**P4C – Philosophy for Children**

P4C is a ‘thinking skills’ intervention introduced by SAPERE (Society for Advancing Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education) based on the work of Matthew Lipman. Interventions show improvements in students reasoning and comprehension skills, but additionally, their social and emotional development. At its centre is the focus on a ‘community of enquiry’ where a group of people through dialogue become more open to the views of others growing through respect for others and developing own way of thinking – their own philosophy.

**Structure of a Community of Enquiry**

***Preparation***

Sit in a circle so that everyone can make eye contact. Alternatively, with large classes, sit as two concentric circles with the centre circle in dialogue and the outer circle observing (these seating positions can be changed later during the enquiry following a brief summative reflection about the process).

Establish agreed conduct:

* Listen to the speaker
* Respond to the dialogue (thinking about what is being said)
* Give reasons (I agree with … I disagree with X because)
* Treat everyone’s contribution with respect
* Comment on the point, not the person
* Contribute to support the community

***Stimulus***

A story, video clip, picture, poem, piece of music, key facts. E.g. This poem by [Guilliame Apollinaire, a French poet](http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/6434130.Guilliame_Apollinaire_French_Poet)

“Come to the edge, he said.  
We are afraid, they said.  
Come to the edge, he said.  
They came to the edge,  
He pushed them and they flew.  
Come to the edge, Life said.  
They said: We are afraid.  
Come to the edge, Life said.  
They came. It pushed them...  
And they flew.”

***Thinking Time***

This may need additional resources: post it notes to write and move around to focus thinking, key word record, feelings record.

***Conversation (shared reflection)***

E.g. in small groups or pairs speak for one minute each about the stimulus. (People should be given the opportunity to pass.)

***Formulation (generating questions)***

As individuals, pairs or small groups raise a question written out clearly on view to everyone that could be used as a possible enquiry.

E.g. “Who is he?” “Why are they frightened?” “Who is we?” “What does it mean to fly?” etc.

***Airing of questions***

A brief explanation of the question is given by each author, followed by reflection and queries raised by the group.

***Selection (voting for the question)***

Some form of voting is then used to choose the enquiry question.

***First words***

The author of the question opens the discussion by sharing their ideas. Each student could also be given time to write their own view to the question for later reflection.

***Building***

The discussion now opens to everyone. The teacher should act as facilitator and should not give opinions. Respectful listening is important so that everyone can give their contribution to the dialogue.

***Final words***

* Students could write their response the question now, followed by reflection of how their personal views have changed.
* Each person in turn is given the opportunity to say what they think (there should be no interruption to their exposition) with the question author being the last to speak.
* Following personal reflection, give the students chance to reflect on the process- who has been a good listener, who has empathised the most, who has showed courage in sharing something personal etc.? This could be the task of the outer concentric ring if sitting as two circles.

*Resources*

SAPERE Level 1 Handbook (October2007) version 2

<http://sapere.org.uk/what-is-p4c/>

<http://www.thinkingeducation.co.uk/p4c.htm>

<http://www.independentthinking.co.uk/What/Special+Projects/P4C/default.aspx>