

Integrating Philosophy for Children into Education

Çocuklar İçin Felsefenin Eğitime Dâhil Edilmesi

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Abstract: Today, many adults and children struggle to use their thinking skills effectively, experiencing difficulties in making connections between ideas, drawing accurate inferences, and approaching situations from different perspectives. This study aims to examine the role of Philosophy for Children (P4C) in developing multidimensional thinking skills and to discuss the importance of integrating philosophy into education. The article focuses on the Philosophy for Children program developed by Matthew Lipman and Ann Sharp and analyzes the model of the community of philosophical inquiry as an educational approach that encourages students to actively participate in philosophical dialogue. This study adopts a qualitative approach based on conceptual analysis and a review of the relevant literature on Philosophy for Children. The analysis suggests that integrating philosophical inquiry into education contributes to the development of students' critical, creative and caring thinking skills, while also supporting the formation of ethical character and the cultivation of tolerant, collaborative and democratic societies.

Keywords: Philosophy for children, critical thinking, creative thinking, caring thinking, education.



Introduction

Philosophy for Children (P4C) is an inquiry-based educational program designed to foster children's ability to think for themselves. The program was primarily developed by Matthew Lipman and Ann Sharp in the 1960s at the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC), with the aim of encouraging children to engage in thoughtful dialogue and reflective thinking. Prior to this, philosophy was largely restricted to university education, and there was a widespread belief that children were incapable of engaging in philosophical thought. Contrary to classical theories such as Piaget's theory of cognitive development, the development of P4C demonstrates that children can engage in abstract thinking and participate in philosophical inquiry not only before university but also before the age of eleven (Matthews, 1980 & 1994; Lipman & Sharp, 1978; Lipman, 1976). This recognition has led philosophers and educators to explore methods for involving children in philosophical thinking and inquiry.

In Turkey, the first initiative related to Philosophy for Children emerged in the 1990s within the framework of the Philosophy Association of Turkey (TFK), marked by the establishment of the Philosophy for Children Unit. This Unit aimed to promote critical and creative thinking skills and reflective dialogue among children. Over the years, the movement has grown, fostering a community of practitioners dedicated to enhancing children's thinking skills through philosophical engagement.

This study aims to examine the role of Philosophy for Children in addressing the limitations of traditional education and to discuss the potential of the community of philosophical inquiry as an educational model that fosters multidimensional thinking skills. A qualitative approach based on conceptual and theoretical analysis of the relevant literature was adopted. The documents analyzed were selected from well-established sources in the field, including the works of Matthew Lipman, Ann Sharp, and other scholars who contributed to the P4C movement. The analysis focused on widely recognized theoretical and educational discussions regarding philosophical inquiry and thinking skills, aiming to provide a consistent and credible interpretation of the role of Philosophy for Children in education.



The article first discusses the need for philosophy in education, then examines the model of the community of philosophical inquiry and the thinking skills it promotes, and finally addresses the aims and implications of integrating philosophy into education.

The Need for Philosophy in Education

Lipman (1988a) points out that we need to develop children's reasoning abilities at an early age for them to be reasonable adults in the future (p.18) and there is no discipline better suited to achieving this goal than philosophy (p.40). Çotuksöken (2013) argues that it is known by observation that children need to develop their thinking and language skills. Kuçuradi (2013) states that she observes many university students and adults are not good at seeing the relation of ideas, understanding the logical implications of arguments, making correct evaluations, acting in conformity with the knowledge of value and values, looking at events from the perspective of human rights. And those are the abilities that can be gained through the practice of philosophical thinking.

The traditional education system is criticized for adopting a rote-learning approach, which injures children's thinking skills in general. Freire (1970) calls it “banking education” approach which aims to transmit knowledge to students rather than encouraging them to engage in inquiry. In traditional education, students study a wide range of subjects in detail; however, they often fail to develop critical thinking skills necessary to evaluate information effectively. Lipman states that, as educators, we teach history but we complain that students do not have a sense of history (1988a). We teach the importance of protecting human rights, not harming the environment, and the importance of peace but yet we see violations of human rights, damages to nature, and wars. We teach moral values such as justice, solidarity, compassion, respect but we rarely see people embrace these values. It follows that the problem lies not in the lack of subjects being taught, but in the teaching method. Students are being informed on certain topics but they do not acquire actual knowledge since having knowledge requires critical thinking, and the traditional education doesn't make room for the improvement of it.

Kohan, Santi and Wozniak, draw attention to the same issue by stating that philosophy and education became separated in modernity, but in



ancient times, especially for Socrates, they were not considered distinct activities and they were not easily separable (2017, p.253). For Socrates, a real teacher should be a philosopher in order to guide the students to knowledge rather than just giving them information. Kohan, Santi and Wozniak further argue that the practice of philosophy is educational when it opens up life to examination (2017, p.253). This can be achieved if education moves beyond the transmission of knowledge and encourages students to engage in philosophical inquiry. Through philosophical inquiry, students can question the events and situations they encounter in life, reflect on their ideas and beliefs. Thus, it may be possible to achieve the underlying and often neglected common goal of both philosophy and education: the goal of improving life. As Socrates said in *Apology*, it is a life that has been questioned and is therefore worth living (Plato, 2002).

According to Lipman, traditional education fails to enable students to engage with knowledge while overwhelming them with an abundance of information. He says that “a closer look at traditional education might reveal students studying the disciplines, and in fact learning them, while yet failing to think in terms of them or to appropriate them fully” (Lipman, 1988a, p.18). Lipman highlights the difference between learning and knowing; and he argues that the goal of traditional education is learning. He clarifies this distinction in the following paragraph:

As long as the major goal of education is thought to be learning, as is the case in all tribal societies, the recall model will dominate testing, and teachers will find it difficult not to teach for the tests. Equally sad is that the information acquisition model that dominates education, rather than encouraging children to think for themselves, is a failure even on its own terms, for we are constantly appalled at how little our children seem to know about the history of the world or about its political and economic organization. (Lipman, 1988a, p.19)

Lipman emphasizes that in an education system focused on transmitting knowledge, children are unable to develop the ability to think for themselves. According to him, “the two principal aims of education have been the transmission of knowledge and the cultivation of wisdom” and traditional societies have focused on the first one while disregarding the second (1988b, p.2). They aim to transmit knowledge to younger members



of the society but they have no interest in imparting wisdom. Referring to ancient philosophers, especially Aristotle, Lipman conceives wisdom as the ability to make good judgments (2003, p.210 & 1988b, p.2). We make judgments everyday both in our professional and personal lives and only some of them can be considered good. For example, a good doctor is one who possesses knowledge of medicine and can make judgments related to diagnosis and treatment of diseases based on this knowledge. Thus, we can infer that the ability to make good judgments and apply knowledge to practice is crucial; and this ability can be taught to children in education through developing complex thinking skills.

Lipman argues that “the greatest disappointment of traditional education has been its failure to produce people approximating the ideal of reasonableness” (1988a, p.18). It is important to point out that he makes a distinction between rationality and reasonableness. The aim of education should be to teach reasonableness rather than rationality. “Education can be seen as the great laboratory for rationality, but it is more realistic to see it as a context in which young people learn to be reasonable so that they can grow up to be reasonable citizens, reasonable companions, and reasonable parents” (Lipman, 2003, p.22). He further explains this distinction in the following paragraph:

Rationality is probably an indispensable notion, but it will always remain problematic as an aim of education. It seems more appropriate to armies, factories, and computers. Reasonableness, on the other hand, would seem more akin to the well-tempered life, in closer touch with the whole person rather than with just the intellect, and more representative of the spirit and outcome of shared inquiry. If the doing of philosophy - philosophical praxis, as it were-is the embodiment of reasonableness, every phase of childhood should have access to that experience, both for its immediate enjoyment and for the preparation it provides for personal and social experiences in the future. (Lipman, 1988a, pp.42-43)

In this paragraph, Lipman focuses on two significant ideas. First, traditional education sets rationality as an ideal in the sense that it associates rationality with the use of computational skills. Like Lipman, Nussbaum deals with the problem of setting rationality as a goal in education in *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach* (2011) and *Not for Profit:*



Why Democracy Needs the Humanities (2010). She states that while education is valued in many societies, it is mostly limited to basic literacy and arithmetic skills (2011). According to Nussbaum (2010), the source of this problem lies in leaders pursuing economic growth, who believe that scientific and technical education should be prioritized for the future of their countries, while failing to recognize the importance of other equally essential life skills. The fundamental error made by the leaders lies in their inability to see the problems arising as a result of the pursuit of economic growth and their failure to recognize that economic growth does not inherently equate to human development. Therefore, she emphasizes the importance of countries focusing on human development in their economic and social policies rather than solely economic growth. This also implies the necessity of a transformation in the education system. An education system aligned with the goal of human development, should include the study of philosophy and humanities. In the chapter on “Socratic Pedagogy” in *Not for Profit*, Nussbaum focuses on the importance of Socratic reasoning and states that in a world bent on economic growth, Socratic ideal, namely the ability to think and argue for oneself, seems dispensable (2010, p.48). In this section, Nussbaum states that there is a contemporary source of practical guidance for teachers who want to use and teach Socratic reasoning and makes a reference to Lipman's Philosophy for Children curriculum (2010, p.73).

Another important idea, following the previous paragraph, is that if we see philosophical thinking as the embodiment of reasonableness, then philosophical practice should be accessible to everyone, especially for children. In other words, engaging in philosophical inquiry is a fundamental right of all individuals, and the realization of this right can only be ensured through the integration of philosophy into he education. He further emphasizes this claim in *Thinking in Education* (2003). He states that while physical education and literacy are widely acknowledged as children's rights, the right to develop their thinking capabilities, such as reasoning, judgment, imagination, and appreciation, is often overlooked. Just as neglecting physical health can weaken an individual, neglecting the development of thinking skills can limit a child's potential and their ability to contribute to society. This is why education should aim to develop children's thinking capabilities as a whole (Lipman, 2003, p.203).



Lipman argues that reasonableness is not only the aim of philosophy but it is the aim of reflective education as well. Referring to the paradigm shift in education starting with Dewey, he states that the primary goal of education should be to cultivate reasonableness—or better, more reflective and critical thinking—rather than mere rote learning (1988a). Thus, it can be argued that the fundamental goals of education are more likely to be achieved through the integration of philosophical thinking into educational practice. Lipman further argues that “If both philosophy and education are seen to share reasonableness as the same goal, it might not seem at all outrageous to contend that fundamentally all true philosophy is educational and all true education is philosophical” (1988a, p.42-43). According to him, despite the current condition of education, philosophy and education are inherently intertwined. Therefore, education needs to be transformed to incorporate philosophy.

Another reason for integrating philosophy into education is that if we want to improve adults' thinking skills, we should start teaching philosophical thinking in childhood by engaging children in philosophical discussions. We cannot expect individuals to show improved skills in a matter they are not being educated. "It is presumed that as the proper teaching of history generates historical thinking and the proper teaching of mathematics generates mathematical thinking, so the proper teaching of philosophy must generate philosophical thinking, regardless of the age of the students" (Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyan, 1980, p.41). In *Philosophy in the Classroom*, Lipman, Sharp and Oscanyan argue that the education system should be reformed to include philosophical thinking, only in this way can people's philosophical thinking skills be developed.

To summarize, based on Lipman's account of the relationship between philosophy and education, the need for philosophy in education can be articulated in two key aspects: Teaching philosophical thinking and adopting philosophical thinking as a teaching method in other subjects. To meet the first need, we should include philosophy courses in the official school curricula and these courses should be planned considering the age of the students. In these courses, we should develop children's multidimensional thinking skills by engaging them in philosophical discussions in the classroom. To meet the second need, we should motivate students to use



philosophical thinking while learning other subjects such as history, science, mathematics, etc. In this way, they can become curious, be motivated to learn with a sense of discovery, and find meaning in what they learn. As Lipman states, “because philosophy is the discipline that best prepares us to think in terms of the other disciplines, it must be assigned a central role in the early (as well as in the late) stages of the educational process” (Lipman, 1988a, p.18).

Lipman argues that there is a need for reform in the education system, and this reform must take philosophical inquiry in the classroom as its model (1988a, p.17). It means that teachers have an important role in developing the thinking skills of the children. They should encourage students to engage with knowledge by questioning, rather than merely providing them with information. It should also be noted that, to handle this task effectively, teachers must have required knowledge and competence to turn the classroom into a community of philosophical inquiry. Yet, teacher training programs in universities do not prepare educators on how to integrate philosophy into their teaching or how to develop students' thinking skills. This highlights another important need: the restructuring of teacher training programs to equip educators with the skills necessary to integrate philosophy into education.

The Community of Philosophical Inquiry

The recognition of the need for philosophy in education has led to the development of different models for practicing philosophy with children. The foundation of philosophical studies with children can be traced back to the Socratic method, characterized by a dialogue that proceeds through questions and answers. In this dialogue, the philosopher serves as a guide, helping an individual arrive at answers through a series of questions. A good example of Socratic dialogue is found in Plato's *Meno* (2002), where the focus is on the question of how virtue is acquired. In this dialogue, Socrates demonstrates that a slave, who has never studied geometry, can come to know how to calculate the area of a square by being guided through questions. This dialogue illustrates that knowledge of concepts can be achieved through Socratic inquiry. The Socratic inquiry method can be effectively used in studies with children. However, since traditional Socratic dialogues, as observed in Plato's works, mainly involve conversations between



two adults, there is a need to adapt and further develop this method for use in educational settings with children. This necessity has led to the development of various models for engaging children in philosophical thinking.

As previously mentioned, Matthews argues that philosophical thinking is a natural ability and children can think philosophically. In his works, he provides examples from his studies with children, but he does not offer a structured method. He uses stories to start a dialogue with a group of children and leads the group to engage in a philosophical discussion by asking questions related to those stories. This approach aims to foster inquiry into concepts and problems that cannot be achieved by traditional education (Matthews, 1980).

One of the most prominent model in Philosophy for Children is the community of philosophical inquiry developed by Lipman. Lipman's interest in this field was sparked in 1968 upon recognizing the need to develop children's reasoning skills. He argues that we don't encourage children to think for themselves, to make independent judgements, to have their own ideas and perspectives, and to be pleased with using reasoning (Lipman, 1976, p. 22). In order to do that, Lipman initiated a pilot project with his colleagues during the 1970-1971 academic year in New Jersey, wherein they worked with fifth-grade students over nine weeks to enhance their reasoning abilities through philosophical inquiry. The findings revealed significant improvements in logical reasoning among the participants (Lipman, 1976). Lipman, Sharp and Oscanyan assert that this model doesn't only teach reasoning but it cultivates the ability to reflect on and elaborate philosophical concepts in a group (1980, p. 41).

Lipman's model is applied in a group setting called the community of philosophical inquiry which primarily consists of the members of a class. He states that "there is good reason to think that the model of each and every classroom-that which it seeks to approximate and at times becomes-is the community of inquiry (1988, p.20). He emphasizes the significance of the community of inquiry with the following statement:

Philosophy entails converting the classroom into a community of inquiry, where students and teachers can talk together as persons and as members of the same community, where they can read together,



appropriate ideas together, build on one another's ideas as well as think independently, seek reasons for their views, explore their presuppositions, so as to bring into their lives a fresh new sense of what it is to discover, to invent, to interpret, and to criticize. (Lipman, 1988, pp.41-42)

When the classroom is converted into a community of inquiry, students engage in a philosophical discussion together with their classmates and teachers. During this inquiry, they understand, critique, and develop each other's ideas, while also generating new ideas together. As a result, both their independent thinking skills and their ability to think collaboratively are developed. Lipman's model encompasses five stages: the inquiry starts with a philosophical story or novel read aloud; students generate questions, after which one question is collaboratively selected to guide the inquiry; participants respond to the chosen question giving reasons and examples; the teacher facilitates the discussion by raising questions and introducing relevant philosophical concepts; and finally, students are encouraged to engage in creative activities such as writing, painting, or drawing related to the philosophical themes explored (Lipman, 2003, pp.101-102).

Following Lipman, SAPERE (Society for the Advancement of Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education, established in 1992) developed an approach that can be applied in schools which aims to enhance students' thinking skills through philosophical inquiry. Similar to Lipman's Philosophy for Children program, the SAPERE approach begins with a philosophical story to stimulate a philosophical discussion. Students formulate questions from the story, one question is selected through democratic voting, and all participants share their responses. At the end of the inquiry, participants summarize the discussion and articulate their reflections. SAPERE highlights the importance of a democratic environment for philosophical inquiry to develop (McCall, 2009).

Catherine McCall's community of philosophical inquiry is a later developed approach. Similar to Lipman's, McCall's model is applied in the community of philosophical inquiry. McCall asserts that successful philosophical engagement with children necessitates a philosophical story that prompts inquiries, contrasting ideas, and argumentation. There should also be a guide who facilitates the inquiry. Different from Lipman's approach, McCall argues that the facilitator should possess knowledge of philosophy



and logic in order to be able to identify potential philosophical discussions that could arise from the responses given by children, and thus effectively guide the inquiry (McCall & Weijers, 2017, p.84). McCall's model involves one participant presenting an idea and providing reasons for it, followed by another participant expressing agreement or disagreement providing their own reasoning. McCall first applied this model with a group of five-year-old children. At the end of this practice, she observed that not only had the children's reasoning abilities improved, but their behavior had also changed both inside and outside of school. They began to show more respect and to help one another, developed tolerance for differing viewpoints, and demonstrated improvements in academic performance (McCall, 2009).

The idea behind the development of the community of philosophical inquiry is to enhance children's thinking skills as a whole by engaging them in philosophical discussions in the classroom. My aim is not to explore various models of the community of philosophical inquiry but to argue that we should develop individuals' thinking skills from an early age. Encouraging students to engage in philosophical thinking in education, and creating the appropriate conditions for philosophical inquiry is an urgent need. Transforming the classroom into a community of philosophical inquiry appears to be an effective way to achieve this goal.

Thinking Skills Developed Through The Community of Philosophical Inquiry

During a discussion on thinking skills, the first dimension that comes to mind is critical thinking. It is defined as the most significant dimension of thinking consisting of mental processes such as reasoning, analysis, connection, and evaluation. This definition focuses on the mental processes of critical thinking but fails to capture the essence of it and its relation to making good judgments. Therefore, critical thinking can be defined as the totality of reasoning skills necessary to acquire knowledge by taking different ideas into account and questioning beliefs, to construct new ideas with good justifications; and to make good judgments. Those skills involve justifying one's ideas, making inferences, analyzing and criticizing arguments, conceptual thinking, the ability to see the relation of ideas, and the ability to see the relation between particular and universal.



Lipman argues that in order to define critical thinking, we need to understand its characteristic outcomes, defining features, and the underlying conditions (1988, p.1). The outcome of critical thinking is judgment. Lipman states that a critical thinker is a model of good judgment, often exemplified by professionals or experts of a subject. This type of thinking involves precision, consistency, and logical reasoning, with an emphasis on making rational decisions and solving problems effectively (Lipman, 2003, 197). The underlying condition of critical thinking is that it relies upon criteria. "The fact that critical thinking relies upon criteria suggests that it is well-founded, structured and reinforced thinking" while uncritical thinking "suggests thinking that is flabby, amorphous, arbitrary, haphazard and unstructured" (Lipman, 1988, p.3). Critical thinking relies upon criteria to make good judgments and the criteria in critical thinking are reasons which support our opinions and claims. Regarding its defining features, Lipman asserts that critical thinking is self-corrective thinking. It is self-corrective since it allows us to correct our thinking when we identify flaws or weaknesses in it.

When examining the relationship between critical thinking, knowledge, and the ability to make good judgments based on knowledge, it becomes evident that critical thinking is closely related to philosophical thinking. When critical thinking is defined as making good judgments, it can be seen as an effort to achieve wisdom and live in accordance with it, which is also the pursuit of philosophy. In its pursuit of wisdom, philosophical thinking seeks to establish a connection between knowledge and action. Thus, Philosophy for Children aims to develop children's critical thinking skills at an early age to attain wisdom relating theory to practice.

Although critical thinking is very important, it is not the only dimension of thinking that needs to be developed. Lipman emphasizes the importance of fostering multidimensional thinking in education (2003, p.197). In the community of philosophical inquiry critical, creative and caring thinking develops simultaneously. Creative thinking requires constructing original ideas independently of beliefs, social norms, and ideologies. One should analyze existing ideas and meta-narratives critically in order to be able to think creatively. Therefore, creative thinking cannot be considered independently of critical thinking. The creative thinker is portrayed as an



artist by Lipman, someone who is imaginative, inventive, and willing to explore new ideas and possibilities. Creative thinking involves breaking free from traditional boundaries, seeking innovative solutions, and embracing imagination (Lipman, 2003, pp.197-203).

Critical and creative thinking should be accompanied by caring thinking in order for students to develop their thinking skills as a whole. Caring thinking involves considering the well-being of others and the world, as seen in a thoughtful parent, an environmental planner, or a teacher who acts with empathy and concern for their students. This dimension emphasizes the importance of ethical values, and a commitment to the well-being of others (Lipman, 2003, P.197-203). Thus, caring thinking is linked to leading an ethical life and the advancement of society.

Lipman argues that the three dimensions of thinking—critical, creative, and caring—should be considered as equally important in education, as they are interrelated and contribute to a holistic approach to human development. He clarifies that all of the dimensions of thinking can be developed through the community of philosophical inquiry (2003, p.203). In the community of philosophical inquiry students engage in reflective thinking and self-correction, constantly revising their understanding based on each other's insights. Members who are part of such a community learn to listen attentively to one another, comprehend and critically analyze the ideas of others, while creatively and thoughtfully constructing their own ideas, and developing a sense of care and concern for others. Therefore, it can be concluded that the classroom should be transformed into a community of philosophical inquiry in order to develop students' thinking skills as a whole.

So far, the significance of incorporating philosophy into education, through the community of philosophical inquiry model, has been affirmed in light of its role in the development of children's thinking skills, combining the critical, creative, and caring dimensions of thinking. It has also been emphasized that this process should not solely concentrate on the acquisition of knowledge, but also on the development of judgment skills to apply knowledge effectively in both professional and personal life, thereby establishing a connection between theory and practice. This leads us to deliberate on the practical aims of integrating philosophy into education.



The Aims of Integrating Philosophy into Education

Integrating philosophy into education, transforming the classroom into a community of philosophical inquiry, is crucial for its contribution to both individual and collective development. McCall argues that “philosophizing should be done for its own sake because philosophical assumptions underlie all aspects of both individual and collective human life” (McCall & Weijers, 2007, p.83). There are philosophical assumptions behind our judgements and actions, and understanding those assumptions empowers the individual. Philosophical assumptions also underlie science, art, morality, politics and social life and examining these assumptions opens the way for progress in these fields (McCall & Weijers, 2007, p.83). In this section, it is laid out that Philosophy for Children contributes to students’ rational development, the cultivation of ethical and creative character, while also promoting the advancement of society.

The most easily observable contribution of Philosophy for Children is the development of reasoning abilities. Rational development, in the sense of reasonableness as Lipman clarifies, is related to the development of one's critical thinking skills. Engaging in a philosophical inquiry helps children to construct arguments, justify their ideas by giving reasons, and make correct inferences, so they can express their ideas strongly and clearly. In relation to rational development, the community of philosophical inquiry prevents children falling into dogmatism. Being a part of the community of philosophical inquiry requires each member to understand the ideas and justifications presented by other members. Thus, it allows children to be open to different ideas and perspectives, to be open-minded. Open-mindedness is a crucial character trait as it allows for the development and enhancement of ideas. Lipman (2003), defines open-mindedness as an attitude towards others in the community, including accepting reasonable criticisms, considering opposing views, and respecting others as individuals (pp.166-169). Following this definition, it can be asserted that open-mindedness is both a character trait developed within the community of philosophical inquiry and a necessary condition for the formation of it.

According to Lipman, critical thinking is self-corrective thinking and it is closely related to the ability of self-control (1988b, p.7). In an era where people are told to do whatever they desire and acting on impulses and



inclinations is considered “natural”, we see that individuals often struggle with self-control, which leads them to engage in actions that harm both themselves and others. If one cannot see the relation between ideas, actions and their consequences, they just keep doing whatever they want. An individual who, through critical thinking skills, is able to see the outcomes of their actions, and based on these outcomes, critically assess and change their ideas will be successful in self-control. That is to say, critical thinking plays a significant role in self-control, as it helps people understand the relationship between ideas, actions, and the consequences of actions. In addition, it contributes to self-control by helping individuals make good judgments based on knowledge, and enabling them to manage their desires and inclinations in light of knowledge.

It is very crucial that the community of philosophical inquiry motivates children to pursue knowledge, thus it helps them to evaluate ideas and situations independently of prejudices, norms, and beliefs. Lipman argues that critical thinking is not just a process but it has an outcome and this outcome is judgment. Everyone makes judgments in their personal and professional lives but we should distinguish good judgment from mere judgment (2003, p.210). Lipman’s distinction between “good” and “mere” judgments align with Aristotle’s perspective. In *Nicomachean Ethics* (2009), Aristotle says that everyone judges well the things they know. An architect makes sound judgments on matters related to their work if they know architecture. A doctor judges well concerning the matters of medicine if they know medicine. The same applies to ethical matters as well. Those who have knowledge of ethics make good judgments on ethical matters. Through philosophical inquiry, children may come to know the concepts of right and wrong, ethical values, and human rights. The development of critical thinking skills allows children to have the knowledge of values and acting in light of this knowledge. Thus, we can say that engaging in the community of philosophical inquiry enables students to develop an ethical character.

The development of an ethical character is crucial in the pedagogy of Philosophy for Children. Ethical problems are the problems that everyone encounters in their lives. We face a variety of ethical dilemmas and ask ethical questions every day. Philosophy for Children should prepare the



students to deal with these problems. Alvarez-Abarejo (2024) argues that Philosophy for Children should focus on educating children towards wisdom, making it a core goal of the program since education should equip students with values and dispositions to seek truth and goodness in the world beyond the classroom. Providing a list of values or giving a definition of wisdom doesn't make any difference; what matters is ensuring that individuals live in accordance with these values and in light of wisdom. In the community of philosophical inquiry, members can better relate theory to practice by discussing ideas in connection to real-life examples and make greater progress on the path to wisdom. Thus, Philosophy for Children cultivates wisdom through the community of philosophical inquiry model and helps children to judge well on ethical matters.

Philosophy for Children also cultivates students' creative character through the development of both critical and creative thinking skills. Creative thinking is the ability to create original and new ideas using imagination, to explore different perspectives and to develop new approaches. The development of creative thinking skills let children live like an artist who imagines new possibilities or a scientist who explores new ideas and inventions. A creative thinker may also contribute to the artistic and scientific development of the society. Furthermore, creative thinking along with critical thinking enhances problem solving skills. It enables one to identify and analyze the existing problem, come up with possible solutions and evaluate their outcomes. Thus, a creative thinker can cope much better with challenges they encounter in life.

Philosophy for Children also helps children to find meaning in life. Lipman, Sharp and Oscanyan argue that Philosophy for Children aims at the improvement of reasoning abilities, development of creativity, personal and interpersonal growth, development of ethical understanding, and development of the ability to find meaning in experience (1980). The ability to find meaning is just as important as the other contributions of Philosophy for Children. "Schools that consider education their mission and purpose are schools that dedicate themselves to helping children find meaning relevant to their lives" (Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyan, 1980, p. 13). Following these ideas, it can be said that preparing children for life is the school's responsibility, and helping them search for and find the meaning



of life is part of this process. Kizel (2017) agrees with Lipman, Sharp and Oscanyan, and states that the community of philosophical inquiry enables children to search and find meaning in life by creating relationships within and between people and the environment (p.93). The ability to find meaning requires the knowledge of values, as well as the capacity to apply this knowledge in life. Philosophy helps children to understand what value is and see what is valuable in itself, in other words, it helps them reevaluate their values, thus they can lead meaningful lives as reasonable individuals.

The search for meaning is a significant subject in both existential philosophy and psychotherapy. Existential philosophy guides us in understanding what constitutes a meaningful life and how we can find meaning, while existential psychotherapy, drawing on existential philosophy, helps individuals cope with the issues arising from the feeling of meaninglessness. Victor Frankl (1969) argues that many people experience existential vacuum which he embodies with a sense of meaninglessness and the lack of purpose in life. He states that the existential vacuum can be overcome through the will to meaning, which involves finding a meaning and purpose in life and realizing it. The search for and finding meaning is a way of improving one's life. According to Frankl, human beings have a will to meaning and will to improve themselves, but this will differ from a drive in that whether or not to pursue it is up to the individual. Kizel (2017) argues that there is a connection between the search for meaning in the community of philosophical inquiry and the search for meaning in life as conceived by Frankl. The community of philosophical inquiry contributes to the search for and find meaning in life enabling each child to find their role and goal in life as well as creating relationships among the members and between members and their environment (Kizel, 2017, pp.90-91). Thus the community of philosophical inquiry develops children's ability to cope with some existential issues, such as the feeling of meaninglessness, loneliness and the anxiety of death, by helping them to find meaning and purpose in life.

In addition to fostering character development, another significant contribution of integrating philosophy into education is social development. Through participating in a community of philosophical inquiry, children are provided with opportunities to encounter differences within a democratic environment. It enables them to question their assumptions,



and respect different ideas and beliefs. Kizel (2021), points out that the community of philosophical inquiry facilitators has a two-phased ethical responsibility. In the first phase, they should liberate themselves from the pedagogy of fear and “banking education” to allow for an authentic dialogical process (p.4). In the second phase, they should embrace enabling diverse identity views and practices. In order to do that, the teachers who are trained in Philosophy for Children, enable students from different social identities to express themselves independently and democratically creating a multi-narratives environment (Kizel, 2021, p.15). Thus, they contribute to the creation of a community that respects diverse identities and the development of a culture that embraces differences.

Philosophy for Children may also aid in the formation of a collaborative society. The members of the community of philosophical inquiry think together building on each other's ideas. As they work together to develop ideas using critical, creative and caring thinking, their collaborative problem solving skills are improved. However, collaborative problem-solving is characterized as an individualistic effort which combines critical thinking skills and communication skills within the current educational framework. Santi (2019) analyzes OECD's understanding of “collaborative problem solving” as conceptualized in PISA 2015 (Programme for the International Student Assessment) survey and criticizes it in light of Lipman's complex thinking theory and the community of inquiry methodology. She points out that PISA's understanding of collaborative problem solving “combines cognitive skills, intellectual abilities and knowledge base with social and behavioral (emotional, motivational) aspects and values that can presumably be acquired through learning, assimilated and applied to complex tasks” (Santi, 2019, p.5). When collaborative thinking is defined this way, it is seen as a process focused on learning specific skills and using them to solve complex problems. This process aims to achieve a particular goal. It is considered effective if it successfully leads to the achievement of the specified goal for the individual rather than focusing on the community or the process itself. Santi (2019) analyzes the concept of collaborative problem solving, in relation to Lipman's idea of complex thinking. She argues that three fundamental components identified by Lipman as critical, creative and caring thinking are simultaneously and synergistically involved in high order



thinking needed in collaborative problem solving (p.12). As opposed to PISA's conception, Lipman sees the process of collaborative thinking as a "mediated activity" that gives superiority to the community, not to individual skills (Santi, 2019, p.17). Building on Lipman's focus on community, Santi defines collaborative thinking from the perspective of Sen's capabilities approach as follows: "The community of inquiry is more than just a learning environment for developing collaborative problem-solving skills; it serves as a "conversion factor" that transforms personal and contextual resources into meaningful capabilities and opportunities within a democratic framework of thought" (2019, p.14). Amartya Sen (1993), argues that quality of life should not be measured solely by indicators like national income. Instead, it should be assessed through individuals' capabilities (p.30). Santi and Di Masi further analyze the relation between the community of philosophical inquiry and the capabilities approach pointing out that philosophical thinking skills are seen as the core components of human functioning and capabilities, which are enhanced through participatory dialogue in the classroom (2014, p.136; see also Santi and Ghedin, 2023, p.246). They argue that philosophical dialogue within a community of inquiry helps children and youth develop the capabilities that enable them to flourish and actively participate in decision-making processes, making them agents and social actors (2014, p.139). Santi's conception of collaborative thinking as a conversation factor, relating the community of inquiry model to human capabilities, emphasizes the potential for creating a community where all members' capabilities are developed.

Finally, Philosophy for Children plays a key role in promoting democratic citizenship within society. Dewey states that "a democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience" (Dewey, 2004, p.93). Both associated living and conjoint communicated experience can be found within the community of philosophical inquiry. Like Dewey, Nussbaum focuses on the importance of democratic citizenship rather than democracy as a form of government. She argues that a democratic citizen is an individual with advanced critical and creative thinking skills, emotional capacities, and imagination (Nussbaum, 2003). According to Nussbaum, for a healthy democracy to exist and for human capabilities to be cultivated, certain skills



must be imparted through education. Among those skills are the ability to see the world from the perspective of others, to collaborate, to consider others' perspectives, to avoid discrimination, to be accountable, to think critically, and to question. She argues that an education focused on developing these skills should adopt an approach centered on the humanities, arts, and philosophy (Nussbaum, 2010, p.69-70). Santi and Di Masi also point out that Philosophy for Children fosters "complex capabilities" necessary for democratic citizenship, such as the ability to argue, judge, care, respect, invent, and change (2014, p.136). They argue that the key aim of Philosophy for Children education is to develop the complex thinking capabilities in children through philosophical inquiry (2014, p.140). These abilities enable more than just democratic thinking, which involves applying democratic values in discussions; they cultivate a democracy of thinking, where thinking becomes a collaborative, shared and transformative activity within the community of philosophical inquiry.

According to Lipman, democracy is one of the chief regulative ideas of an inquiry-driven society (2003, p.235). If democracy is characterized by public discussion of the issues that affect the society, it presupposes that citizens have the capacity to understand these issues and the rationality to deal with them (Lipman, 1988a, pp.117-118). However, the ability of citizens to understand and effectively engage with these issues, as well as to possess the rationality required to address them, does not arise spontaneously. It is essential that citizens are educated in a way that equips them with the necessary skills to navigate these complex problems. Namely, the realization of a democratic society hinges upon the reformation of the education system in a way that fosters the development of citizens' thinking capacities as a whole.

Conclusion

This article argues for the need to integrate philosophy into education. To support this claim, it first addresses the problems of traditional education and demonstrates how these issues can be addressed by incorporating Philosophy for Children (P4C) through the community of philosophical inquiry model. Traditional education aims to transmit information to students, yet it does not prioritize fostering wisdom. While students acquire knowledge through rote learning, they often fail to learn how



to think independently. Moreover, although traditional education sets rationality as a goal, it often treats reason merely as a tool to achieve utility, neglecting the importance of making sound judgments and the ability to act in light of knowledge. Additionally, it does not promote multidimensional thinking. The community of philosophical inquiry, however, encourages these multidimensional thinking skills and supports children in pursuing truth and reflective thinking.

The integration of philosophy into education contributes to the development of students' ethical, reflective, and creative character, and supports the formation of collaborative and democratic societies. The effective implementation of philosophical inquiry in education depends on teachers' readiness and familiarity with philosophical thinking, highlighting the importance of specialized training programs for educators. Furthermore, philosophy should be gradually integrated into school curricula beginning from the early years of education, and future empirical research is encouraged to explore the practical impact of philosophical inquiry on students' cognitive and social development.

To ensure the reliability and validity of this study, literature was carefully selected from well-established sources, including the major works of Matthew Lipman, Ann Sharp, and other scholars who contributed to the development of P4C. The analysis followed a systematic conceptual and theoretical approach, identifying, categorizing, and comparing key concepts, arguments, and models across sources to provide consistent and valid interpretations. While the study offers a comprehensive theoretical framework for integrating philosophy into education, it has limitations due to its reliance on literature analysis without empirical classroom data. Future research is encouraged to conduct empirical studies to validate and extend the findings.

As a result, the community of philosophical inquiry model of Philosophy for Children challenges traditional pedagogies and offers a holistic approach to education by cultivating critical, creative, and caring thinking. Overcoming challenges such as changes in teaching practices, curriculum design, and assessment methods can significantly contribute to human development and lay the foundation for collaborative and democratic societies. This study contributes to the field by providing a theoretical and



practical framework that highlights the role of philosophical inquiry in developing multidimensional thinking skills and fostering ethical, reflective, and socially responsible individuals.

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Öz: Günümüzde birçok yetişkin ve çocuk, düşünme becerilerini etkili bir şekilde kullanmakta zorlanmakta; fikirler arasında bağlantı kurma, doğru çıkarımlar yapma ve olaylara ya da durumlara farklı açılardan yaklaşma konularında çeşitli güçlükler yaşamaktadır. Bu çalışma, Çocuklar İçin Felsefe (P4C) yaklaşımının çok boyutlu düşünme becerilerinin geliştirilmesindeki rolünü incelemeyi ve felsefenin eğitime dâhil edilmesinin önemini tartışmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda makalede, M. Lipman ve A. Sharp tarafından geliştirilen Çocuklar İçin Felsefe programına odaklanılarak, öğrencilerin felsefi diyaloglara aktif katılımını teşvik eden bir eğitim modeli olarak felsefi soruşturma topluluğu ele alınmaktadır. Çalışma, Çocuklar İçin Felsefe literatürüne dayalı kavramsal analiz ve literatür incelemesine dayanan nitel bir yaklaşıma dayanmaktadır. Yapılan analiz, felsefi sorgulamanın eğitime dâhil edilmesinin öğrencilerin eleştirel, yaratıcı ve özenli düşünme becerilerinin gelişimine katkı sağladığını; bunun yanı sıra etik karakterin oluşumunu desteklediğini ve hoşgörü, iş birliğine dayalı ve demokratik toplumların gelişimine katkıda bulunduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çocuklar için felsefe, eleştirel düşünme, yaratıcı düşünme, özenli düşünme, eğitim.

