a discipline (Hand, 2008, p.10) and Mautner’s description of what philosophy does. Here, the subject-matter of philosophy is ‘the concepts, theories and presuppositions present in various disciplines and in everyday life.’ where traditionally, the focus has been on ‘the most fundamental or general concepts and principles involved in thought, action and reality. (Mautner 2005 p. 466)’ (Hand, 2008, p.10) This thinking eventually leads Hand to the conclusion that children can philosophise, for his claim is that doing philosophy basically amounts to conceptual analysis and he then goes on to illustrate how this might be featured within the classroom.

Hand’s restriction of ‘doing philosophy’ to ‘conceptual analysis’ is thus a firm limitation on the kind of discussion that might count as philosophy. Catherine McCall, who has worked extensively training teachers to do philosophy with children advocates the creation of a ‘Community of Philosophical Inquiry’ (CoPI) (2009) and states clearly what is to count as appropriate philosophical discussion. She is adamant that a chair (teacher) with philosophical training is necessary to steer any discussion towards explicit philosophical reasoning. She rules out the idea of individual ‘musings’ or wondering by explaining that here is no place for these in ‘realist philosophy’ which forms the basis of CoPI. Instead, she explains, discussion should focus on ‘the philosophical assumptions and principles that underlie actions, judgement, emotions, etc. – distinguishing between epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, philosophy of mind, philosophy of science, etc.’ (McCall, 2009, p.94).

Critical thinking programmes for schools frequently echo the procedures that we might recognise as philosophising: ‘The underlying concern of critical thinking is the making of reasoned judgements and arriving at reasoned judgements in actual contexts of disagreement and debate is a dialectical process involving the comparative weighting and balancing of a variety of contending positions and arguments’ (Bailin, 2010a) Critical thinking here is not seen as a series of mechanical techniques and strategies, instead

the actual process of arriving at judgements through inquiry is carefully and imaginatively shown to involve reason, skill and balance akin to disciplined philosophising. (Bailin & Battersby, 2010b).

All three examples above are concerned with restricting, and therefore teaching, a particular and structured form of reasoning that is then seen as what constitutes philosophy's educational value. However, Matthew Lipman's original idea of philosophical discussion to enhance children's thinking, together with some of the programmes such as SAPERE that were inspired by him, seem to stand in something of a contrast to these particular prescriptive accounts of what is educational about philosophy.

Catherine McCall's account, which helpfully sets out what she sees as the distinctions between other versions of philosophy with children and CoPI, states that Lipman's original Philosophy for Children offers a 'democratic practice in which children are joint creators of meaning' (McCall, 2009, p. 104) designed to support or create communities of inquiry. On her account, Lipman's form of doing philosophy with children aims to generate critical, creative and caring, rather than more disciplined philosophical, thinking. In particular, each child's experience and expression of their thinking is to have equal value regardless of its philosophical strength. Participation in communities for inquiry have less structure in that questions can be posed at any time and in the SAPERE version there is systematised turn-taking and voting on the questions to be pursued. These points lead McCall to suggest that the main distinction between CoPI and these other forms of philosophy with children arises from the Deweyan emphasis on education for democracy where a 'respectful, caring and collaborative environment' for discussion is key, and is in contrast to McCall's allegiance to rigorous (realist) philosophical thought. The central purpose of discussion in each view is very different. If CoPI aspires to teach children how to philosophise in a disciplined way, discussion in a community of inquiry is disciplined but largely there to enable children to negotiate a link between the ideas of others and their own experience. This 'freer' model of discussion therefore stems not just from Dewey's notion of democracy but from a much fuller account of Dewey's distinctive idea of education as experience.

The Deweyan emphasis on arriving at meaning through philosophical discussion in schools is identified by Suissa (2008) as the significant Pragmatist shift from truth to meaning, however one of her observations is that some versions of philosophical discussion in schools are beset by the problem of still seeing the pursuit of truth as the fundamental point of doing philosophy. To counter this she reminds us of Dewey's words:

poetic meanings, moral meanings, a large part of the goods of life are matters of richness and freedom of meaning, rather than of truth; a large part of our life is carried on in a realm of meanings to which truth and falsity as such are irrelevant. (Dewey, in Hickman and Alexander, 1998, p.91)

Suissa includes some versions of critical thinking in her criticism of the pursuit of truth rather than meaning, and points out that although philosophy might develop critical thinking skills or dispositions, this is not sufficient for it to have a place in the curriculum since 'surely good teaching in any curricular subject is such that it encourages critical thinking.' (Suissa, 2008, p133)

Suissa's conclusion is ultimately that philosophy should not become another subject within the Secondary school curriculum with all the assessment and curriculum guideline requirements that this would incur. Instead she argues that classes in philosophy might exist to engage children in speculative and imaginative exercises, 'loosely structured around the philosophical questions which arise from the aspects of human life, culture and meaning encountered through the rest of the curriculum.' (Suissa, 2008, p.143)

Alongside Suissa's chapter in this collection of writings about philosophy in schools, three chapters look less directly at what practically characterises philosophical discussion and more at how it may be provoked by literature - familiar materials that already have a place for study within most forms of education. Karin Murrin describes and argues strongly for picture books to be used to provoke a form of philosophical discussion with young children. The other two chapters by Conroy and by Glueck and Brighthouse are less concerned with making discussion systematically philosophical, and are more concerned about highlighting

the space that already exists for philosophical thought within the study of literature. Murriss is concerned to use the attributes of good picture books in the service of philosophy, while Conroy is looking for educational sources for cultivating wisdom and Glueck and Brighouse want teachers to be 'sensitive to, and alert their students to, the philosophical dimensions' already present in much of Children's Literature. (Glueck and Brighouse, 2008, p.119)

In these last two chapters there is a clear sense in which we are moving away from any promotion of children philosophising to learn to *do* philosophy, yet a sense in which the ability to philosophise can be an educationally valid way of thinking is retained. The highly influential work on multiple intelligences by Howard Gardner illustrates another way of approaching the possible educational value of philosophy. Gardner explores a notion of what he calls 'existential intelligence' but is hamstrung by his own criteria for what counts as an 'intelligence' in fully endorsing its place in education : 'my hesitation in declaring a full-blown existential intelligence comes from the dearth, so far, of evidence that parts of the brain are concerned particularly with these deep issues of existence..... it is possible that existential questions are just part of a broader philosophical mind – or that they are simply the more emotionally laden of the questions that individuals routinely pose.' (Gardner, 2006a, p.21) However in his desire to promote and articulate what he calls 'an education for understanding' Gardner later offers a more developed and practically orientated view:

'It is possible to envision an education that assumes.....an approach.. rooted in the progressive tradition of John Dewey.... (where) the curriculum is build from the first, around gritty central questions or generative issues...that thoughtful human beings all over the world have posed,' (Gardner, 2006b, p.148) Gardner then suggests how these issues can be introduced from an early age, in forms that reflect aspects of disciplinary inquiry in different conceptual domains such as 'identity and history' or 'the biological world'.

It is possible to critically evaluate all the views set out above in more detail, however, the argument I wish to pursue is best served at this point by some comments on the first view I began this paper with. In the first chapter of the book he has co-edited, Hand describes three popular misconceptions about philosophy that he feels incorrectly suggest that philosophy is a hard subject, beyond the understanding of many, including of course, children. I shall focus on two because although he does not use them explicitly as criticisms of the philosophy for children movement, the implication is that some of the arguments put forward to support philosophy with children suffer under these misconceptions.

Hand's first target is the claim that philosophy has no right or wrong answers which often appears in the statements of teachers who advocate the practice of doing philosophy with children. This seems an overly simplistic representation of the spirit behind the philosophy with children movement in general and even the teachers' comments that Hand quotes. In the UK, teachers of young children (his attention in this chapter is on primary-aged children) have been, and many are still, hamstrung by a tightly objectives-led curriculum underpinned by a poor conceptualisation of what counts as knowledge (Alexander, 2009, p.247). Thoughtful primary teachers see in philosophy, a way of teaching that does not have heavily prescribed and pre-determined outcomes. The claim of 'no right or wrong answers' is arguable merely shorthand for this characteristic. The sense of freedom from prescription could be what underpins their professional excitement at finding a way of teaching that allows for a variety of answers to count as appropriate. As Murriss puts it:

many teachers and pupils have become dependent upon the certainty of right and wrong answers and feel lost and confused when questions elude simple resolution. They have become victims of a mostly answers-based curriculum that offers an ill-founded sense of security (Haynes & Murriss 2006) (Murriss 2008 p. 115)

To express what is philosophy's advantage more simply, it is not that there are no right or wrong answers but that philosophical discussion avoids simplistic tick-box answers. In philosophy and even with quite young children, answers can be questioned, unpacked, developed and elaborated in subtle ways that much of the current UK Primary Curriculum, for example, does not allow for.

Although the next point is not an explicit criticism, Hand implies that many of the philosophy with children programmes are happy to use questions in ways that give the impression that philosophers have largely failed to make any progress over ‘perennial’ dilemmas. He dismisses this misconception by explaining how conceptual analysis allows for the tracing of ‘logical implications of possible uses of particular concepts.’ (Hand, 2008, p.10). However this seems hardly to be the point when raising these kinds of questions with anyone, adult or child, who has not previously considered them. Questions such as ‘How do we know when something is fair?’ or ‘Is kindness enough to make anyone a good person?’ can provoke a new depth of thought and reflection that for those encountering the exploration of such ideas for the first time, creates felt originality, freshness and excitement. An awareness that others had charted ‘possible conceptual implications’ might simply inhibit the effort needed to think through what such a question might entail or mean for oneself or that group in the discussion.

A more apposite point comes from Glueck and Brighouse: ‘Philosophical discussion can be especially difficult to manage, because it must be somewhat open-ended in order for it to elicit genuinely philosophical thinking, but it must not leave the impression that everyone’s opinion is as valid as everyone else’s or that there are no truths at stake. Because if that were so the activity of critical reasoning would be pointless. (Glueck and Brighouse, 2008, p.130) However as suggested below, a more fulsome Deweyan perspective might find problems even with this questioning of the extent of space and validity there should be for personal views.

In this brief summary of selected accounts of philosophy with children, the order in which they have been presented is intended to suggest a continuum, beginning with the more prescribed or narrow views of what counts as doing philosophy and ending in a broader more general view, that philosophical ideas and thinking pervades our lives and can be valuable as education when enshrined in already legitimised educational domains. While the earlier characterisations stress the need for specific training on behalf of teachers and children, the later ideas suggest that philosophy can exist as a more generalised feature of education. In the centre of this continuum, the ideas of Dewey emerge as pivotal for the philosophy for children campaigners but also clearly extend to the more general views, as I have tried to indicate.

If we now return to Suissa’s account of a Deweyan perspective on philosophy in schools, a tension is identified between justifications for philosophy by citing its benefits for the individual as opposed to society. The claims embedded in some philosophy for children programmes, that meaning accrued through social encounters is primarily of educational value because it is a way of developing of self-knowledge, Suissa finds to be an inadequate interpretation of Dewey’s view of experience. By stressing the immediate experience of the individual, she suggests doing philosophy becomes the drawing of ‘problems and debates out of everyday experience of children..... (linked) with the educational aim of promoting ‘self-understanding’ (Suissa, 2008, p 136.) She argues cogently that Dewey’s stress on experience, is far richer and ‘rooted in the idea that humans are essentially concerned with a constant attempt to make and to improve shared meanings out of their active encounter with the natural, social and cultural worlds. (Suissa, 2008, p. 138)

Because Dewey’s fundamental educational ideas do rest in his complex conceptualisation of ‘experience’, further inadequacy is to be found when the argument for doing philosophy in schools is reduced to a strategy for the promotion of democracy, by, for example, simple turn-taking. Instead, the imperative in Dewey’s work is to closely address the quality of any engagement deemed educational. In the particular focus we have on open-ended discussions, participants create meaning for themselves through both listening to others and becoming more conscious of their own thoughts and ideas as they contribute so that ‘talk may not merely serve to articulate the emotional and reflective life, but actually constitute it.’ (Doddington 2001, p. 272)

For Dewey, the stress on the views being held *personally* is vital for experience to be educational. Concerns introduced should be real and puzzles should be genuine if children are to invest themselves in a discussion and thus experience the qualities of engagement designed to propel them to seek further experiences with these qualities. The reason personal involvement is so vital, is to create conditions that will

encourage children to *want to* reflect in collaboration with others or, in Dewey's phrase, be 'ready' 'to consider in a thoughtful way the subjects that do come within the range of experience – a readiness that contrasts strongly with the disposition to pass judgement on the basis of mere custom, tradition, prejudice, etc., and thus shun the task of thinking.' (Dewey, 1989 p. 139).

If we are to grasp the Deweyan notion of being ready to experience in an educational sense, it is important to understand what might constitute 'readiness'. In essence, this is akin to certain dispositions that prepare us to be receptive and Dewey lists four attributes: open-mindedness; wholeheartedness; responsibility and later, directness as the 'moral traits' (Dewey, 1985, pp366-367) necessary to prepare us to learn through social encounters. Open-mindedness for Dewey has an active quality and denotes a willingness to consider the new and the unfamiliar: 'an open-minded person merges curiosity, wonder and respect into an active receptivity to new points of view, to new outlooks and to new ways of thinking and knowing.' (Hanson, 2006, p170). Whole-heartedness describes the desire and willingness to fully engage, the contrast is with a half-hearted approach to an encounter. A 'whole-hearted individual remains absorbed, immersed, engrossed and as best as possible sees the activity or task through to completion.' (Hanson, 2006, p170). Being responsible implies facing the challenge of working through what emerges in an encounter to see what difference it makes to one's present, personal understandings and beliefs, while directness implies having the courage to be clear-sighted in focusing one's energies and resources well.

These features do not negate Suissa's reminder that a Deweyan view of 'experience' directs an individual's attention towards the betterment of the social condition, but it does reassert the significance for the individual, not just for self knowledge, but for a quality of experience that can 'fund the self in substantial ways, fuelling its growth so that in all subsequent situations it has greater resources and energies to bring to bear, thereby generating an ascending spiral of experience and quality of life' (Hanson, 2006 p. 173)

Doing philosophy through discussion can contribute to authentic language experiences in school through which 'both personal and cultural identity can be forged' (Doddington 2001, p.269). In essence, education should entail wholehearted, meaningful discussions to further create meaning. However before the weight of this requirement is again accused of sinking discussions into mutual or self-analysis, it is worth reminding ourselves of the significant feature of philosophy that turns us outward, to look beyond ourselves - that of wonder. The perspectives discussed earlier would no doubt acknowledge that one aspect of philosophy relevant to becoming educated, centres around a capacity for wonder. This idea is obviously an ancient one. Plato argues that the 'feeling of wonder is very characteristic of the philosopher' and that 'philosophy has no other starting point...' (Plato, *Theaetetus 155d*) while Aristotle suggests 'it was because of wonder that men both now and originally began to philosophise' (Aristotle, *Metaphysics 982b*) in (Mackenzie, R. 2008, p. 5). This refers to a wider and older notion of philosophical contemplation and wonderings and yet with the idea of children engaging with philosophy, it regains some significance. Children can express delight and amazement at simple things and we could argue that many child-like questions such as 'Where did the moon come from?' or even 'Why should I be good?' show that, necessarily, through their lack of experience and understanding about the world, there is a natural tendency to 'wonder'. The temptation to launch into explanations for these questions when children pose them can be great for any parent or teacher, but Dewey of course would require that to be educational, any form of response should preserve and inspire further capacity to wonder. However we conceptualise the role of the teacher here, the space to play with thoughts is necessary, the release from 'correctness' and 'pre-ordained' answers and the ability for teachers to show 'children that utterances can be 'food for thought' rather than prompts for interrogation' (Doddington, 2001, p.273) is important. And before the criticism occurs that this just characterises a comfortable 'armchair' activity, it is important to remind ourselves that in a Deweyan sense, 'an open-minded attitude is one that never takes anything for granted and continuously questions assumptions. Philosophical puzzlement is an emotional condition involving doubt and uncertainty. It may give rise to feelings of alienation, despair or excitement.' (Haynes, 2008, p.42)

If these kinds of exchanges qualify as philosophising it is useful to observe how this form of discussion has certain qualities in common with other kinds of engagements in, for example, the arts and literature. In both philosophising and artistic engagements, there needs to be some freedom from the imperatives of the urgent or mundane. Similar to the idea of playing a game, receptivity and open-mindedness allows the participants to submit to a co-constructed situation and in a reflective, unprescribed context of a sustained discussion, teachers and children are able to 'play with ideas' and wonder, or imagine to entertain possibilities. However it is important to stress that the notion of play used here is a serious one whereby 'The structure of play absorbs the player into itself and thus frees him from the burden of taking the initiative which constitutes the actual strain of existence.'¹ (Gadamer, 1989, p.105)

Both philosophy as discussion and the reading of literature are examples of forms of engagement that are characterised by a lack of thought and action centred on direct necessity. They can therefore be distinguished from encounters with the world that are designed to provide quick practical solutions or basic survival needs. It is by approaching an event or object in this non instrumental way that an individual can in some 'playful' sense be released from normal everyday constraints to imagine and see beyond the particularity of the present to create meaning. Yet once here, it can be seen that these characteristics can be applied more broadly - to the educational experience of children engaging in *making* art for example:

Each of us, as artist, can take what is common and shared, and through art, shape and form it to return it to the world made *meaningful* through the personal lens that is distinctive to us as an individual. This emphasis in making art stresses that children's immediate, personal experiences are the rich source from which they can return their impressions to the world in imaginative ways. (Doddington, 2010)

It might be suggested that by now the notion of philosophy appears to be evaporating from the argument or that Suissa's complaint about an interpretation of Dewey's 'experience' being too narrow a focus on the individual, has pertinence again. Yet my intention is not to eclipse philosophy or fall into the individual self-knowledge trap, but to step back to see what various expressions of Deweyan experience as education may ultimately have in common. Hanson's description of involvement that enriches and promotes experience could apply to both a particular version of philosophising and other ways of engaging with others. 'The more the self can infuse into a situation, the richer the situation and the richer the possible incremental transformation of the self - this will be much more assured if situations increasingly feature greater infusions from the world by way of objects, including other selves enjoying a comparable experience. (Hanson, 2006, p.173)

To tie the argument more securely to philosophy, it is necessary to see how Dewey emphasises that educational experience should generate 'moral knowledge' that 'builds up a social interest and confers the intelligence needed to make that interest effective in practice' (Dewey, 1985, p. 366) The term 'moral knowledge' is used 'to capture what students and teachers learn through activities that are saturated with interaction between themselves and the most challenging subject matter they are equipped to tackle...(where). they learn that ideas, interpretations, explanations and ways of knowing have consequences....are *alive*....are part of *their* lives and they expand the scene of life' (Hanson, 2006, p.183) For Dewey, understanding across the curriculum is acquired 'under conditions where...social significance is realised' (Dewey, 1985, p. 366) and in ways that 'feed moral interest and develop moral insight'. (Dewey, 1985, p. 366). It seems that while it is central to philosophy, the question 'How should we live our lives?' can also be broached in a range of learning engagements.

My paper has tried to show that while many arguments for philosophy with children rest on the work of Dewey, we need to return to some of the subtleties and complexity in his work to get a clearer idea of how this might be best manifest in school. The connection with literature highlighted in a number of views is not incompatible with this but I have tried to show that a Deweyan view actually allows for different manifestations of the kinds of experiences he deems educational and some, but not all, can be found in some

of the particular forms advocated as philosophy with children. There is no doubt that in a very practical sense, teachers may see in see children philosophising, a welcome contrast to performative, objectives-led learning and teaching, and a relief from the current education mantras of ‘pace’ and ‘curriculum ‘coverage. However if this is so, the question then becomes, are the desirables we see highlighted by Dewey’s notion of ‘experience’ best achieved through philosophy for children? My final suggestion is that this is but one, well-supported way of achieving that quality of experience, but there are others. The significant point should be that teachers understand the qualities of experience they need to pursue, consciously look for or intentionally create. This may well occur through philosophy for children but not necessarily so. It can occur through discussion of poetry, drama, picture books, art, moral or civic dilemmas, but more crucially, aiming for this desirable state for children should become an inherent part of the pedagogy of teachers and therefore happen when it is opportune or planned for as part of a teacher’s repertoire for teaching. It could be that the extent of prescription teachers are used to means that some of the programmes outlined offer the surest and most practical way of allowing this to happen. Alternatively, with more professional autonomy, and a wholehearted commitment to creating high quality educational experience, we should perhaps be arguing that teachers themselves are those best placed to exercise judgement about when and where and how philosophising with children in any of its many forms should most fruitfully happen as educational experience.

Notes

¹ Gadamer p 105

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