

5th P4C

Materials Interview

Interviewer: Please describe the instruction materials you're using for this lesson.

Teacher: With Philosophy for Children there isn't necessarily a curriculum. There's the baseline that philosophers have laid out with different aspects, it needed to be included within P4C. When you run P4C but the beautiful part about it is that you get to make up how goes with your kids. So for us in the beginning of the year the curriculum I guess it's kind of just setting the standards, and providing a perimeter on an outline for kids to think philosophically together, and setting those expectations so that they actually can do it.

It doesn't start like this, we didn't start the year being like, "Okay let's think of any question and then sit down talk about it." It was a lot of building a community, and then creating an agreement within our community. Then deciding what does it even mean to think philosophically, and outlining what a good question might be and practicing. Again and again my kids were asking questions like, "Is Siri evil?" Which drives me nuts that they picked it, but they were asking all types of questions, and then as a teacher you have to let it go because they quickly realize, "Oh this isn't that interesting." They went through that trying it out and went, "Okay that's not interesting." Then realizing knowing we need to stick to this type of criteria to help us ask a different question. I think it's setting up those routines, the framework I guess for them to sit and think philosophically. In this case there is no curriculum, does that makes sense? Yeah.

Interviewer : We're going to talk more about that. So why did you considered choosing these materials?

Teacher: I guess maybe why they consider using Philosophy for Children. I noticed through my years of teaching that kids begin to lose their sense of wonder. I used to teach 2nd grade, and my 2nd graders they wouldn't ask questions. To me that was such a shock, 2nd graders should be exploring and wondering about everything. Really is people living life we ask questions, right. We wonder about things and my kids were just taking everything that was being told to them as fact. He said that blue is the best color, so blue is the best color.

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They weren't really thinking critically, and they weren't learning how to talk collaboratively, and how to build a community that they were allowed to do that. That was one of the reasons why I started to implement P4C in the classroom, and it's my students favorite part of the day, or the week or whenever we do it. It's like, "Oh yes we can't wait to do P4C." You know because it's interesting that's they're learning how to speak with each other, learning how to disagree. They're learning how to find that there really sometimes is no answer, which even as adults we have a hard time with it so.

Typically I like to tie it with curriculum, and then I also sometimes just like to see

what are 5th graders thinking about these days? Where are my kids? It was easy to see that a lot of the questions were about identity, right and who is a 5th grader and looks which is so applicable to a 5th grade's developmental process. For me that's an interesting check in to see where are we as a group, and what are some of the issues that we're dealing with. The reason I chose to do a play of development today is just that we haven't done one in a while, and they were asking for one so that also tells me they have something on their mind that they want it they wanted to talk about.

Interviewer : What is it that you like about these materials?

Teacher: I love that there are no materials. I love that there is no standard way to do it. I love that the kids guide it. I love that comes from the kids. I love that ... I mean think about if our politicians today were taught to think critically, and to speak in an intellectually safe community, and to give reasons and examples and acknowledge assumptions, and making friends. People would, I don't know I just think that we would be much better off if we all were taught to communicate this way, and to find comfortableness in not knowing. To be able to think and to keep thinking about something, and be interested in something. It's so good to see your kids do this because they don't do this, they don't spend a lot of time doing this. It's often here's how you do it, there's one answer and you're going to do it this way and you're going to get this answer. We aren't giving them ... We aren't teaching them to think. I feel Philosophy for Children teaches our kids to think.

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Interviewer : Are there any changes you'd make?

Teacher: To that particular lesson?

Interviewer : Yeah, or the materials.

Teacher: To the materials, well you adapt it to be your own. I've changed things like someone can snapping. When my kids it's hard for them not to want to comment, and we do it to like, "Oh yeah like that." Or "Hmm you know." To keep it from being verbal we've added in things like nonverbal cues like snapping or kind of the be quiet sign. We've added things that fit us because they're a talkative group. I had to give them away to say like, "I get, I like what you're saying." Whatever their motion is, everybody does something different.

I've adapted it to fit them and then every time like you saw that I had to adapt the question, because the one that had the most votes was not going to be a philosophical question. I had to typically just go with it but I brought out the top three, and then we re-voted by going over the what makes a good philosophical question. So you're constantly adjusting to support success. We could've gotten in is Siri evil? If you guys were there we'd maybe would have if you weren't there. Just to see where it goes because sometimes we think it's not a great question. We underestimate them and we think that's a ridiculous question, but maybe it had a

[00:06:00] different underlying intent. So we're always changing, right.

Interviewer : How do you describe these materials as meaningful or irrelevant to students lives?

Teacher: P4C is relevant because it's our everyday, right. That's how we navigator worlds. kids are one of our first philosophers, there are the people who wonder about everything right? They think philosophically from a young age. Schools are so standardized that we don't allow for that thinking and I think it shuts off a lot of creative thinking, a lot of philosophical thinking, and it's creating generations of kids who aren't thinkers. They're just followers or doers, and it's allowing them the chance to see that they can be successful and give them an opportunity to do it.