

P4D:

Philosophy and Democracy in the Classroom

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Introduction

In this article we report on interim results and progress of a research project by the Research Centre for Integrated Pedagogies at INHolland University of Applied Sciences. The research focuses on the use of philosophy in the classroom for promoting democratic citizenship. Here we report on the exploratory phase of the research. In the meantime, the in-depth investigation phase of the research has begun.

The concept of philosophy with children mainly builds on the work of the American philosopher Matthew Lipman. He sees philosophy with children as a contribution to critical and creative thinking and in this way to democratic society, conceptualized in the Dewey tradition. Philosophy helps people to live together and to compare and communicate ideas and values with one another in order to promote democratic awareness and mutual growth. Democracy presupposes recognition of reciprocal interests of individuals and groups. For this reason democracy cannot be seen as permanent or as a situation which we, the adults of today, can offer to children, the adults of tomorrow. Democracy is something we continuously have to work at, through intensive interaction between individuals and groups in society. A democratic society must put effort into educating children to become rational and reasonable individuals with developed thinking capacities and the ability to coordinate

and cooperate. The most important aim of philosophy with children is to help them develop responsive and creative ways of thinking by converting the classroom into a community of dialogue and inquiry.

In the research project 'Philosophy for Democracy' we analysed 25 classes in several schools, specifically with regard to learning processes and results of a Philosophy with Children programme, Democracy in Dialogue, developed by the Dutch Centre of Philosophy for Children. This programme offers a structured, thematic approach, in order to help primary schools to give philosophy with children a fixed place in the school curriculum, as a contribution to active citizenship education.

The main research themes are:

- What clarification can be given to the concept of 'philosophy with children' in relation to the development of active democratic citizenship?
- What are the assumptions with regard to conceptions of democracy and dialogue as well as to pedagogical and educational practices and objectives?
- What learning processes occur and how can results from this lesson be defined and measured in terms of growth of democratic values, insights and sensibilities?

The complete research route is planned from 2006 to 2011. In this article we focus on the first exploratory phase, which took place in the two years between summer 2006 and summer 2008.

Context of the research project

In the research two themes come together. One is the recent history of the Centre for Philosophy with Children. The other is the growing importance of citizenship education.

In 2004 the Centre for Philosophy with Children in the Netherlands changed its policy. No longer would the main effort be directed to the broad dissemination of Philosophy with Children, but the focus would shift to supporting those teachers and schools already beginning to practice Philosophy with Children. They should be better equipped with methodological instruments and arguments to sustain and develop Philosophy with Children in their classes and schools.

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This change in policy resulted in a research project 'Teachers philosophize'. In this research, which started in winter 2005, eight young teachers who were enthusiastic about implementing Philosophy with Children in their classes, were closely followed during their efforts to do so by four experienced school counsellors. What we wanted to know was what motivated them to keep going, which experiences and instruments they found helpful, what obstacles they found in their way, and how they dealt with them. Over more than six months, the counsellors visited them in their classes about once every two weeks for observation and collaborative reflection. The attitude of the counsellors was not to show the teachers the way, but to follow and support them on their own way.

Both teachers and counsellors found the structure of this action research very fruitful. It gave the opportunity to learn a lot about the thinking, motivation, and aims of teachers. The research resulted in a book 'Kinderen leren filosoferen (Children learn to philosophize)' (Bartels, 2007). Based on an analysis of the practices of these eight teachers, a new initiative was developed to better support and equip teachers to philosophize with children. Because all the tools described in the book have proved successful in practice, the Centre for Philosophy with Children expects the book to be a useful guide for teachers in their efforts to implement and develop philosophy in their classes. A challenge for all teachers is how to obtain enough space and time in the already overloaded primary school curriculum. The hours philosophizing may be successful, but how can they be accounted for within the framework of established goals and the prescribed curriculum?

In the autumn of 2006 new legislation was introduced in the Netherlands, making the advancement of active citizenship a main task of schools. From its theoretical starting points, as developed by Matthew Lipman, philosophy with children has always been seen as a contribution to democratic society. Such a society should put all efforts into educating its citizens to reasonability, says Lipman (Lipman, 1991).

The Centre for Philosophy with Children in the Netherlands saw the introduction of this legislation as a chance to implement philosophy with children within the framework of the advancement of democratic citizenship. The Centre has developed a programme, based on the approach as set out in 'Kinderen leren filosoferen', which better enables teachers to philosophize with their children within this framework. Pilots were run between March 2007 and June 2008.

The task of the Research Centre for Integrated Pedagogies at INHolland Professional University is to initiate and support research on integrated pedagogical practices in education. Educating for active citizenship is one of the main points of interest. The Centre supported

the research project 'Teachers philosophize' and has made the follow-up theme of philosophy and democracy in the classroom, 'Philosophy for Democracy', a part of its research programme.

Clarification of concept

The exploratory research focused on the question: can philosophizing with children be called a democratic practice? This research question was formulated on the assumption that democratic practices in education can contribute to the development of democratic citizenship competencies of children.

In this paragraph we will examine the conceptual relation between philosophy with children and (the development of) democratic citizenship. The clarification of the concepts is provisional, it will be further developed in the next stages of the research.

The democratic constitutional state can be seen as a system in which contrasts and conflicts of all sorts are acknowledged. Democracy gives freedom and the opportunity for difference. This is the democratic paradox: a democracy emphasizes recognition of differences, conflicts and contrasts, but at the same time supports and maintains a common identity connected to the unity of a political community. The specific characteristic of democracy is the recognition and legitimacy of conflict with, simultaneously, a refusal to repress conflicts in an authoritarian way. A democracy has to acknowledge a diversity of values (Schuyt, 2006/2).

The democratic constitutional state has legislation, institutions and procedures to secure the principles of the system; the main democratic values are laid down in constitutional rights.

Through the recognition of a diversity of values, democracy may appear neutral. However, a democracy is always normative as it defends the individual's freedom to choose his or her own way of life. Each one of its members has the right to think differently and to be different, within the restriction of not harming others and with prohibition of discrimination. 'The main values of the democratic way of life can be formulated, conditional on the minimal but crucial requirement of a good and peaceful debate about who we are and want to be. It is not consensus on values, but more the lack of it, and the wish to stay in communication about these differences, which expresses the commitment of democratic citizens to each other' (Pels, 2007).

Democracy, therefore, is also a way of living, as stated beautifully by Dewey: 'Democracy is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience'. Democracy is not a fact, a situation which we adults can offer ready-made to our children. 'Democracy is more like a road on which we permanently have to work through intensive interaction between as many individuals and

groups in society as possible' (Berding, 1999).

We see the recognition of differences as one of the main values of democracy: the individual has a right to be who he wishes to be. The other values are derived from the minimal conditions required for living together peacefully. The democratic constitutional state in itself is no guarantee for a developed and sustainable democracy. Democracy cannot exist without the will and the capability of its citizens to live together in a democratic way: that is democratic citizenship.

One very important issue in democratic citizenship is diversity. Diversity is unexpected or challenging difficulty in communication between ourselves and others. To deal with differences, a citizen in a democratic society has to be able to cope with these autonomously and judiciously.

Judiciousness, which is also a responsibility of the democratic citizen, can only be developed through participating in democratic (action) practices.

In order to achieve this, we believe one important attribute of the democratic citizen is willingness and capacity for dialogue. The democratic way of life has not only to cope with differences, but also implies the wish and capability to communicate about these differences. This communication should be dialogical. Communication in a democratic society should not only be an exchange of ideas and viewpoints in order to persuade others, or to bring them to recognition of our interests; it should also be dialogical. In a dialogue we try to understand others, we try to get insight into their thinking and goals and we try to reach some common understanding. That is the starting point we can build on and which is needed for democracy to last.

We have been very restrained in this conceptualization of democratic citizenship. We did not want our concept to be one involving the whole person, nor should it imply the realization of all kinds of social ideals, apart from those essential to democracy. Our concept is derived from the main values of democracy, the items necessary to develop and sustain democracy. No more, but certainly no less! The concept may contain ideals, which are important in education and in bringing up children. Ideals are motivating for educators.

A democratic citizen has the wish and the capability to live with others in a democratic way. Educating for democratic citizenship should contribute to developing skills and attitudes for this. There is without doubt also a knowledge component. This has for example been worked out by the Dutch Foundation for Curriculum development (Bron, 2006). Apart from teaching children some of the main facts and institutions of democratic society, the acquisition of knowledge is not seen as a goal in itself, but as a contribution to the recognition of democratic values. i.e. 'when you know what sacrifices people made in the past to achieve democracy, you better understand the value of it' (de Winter 2004/1).

There is another good reason to be restrained. A concept which expects the world from education, while at the same time, adults so obviously fail to get on with one another, is utopian. We also realise that children and young people have experiences in daily life, including at school, that have great impact on their attitude towards democracy (Biesta 2007). However, that offers no reason to ignore the formation of democratic skills and attitudes within school. Education in general and philosophy with children in particular could contribute to these, which are:

- The recognition of difference: the recognition of everyone's right to be who he/she wishes to be, in the knowledge that no one is superior to others (recognition of equality), nor can have any claim to superiority on the basis of values and viewpoints.
- Ability and willingness to communicate about differences, in debate and discussion, but also in dialogue and in the attempt to understand the thinking and actions of others.
- Coping with social conflicts without the use of authoritarian or violent means; reasonability in this framework is a value as well as a skill. We have to learn to use all sorts of democratic communication, such as deliberation, meeting, etc., and mediation, as well as forms of democratic decision-making, such as elections and different decision-procedures.
- Judiciousness: a responsibility of the citizen, and so a necessary skill. Therefore we need to learn to think critically and analytically, to learn to form our own opinion, and to reason.
- Autonomy: democratic citizenship can only be practised by autonomous people.

How do children and young people acquire these attitudes and skills? One very effective way seems to be to let them participate in democratic practices. We do not learn these skills and attitudes through rules and facts, from books and worksheets. We can only learn them by doing, 'by acting in citizen-practices or situations that are similar' (van Gunsteren, 1992).

Although school is in itself not necessarily a democratic environment, in school we can create safe learning environments in which children and young people can experiment with ways to communicate and deal with others; they can make mistakes without having to bear the full consequences. These practices are democratic and help learning to live together in a democratic way. By participating in democratic practices, children and young people learn how to act, in the first place through their own experiences, but also through the observation of actions of others, they can imitate and/or reflect on this. So they build up a repertoire of examples, insights and actions. This

repertoire helps them obtain insights into new and unknown situations.

Examples of democratic situations are the school- or class-meeting, in which the children jointly discuss and decide on the rules at school, take responsibility for the social climate at school, the forming of committees that are responsible for the playground, or for a celebration, etc.

Other good examples of democratic practice could be school projects in the area around the school, when there are political, social or environmental issues at stake. Children can participate in discussions, and can try to influence decision-making.

Our hypothesis is that philosophy with children can be a democratic practice in education, and a potentially powerful one. Many aspects of the democratic way of life could reveal themselves in philosophy with children, could in this way contribute to the development of democratic citizenship. Specifically

- the development of thinking abilities and judiciousness, especially with regard to critical thinking and reasoning skills,
- the development of autonomous thinking, which also contributes to self-identity,
- children learn to cope with differences of opinion,
- the development of dialogue,
- a setting where all participants are considered equal.

Results of the first phase of research

Aims and responsibilities

In March 2007 the programme and research project 'Philosophy for Democracy' started in 25 classes in several primary schools. Both the programme and the first exploratory phase of research ran until summer 2008.

The programme 'Philosophy for Democracy' covers the whole primary education period (age 4 to 12) and consists of four parts, each containing fifteen elaborated themes

- 'A child can ask more than why' for group 1/2 (age group 4 – 6 years), in which asking questions is the central focus.
- 'All votes count' for group 3/4 (age group 6 – 8 years). The main focus is the advancement of dialogue.
- 'Just because isn't a reason' for group 5/6 (age group 8 – 10 years), in which the development of thinking skills is the central issue.
- 'The big issue' for group 7/8 (age group 10 – 12 years), in which some democracy-related themes, such as freedom of speech, tolerance, etc. are elaborated.

The programme 'Philosophy for Democracy' is an 'ordinary' programme for philosophy with children. Apart

from certain themes in group 7 and 8 there is no explicit emphasis on the development of democratic values or skills. That is why this programme is potentially a good test for the hypothesis that philosophy with children as such is a democratic practice.

In the programme special attention is paid to:

- philosophical orientations for the teacher;
- a large variety of scenarios to open up philosophical enquiries;
- the structure of the enquiry, which should focus on enabling elaboration and deep insight;
- closing activities.

The programme mainly sets itself apart in the way instructive hand-outs are given to the teachers in order to structure the research. Furthermore, the programme should stimulate and enable teachers to philosophize at least once every two weeks with their children. The assumption is that when it is done less often, it is no longer effective.

In the first phase of research, the central question is whether, and to what extent, philosophizing with children can truly be called a democratic process: how all participants in a philosophical enquiry are equal and have an equal opportunity to influence the process; how an enquiry develops opinion, freedom of speech, and exchange; how philosophical enquiry shapes dialogue.

In this phase of research we especially wanted to know how children participate in philosophical enquiries as democratic practice. To that end, we focused on five aspects of practice which should indicate that philosophy with children is a democratic practice:

1. equality
2. dialogue
3. autonomy
4. judiciousness
5. difference of opinion

We converted these aspects into practical question lists.

In this exploratory first phase we used three instruments

- two consecutive questionnaires for the teachers, each consisting of three parts. The questionnaires were similar in purpose but were worded somewhat differently to broaden the scope. Each first part focused on information about the participating teachers: the class or age group they teach, the experience they have in philosophy with children and their motivation for joining the programme.

The second parts focused on the teachers' observations during the philosophy sessions. The question lists were partly taken from the examples in 'Kinderen leren filosoferen' (Bartels, 2007), which in turn were adapted from the well-known 'Barry Curtis list' (Curtis 1989). Examples of questions used were: Do the children give arguments supporting their opinion – does the discussion leader have to

ask for them, or do the children spontaneously give reasons for their opinions? Do the children answer for themselves – do they take over one another's answers, or come up with their own? (the first Teachers' research question list is attached in Appendix 1, the second Teachers' research question list in Appendix 3).

The third parts of both questionnaires reviewed the teachers' assessment of the programme. 24 teachers completed the first questionnaire in June 2007, 16 completed the second in February 2008.

- two short consecutive questionnaires for children from group 3 to 8 (age group 6 – 12). Again, the purpose of both questionnaires was similar but different wording was used to broaden the scope. On these forms we asked the children about their behaviour during the philosophy sessions. Questions like: Do you voice your own opinion? Can and do you speak freely and independently? 393 children completed the first questionnaire in June 2007, and 363 the second questionnaire in February 2008. (the first Children's research question list is attached in Appendix 2, the second Children's research question list in Appendix 4))
- Class observations and interviews with eight teachers and their classes in order to clarify the statistical data from the questionnaire research. During classroom observation the same topics as on the questionnaire were used as a guideline.

The question lists for both teachers and children were pretested on small groups. We were mainly interested in how well children understood the wording in the question list. Apparently, they had no problem.

The participants

25 teachers and all children in their classes participated in the programme in May 2007. Three complete school teams participated, the others were individual teachers, personally interested in participating. The research group represents a fair amount of diversity, with regard to type of school (public, catholic, independent neutral), and to school population (inner city, multicultural, middle class).

The representation of different school years (from group 1/2 to group 7/8) is biased for teachers, as well as for children. Teachers with a group 5/6 or group 7/8 are unfortunately severely underrepresented among respondents. With regard to the children, they range from group 3/4 to group 7/8 (there is no sense in giving the youngest group a written questionnaire), with overrepresentation of group 3/4. Several comparisons between the three schools were made. It was interesting to see that the practice of philosophizing, in the perception of teachers and children on the researched topics, did not vary much.

Results

The teachers were very enthusiastic about the programme. The average assessment by teachers was 4,06 on a five point scale. 'This brings me so much structure'; 'it just works'; the manuals make sure 'that the enquiry doesn't stay at the surface, it forces you to go deeper'. 'You have to work regularly with the programme', teachers said, 'then you will see the benefits'. Most of the teachers philosophized with their class at least once every two weeks. The ones who did it more frequently reported more progress. These teachers were probably the most enthusiastic ones. The programme recommends that teachers and children philosophize once every two weeks. The enthusiasm of the teachers is not only explained by the quality of the programme. The sole fact that it exists, was already seen as a great stimulus.

Which behaviours do we observe during philosophizing with children?

Philosophizing starts with children asking the questions! That is at least what is assumed in the programme guidelines. Starting questions focus the topic and direction of the dialogue, so the initial questioner has an important influence on the process in a philosophical enquiry. During the sessions a lot of questions will be put forward, both by children and the teacher. The teachers ask questions, with which they also influence direction and the development of the enquiry.

During the enquiry children ask one another questions: Why do you think so? Can you prove that? Does that mean ...? Do you also think that ...? Children are already able to do this when they are five years old. These are the questions that make dialogue out of a conversation. In this way the children's questions shape the enquiry.

This is a remarkable break with the mainstream of daily school practice, where there is barely room for children to ask and discuss questions. Countless research studies show how many questions teachers ask and the astonishing speed at which they do so (Dillon, 1982; Rowe, 1996; see References). The research results show that, notwithstanding the assumption of the programme, it is hard for most teachers to drop this pattern while philosophizing with children. Perhaps even the programme manual contributes to this: in the manual teachers are shown a direction for the enquiry by means of questions which they have thought of in advance. This doesn't necessarily stimulate children to ask their own questions. The multiple asking of questions by the teachers can make the teacher, rather than the children, the central figure in a philosophical enquiry. Still, in philosophy sessions there is relatively much more space for children to participate and formulate their own questions.

Of course, there are differences between children too. Every group has its 'big mouths' and 'silent types'. The

results show that teachers as well as children recognized this phenomenon. And all seemed to be a little unhappy with it. 'At the beginning a lot of children speak. But then the enquiry is often taken over by the usual faces', one teacher wrote. One of the children said: 'a theme is interesting when everyone can talk about it, especially when everyone thinks differently about it.' Letting everyone join in is a hard task in groups of over twenty children: 'when I want to say something, then the others are still talking, they talk very fast one after another and then I don't know what to say anymore', sighed a girl. The teacher who gave turns, or went around the circle and let everyone join in, was appreciated as most democratic, but 'not philosophical. The topic changes in between and you can't react anymore', said a boy who probably was one of the 'big mouths'. Still, most children thought that everyone had an equal opportunity to participate. In practice this was mainly realized by the use of duos and smaller groups during the enquiry.

The involvement of the children in philosophy was highly rated by the teachers, apart from the ones who teach group 1 or 2 (the youngest children). In written explanations and also in observations and interviews with the teachers it became clear that teachers find it difficult to involve four-year-old children in philosophical enquiry.

Interestingly, teachers also reported less involvement in group 7/8. What this means is not entirely clear. When we look at the children, there is a lower degree to which they say that philosophy is about things they find interesting (see table 1). However, when we interpret involvement as the degree to which children think about the questions that are discussed in philosophy we see high scores. (see table 2). There is also a small change observable in comparison to group 5/6, but this is not statistically significant.

For our purposes, the answers on the topic 'I always listen carefully to what other people say' were very interesting. This topic had the highest average scores in the children's research, and the spread of answers was not very broad. The score remained high in all groups. Thinking about what is being said and listening to what others say showed high scores across the board. The teachers also found that children listened well to one another. 'They do it so they can react to each other', wrote one teacher of group 7/8. 'If you don't listen, you can't join in', was a child's reaction from another 7/8 group. Joining is what most children keenly want to do.

Just as high, and for our purpose very interesting, were the scores with regard to autonomy: children formulated their own answers, their contribution to the enquiry was authentic and they contributed independently from others. The response of the teachers showed high average scores and the low standard deviations showed that the picture was consistent. Only with the youngest (group 1/2) was

Table 1

Response to the question: when we philosophize in the group, it is about things I'm not interested in – I'm interested in (response on 5 point scale).

Group	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
3/4	3.66	174	1.301
5/6	3.10	107	1.132
7/8	3.07	110	1.011
Total	3.34	391	1.211

Table 2

Response to the question: when we philosophize I always think about something else – I always think hard about what people are saying (response on 5 point scale).

Group	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
3/4	3.79	173	1.278
5/6	3.62	107	1.203
7/8	3.67	109	1.037
Total	3.71	389	1.193

Table 3

Response to the question: when we philosophize I always say what someone else said – I always say what I think (response on 5 point scale).

Group	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
3/4	3.72	173	1.313
5/6	3.92	106	1.251
7/8	3.99	109	1.221
Total	3.85	388	1.273

this score a little lower in the perception of the teachers. Children also reckoned that they gave their own opinion (see table 3). 'Children don't sit there copying each other. In group 5 they still did, it's really annoying. But in this class it doesn't happen anymore' said a boy in group 7/8. His classmate had an explanation: 'That's because we're a bit older now.'

Children give reasons for their opinions, and they do so more and more spontaneously as they get older, is the conclusion. 'They develop as they get older', wrote one of the teachers of group 3/4. This is confirmed when we see

the results of the children's research. That younger children (group 1/2) found it hard to give reasons (mainly the four year olds, according to the teachers) is not surprising. From another question we conclude that most children find it hard to think of new reasons, when a point of view has to be defended.

Appreciating differences seems to be a strong result of philosophy with children. Many differences of opinion emerge during philosophizing, according to the teachers. 'The children often have different opinions', wrote a teacher of group 1/2, 'which you mainly see among the older infants'. Another teacher of group 3/4 noted: 'During a discussion we don't often get consensus on a subject. There's always many angles put forward'.

These differences were valued by children with an average score for that item of 4.11. In an interview the children recounted how they especially enjoyed the discussion when there were lots of different opinions. Still, it could be difficult. As a group 7/8 boy described: 'G. and I talk an awful lot. You know that. I often disagree with him. In his own way, he's right, but it's weird. It's always like that with G., he's always got an unusual opinion'. 'He always comes up with something good. But you don't always get it', added a classmate. Don't you ever ask him why? 'All the time. It is funny, but sometimes it gets on your nerves too.'

Can children deal reasonably with objections and differences of opinion? In all foregoing topics we saw that teachers and children did not rate the practice of philosophy very differently. The trend in their answers was always the same. Not on this particular item, however. The teachers may have too rosy a picture of how children feel about objections and differences of opinion. They seemed to agree on this: yes, children react rationally to objections. But the children themselves said, 'No, it is annoying when others don't agree with you'. As children got older this diminished. Maybe this is a growing process. Of course, we must take into account that teachers and children responded to a different formulation of the question. The teachers were asked about observable behaviour, while the children were asked about their feelings. In a way this makes it even more interesting from the perspective of democratic citizenship development: although children do not like to, they still act rationally when differences of opinion arise.

Is Philosophy with children a democratic practice?

We have examined communication, during philosophy sessions, about certain aspects that can be considered to indicate the democratic quality of these sessions. The results forming the first phase of the research seem to confirm our main hypothesis: Philosophy with children is – in most of the examined aspects – a democratic practice!

On the subject of equality, we see that the teacher is the dominant source of questions within the philosophical enquiry, and because of this, decisive in its direction and development. Still, we also observe considerable influence from the children. This is chiefly observable in the questions they put to one another, and in the way they react to each other.

Everyone has equal opportunities to participate. The enquiry within the full circle of an entire class of children is mostly dominated by some 'big mouths', but by using smaller circles and groups everyone still gets their turn. The involvement of children in the enquiries is high.

The dialogical form and the development of dialogue are prominent in several aspects of philosophizing. At a young age, children already have dialogical attitudes and skills, such as asking one another questions, listening to one another, and these attitudes and skills develop more and more as they get older.

Children mainly express their own opinions, their contribution to the enquiry is authentic and they contribute independently from one another. The four- and five-year-olds sometimes watch each other first, but from group 3 (age 6) upwards they are admirably involved. This even develops further.

Children give reasons for their opinions, and they do so more and more spontaneously as they get older. Even if they find it hard to think of new reasons, when they have to defend their point of view.

Differences of opinion are present during philosophizing and they are valued. Now and then, it can be annoying when someone else disagrees with you. Obviously that does not feel comfortable, but in their reactions that discomfort – as children get older – is less and less observable.

Is philosophizing democratic? 'Sometimes it is, sometimes it isn't', said one of the children. 'When we're talking, some children think they're totally right and that others should agree with them. I've sometimes done that, I get annoyed with myself, because it's just wrong, everyone should have their own opinion.' His classmate is also even-handed: 'Yes and no, because one time you see it one way and you don't see it other people's way. Then you're so busy thinking about your own opinion, you can't be wrong. But another time you can be, because together, you always sort it out'.

Next Steps

In the foregoing piece we reported on the first exploratory phase of the research project Philosophy for Democracy. Since then, we have started the process of in-depth investigation, with a planned trajectory through to 2011. What contribution does philosophizing with children make to the development of democratic skills and attitudes?

On that subject, the main precepts of philosophizing with children make great claims. But in between those main precepts and the learning processes which may or may not occur within children, stand the particular school's teaching materials and curriculum, and the teachers who interpret and deliver those in their own way. In five schools, our continuing research project aims to discover this: whether and how the previously mentioned curriculum for philosophizing with children leads to learning processes which can be identified as contributing to democratic development.

After the next steps

In this article we have reported on the results of the exploratory phase of a research project on philosophy and democracy in classroom. Since it was some years ago that we wrote this, the in-depth phase of the research project is already finished. This research has been completed in a PhD-thesis '*Philosophy for democracy*; thinking, dialogue and diversity in primary education'.

Philosophy with children seeks i.a. to develop children's critical thinking, their ability to judge and also aims to enhance their dialogical skills and attitudes and to contribute to their dealing with differences. These are important competencies for a citizen in a democratic society. In *Philosophy for democracy* we explore these aims in four primary schools: which contribution does Philosophy with Children make to the development of democratic skills and attitudes? We have used Goodlad's curriculum model which was further developed by Van den Akker (Goodlad, 1979; Van den Akker, 2003). In this model, a curriculum is divided into six levels: the underlying view or rationale; manuals and other resources; the interpretation by the teacher; the operationalisation of teachers and children in their classes; the experiences of the children and the results of the curriculum. At each of these levels we have examined Philosophy with Children in relation to democratic education.

The main conclusions of the research are that Philosophy with Children in these schools makes an important contribution to the development of the dialogical skills and attitudes of children, as well as their appreciation of differences, and their ability to deal with those in a positive way. With regard to the contribution that it makes to the development of children's thinking and judiciousness the results in this study are less convincing. Children in the research schools learn to articulate their thoughts, they make a start with providing arguments for their points of view. The philosophical examination of presuppositions

in this thinking, the quality of the arguments used and the meaning of concepts occurs less often.

A summary of the PhD-thesis can be obtained by the first author on request (rob.bartels@inholland.nl).'

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Appendix 1

Teacher research question list 1

1. Do the children ask questions?						
Few questions asked	1	2	3	4	5	Many questions asked
2. How many children participate in the discussion?						
A few children speak a lot and at length	1	2	3	4	5	Most children get a chance to speak
3. Involvement in the discussion?						
The children are quickly distracted	1	2	3	4	5	The children are very interested
4. What answers are given by children?						
Children copy each others' answers	1	2	3	4	5	Children give their own answer
5. Do the children give reasons for their opinions?						
It is difficult for the children to give reasons for their opinions, even when the leader asks for them	1	2	3	4	5	The children spontaneously come up with reasons
6. Do children focus on each other or on the discussion leader?						
The children focus on the discussion leader	1	2	3	4	5	The children focus on each other and look at each other
7. Can the children accept criticism from each other?						
The children respond emotionally to criticism	1	2	3	4	5	The children respond rationally to criticism
8. Can the children defend a point of view?						
The children don't react to another point of view with arguments	1	2	3	4	5	The children try to think of new arguments on behalf of their point of view

Appendix 2

Children's research question list 1

When we're philosophizing in the group...						
I never ask questions	1	2	3	4	5	I never ask questions
I never join in and talk	1	2	3	4	5	I always join in and talk a lot
Some children get much more chance to talk than others	1	2	3	4	5	Everyone gets the same chance to talk
I always think about something else	1	2	3	4	5	I always think hard about what people are saying
I always say what someone else said	1	2	3	4	5	I always say what I think
I never explain why I think something	1	2	3	4	5	I always explain why I think something
I never listen to what other people say	1	2	3	4	5	I always listen carefully to what other people say
It's annoying when other children don't agree with me	1	2	3	4	5	It's fun when other children don't agree with me
It's about things I'm not interested in	1	2	3	4	5	It's about things I'm interested in

Appendix 3

Teacher research question list 2

1. How do the children listen to each other?						
They hardly listen to each other at all.	1	2	3	4	5	They always listen carefully to each other.
2. Does the class listen to all children equally?						
The class listens much better to one or two children than to the rest.	1	2	3	4	5	The class listens to all children equally well.
3. How much do the children value each others' opinion?						
The class values the opinions of one or a few children much more than the rest.	1	2	3	4	5	The class values everyone's opinion equally.
4. Do the children try to understand each other?						
The children don't try to understand each other.	1	2	3	4	5	The children try their hardest to understand each other.
5. Do the children ask each other questions?						
The children never ask each other questions.	1	2	3	4	5	The children ask each other a lot of questions.
6. Do the children focus on each other or on the discussion leader?						
The children focus on the discussion leader.	1	2	3	4	5	The children focus on each other and look at one another.
7. Do children react to what other children have to say?						
The children hardly react to each other at all.	1	2	3	4	5	The children react a lot to one another's statements.
8. Are there many different opinions?						
There are few different opinions.	1	2	3	4	5	The children use arguments when they react to disagreement.
9. Can the children accept disagreement from one another?						
The children react to disagreement by stopping talking or getting irritated.	1	2	3	4	5	The children use arguments when they react to disagreement.

Appendix 4

Children's research question list 2

When we're philosophizing in the group...						
I always listen carefully to what other people say	1	2	3	4	5	I never listen to what other people say
I listen to everyone just the same	1	2	3	4	5	I don't listen to everyone the same
I think everyone's opinion is just as important	1	2	3	4	5	I think the opinion of some children is more important than others
I always want to know how other children think about something	1	2	3	4	5	I don't care how other children think about something
I always try to understand what other people mean	1	2	3	4	5	I never think about what other people say
I often ask other children questions	1	2	3	4	5	I never ask other children questions
I think it's fun when there are lots of different opinions	1	2	3	4	5	I think it's annoying when there's lots of different opinions
I don't mind when other children don't agree with me	1	2	3	4	5	I hate it when other children don't agree with me
It's about things I'm not interested in	1	2	3	4	5	It's about things I'm interested in

