

## Philosophy for Children in Teacher Education: Effects, Difficulties, and Recommendations

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Received: 14 August 2018  
Revised: 11 November 2018  
Accepted: 20 October 2018  
ISSN: 1307-9298  
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DOI: 10.26822/iejee.2019248591

### Abstract

It is necessary to realize widespread and effective implementation of philosophy for children (P4C) in teacher education. Learning the views of teacher candidates and identifying implementation-related difficulties can help determine the content of such education. Thus, thirty teacher candidates who participated in an elective P4C course were studied. Data obtained through a qualitative study showed that the candidates struggled to ask questions, conduct debates, and associate philosophy with curricula. However, their perceptions of childhood and philosophy changed positively. In order for P4C teacher education to succeed, the importance of philosophical knowledge and perspectives should be emphasized, discussion and questioning processes should be analyzed, and candidates should receive feedback and have opportunities for practice and self-assessment.

**Keywords:** Philosophy For Children, Teacher Training, Teacher Candidates

### Introduction

Matthew Lipman initiated philosophy for children (P4C) in the 1970s. Pre-school to high school aged children from many countries were taught philosophy, and had the opportunity to philosophize with their classmates. Thus, P4C research also began. In studies, P4C's relationship with thinking skills (Daniel & Auriac, 2011; Millett & Tapper, 2012), democracy (Bleazby, 2006; Burgh & Yorshansky, 2011), citizenship (Garat & Piper, 2011; Splitter, 2011) and values education (Cam, 2014) has come to the forefront. In addition to P4C's contributions to children's reasoning skills (Lam, 2012; Marashi, 2009), studies have also noted its impact on children's ability to debate (Cassidy & Christie, 2013; Poulton, 2014). Despite fifty years of such contributions, P4C has been institutionalized in only certain countries, and continues to exist only through concerted efforts of educators; it is not well-recognized globally. In addition to the challenges faced by the promotion of non-traditional approaches in schools, P4C also has its own unique problems. These problems impede an extensive and effective implementation.

#### *Philosophy Education and Philosophy Perception*

P4C's main obstacle is traditional philosophy education—the transfer of philosophical knowledge rather than philosophizing (UNESCO, 2009). Schools' traditional philosophy education negatively affects philosophical perceptions. Philosophy is seen as a mass of complicated and confusing information reflecting only the views of philosophers; its relationship with thinking processes and its value in human life are ignored. Popper (2006) says that everybody is capable of philosophy: we can each accept many concepts. Such non-critical assumptions are often philosophical. Sometimes they are true, but often they are fallacies. Whether we think rightly or wrongly can only be identified through a critical examination of the philosophies that we accept. This critical examination is the source and responsibility of philosophy. Popper says that philosophy applies to everybody, especially when approached appropriately. Philosophy education should bridge

the relationship between philosophy and our lives, and teach us to think rightly. Kuçuradi (2006) states that the Paris Philosophy Declaration of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)'s philosophy education encourages thinking, openness, responsible citizenship, understanding, and tolerance. He also asserts that it generates responsibility for ethical problems, especially significant contemporary problems, by promoting independence in thought, and enabling people to question diverse forms of propaganda. In order for these achievements to occur, philosophy education should not merely transfer the history of philosophy, it should also include philosophizing. Kant says that philosophizing, not philosophy, is to be learned (Comte-Sponville, 2006). Philosophy occurs when we ask questions, debate and test thoughts, consider possible evidence against ourselves, and question our concepts (Nagel, 2004). Philosophizing makes it possible to actualize philosophy's critical attitude as well as relate it to human life. Philosophy education should be reassessed through this point of view; otherwise, a philosophy education appropriate for its purpose and aligned with the nature of philosophy will not be realized.

#### *Childhood Perception*

Lyle (2014) notes that teachers' perceptions of childhood influence the quality of P4C practices. Hand (2008) explains the misconception that children cannot grasp philosophy, both by exaggerating the cognitive capacity required for philosophy and by underestimating the cognitive capacities of children. Philosophers are often perceived as unattainable intellectuals, disconnected from the practicalities of daily life, giving incomprehensible answers to unsolvable questions (Billington, 2011). As mentioned above, this view is justified by the inadequate quality of current philosophy education, wherein some teachers are not concerned with whether philosophy is understood, and/or believe that its understanding requires special talents. However, the history of philosophy has likened children and philosophers. Montaigne (2006) states that it is a mistake to represent philosophy to children

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as something unattainable, frowned upon, and troublesome. Jaspers (2010) states that it is common for children to ask questions, thereby encouraging people to philosophize. The childlike ability to wonder and marvel is at the heart of philosophy. Children, like philosophers, perceive the world and everything on it as new, thus everything provokes their curiosity and astonishment (Cevizci, 2010). Children's courage is also necessary to philosophize—a thinker requires the courage to see and express problems, as they are, against all prejudices of his own era and position (Hösle, 2004).

The underestimation of children's cognitive capacities consists of philosophical, cultural, and psychological factors that are related to and sustain one another. According to Matthews (2000), the concept of childhood is problematic culturally, historically, and philosophically. Children are profound and surprising: this combination also describes the classical field of philosophy, but one finds no mention of children in 2,500 years of written philosophy. This has only recently begun changing: philosophers now recognize the importance of babies and are learning new things from them. Indeed, philosophical encyclopedias now feature titles such as 'Baby Mind Theory' and 'Baby Perception' (Gopnik, 2012).

Matthews (2000) argues that children's philosophical thinking capacities are not represented in the concept of childhood that developmental psychologists offer. Dismissing children's philosophical thinking capacity encourages the underestimation of childhood. Here, Matthews points to Piaget's theory of development, asserting that children cannot perform certain mental processes before a certain age, and that children's thinking skills are limited by their maturity. Vygotsky (1998) criticizes Piaget's views on the grounds that he ignores children's experiences. According to Vygotsky, Piaget does not consider socio-cultural factors and school coursework, both of which influence children's thinking. Instruction plays an important role in the development of children, opening up human-specific qualities of the mind and taking children to new levels of development.

According to Piaget, children lack original moral knowledge because they must be taught to empathize or sympathize, and cannot understand intentions and abstract rules; modern science discredits this view (Gopnik, 2012). Experimental studies with five-year-old children have shown that children can identify with others and comprehend what other children think: they can understand and manipulate thoughts that differ from their own and to which they object, and they can accomplish abstract thought processes and reason about abstract philosophical concepts (McCall, 2009).

As Matthews notes, the concept of childhood is also historically problematic. Wall (2010) has explained three models of historical perceptions of childhood. The first model sees childhood as a natural state of moral disorder, describes children as rebellious, asserting that they should be disciplined. The second model assumes that a child is innately worthy, and should be guided to preserve their pure, incorrupt state, with necessary support to resist corruption. The third model describes children as 'developing'. Children are potential adults, and childhood is considered to be independent from other periods of life. The roots of this model, which is applicable to modern childhood, extend to Locke and even Aristotle. Murriss (2016) has also mentioned the 'fragile child' model that emerged in the 20th century. This model, inspired by the psycho-medical scientific theory, describes children by deriving concepts such as 'talented' and 'hyperactive', and focuses on protecting, diagnosing, and improving children.

Children have been both embraced and controlled by adults throughout history (Holt, 1995). These models, which have evolved into one another and disseminated their effects

in every century, have affected children's education. These models ignore children's individual differences, disregard their capacity for independent thinking and decision-making, and lead adults to perceive them as requiring direction. Wall (2010) has defined children as creative individuals, rather than classifying them as 'good', 'bad', or 'neutral'. Murriss (2016) posited a post-humanist understanding of childhood, rather than conceptually labeling the child's nature with 'innate/cultural' dualities. In order to be able to philosophize with children, it is necessary to eliminate adult perspectives that disdain children's capabilities.

#### *Personal Epistemology*

Epistemology is a field of philosophy dealing with the nature of human knowledge. Personal epistemology and epistemological beliefs reveal how individuals know, their theories and beliefs about knowing, and the influence of their epistemological frameworks on their thought and reasoning processes (Hoffer & Pintrich, 1997). Schommer (1990) classified personal epistemology into five dimensions: the source of knowledge, the precision of knowledge, the organization of knowledge, the control of learning, and the speed of learning. The views on the source of knowledge are distributed between the transfer of knowledge from authorities who know everything, and the generation of knowledge attained by individuals themselves. The belief that knowledge is precise and absolute is confronted by the belief that it constantly changes. The belief that knowledge is organized in patterns is opposed by the belief that knowledge has a complex structure. The thought that the ability to learn is innate differs from the thought that it is gained through experience. The thought that learning occurs quickly (or not at all) is confronted by the belief that it is a gradual process. Research shows that teachers' personal epistemologies affect learning processes and teaching practices (Brownlee, 2004; Olafson & Schraw, 2010). It has been observed that teachers who believe that learning is a process and students are capable of understanding the world and developing their own views more effectively use more diverse learning strategies than teachers who believe that external support is necessary for learning and that students cannot form their own ideas. In addition, teachers with constructivist and flexible epistemological beliefs accept the existence of alternative thoughts rather than finding the answers of students 'correct' or 'unacceptable' (Hashewh, 1996). An approach in which knowledge is absolute and alternative views are unacceptable disrupts inquiry-based activities in the classroom and the process of philosophizing with children. Knight and Collins (2014) observed that despite a dedicated effort, P4C could not substantially progress in Australia, partly due to the teachers' epistemological beliefs.

When the effects of teacher candidates' personal epistemologies on their teaching practices are taken into account, it is clear that the relative nature of education and influence of candidates' views must be addressed. It is important to offer candidates more complex and relative epistemologies—rather than personal epistemologies in which knowledge is perceived as absolute and simple—and to involve them in more reform-based instructional practices (Yadav, Herron, & Samarapungavan, 2011). It is evident that methods such as P4C cannot survive unless there are democratic and collaborative approaches in teacher education. In fact, teachers generally are not ready to use a teaching strategy that is not knowledge-based. Therefore, P4C education must occur in pre-service and in-service teacher education (N. R. Lane & Lane, 1986).

#### *Philosophical Background*

Another obstacle to realizing P4C's goals is the belief that a philosophical background is not required in order to

teach philosophy to children. What is meant here is not rote knowledge of the history of philosophy or the views of philosophers. According to Wartenberg (2009), to philosophize, we need to know and ask philosophical questions, to be aware of the subjects of philosophy, and to be able to give examples of abstract subjects of discussion. However, awareness of the basic elements of conducting a philosophical debate is critical. It is also necessary to distinguish qualified answers to philosophical questions. Introducing children to an anti-intellectual education that claims that each idea is of the same value can harm philosophy. In terms of increasing teachers' abilities to philosophize, the inclusion of philosophical knowledge in P4C teacher education is important (UNESCO, 2007). Worley (2009) states that P4C facilitators should have basic, not expert, philosophical knowledge. Just as someone unfamiliar with history or math cannot teach these courses, someone unfamiliar with philosophy cannot teach philosophy. It is necessary to know the value and meaning of philosophy and understand that it is not a method without content. Otherwise, as Van-sielegem (2005) points out, P4C will be instrumentalized, and lose its authenticity.

The obstacles to P4C's effective widespread adoption and implementation include negative perceptions of philosophy and philosophy educators' fostering those perceptions, opinions regarding childhood, teachers' personal epistemologies, and their lack of any philosophical background. The purpose of this study is to propose an organization of P4C education content in response to the problems identified above. Accordingly, this study was carried out among elementary education and psychological counseling and guidance teacher candidates who were enrolled in the P4C elective course in a Turkish university. The questions for the study were:

1. What is the impact of the P4C course on teacher candidates'
  - a. perceptions of philosophy; and
  - b. perceptions of childhood?
2. What are the difficulties faced by teacher candidates in planning and executing P4C activities?
3. What are the views of teacher candidates regarding the involvement of P4C in the process of teacher education?

## Method

In this study, a qualitative research method was employed to understand the feelings and thoughts, together with the underlying rationale, of the teachers who participated in P4C, and to obtain information about the P4C course in teacher education. The course lecturer, whose field of study was P4C, was also the researcher. The data were gathered by the researcher using qualitative data collection instruments by observing the participants in the classroom environment. A flexible process was followed, which focused on understanding the participants' perspectives.

### Research Design

The research design consisted of a case study. The case study is a qualitative research type that focuses on a specific program, case, or event (Merriam, 2009), and requires the inclusion of multiple data sources in order to provide an in-depth understanding (Creswell, 2009). In this study, P4C was presented as a case; data were obtained from three types of data sources: observations, interviews, and documents.

### Planning the Process

The subject of the researcher's doctoral dissertation and the field of study is philosophy for children. The researcher determined the difficulties P4C practitioners experienced and identified the key features that differentiated P4C from other approaches. Apart from its distinctive problems during the application process of the teachers, P4C has the problems which the other non-traditional methods face. Managing the discussion process and asking questions about high-level thinking skills can be given as examples. The reasons for these problems include the use of traditional methods in teacher education and not having enough lessons which are based application. Thus, the basic features of P4C, the difficulties experienced by the teachers during the implementation of this course is the framework. The need for practice in teacher training is one of the factors shaping the course. For this reason, in the course, the application examples for P4C activities are given and then the teacher candidates design and apply their own activities. P4C activities are designed and applied. The course is also involved in linking P4C with the curriculum in order to provide an interdisciplinary perspective and to increase the applicability of it. The researcher proposed the P4C as an elective course and her proposal was accepted by the faculty of education.

The course can be taken by all students of the faculty of education because it is important that the student is a teacher candidate rather than in which department study at. The quota of the course was limited to 30 in order not to disrupt the discussion environment. The aim and content of the course was given to the students who wanted to choose the course. Thus, 30 volunteer students chose the course.

### Participants

The study participants were 30 teacher candidates studying at a Turkish university during the spring of 2016. Twenty-nine of the participants were students in the elementary education department, and one was a student in the guidance and psychological counseling department. One of the elementary education students attending the four-year program was a senior, nine were juniors, and nineteen were sophomores. The psychological counseling and guidance student was a junior. One of the students was male; all others were female. The ages of the candidates ranged from 20 to 23 years. All elementary education students took the philosophy of education in the second year. However, psychological counseling and guidance student did not take this course.

### Process

The course took place in the 14 weeks between February 16, 2016, and May 17, 2016. Thus, 30 volunteer students chose the course. The course took place in a classroom in the primary department of education building. The course was completed in 42 hours, 3 hours a week. The relationship between philosophy and everyday life, theoretical knowledge regarding P4C, question analysis, principles of conducting debates, sample activities and related analysis, and strategies used in philosophizing with children were discussed in the process. During the implementation phase, the candidates selected an elementary school course and associated their plans with the goals or values involved in the curriculum. Groups of three planned a P4C lesson and applied it to their peers. The implementations were evaluated by discussion.

### Data Collection Instruments and Data Collection Process

Observation. The researcher evaluated the teacher candidates' implementations through an observation form. The

researcher did not use any standard or detailed observation form. The semi-structured observation form consisted of the following main titles: 'Presenting the Appropriate Stimulation', 'Determining the Basic Problem/Question', and 'Conducting a Debate'. These main titles are important for the implementation process of P4C. Therefore, they formed the basic framework of observation. The ten lesson plans prepared in three-people groups were administered by a group-appointed candidate; thus, ten prospective teachers were evaluated using the observation form.

The types of observation vary according to the researcher's role. In this research, the role of the researcher is the participant observer. The participant observer tries to collect information from the field as both observer and participant (Gold, 1958). In this method, research takes place in the natural environment in which the researcher participates in the environment (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). In this study, the researcher is the person who conducts the course and collects the data as the participant observer.

Document. In this study, the observation documents consisted of self-assessment forms and by which each teacher candidate assessed him/herself, providing statements regarding his or her awareness of the subject at the end of a lesson. The self-assessment forms included the following open-ended questions:

1. What are your feelings and thoughts about the process of preparing a P4C plan?
2. At what stage were you challenged when preparing a P4C plan? Why?
3. What are the shortcomings in your plan? What would you do next time?
4. What do you think is the strongest part of your plan? Why?
5. What are your feelings and thoughts about the implementation process?
6. At what stage did you find it difficult to implement your plan? Why?

The documents also included ten P4C plans. The P4C process is flexible. The ambiguous course of discussion prevents detailed planning. In addition, a detailed plan limits the teacher. For this reason, P4C plans are shaped around main headings and possible discussion questions. Semi-structured plans consisted of the following headings: 'Objectives', 'Introduction and Discussion', and 'Evaluation Activities'. The plans were reviewed using the Lesson Plan Evaluation Form. With this form, the appropriateness of the achievements (inside and outside the program), introductory activities, questions (mostly philosophical questions), tools (mostly text) and evaluation activities were evaluated.

*Interview.* At the end of the fourteen weeks, eight of the volunteer candidates (all female; one being the guidance and psychological counseling student) were interviewed. Information on interviewed teacher candidates is presented in Table 1:

A semi-structured interview form was used to obtain their thoughts and feelings about the course. In the semi-structured interview, the questions are flexible, the majority of the interview consists of questions asked to be clarified, and there are no details of pre-determined expressions and questions (Merriam, 2009). The interview questions were as follows:

**Table1.** Information on Interviewed Teacher Candidates

Teacher Candidate (TC)	Age	Gender	Major	Class Level
TC 1	21	Female (F)	Psychological Counseling and Guidance	3
TC 3	21	F	Elementary Education	3
TC 4	22	F	(EE)	3
TC 10	22	F	EE	3
TC 13	20	F	EE	2
TC 18	20	F	EE	2
TC 29	23	F	EE	4
TC 30	21	F	EE	2

1. How do you evaluate the impact of P4C on feelings and thoughts? Why?
2. What do you say about the feelings and thoughts in the process of preparing activities for P4C? Why?
3. Can you benefit from P4C when you are a teacher? How?
4. What do you think about linking P4C with the curriculum?
5. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this course? Why do you think like this?
6. What are your suggestions for this course?

During the interviews with the students, the questions could be expressed differently according to the course of the conversation, the order of the questions changed, and new questions were added from time to time. Interviews took place in the classroom where the course was held. Each interview lasted an average of 30 minutes. Interviews were recorded with audio recorder.

*Ethic.* It is ethically important whether a research is worth doing and whether the research is useful (Punch, 2011). P4C is known by many countries around the world. The importance is increasing in Turkey. The studies also show that P4C positively affects students on social, cognitive and affective levels. The aim, content and research process of the course were explained to prospective teachers who wanted to take P4C course and asked to decide whether to take this course or not under these conditions. Thus, the volunteer candidates approved the process and took the course. During the interviews, the audio recorder was taken by having the permissions of the candidates. In addition, the names of the participants were kept confidential during the research and in the reporting of the research.

*Data Analysis*

Before the analysis process, observation notes, documents, and recorded audio interviews were transferred to computer. Having read the data once, irrelevant data were extracted. The researcher took notes while reading the data to help create themes. The data were analyzed by content analysis within the framework of the research questions determined based on the researcher's aim and assumptions. In qualitative research, data analysis includes data preparation, editing, coding data, combining codes, and finally presenting data in figures, tables, or discussion (Creswell, 2009). In this context, similar expressions in the data were



coded and categorized according to any relation between them. Categories and themes were changed from time to time. In the process, both inductive and deductive ways were followed. Each category was grouped under main themes. Separate analysis of three data sources and their comparison after analysis are important for the validity of the research. Therefore, this process was carried out separately for the data obtained from each data source. Subsequently, the analysis results from different data sources were compared. The results of the analysis of the individual data sources were substantially paralleled. After that main themes gathered under research questions and were finalized.

### Findings and Interpretation

Theme explanations are given below under each research question.

*What is the Influence of the P4C Course on Teacher Candidates'...*

*'Perception of Philosophy?'* The teacher candidates stated that philosophy was related to their lives, that philosophy education was more than memorizing philosophers' views, that they could learn to philosophize, and that with the help of the P4C course, they understood that they had been unknowingly philosophizing. At the same time, they had an increased interest in philosophy. In the P4C course, philosophy's relation to daily life, similarities between philosopher and child, and the act of philosophizing were all addressed. The candidates had not previously contemplated these aspects of philosophy, as their previous coursework focused on history and philosophers' opinions. In addition, they did not encounter a course in the faculty of education other than the limited and theoretical educational philosophy. Even in some teacher training programs (such as psychological counseling and guidance) there is no educational philosophy course. The P4C course thus changed the candidates' perceptions towards philosophy.

*'Childhood Perception?'* Teacher candidates realized that children are capable of asking philosophical questions and that, with guidance, they could also provide logical answers to these questions. They shared their opinion that P4C could be used to better understand children. Traditional education regards children's minds as 'blank slate: teachers are responsible for transferring knowledge, and they approach children's reasoning capacities hesitantly. Teacher candidates are often presented with this traditional perception of childhood. At the end of the course, the candidates were surprised that the children asked philosophical questions, discussed them, and generated their own arguments. The candidates also thus began to question their own perceptions of children and childhood.

*What are the Difficulties Faced by Teacher Candidates in Planning and Executing P4C?*

*'Asking Questions'* The teacher candidates stated that they experienced the greatest difficulty asking questions during the process of philosophizing with children in the analysis, synthesis, and evaluation stages. According to the candidates, associating the questions appropriately with the text and the concept discussed was challenging. The difficulty of generating unbiased questions which would not direct the children was also among the mentioned difficulties.

The candidates often discussed difficulty related to directing appropriate questions in the discussion process. Observation notes also reflected this problem. In addition to the above problems, the candidates experienced difficulties asking questions that would ensure reasoned thinking and promote a concept-oriented philosophy that would deep-

en the debate. The posing of insufficiently clear questions which were not thought-provoking but rather confirmed the children's own ideas constituted a problem in terms of the debate process. The candidates also recognized the importance of asking qualified questions. The candidates talked most about the importance of asking questions both abstract and concrete, and directing children to look at questions from different angles. The candidates' difficulties asking questions leading to higher-order thinking can be attributed to their personal epistemologies formed by their traditional learning and past experiences.

*'Associating with the Curriculum'*. Among the candidates' difficulties related to questioning, they also experienced difficulty associating philosophy with the curriculum. Although they found it meaningful to associate P4C with other courses, they had difficulty using philosophy to support curriculum goals. This can again be explained by the candidates' own traditional philosophical backgrounds, which impeded their ability to connect philosophy with other disciplines.

*'Conducting a Debate'*. Guiding a debate without ascertaining the truths in children's minds was another difficulty that the candidates faced. The observations revealed that the candidates experienced problems managing the debate process, in terms of encouraging participants to have conversations, ensuring clarity, and directing participants to discuss each other's views. There were also problems in deepening the debate, debating another question without deepening it, and ensuring that the debate continued. Practitioners who initiated discussion regarding concepts such as justice, responsibility, and truth, occasionally turned the P4C activities into values education that dictated 'right' behavior. This can be explained by the candidates' personal epistemologies based on knowledge transfer, which did not accept different perspectives and involved the absoluteness of truth.

The teacher candidates realized the role of their philosophical backgrounds in P4C education. This realization was often based on their observations regarding the debate process. They saw a close connection between having a philosophical background and asking thoughtful questions about concepts such as 'good-bad' and 'right-wrong', deepening debate, and addressing basic philosophical questions. The discussion processes of those who investigated the philosophical background of the concepts in which the activities took place were more productive. Others had difficulties asking philosophical questions, generating new questions during the debates, and asking questions that would promote different points of view. These challenges reduced the quality of the discussion process. At the same time, the practitioners could not tell which answers were more qualified, so they were unable to provide appropriate feedback. The inability to distinguish the quality of responses created the perception that each answer was valuable, preventing the emergence of answers that included thinking rightly as well as philosophical depth.

*What are the views of teacher candidates regarding the involvement of P4C in the process of teacher education?*

*'Associating with the Curricula'*. The candidates stated that it was possible to utilize P4C in every lesson, to deeply question concepts, foster critical thinking skills, generate conversation, and provide permanent learning by moving away from rote learning. The candidates also said that once they became teachers, they could utilize philosophy to connect disciplines and support the curriculum's goals.

*'Preparing and Implementing Activities'*. The teacher candidates designed P4C activities after viewing and analyzing sample activities. They then applied their activities to their peers. During the individual interviews, they noted that this method was useful. They discussed the value of noticing

their shortcomings in debate management and question generation. They observed that working collaboratively brought different perspectives. They also mentioned that the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge was instructive. At the same time, the candidate's own attempts at philosophy occasioned them to reconsider their own debate skills.

*'Evaluation'*: A 'Teacher Candidate Lesson Plan Self-Assessment Form' and 'Teacher Candidate Lesson Plan Assessment Form' were used during the course. Open-ended evaluation questions were used at the end of the lesson. The lesson plan, the practices, and the nature of the questioning process were evaluated by discussion. During the interview, the candidates indicated that they observed inefficiencies in the evaluation activities and the evaluations on the applications.

### Discussion and Conclusion

At the end of the P4C elective course, the candidates' interest towards philosophy increased, their perceptions changed, and they viewed children's thinking capacities anew. It can also be stated that their previous perceptions of children and their personal epistemologies negatively affected their processes of conducting debates and asking questions. It can be argued that their lack of a philosophical background led to difficulties associating philosophy with curriculum and in conducting debates. What were deemed as necessary in P4C lessons were the preparation, implementation, discussion, and evaluation of P4C activities, ultimately associating P4C with the curriculum.

The main activity of P4C is question-based debate. For this reason, the candidates in the P4C course encountered and analyzed many types of questions leading to higher-order thinking and philosophizing with children. They became aware of the question types, as well as questions, that might lead to higher-order thinking. Murriss (2008) notes that in P4C, teachers learn to ask questions that will lead to philosophical debate.

In this study, one of the candidates' challenges was asking questions, a step in the process of philosophizing. They experienced difficulty preparing appropriate questions to facilitate higher-order thinking skills, promote philosophy, and deepen debates. Green and Condy (2016) reached similar conclusions in their P4C interviews with 30 elementary education teacher candidates. The candidates indicated that they found it difficult to ask philosophical, rather than factual, questions and that even if they had awareness of philosophical matters, they could not translate that awareness into their questions. Thus it can be seen that understanding the types of questions needed for philosophical instruction, and analyzing and preparing such questions, is of great importance when educating P4C teachers.

A lack of a philosophical background challenged the candidates' management of the debate process. P4C does not teach philosophical knowledge, nor does it offer content in the form of curriculum, but every inquiry carries philosophical concepts and questions. It is not a 'method without content' (Lewis & Robinson, 2017). Therefore, a philosophical background is needed to make an inquiry effective and connect it with the curriculum. Important aspects of philosophy—life relevancy, characteristics of philosophical discussion, and the main areas of philosophy—should be discussed in P4C teacher education. Such an approach, as seen in this study, also helps change the candidates' perceptions of, and increase their interest in, philosophy. Moreover, it supports the idea that P4C is not a method without content.

The teacher candidates' personal epistemologies and perceptions of childhood also impeded their ability to manage

the debate process. Learning models based on transfer of knowledge prevented the candidates from creating an open dialogue that would allow them to approach questions from different perspectives and foster higher-order thinking. Lyle's 2014 study conducted on students and teachers from 64 schools supports this view. In his study, Lyle examined teachers' perceptions about childhood models. He concluded that teachers who cared about children's social skills employed P4C more frequently than those who defined children as 'innocent', 'bad', 'blank slate, and 'developing'.

This study shows that the P4C education changed candidates' perceptions of childhood, and increased their confidence in children's thinking capacities. There are also other studies indicating that P4C courses transform childhood perceptions and personal epistemologies. Scholl (2014) interviewed 14 elementary school teachers following a course in philosophy education. The teachers discussed the pedagogical models in their schools and stated that the teachers' perceptions of the models changed after the philosophy course. Some teachers expressed amazement regarding their students' knowledge and abilities. They have since come to understand that children can know and do, instead of seeing children as blank slate. Scholl, Nichols, and Burgh (2016), in their experimental work with fifty-nine elementary school teachers, observed that a philosophical inquiry-based education generated a pedagogical transformation in teachers.

In the course, the candidates were able to self-criticize their personal epistemologies and childhood perceptions. In interviews with prospective teacher candidates who took a P4C seminar, Demissie (2015) found that P4C directs candidates to reflectively consider information and pedagogy. The study shows that P4C provides a strong context in which to stimulate teacher candidates to utilize reflective thinking. Brownlee and Berthelsen (2008) argue that teachers' thinking processes about teaching practices increase by acknowledging that learning is a versatile and complex process. Therefore, teacher candidates should be encouraged to think critically and reflectively, and to express and develop their personal beliefs about their own learning and teaching. It is useful to provide an opportunity for pre-service teachers related to the self-reflection of instructional practices in the classroom as the way to develop knowledge and beliefs or maybe refine them in the future. (Purnomo, Suryadi & Darwis, 2016). These may include conducting sample discussion sessions and examining perspectives on children and learning. Moreover, self-assessment forms and diaries can be used to generate candidates' reflective thoughts.

Associating P4C with curricula was considered a challenge by the candidates. This difficulty may be due to their lack of philosophical knowledge and view of the link between philosophy and subjects of the curriculum. Nevertheless, the candidates found it important to associate P4C with curricula in terms of questioning concepts, deepening thinking, creating an open-dialogue, and establishing interdisciplinary relationships. According to Lewis and Robinson (2017), the P4C program teaches candidates not only to philosophize, but also to see the philosophical potential of curricular topics and develop ways to relate them to philosophical inquiry. For this reason, before considering P4C as a separate lesson, it is necessary to establish its association with the curriculum, and to ensure that educators establish this relationship. This will enable teachers to easily include philosophical arguments in their instruction (Wartenberg, 2009).

After the candidates analyzed the P4C activities, they noted the importance of activity preparation, and assessed the activities through implementation. The candidates stated that post-implementation assessment especially informed them regarding their deficiencies, aiding in self-improvement. Lip-

man (1988) mentions a similar three-stage model in P4C education. The first stage involves studying the P4C programs, in which the candidates discuss activities, as well as implement practices related to the activities. In the second stage, candidates observe an instructor's sample applications with children and apply the applications in their classes. Finally, the instructor observes the candidate and provides feedback. Here, Lipman notes the need for implementation and feedback, but includes ready-made activities.

### Recommendations

The gains of the teacher candidates in the elective P4C course, the difficulties they experienced, and the recommendations they provided all offer ideas about P4C teacher education. Of course, teacher education involving critical, creative, and collaborative learning models, and a philosophy education that is based not on rote learning but is connected to life, will limit and change the content of P4C teacher education. Until changes are made, it is necessary to provide the parts omitted by the education system. Based on our findings, the following can be said regarding P4C teacher education:

- In teacher candidate education, the P4C course can change traditional perceptions of childhood and personal epistemologies.
- In order to create a philosophical background in P4C teacher education, skills such as philosophical question recognition and debate management should be included.
- Questions leading to higher-order thinking can be analyzed, and sample discussions and evaluation sessions on the nature of the discussion can be organized.
- Teacher candidates can prepare lesson plans by associating them with curricula instead of implementing ready-made activities. Activity application and feedback are critical components of P4C education.
- Opportunities for self-evaluation.

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