the implementation of philosophy for children in the primary classroom

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

Swimming Against the Tide: The Implementation of Philosophy for Children in
the Primary Classroom

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Abstract

Philosophy for Children is a cognitive enhancement programme that utilises Socratic questioning and a dialogic pedagogy to develop the reasoning, creativity, social skills and ethical understanding of children. An abundance of research has established P4C's efficacy in achieving these aims (Trickey & Topping, 2004). However, Leat (1999) asserts that despite evidence of the effectiveness of thinking skills programmes, embedding innovative programmes like P4C into school practice is analogous to "rolling a stone uphill" (p389) and anecdotal evidence of the researcher's own experience as a SAPERE level 1 trainer substantiates this claim.

Exploration of the implementation of P4C in the classroom is a neglected area in the large body of research literature pertaining to P4C; research efforts until recently have tended to focus on the cognitive, affective, methodological and theoretical aspects of this approach. This research set out to test the veracity of Leat's (1999) claim that teacher efficacy is "…a measure of the chances of implementing change" (p399) and employed qualitative interviewing to examine the factors which primary teachers perceived to determine the implementation of P4C in the classroom.

The research findings identified three distinct groups of P4C implementers: regular, intermittent and ceased. Analysis of the factors that teachers perceived to determine the implementation of P4C in the classroom revealed differing levels of teacher efficacy amongst these three groups and substantiated Leat's (1999) claim. Furthermore, analysis facilitated the formulation of fuzzy predictions about the likely consequences of decision making on the P4C implementation process. The research findings also highlighted tensions, which were not exclusive to any particular group, between the values and practice of P4C and the values and requirements of the prevailing educational policy context. Further analysis gave credence to the view of many experienced SAPERE P4C trainers that P4C in the current climate represents counter-cultural practice.

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

The writer spent the early years of her career working in a primary school in an area of high socio-economic deprivation. During this time the writer was frustrated by the disparity between attainment levels in National Curriculum tests and the abilities of pupils as observed through daily classroom interactions. As a consequence she undertook a master's degree in applied educational studies and through this further study became increasingly convinced that thinking skills programmes might provide a pedagogical solution to the problems of under-achievement experienced in her own teaching context.

Although the writer was aware of a range of thinking skills programmes highlighted in academic literature, P4C was of particular interest because of its curriculum flexibility, low resource requirements and the large body of evidence citing its effectiveness in raising academic achievement in the classroom. Philosophy for children (P4C), based on constructivist assumptions and the tradition of Socratic dialogue, is a 'context free' cognitive enhancement programme which is established in over 35 countries (Burgh et al., 2006). P4C aims to develop students' critical, creative, collaborative and caring thinking through the use of Socratic questioning and a dialogic pedagogy. A plethora of research has established P4C's efficacy in promoting children's cognitive and affective skills (Trickey & Topping, 2004). However, despite the evidence of their effects, Leat (1999) argues that thinking skills programmes "…usually fail to make a lasting impact or become established within school systems" (p387).

The availability of P4C training in the England first came to the attention of the writer at a Social, Emotional and Behavioural Development Conference run by Antidote, a charitable organisation dedicated to promoting the development of social and emotional literacy in

schools. At the time she was working as a Teaching and Learning Consultant for Inclusion and Special Educational Needs for a large rural Local Authority. P4C appealed to the writer both personally and professionally: Firstly, P4C accorded with many of the writer's own values and beliefs about education, teaching, learning and childhood: The writer agrees with Dewey (1916), Lipman (2003) and Fisher (2003) that the core business of schools should be the development of pupils' critical and reflective thinking. In the writer's view, an education system which fails to incorporate this aspect into the educational process cannot be deemed to be educating per se. The writer also agrees with Vygotsky (1978) that teaching and learning is a dialogical process which is mediated through language use and furthermore, that the limits of an individual's capacity to use language also prescribe the limits of the individual's capacity to know the world; a sentiment which echoes that of Wittgenstein (1961). Therefore the ability to listen and to communicate effectively with others is a vital aspect of effective learning but this skill is often under-developed in the primary classroom (Ofsted, 2005). Finally, the writer agrees with Opie (1959) that the culture of childhood is based on oral tradition and furthermore, that teaching should in some part reflect this. P4C builds on this oral tradition.

From a professional point of view the writer recognised the potential of P4C for furthering the aims of the inclusion agenda; namely increasing the participation and achievement of under-attaining and special educational needs pupils. Although in aggregate the attainment of primary pupils in the Local Authority in which the writer worked always exceeded national averages there were small pockets of socio-economic deprivation where pupil attainment always fell well below nationally expected levels. At the time, the writer was personally involved in two particular aspects of educational policy whose aims could potentially be furthered by the successful implementation of P4C in the classroom: The

Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) was launched as a pilot by the DfES in 2003 and rolled out to other schools in 2005 as part of the *Excellence and Enjoyment* (2003) strategy. P4C was highlighted in the guidance as an approach which lent itself "… particularly well to work on developing children's social, emotional and behavioural skills" (DfES, 2005, p24). The 'Narrowing the Gap' agenda aimed to minimise the gap between low performing free school meal pupils and their peers through the use of multiple strategies like data analysis and pupil tracking, targeted intervention and the development of 'quality first teaching'. P4C was highlighted in the Primary National Strategy publication "What Works for Children with Literacy Difficulties" as an effective intervention for improving reading comprehension (Brooks, 2007, p98). The Local Authority was also committed to 'Teaching Children Talking' a project which aimed at improving the oral language development of primary pupils. The importance of oral language development for effective learning is highlighted by the Expert Panel for the National Curriculum (2011) who state that there is a "… compelling body of evidence that highlights a connection between oral development, cognitive development and educational attainment" (DfE, 2011, pp9-10). P4C is discussion based and the writer also recognised its potential for making a significant contribution to this agenda.

The writer agrees, based on personal experience of teaching and supporting schools in the current policy context, with the findings of the Cambridge Primary Review (Alexander, 2010a) that there is room for improvement within the primary education system. At present the curriculum is standardised, often hurried, bears little relation to the real lives, experiences and concerns of pupils, provides limited opportunities for self-actualisation, is inadequate in terms of preparing pupils for the challenges of adulthood in the 21st century and is overly focused on narrow performance outcomes to the detriment of broader

educational aims like, for example, the development of creativity (Ibid.). These concerns are also reflected in earlier policy discourse promoting a 'reframing of pedagogy' towards more enquiry based, dialogic and constructivist approaches to teaching and learning (Paul Hamlyn Foundation & the Innovation Unit, 2008). Although the writer believes that concerns about national competitiveness in the global knowledge economy has driven much of the government interest in exploring alternative pedagogies which better suit "the needs and aspirations of teachers and children in the 21st century" (Ibid, p1) this discourse also has implications for social justice. Bourdieu (1997) believes that the concept of cultural capital can be used to explain disparities in attainment between differing social classes. Alternative pedagogies like P4C recognise that the development of thinking is a social achievement (Brown & Lauder, 2001) and encourage the pooling of collective intelligence, thus challenging and ameliorating the negative effects of limited cultural capital on an individual's capacity to learn.

In 2005 the writer organised SAPERE level 1 P4C training for Local Authority consultants working in the field of inclusion. The writer was keen to disseminate this training to schools in the Local Authority and as a consequence she undertook further training and mentoring and became a SAPERE level 1 P4C accredited trainer in 2008. In her capacity as a Teaching and Learning Consultant for Inclusion and SEN the writer facilitated whole school P4C training for 11 schools, cluster group training for 4 schools and 15 other P4C training events. Over a three year period the writer also facilitated P4C enquiries with year 10 pupils at a local special school with positive results. Despite this activity, to the writer's knowledge only 2 schools in the Local Authority are still implementing P4C in the classroom.

The writer continues to provide SAPERE accredited P4C training to schools in different Local Authorities. In addition, the writer is also part of a four year national P4C project funded by the Education Endowment Foundation which involves training clusters of primary schools in socially disadvantaged areas in the P4C approach. The writer thinks it is vital that P4C educators better understand "the considerations which bear upon curricular action" (Stenhouse, 1975, p111); specifically the considerations which teachers perceive to determine the implementation of P4C in English primary classrooms. Professional development in the P4C approach is expensive and schools are now operating in a context of increased accountability for school spending linked directly to pupil outcomes. The writer believes that the data from this research will provide valuable insights from which to plan continuing professional development in P4C which aspires to provide teachers with the appropriate support to successfully embed this approach into classroom practice.

Although P4C is a much researched area, research efforts have tended to focus on the cognitive, affective, social, methodological and theoretical aspects of P4C. Until recently, little attention has been directed towards researching the implementation of this innovation or the factors which are perceived to determine this process. As part of an on-going research project exploring the impact of P4C on classroom practice in South Wales, Lyle & Thomas-Williams (2011) published a paper which explored head teacher perceptions of P4C and how they planned to embed this innovation in their schools. Although this work is related to the writer's area of interest and will inform the literature review this work is located outside of the English policy context and relates specifically to change management from a senior leadership perspective.

Teachers are the agents of change in the classroom (Stenhouse, 1975, Hargreaves, 1994, Leat, 1999). Leat (1999) argues that teacher efficacy is "…a measure of the chances of implementing change" (p399) in the classroom. Teacher efficacy is composed of three elements (Soodak & Podell, 1996); personal efficacy describes a belief that one has the skills to effect lasting positive change; outcome efficacy describes a belief that the strategies employed will lead to positive outcomes; and teaching efficacy describes a belief that one can "overcome all the problems that the teaching environment poses" (Leat, 1999, p399). Leat (1999) argues that teachers must possess all three elements in order for thinking skills programmes to be successfully implemented in the classroom. Just as "…primary education is embedded in place, time and society" (Alexander, 2010a, p39), so too are teachers. Therefore the central question of this research is:

"What are teacher's perceptions of the factors determining the implementation of P4C in the classroom?"

In order to answer the main research question further sub-research questions are required:

1. *What is the policy context within which P4C currently exists?*

   Teachers do not teach in a vacuum. As touched upon earlier, teachers are situated in a social, political and economic context which is broader than the classroom or the school (Troman et al., 2007). This context, to a greater or lesser degree, prescribes the possibilities for action within the classroom. Therefore, in order to answer the main research question it is necessary to explore the wider policy context in which P4C currently exists. This will necessarily include the now defunct Primary National Strategy because the writer believes, based on her own professional experience, that the main messages promulgated through this policy have had an enduring effect on values and practices in schools and classrooms.

2. *What are the educational assumptions underpinning P4C?*

   Fundamentally, educational action is driven by values. Values are shaped through personal experience, the cultural milieu of the school and the wider policy context. So it is important for this research to explore to what extent the educational assumptions of P4C (which are unavoidably value laden) cohere with teacher values and the values espoused through the wider policy context.

3. *What are the implications for P4C implementation?*

   In order to answer the main research question it is important to explore the potential impact of the wider policy context and the educational assumptions of P4C upon teacher's decision making about the implementation process.

4. *How do primary teachers implement P4C?*

   Curricular action is shaped by a range of considerations which to some extent are revealed by the action itself. Therefore, in order to answer the main research question it is important to explore the actions teachers have taken to implement this approach in the classroom.

5. *What do primary teachers say are the main factors influencing their decision-making?*

   Each teacher and each educational context is unique. Although the literature reviews may reveal potential opportunities and challenges which could have a bearing on the P4C implementation process to what extent these factors are implicated in teacher decision making is unknown. Therefore it is necessary to investigate the factors which teachers perceive to influence decision-making during the implementation process.

The writer will now provide an overview of the thesis structure, outlining where each of the research questions will be addressed and the key content areas of each chapter.

The first literature review of this thesis will address the first and third sub-research questions: '*What is the policy context within which P4C currently exists?*' and '*What are the implications for P4C implementation?*' In order to inform the third sub-research question it is necessary to begin this chapter with a brief overview of the nature and form of P4C and its key enablers. The chapter will then address the first sub-research question and will begin by examining the forms of globalisation that have most influenced English educational policy making, practice and values. This analysis will suggest that 'knowledge economy' discourse has had a significant impact on primary educational policy and so it is important to consider this influence in England from 2003 to the present time. Throughout this chapter the writer will draw attention to the implications of current primary educational policy, practice and values for the implementation of P4C in English primary classrooms.

The second literature review of this thesis will mainly address the second and third sub-research questions but will also include reference to the first sub-research question. In order to answer the questions '*What are the educational assumptions underpinning P4C?*' and '*What are the implications for implementation?*' the chapter will begin by examining global and national developments regarding the teaching of philosophy in primary schools and the impact on English policy discourse. This will be followed by an exploration of the origins, aims, theoretical underpinnings and methodology of P4C with special reference to P4C as practised in the English context. The issues surrounding continuing professional development in this area will then be explored. Finally the writer will address the claims and criticisms of P4C which the writer believes are pertinent to teacher decision making during the implementation process. Throughout this chapter the writer will draw attention

to the relevance of the educational assumptions of P4C to the current policy context and the implications for implementation.

The fourth chapter of this thesis will provide a philosophical, methodological and procedural justification of the research approach and methods adopted in this thesis. The writer subscribes to the view that human action "…is not simply a consequence of psychological attributes such as drives, attitudes or personalities, or determined by external social facts…but results from a continuous process of meaning attribution which is always emerging in a state of flux and subject to change…and this process takes place in a social context" (Cohen & Manion, 1985, pp35-36). Although participant observation might be regarded as the most appropriate method for exploring the concerns of this thesis time and monetary restrictions precluded this as a viable option. Instead, based on the pragmatic considerations outlined above the writer undertook a longitudinal study and used qualitative interviewing as the chosen research methodology.

The fifth chapter of this thesis will address the fifth and sixth sub-research questions: '*How do primary teachers implement P4C?*' and '*What do primary teachers say are the main factors influencing their decision making?*' This chapter will present and compare the empirical research findings from multiple semi-structured interviews conducted with eight research participants over a fifteen month period.

The sixth chapter of this thesis will address all the sub-research questions as a prelude to answering the main research question '*What are teacher's perceptions of factors determining the implementation of P4C in the classroom?*' The writer will use the construct of teacher efficacy to explain disparities in implementation effects. Analysis will incorporate the major themes

emerging from the empirical data and, where relevant, make reference to existing literature and theory. This chapter will also draw upon the research evidence to argue that P4C is a counter-cultural practice; a view which is supported by a number of experienced SAPERE trainers.

The main research question will be addressed in the concluding chapter which will also include the theoretical and policy implications of the research findings, recommendations and research limitations. The table below provides an overview of the thesis structure and the research questions which will be answered in each chapter.

Overview of thesis structure and research questions	
Chapter 1: Introduction	Thesis rationale, research questions, structure and content
Chapter 2: P4C and the Current Policy Context	What is the current policy context within which P4C currently exists? What are the implications for P4C implementation?
Chapter 3: The Educational Assumptions underpinning P4C	What are the educational assumptions underpinning P4C? What are the implications for P4C implementation?
Chapter 5: Results	How do primary teachers implement P4C? What do primary teachers say are the main factors influencing their decision making?
Chapter 4: Methodology	Philosophical, methodological and procedural justification of the approach taken in the thesis.
Chapter 6: Analysis and Discussion	What is the current policy context within which P4C currently exists? What are the educational assumptions underpinning P4C? What are the implications for P4C implementation? How do primary teachers implement P4C? What do primary teachers say are the main factors influencing their decision making? What are teacher's perceptions of factors determining the implementation of P4C in the classroom?
Chapter 7: Conclusion	What are teacher's perceptions of factors determining the implementation of P4C in the classroom?

This chapter has provided an overview of the structure and content area of this thesis. Chapter two will now discuss the current policy context within which P4C currently exists and the implications for P4C implementation.

Chapter 2: P4C and the Current Policy Context

Introduction

This chapter will explore the current policy context within which P4C exists and the implications for implementation. In order to lay the scene the writer will begin with a brief overview of the nature and form of P4C and its key enablers. The writer will then examine the forms of globalisation that have most influenced English educational policy making, practice and values. This will include consideration of the impact of 'knowledge economy' discourse on primary educational policy from 2003 to the present time. Throughout this chapter the writer will draw attention to the relevance and impact of policy for the implementation of P4C in English primary classrooms.

P4C is a dialogic, critical and democratic pedagogy which teaches students to philosophise; to develop critical, creative, collaborative and caring modes of thinking through discussion of questions which connect with all human experience. It is a quest for meaning and truth; a dialogical process which moves inductively from the concrete, personal experience of pupils to abstract generalisation. With regard to providing the conditions necessary to enable the teaching of philosophy in schools UNESCO (2011b) recommend that national policy, planning and administration of education should: "Reaffirm that education contributes to building the intellectual autonomy of individuals and refuse to reduce the education process to training for instrumental techniques and competences" (p2). Furthermore, UNESCO (2011b) recommend that member states should aim to make philosophical enquiry "…a principle of primary and secondary education in general" (p3).

Although the following is neither exhaustive nor hierarchical, the writer would argue that the necessary conditions required for building the intellectual autonomy of individuals in

the primary classroom (and thereby providing an environment in which P4C can flourish) include:

- An environment which facilitates and encourages innovation and develops teachers' capacity to handle uncertainty and take risks (Wegerif, 2010; Claxton, 1998).

- sufficient time and space in the curriculum; for the exploration of ideas, for reflection and for the co-construction of knowledge (Hall & Thomson, 2005)

- an epistemological stance in the classroom which positions the teacher in a fallibilistic as opposed to an authoritative, information imparting role (Lipman, 2003; Fisher, 2003)

- an understanding of the importance and role of meaningful dialogue for intellectual development and deep learning (Alexander, 2010a, Wegerif, 2010)

- "a shift in the locus of control for learning to the learner" (Scholl, Nichols & Burgh, 2008, p6; Jeffrey & Woods, 2003)

The agency of teachers to facilitate change in the classroom is circumscribed by the social, political and economic context within which they are situated. The concept of globalisation remains a dominant theme in policy discourse, production and practice across nation states (Lauder et.al, 2006). In order to understand the policy context within which P4C currently exists (and hence teachers 'room for manoeuvre' within this space) it is necessary to begin with a consideration of the nature and impact of globalisation on educational policy, practice and values in England.

Globalisation

In this section the writer will begin with a brief discussion of the concept of globalisation. The writer will then focus upon the concept of economic globalisation; a phenomenon which the writer will argue is the dominant influence on national educational policy discourse, production and practice.

According to Held et al. (1999) globalisation refers "to processes of change which underpin a transformation in the organisation of human affairs by linking together and expanding human activity across regions and continents" (p15). However, it could be argued that these processes of change which link and expand human activity across regions and continents have a long history; originating in the emergence of universalistic religions and continuing with the rise of capitalism in the 16th century (Morrow & Torres, 2000). Despite these long term trends globalisation tends to be regarded as a much more recent phenomenon – coming to the fore in the 1970's with a conjunction of international events which had significant effects on the domestic policy and practice of many developed nations, including changes to the welfare state, the adoption of laissez-faire economics, market deregulation and a shift from standardised mass production to more flexible production methods (Ibid., p5).

Yet the concept of 'globalisation' is still fraught with difficulties: Kellner (2000) argues that "…there is no such thing as 'globalisation' per se" and that "…the term is used as a cover concept for a heterogeneity of processes that need to be spelled out and articulated" (p299). Hirst & Thompson (1996) and Bottery (2000) draw attention to the difference between what might be termed globalisation facts (descriptions of what is the case) and what might be termed globalisation forecasts (theories about the direction of globalisation

processes which are normative and value-laden in nature and appear to favour particular interest groups). To complicate matters even further, Kellner (2000) also makes a distinction between globalisation from above (driven by political and economic elites) and globalisation from below (driven by individuals and interest groups committed to the goals of democratisation and social justice). Despite these conceptual complexities three forms or dimensions of globalisation are most commonly described: economic, political and cultural (Waters, 1995, Dale, 1999, Held et. al 1999, Marginson, 1999, Bottery, 2000, Kellner, 2000, Papastephanou, 2005). These forms of globalisation are constructed of both fact and forecast. The writer would argue that economic and political globalisation processes have had the greatest impact on the educational policy making of nation states and set the context within which P4C currently exists, so it is to these forms of globalisation that the writer will now turn.

Economic globalisation is driven by elite interest groups and may be regarded as a form of globalisation from above. Indeed, globalisation per se is defined by the International Monetary Fund (1997) as: "the economic interdependence of all countries in the world, caused by the increase of the volume and the variety of the international transactions of goods and services, as well as of the international flows of capital, and by the accelerated and generalised diffusion of technology" (quoted by Perez Iriarte, p24).

In 1996 Hirst & Thompson argued that although the world economy was highly internationalised it didn't meet the criteria of a truly global economy and that the reality of true economic globalisation would entail a radical alteration of the world economic structure characterised by:

- Totally unregulated, socially de-contextualised global markets

- A situation in which national level processes (for example, policy making and the management of social affairs) are subsumed and subordinate to global economic processes

- The global dominance of trans-national corporations and footloose capital, which national governments are unable to regulate even on their own territories

- An open world labour market and a significant decline in the power of organised labour

The writer would argue that the global economic crisis, which began in 2008, marks the shift from a highly internationalised world economy to true economic globalisation; the de-regulation and globalisation of financial markets (which began in the late 1970s) culminated in a situation where financial assets were grossly inflated relative to the real wealth of national economies (Crotty, 2009). Despite the best efforts of affected governments to use public funds to mediate the worst excesses of the financial sector, the world was gripped by global recession and national governments responded by making 'structural adjustments' to their public sectors. In the writer's own experience, the consequences for Local Authority School Improvement Services across England have been dramatic; resulting in substantial job losses and a concomitant decline in the range and availability of support offered to schools. Professional autonomy has been severely curtailed and the continuing professional development provided by officers in the writer's own Local Authority is now substantially directed towards addressing school performance as determined by the new framework for Ofsted (2012) inspection.

Processes of economic globalisation have reified a culture of performativity defined by Ball (2003) as "…a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as a

means of incentive, control and attribution and change – based on rewards and sanctions (both material and symbolic). The performances (of individual subjects or organisations) serve as measures of productivity or output, or displays of 'quality', or 'moments' of promotion or inspection. As such they stand for, encapsulate or represent the worth, quality or value of an individual or organisation within a field of judgement" (p216). The employment of crude measures of school performance, based on narrow assessments of basic skills, inhibit opportunities for the development of intellectual autonomy and reduce the education process "to training for instrumental techniques and competences" (UNESCO, 2011b, p2).

According to Cerny (1997) political globalisation means that the power of nation states to determine domestic policy is circumscribed by "…complex congeries of multilevel games played on multi-layered institutional playing fields, above and across, as well as within state boundaries" (p253). In other words, national policy making is not simply determined at the national level; global and local agents also exert an influence on policy direction and production. The writer would argue that the trend towards this form of globalisation is evidenced by:

- The ceding of political power away from the nation state to supra-national organisations like the European Union in an attempt to mediate the impact of global economic competition

- The influence of supra-national economic organisations like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank on the economic policies of nation states, locking developing (and in recent times) developed nations into non-negotiable economic arrangements euphemistically termed as "strategic adjustment programs" (Blanchette, 2000)

- The influence of global competition on the domestic policies of nation states (DfEE, 1997), particularly within education, which is seen as "…a prime source of economic competitive advantage" (Ng & Tan, 2006, p4).

However, Bourdieu (2003) argues, and the writer agrees, that globalisation is a mainly economic phenomenon, a 'pseudo-concept' which describes and prescribes the expansion of the economic field to the entire world (p84). Hence political globalisation is merely the expansion of the world economic field into the political field of nation states where political issues are recast as "…impersonal market imperatives, or as "private" ownership prerogatives, or as technical problems for managers and planners…" (Apple, 2000, p65)

The writer would agree with Dale (1999) and Lopez (2000) that economic globalisation is the dominant influence on national educational policy fields. In the case of developed countries this means (among other things) that the role of government is one of 'strategic trader'; limited to niche marketing and the development of 'human capital' which meets the needs of 'desirable' trans-national corporations (Green, 1999, Marginson, 1999). An example of this is Singapore, which reformed its education system in the 1990s in the belief that developing the critical and creative capacities of students would better serve the needs of a national economy aiming to build core capabilities in the strategic areas of Biomedical Sciences, Environmental and Water Technologies and Interactive and Digital Media (Ng, & Tan, 2006, p4).

Globalisation and Educational Policy Convergence in Post-Industrial Nations
The writer would first like to clarify what is meant by educational policy. McLaughlin (2000) defines educational policy as a "…detailed prescription for action aimed at the

preservation or alteration of educational institutions and practices" (p17). However, this understanding of educational policy is limiting and the writer would agree with Lingard et al. (2005) that educational policy should be viewed within the broader context of a social arena or field. The idea of a social field was developed by Bourdieu (1998) and is defined as:

"…a structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and people who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside this space, which at the same time becomes a space in which the various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field. All the individuals in this universe bring to the competition all the (relative) power at their disposal. It is this power that defines their position in the field and, as a result, their strategies" (pp40-41).

Within this social field policy influence, production and practice are played out according to the power, influence and context of the agents involved. Hence educational policy is conceptualised here as the product of an unequal and multi-layered (global, national and locally determined) social process which aims to preserve or alter educational ideologies, institutions or practices.

Green (1999) states that '...there is clear evidence of policy convergence within Europe and East Asia around a range of broad policy themes…' (p69). Although education in capitalist economies has always been viewed as a mechanism for economic growth, the 1980's and 1990's began to see the emergence of a consensus in the developed nations of the world that education is the primary mechanism for maintaining a competitive advantage in the global economy. The global recession appears to have consolidated this view as President Barack Obama's 2009 address to the Joint Session of Congress illustrates:

"In a global economy where the most valuable skill is your knowledge, a good education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity – it is a pre-requisite…we know that the countries that out-teach us today will out-compete us tomorrow" (www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-of-President-Barack-Obama-Address-to-Joint-Session-of-Congress).

Economic rationalism or neo-liberalism (the belief that market forces and increased competition achieve greater efficiency in the allocation of resources) and a growth oriented paradigm (the belief that the singular goal of a nation should be economic growth) have provided the ideological underpinning for educational reforms in the advanced nations of the world resulting in:

- The devolution of responsibility for educational 'outcomes' to the school level through decentralisation of educational governance and financial control (Green, 1999, Bottery, 2000, Bottery & Wright, 2000, Levin, 2003)

- Increasingly centralised and prescribed curricula and increased testing, assessment and public performance evaluation (Green, 1999, Levin, 2003)

- The development of quasi-markets in education through open enrolment and the rhetoric of parental choice (Green, 1999, Levin, 2003)

- The promotion and extension of post-compulsory education and training and development of the concept of 'lifelong learning' (Green, 1999)

- Increased concern with the development of skills and dispositions believed to be essential in meeting the demands of the knowledge economy (Green, 1999, NACCCE, 2001, DfES, 2004, Tharman, 2004)

The reforms challenge the "ideal of a humanistic education without utilitarian purpose" (Dunne, 1995, p64) and have catalysed a slow but seismic shift in the values and practices of public sector organisations in the developed world - away from ideas of collective social responsibility and process oriented practice towards cheaper notions of individual accountability and the outcome oriented practice of 'New Public Management'. Teaching has been transformed into a rational enterprise devoid of wider moral purpose. Pring (2001) states that:

"The language of education through which we are asked to 'think in business terms' – the language of inputs and outputs, of value-addedness, of performance indicators and audits, of products and productivity, of educational clients and curriculum deliverers – constitutes a new way of thinking about the relation of teacher and learner. It employs different metaphors, different ways of describing and evaluating educational activities; but, in so doing, it changes those activities into something else. It transforms the moral context in which education takes place and is judged successful or otherwise" (p201).

Research over the past fifteen years suggests that increased standardisation across school settings, short-termism and risk aversion have been the practical consequences of the first three reforms in England (Gerwitz et al, 1995, Whitty et al, 1998, Sharpe & Gopinthan, 2002, Maseman, 2007, Alexander, 2010a). These consequences represent the antithesis of the conditions required for building the intellectual autonomy of individuals in the classroom and thereby providing an environment in which P4C can flourish. The writer will now consider the influence of knowledge economy discourse on national educational policy production.

The Significance of the Knowledge Economy

Some academics dispute the significance and even the very existence of the knowledge economy. Brown & Hesketh (2004) argue that the economy has always been driven by new knowledge and technological advances and that our contemporary experience is merely an acceleration of a centuries old trend. In the same vein Peters (2001) argues that the idea of the knowledge economy is a value and theory laden discourse which is at least thirty years old (p15). However, the perceived significance of the knowledge economy is reflected at a supranational and national level through, for example OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) literature, regional and national policy. The Lisbon Council's Strategy to make the European Union "…the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world" represents a strategic regional response to a shared perception of economic threat from the fast developing, lower-wage economies in Asia, such as China and India (Brinkley, 2006, p9). The Department for Trade and Industry (1998) UK white paper Our Competitive Future: building the knowledge driven economy clearly illustrates the economic bent of 'knowledge economy' discourse which is intimately linked to national (and individual) prosperity:

"For countries in the vanguard of the world economy, the balance between knowledge and resources has shifted so far towards the former that knowledge has become perhaps the most important factor determining the standard of living…"

(http://www.dti.gov.uk/comp/competitive/main.htm)

But what is the knowledge economy? Peters (2001) states that the characteristics of a knowledge economy include:

- "Economics of abundance"; knowledge and information are resources which do not deplete when used and may in fact grow as a consequence of usage

- "Annihilation of distance"; ICT applications diminish the effects of space and time on the capacity to do business resulting in 24 hour virtual markets with global reach

- "De-territorialisation of the state"; knowledge and information is almost impossible to contain and may 'leak' to the places where it has the highest value

- "Importance of local knowledge"; the value of knowledge and information is heavily context-dependent

- "Investment in human capital"; humans are the key resource in a knowledge based economy

(pp7-8).

The knowledge economy is most commonly associated with hi-tech and knowledge based industries with a strong research and development focus, a well-educated workforce and high ICT usage (Brinkley & Lee, 2006). Knowledge based industry as defined by Eurostat (the statistical arm of the European Commission) includes: high to medium tech manufacturing and communications, financial and business services, health, education, creative, cultural and recreation services (Ibid, p5). However, in a report prepared for the 2007 EU Spring Council, Brinkley & Lee (2006) argue that in reality the knowledge economy applies across all industries. The Department for Trade and Industry (1998) support this view and depict a vision of the knowledge economy as one which is based on the effective application and exploitation of all forms of knowledge to all manner of activities in order to achieve maximum economic advantage. Human capital theory (i.e. that investment in education and training will guarantee economic growth) is heavily implicit in this view and as a consequence education has become one of the world's fastest growing 'knowledge industries', estimated in 2001 to account for 6% of the world gross domestic product (DfEE, 2001a, p20).

Peters (2001) criticises post-industrial nations for developing education policies which are heavily framed by the neo-liberal vision of a 'knowledge economy'; where knowledge is privatised, the worth of education is measured solely in terms of its ability to service the needs of economic elites and education's function is reduced to providing (as efficiently and competitively as possible) "… training for instrumental techniques and competences" (UNESCO, 2011b, p2). This, he argues, is at the expense of education policies framed by the social democratic vision of a 'knowledge society'; where education is reinvented as a welfare right and knowledge rights are recognised as "…a basis for social inclusion and informed citizenship" (p13). Peter's (2001) humanist vision of a 'knowledge society' recognises the potential of education as a force for positive social change and human wellbeing and as such accords with the educational assumptions of the P4C approach.

From the late 1990s creativity began to be increasingly recognised as a prime asset for maintaining a successful post-industrial economy (DfEE, 2001a, Tharman, 2004, Roberts, 2006); by 2006, creative industries alone accounted for 7% of global GDP and employed 2 million people in the UK (Roberts, 2006, p11). According to the now defunct Qualifications, Curriculum and Development Agency the knowledge economy requires workers who are able to:

"…see connections, have bright ideas, are innovative, communicate and work well with others and are able to solve problems. In other words, they need creative people" (http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-1-and-2/learning-across-thecurriculum/creativity/whyiscreativitysoimportant/index.aspx).

As illustrated above, creativity and its practical counterpart innovation are central to knowledge economy discourse. The QCA (2004) define creative activity as "questioning and challenging, making connections and seeing relationships, envisaging what might be, exploring ideas, keeping options open and reflecting critically on ideas, actions and outcomes" (p10). Feldman et.al (1995) state that individuals cannot be creative unless they: "believe that they can change the world and add to its knowledge themselves" (cited in Davies, 2006, p41). Both these views suggest that building intellectual autonomy is a necessary prerequisite for the development of a creative and innovative workforce.

The writer would argue that creative activity in the classroom (as defined above) cannot be achieved through a didactic, monologic pattern of classroom interaction. Dialogic teaching on the other hand, is a fundamentally creative activity, requiring the active participation of pupils in the co-construction of knowledge through meaningful dialogue (Wegerif, 2010). Dialogic teaching builds intellectual autonomy and is conceptualised by Alexander (2010a) as:

"Collective: teachers and children address learning tasks together, whether as a group or a class; Reciprocal: teachers and children listen to each other, share ideas and consider alternative viewpoints; Supportive: children articulate their ideas freely, without fear of embarrassment over 'wrong' answers and they help each other to reach common understandings; Cumulative; teachers and children build on their own and each other's ideas and chain them into coherent lines of thinking and enquiry; Purposeful: teachers plan and steer classroom talk with specific educational goals in view" (p306).

The writer will now explore the influence of knowledge economy discourse on primary educational policy from 2003 onwards. This will begin with a discussion of the Primary

National Strategy response to the needs of the knowledge economy and its effectiveness in developing creative activity in the classroom before moving on to look at later government policies in this area.

Responding to the Needs of the Knowledge Economy: The Primary National Strategy

In 2003 the document Excellence and Enjoyment: A strategy for primary schools launched the Primary National Strategy (PNS) which incorporated the 1998 National Literacy Strategy (NLS) and the 1999 National Numeracy Strategy (NNS). It was a strategy motivated by domestic political concerns and economics:

By the year 2000 there was growing anxiety that the NLS, the NNS and the pressures of target-setting were creating curriculum imbalance. SATs results plateaued and in 2002 the government failed to meet the educational targets that it set for itself. Creativity was increasingly recognised by policy makers as a lever for raising achievement and overcoming socio-economic inequalities (Brehony, 2005).

Secondly, although traditional forms of industry and manufacturing declined in England in the face of global competition 'creative' industries grew at an unprecedented rate – by 34% in a decade "…against a backdrop of almost no growth in employment in the economy as a whole" (DfEE, 2001a, p19). Critics like the Department for Trade and Industry, DEMOS and the Department for Media, Culture and Sport began to question the economic consequences of the 'standards agenda' which was accused of 'squeezing out' creativity: "People who generate bright ideas and have the practical abilities to turn them into successful products and services are vital not just to the creative industries but to every

sector of business. Our whole approach to what and how we learn from the earliest stages of learning needs to adapt and change to respond to this need. Academic achievement remains essential, but it must increasingly be delivered through a rounded education which fosters creativity, enterprise and innovation" (DTI & DfEE, 2001, para 2.11).

The solution was to combine excellence (maintaining a tight focus on the standards agenda) with enjoyment (urging primary schools to be more creative and innovative in their curriculum provision). Excellence and Enjoyment (2003) sent a clear message to teachers and primary schools: "Teachers have the freedom to decide how to teach – the programmes of study state what is to be taught but not how it is to be taught…" (DfES, 2003, para 2.4). The Excellence and Enjoyment (2003) Primary National Strategy included:

- A reiteration of the curricular freedoms which schools already had and encouragement to schools to '…take control of their curriculum, and to be innovative' (DfES, 2003, p16)

- A continuing focus on basic skills with the aim that over the country as a whole, at least 85% of 11-year-olds would reach level 4 in literacy and numeracy by 2006, whilst at the same time allowing schools to set their own targets '…which are stretching, but are also realistic'(DfES, 2003, p21)

- A focus on social cohesion and the development of pupils' emotional intelligence, embedding '…the teaching of positive behaviour into the fabric of learning and teaching in the school' (DfES, 2003, p13)

- Building the capacity of teachers to 'manage really effective learning and teaching across the curriculum, rather than on presenting identikit blueprints for teaching' (DfES, 2003, p30)

The writer will now consider to what extent the Excellence & Enjoyment (2003) strategy was successful in making a space for creative activity and dialogue in primary schools and hence building the intellectual autonomy of individuals in the classroom. In doing so, the writer will first consider the content and quality of the continuing professional development materials which followed Excellence & Enjoyment (2003) before evaluating their impact on schools and pedagogy.

Despite the declared importance of creativity in policy discourse, the Excellence and Enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years (DfES, 2004) professional development materials failed to fully explore the nature of creative activity in educational settings and pedagogy was reduced to six rather vague 'teaching strategies' to support creative thinking in the classroom:

"use imagination, generate more ideas, experiment with alternatives, be original, expand on what we do and know and exercise our judgement" (DfES, Understanding how learning develops, 2004, p72).

In the same vein five 'teaching strategies' were offered for encouraging extended dialogue in the classroom:

"allow thinking time, use 'think-pair-share', do not respond immediately after the child has replied, challenge the response and ask the child to elaborate" (DfES, Creating a learning culture, 2004, p21).

In discussion of pedagogical approaches, three main pedagogies were tabulated in the professional development materials as being "used by most" teachers and practitioners: "direct, inductive and exploratory teaching methods" (Ibid, p15). It is important to note that these pedagogical assertions were not referenced to any research evidence. The

materials go on to discuss in further detail the dimensions of direct instruction and interactive whole class teaching but inductive and exploratory teaching methods failed to get a further mention; sending a clear message to schools about what approaches have official approval.

In the writer's view there are three major flaws in the Excellence and Enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years (DfES, 2004) CPD materials (and the raft of PNS materials which followed): Firstly, they rarely advance "…beyond sentiment and assertion into argument and justification" (Alexander, 2010a, p298). Secondly, the materials fail to recognise differences in the professional knowledge and expertise of teachers - assuming a 'one size fits all' approach to continuing professional development. Garet et al (2001) note that a fundamental element of effective CPD is the match between professional development activities and the developmental needs of the teacher; in circumstances where this match is poor research evidence suggests that the impact on classroom practice will also be poor (Day, 1999). Thirdly, and related to the first and second points, the CPD materials are reductive and simplistic (which is exemplified by the 'teaching strategies' suggested to develop extended dialogue and creative thinking); leading to shallow implementation of prescribed practice; a claim which is supported by other studies (Alexander, 2010a).

The thinly disguised prescription of the Excellence & Enjoyment (2004) professional development materials and the lack of additional non-contact time with which to engage and reflect upon them is a world away from the Singaporean model of curricular and pedagogical change where schools were given the freedom to decide how and what kind of changes would be implemented and teachers were provided with opportunities for at least

100 hours of continuing professional development in order to facilitate change (MOE, 2004, p4).

Ofsted evaluated the impact of the Excellence and Enjoyment (2003) Primary National Strategy in schools in 2005. Despite the executive summary of Excellence and Enjoyment (2003) urging schools to "Take ownership of the curriculum…" (p4) and "Be creative and innovative in how they teach…" (p4) Ofsted (2005) reported that: "Most head teachers and subject leaders have concentrated on the raising standards agenda, which is at the heart of Excellence and Enjoyment, but have been more cautious in promoting greater flexibility within the curriculum… However relatively few schools have made wholesale changes to the way in which the curriculum is structured and organised" (Ofsted, 2005, p2).

Nationally, innovation and creativity was found to be limited to the reintroduction of themed weeks and cross curricular projects; bolted onto instead of being integrated into the whole curriculum. Ofsted's (2005) explanation for this lack of 'wholesale changes' exemplifies the prevalence of a risk-averse performativity culture in English primary schools in this period - a legacy which continues to the present day:
"Schools are anxious to maintain the improved standards they have seen since the introduction of NLNS. Many do not wish to risk losing these gains through too great a change" (p3).

Despite the importance of extended dialogue and creative activity for developing intellectual autonomy and deep learning in the classroom (and notwithstanding their importance to the knowledge economy) the Ofsted (2005) evaluation failed to include them in the recommendations for school level improvement. Pedagogical recommendations

were limited to improving teacher questioning, not as valuable technique for building intellectual autonomy, but as a performance tool for improving assessment for learning. Furthermore, the Ofsted (2005) evaluation was critical of those schools who had not used the Excellence and Enjoyment (2004) materials as a tool for school improvement and recommended that all schools should "make effective use of the PNS's teaching and learning materials to improve the consistency of good teaching" (Ofsted, 2005, p7). The standardisation of practice recommended by Ofsted (2005) belies the Excellence and Enjoyment (2003) strategy promises of "more autonomy for teachers and schools" (DfES, p30) and provides evidence of a "tightening of government control of the agenda and forms of CPD" through the Primary National Strategy in this period (McNamara, Brundrett and Webb, 2010, p427).

Three implicit messages pervade the Ofsted (2005) evaluation of the impact of the Excellence and Enjoyment (2003) which the writer believes had important consequences for schools: Firstly, improving standards in 'the basics' should be the primary concern of schools. Secondly, standardisation and regulation remain the order of the day, a message which stands in direct contradiction to the views expressed in Excellence and Enjoyment (2003) which exhorts against the use of 'identikit blueprints for teaching' in schools (DfES, p30). Finally, although non-statutory, compliance with the diktats of the Primary National Strategy is, to all intents and purposes, obligatory for schools in difficult circumstances who want to improve their chances of a favourable Ofsted (Alexander, 2010a).

Balarin and Lauder (2010) accuse the Primary National Strategy of imposing 'a state theory of learning' on schools, a complaint echoed by many of the Cambridge Primary Review's submissions and soundings (Alexander, 2010a, p411). Perhaps more worryingly, Harris et al

(2003) also suggest, and this was borne out by The National Strategies Improving Schools Programme (2009), that the models of change adopted by schools in this period (which were ultimately decided by Ofsted inspections and SATs results) threatened a "…new social geography of divisive improvement that [offered] professional learning communities to the advantaged and [imposed] performance training sects on the rest" (Harris et al, 2003, p191). In other words, opportunities to exercise professional autonomy in school development were (and still are) circumscribed by school Ofsted reports and ranking in the league tables.

The writer would argue that the opportunities for professional autonomy and creative activity advocated by the Excellence and Enjoyment (2003) Primary National Strategy were not advanced by the CPD materials which accompanied them. However, research evidence suggests that a culture of state imposed performativity, which implicitly demanded the implementation short-term, low risk strategies at school level, was mainly responsible for negating real opportunities for professional autonomy and creative activity.

In 2008, five years after the introduction of Excellence and Enjoyment (2003) concerns were still being expressed about the impact of performativity and the consequences for pupils' creative and intellectual development. In a publication which promoted a 'reframing of pedagogy' towards more enquiry-based, dialogic and constructivist approaches to teaching and learning the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and The Innovation Unit stated: "It is time to hold up our hands and admit that our education system just isn't working well enough. Our emphasis needs not to be on improving the residual value of outdated curricula, tests and league tables, but on inspiring and challenging children… Approaches to subjects and to teaching practice must be reviewed in order to re-engage teachers in

professional creativity and children in the development of their intellectual and social maturity" (Paul Hamlyn Foundation and The Innovation Unit, 2008, p1).

Over an eight year period 459 National Strategy documents were issued on literacy teaching alone (Hofkins et.al, 2009, p11). The Primary National Strategy was unceasingly imposed on schools through "ministerial rhetoric, Ofsted inspections, initial teacher training requirements, professional development and at local authority level, by the appointment of primary strategy managers" (Alexander, 2010a, p209). Unfortunately the political hegemony of the Primary National Strategy stifled the work of other government departments in promoting and developing a clear understanding of creativity and its curricular and pedagogical implications for schools.

Teacher's beliefs about teaching and learning directly influence pedagogical decision-making (Nespor, 1987; Pajeres, 1992; Richardson, 1996; Hattie 2012). Pedagogy is defined here as:

"…the act of teaching together with its attendant discourse of educational theories, values, evidence and justifications. It is what one needs to know, and the skills one needs to command, in order to make and justify the many different kinds of decision of which teaching is constituted" (Alexander, 2010a, p280).

In 2004 Smith et al. found that the National Strategies had done little to transform teacher pedagogy:

"Traditional patterns of whole-class interaction have not been dramatically transformed by the strategies… Far from encouraging and extending pupil contributions to promote high levels of interaction and cognitive engagement, most of the questions asked were of a low

cognitive level designed to funnel pupils' response towards a required answer" (p.408). These findings are also supported in more recent research (Tymms & Merrell, 2010).

Hall et al (2006) and Turner-Bissett (2007) argue that the culture of performativity exerts a powerful influence on pedagogical choices at classroom level; with the implication that didactic teaching which is content driven and 'time–efficient' will be the pedagogy of choice for most teachers most of the time. Ironically, this type of pedagogical approach is more likely to inhibit creative activity (and the development of intellectual autonomy) in the classroom (Turner-Bissett, 2007) as studies by others (Alexander, 2004, Hardman et al, 2003, Moyles et al, 2003) also confirm. Hall & Thomson (2005) state that if creativity is to be taken seriously then:

"…students need time to practice and to make mistakes; they need opportunities to play and reflect; they need to engage in cultural critique and dissent. Standardised teaching, ruled by standardised outcome measures…are unlikely to be the optimal conditions for promoting creativity in school" (p15).

In 1999 the NACCCE report "All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education" concluded that "the problem for creativity lay in the balance of the curriculum, not in teaching" (Hall & Thomson, 2005, p13). The writer would disagree; the problem for creativity lies in the balance of the curriculum and pedagogical repertoire; classroom research indicates that patterns of teaching which include recitation, closed questioning, brief recall and minimal feedback are highly entrenched (Galton et al., 2008). The Cambridge Primary Review reflected that:

"… 'deep structure' pedagogical change is extremely slow in the vital realm of that interaction which shapes (or frustrates) children's understanding, and that basic interactive

habits are highly resilient, for they are deeply embedded, historically and culturally"
(Alexander, 2010a, p298).

Although there is lots of evidence to suggest that the pedagogical dominance of didactic teaching is the result of 'heavy-duty accountability' (Woods & Jeffrey, 1996, p43) and an overloaded and heavily prescribed curriculum (NACCE, 1999, Woods, 2004, Hall & Thomson, 2005, Hall et al 2006, Turner-Bisset, 2007) the writer believes that these constraints cannot entirely account for this dominance (Galton, 2007). Although these constraints are certainly not conducive to the development of a wider pedagogical repertoire, studies by Cuban (1983, 1990 & 2004) indicate that didactic teaching has been an enduring feature of education systems at all levels of schooling since the mid-1850s. The writer believes that the "grammar of schooling" (Tyack & Cuban, 1995), a historically based set of cultural expectations about what constitutes 'real education', also provides part of the explanation for this pedagogical dominance. The 'grammar of schooling' is perpetuated through policy discourse; a recent example comes from the conservative minister for education who stated that "…education is about the transfer of knowledge from one generation to the next" (DfE, 2010c). The focus on subject knowledge promulgated through coalition government policy discourse, and later emphasised in the revised National Curriculum, represents a marked departure from New Labour policy discourse which entertained a broader view of education as illustrated by the Rose Review (2009) and its endorsement of P4C in National Strategy publications (DfES, 2005, DCFS, 2007).   Didactic teaching is the only approach required for a 'banking concept' of education (Freire, 1996) which positions pupils as passive, empty vessels ready to "receive, file and store 'deposits' of information" (p53) from the official voice of authority. This view of education fails to recognise the importance of building the intellectual autonomy of

individuals in the classroom and negates any opportunities for doing so through a limiting pedagogical repertoire.

Recent and Contemporary Policy Discourse on Curricular Directions

In 2006, Cambridge University and the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation launched the most comprehensive enquiry into the state of primary education in England since the Plowden Report (CACE, 1967). Problems identified with existing National Curriculum arrangements included: short-termism, curriculum overload, a loss of curricular breadth and balance, prescription and micro-management and a "pedagogy which rates transmission more important than the pursuit of knowledge in its wider sense" (Ibid, p251). Unsurprisingly, many submissions to the Cambridge Primary Review (Alexander, 2010a) asserted that opportunities for creative activity were undermined by curriculum prescription and high stakes testing. Other submissions expressed concern about the impact of didactic teaching on pupils' ability to think flexibly and creatively and the implications of this for their future employment prospects (p227). The Cambridge Primary Review (Alexander, 2010a) stressed that "both creativity and imaginative activity can and must inform teaching and learning across the curriculum" (p267) although in a submission to the review Professor Anna Craft noted the ambiguity surrounding the concept of creativity in schools.

Making a space for creative activity (as defined previously) necessitates the development of a broader pedagogical repertoire than currently exists and hence the Cambridge Primary Review placed pedagogy at the 'heart of the educational enterprise' (Ibid, p307). In one of its proposed aims for the primary curriculum, 'Enacting Dialogue', it urged schools to "advance a pedagogy in which dialogue is central: between self and others, between

personal and collective knowledge, between present and past, between different ways of making sense" (Ibid, p199). Several submissions to the Cambridge Primary Review highlighted the importance of dialogic teaching as a means of developing the intellectual and creative capacities of pupils and the Society for the Advancement of Philosophical

Enquiry and Reflection in Education (SAPERE) noted the need for encouragement, support and professional development in this area (p283). A précis of the final report of the Cambridge Primary Review stated that "…teaching which is 'dialogic' – where classrooms are full of debate and discussion that is collective, reciprocal, supportive, cumulative, critical and purposeful – can only be seen as the antithesis of any 'state theory of learning' and indeed as its antidote" (Hofkins, 2009, p29).

In January 2008, the Labour Government responded to on-going work of the Cambridge Primary Review by establishing its own 'independent' review of the curriculum led by Sir Jim Rose. One of the remits of the review was to:
"…provide all pupils with a broad and balanced entitlement to learning which encourages creativity and inspires in them a commitment to learning that will last a lifetime" (DCSF, 2009, p26).

Instead of a subject based curriculum (and in a similar vein to the Cambridge Primary Review) the report recommended that six broad areas of learning be underpinned by six essentials for learning and life: literacy, numeracy, ICT capability, learning and thinking skills, personal and emotional and social skills. These 'essentials for learning and life' reflect the requirements of the knowledge economy. The report made implicit references to the centrality of dialogue in learning and recommended that "…children's spoken

communication is developed intensively within all subjects and for learning across the curriculum" (DCSF, 2009, p21).

Although the central requirement of the review was to "reduce prescription and overload…so that schools have greater flexibility to meet pupils' individual needs and build on their prior learning" (DCSF, 2009, p10) it failed to address the problems engendered by high stakes testing and performance tables. As Sharpe and Gopinthan (2002) argue "Schools have a tendency to focus on what is being measured…to change behaviour we have to change what counts" (p160). Despite the review's failure to address deep seated issues 92% of respondents to the interim report (DCSF, 2008, p16) embraced the changes proposed. Coupled with the promised dissolution of the Primary National Strategy in 2011 schools recognised and grasped the opportunity to develop a more creative and meaningful primary curriculum. In 2009 most schools in the writer's own Local Authority began to re-develop their own curriculums in line with the model proposed by Rose (DCSF, 2009).

Back to the Future: Coalition Government Policy Directions

On the 12th May 2010 a new Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition government took office and within a month it announced its intention not to proceed with the recommendations of the Rose Review (DCSF, 2009). In a document published later that year it described Rose's overhaul of the National Curriculum as a "serious backward step" which replaced concepts with "vague generic statements of little value" and failed to benchmark the National Curriculum against the highest performing school systems internationally (Foreword by the Secretary of State for Education, cited in Oates, 2010). The case for educational reform presented by the Coalition government in late 2010 was dominated by 'PISA panic' (Alexander, 2012, p7); England's perceived decline in

international league tables of academic achievement. It expounded a well-worn 'human capital' narrative and argued that the answers to England's perceived educational ills could be found globally by learning from 'high performing' education systems which, it further argued, had moved beyond tightly controlled and highly centralized models of educational reform and were now focused on the promotion of innovation through greater professional autonomy (DfE, 2010a).

Somewhat out of touch with developing practice in primary schools, the education white paper 'The Importance of Teaching' (DfE, 2010b) stated that:

"The National Curriculum is weighing teachers down and squeezing out room for innovation, creativity, deep learning and intellectual exploration" (p40). Based on the international evidence of high performing educational systems, the solution proposed by the expert panel for the National Curriculum review was that the National Curriculum, should:

 "set out only the essential knowledge (facts, concepts, principles and fundamental operations) that all children should acquire, and leave schools to design a wider school curriculum that best meets the needs of their pupils and to decide how to teach this most effectively" (DfE, 2011, p6). The expert panel's recommendations to reduce curriculum content and the number of subject areas which are subject to statutory assessment would, it argued, encourage deeper, more profound learning and provide schools with the opportunity to develop an innovative local curriculum and to:

 "…develop particular curricular interests or specialisms… For example, a specific focus might be developed for a school's provision or for a phase of learning, either as separate elements e.g. 'philosophy for children' or integrated across the school curriculum, such as 'thinking skills'" (DfE, 2011, p21).

In line with the Cambridge Primary Review (2010) and the Rose Review (2009) the expert panel for the National Curriculum Review (2011) also made implicit references to the centrality of dialogue in determining effective teaching and learning and recommended that: "…the development of oral language should be a particular feature of the new National Curriculum" because of a "…compelling body of evidence that highlights a connection between oral development, cognitive development and educational attainment" (DfE, 2011, pp9-10). In support of this the criteria for evaluating the quality of teaching under the Ofsted (2012) framework included "the extent to which teachers' questioning and use of discussion promote learning" (p11) which implicitly sanctions moves toward the incorporation of dialogic and constructivist approaches into teachers' pedagogical repertoires.

With regards to the implementation of a revised National Curriculum Oates (2010) argued that 'curriculum coherence' and 'curriculum control' were necessary elements in ensuring that the curriculum is enacted as specified. A curriculum is coherent when "the national curriculum content, textbooks, teaching content, pedagogy, assessment, drivers and incentives are all aligned and reinforce one another" (Oates, 2012, p3). Mechanisms for control are embedded within a 'coherent curriculum' which Oates (2010) argued "need not necessarily derive from top-down measures…" (p15). However, despite a wealth of evidence suggesting that performativity circumscribes innovation and professional autonomy the government's education white paper (DfE, 2010b) proposed (and later implemented) an intensification of 'top-down' control mechanisms through: raising floor targets for schools; maintaining external testing at the end of Key Stage 2; reforming performance tables to set out higher expectations; introducing performance related pay;

promising that consistently 'under-performing' schools would be forced to convert to academy status; and reforming Ofsted inspections so that the judgement of 'satisfactory' now requires a notice to improve.

Government has promised not to prescribe teaching methods in order to promote innovation through greater professional autonomy (DfE, 2010a) and yet the Education Secretary has made it very clear that direct teaching is the only method which has official approval (DfE, 2013). He has subjected alternative pedagogical approaches to a discourse of dichotomy and derision (Ball, 1990, cited in Alexander, 2010b, p108) accusing "progressive" teaching methods of negating opportunities for children to acquire knowledge and encouraging too much "chatting" amongst pupils which is educationally harmful because "you aren't learning anything when you're talking" (DfE, 2013). Unsurprisingly, "the extent to which teachers' questioning and use of discussion promote learning" (Ofsted, 2012, p11) has been removed from criteria for evaluating the quality of teaching in the new Ofsted (2013) framework for inspection.

At the most fundamental level, the writer would argue that Coalition government plans for the reform of education are little more than a rehash of the Excellence and Enjoyment (2003) strategy; the emphasis on pupil performance and accountability in core subjects remains a dominant theme and innovation and professional autonomy is reduced to direct teaching of nationally predetermined 'basic skills' targets whilst attempting to maintain a broad and balanced curriculum experience for pupils.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the extent to which recent and contemporary educational policy has been effective in making space for building the intellectual autonomy of individuals in the classroom and thereby providing an environment in which P4C can flourish. Education policy in England has been driven by economic globalization and fuelled by anxieties about the ability to compete in the global marketplace (Dale, 2000, Priestley, 2002). Although policy discourse from the 1990s onwards began to stress the vital importance of creativity for maintaining a successful knowledge economy it failed to recognize that building the intellectual autonomy of individuals through dialogue is a necessary prerequisite for this. It is paradoxical that the attributes valued by the knowledge economy are the ones that are nourished, not through competition and a focus on narrow short term targets, but through dialogue, collaboration and a focus on the long term project of building intellectual autonomy.

The recommendations of the Cambridge Primary Review (Alexander, 2010a) have been largely ignored by government policy makers. The current education policy context is still operating within a market and growth oriented paradigm and coalition government responses to the problems of the National Curriculum merely echo the failed 'Excellence & Enjoyment' (DfES, 2003) strategy. Although recent policy discourse has acknowledged the importance of meaningful dialogue for intellectual development and deep learning (DfE, 2011, Ofsted, 2012) official views of pedagogy remain deeply conservative and an intensified performativity culture continues to circumscribe possibilities for curricular action (Alexander, 2010a) making it difficult to move away from an already deeply embedded "pedagogy which rates transmission more important than the pursuit of knowledge in its wider sense" (Alexander, 2010a, p251). P4C is not a short-term strategy,

its benefits are gradual but evidence suggests that they assume a more substantial form (Millet & Tapper, 2011). However, schools, particularly those in difficult circumstances facing the threat of conversion to academy status and those that are already accountable to the Secretary for Education, are more likely to opt for short-term school development goals which offer a 'quick fix' and accord with the view of good practice promulgated through the Department for Education (2013).

This chapter has explored the current policy context within which P4C exists and the implications for implementation. The following chapter will explore the educational assumptions underpinning P4C, their relevance to the current policy context and the implications for implementation.

Chapter 3: The Educational Assumptions Underpinning P4C

Introduction

The previous chapter explored the extent to which the current policy context has been effective in making space for building the intellectual autonomy of individuals in the classroom and thereby providing an environment in which P4C can flourish. The chapter concluded that an intensified performativity culture continues to dominate primary educational practice making it difficult for teachers to move away from a didactic pedagogical approach in the classroom. This chapter will explore the educational assumptions underpinning P4C and the implications for implementation. The discussion will begin by examining global and national developments regarding the teaching of philosophy in primary schools and the impact on English educational policy discourse. This will be followed by an exploration of the origins, aims theoretical underpinnings and methodology of P4C with special reference to P4C as practised in the English context. The issues surrounding continuing professional development in this area will then be explored. Finally the writer will address the claims and criticisms of P4C which the writer believes are pertinent to teacher decision making during the implementation process. The writer will then consider the relation between the educational values of P4C and the current policy context.

The Teaching of Philosophy in Primary Schools: Global and National Developments

Since its inception in 1946, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has been active in supporting the development of an international philosophical culture as a means of improving and reinforcing a respect for

human rights and lasting peace. In 1995 The Paris Declaration for Philosophy maintained that:

"…all individuals everywhere should be entitled to engage in the free pursuit of philosophy and that the teaching of philosophy should be maintained or expanded where it exists and introduced where it does not yet exist" (UNESCO, 2006, p. 6).

In 1998 an international meeting of experts at UNESCO made a number of specific recommendations regarding the teaching of philosophy to children that included: the collation and dissemination of information on existing philosophical activities for children in different countries; the development of philosophical activities with primary school children; and the promotion of philosophy training for primary teachers (UNESCO, 1998, p29).

In 2007 the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) published 'Philosophy: A School of Freedom' in response to explicit requests from Member States. With contributions from 126 countries it articulated the "present state of teaching of philosophy in the world" (UNESCO, 2007, p. xi) and aspired to "constitute a reference tool for policies concerning the teaching of philosophy" (Ibid. p. xii). It was the first study to address the teaching of philosophy at pre-school and primary levels (from 3 to 12 years of age) and as the title suggests, it argued that the purpose of teaching philosophy to children is to "incite and invite questioning without imprisoning it" (UNESCO, 2007, p. xvii) and to liberate and open "the young minds called to become the thinkers and players of the world of tomorrow" (UNESCO, 2007, p. xi).

The UNESCO study asserted that the practice of P4C is imbued with values which are of "educational and political significance" (UNESCO, 2007, p.15) and suggested that the

growing enthusiasm and interest in teaching philosophy to children which has emerged in recent years reflects: a global concern amongst educators about how we educate pupils for life in the 21st century; a growing recognition of the importance of dialogue for "stimulating the intellectual and moral development of pupils from a very young age" (UNESCO, 2007, p.3); and a tacit acknowledgement that current educational paradigms are inadequate on both counts. Public support for teaching philosophy to children is growing in the UK and also reflects recognition of the inadequacies of the current educational paradigm in which schools are operating. In September 2011, in a letter to the Guardian, fifty three signatories, including philosophers, broadcasters, authors, educators, comedians, sociologists, and psychologists, called for the introduction of philosophy lessons in the classroom from an early age on the basis that it would have "immense benefits in terms of boosting British school children's reasoning and conceptual skills, better equipping them for the complexities of life in the 21st Century" (Guardian, 13th September 2011).

The UNESCO study was careful to highlight that although P4C is a term commonly used to describe a range of practices associated with the teaching of philosophy to children, its origins are based on a set of specific principles, methods and materials which represent a western, democratic cultural viewpoint. The study rightly opposed the imposition of one "cultural model upon peoples, countries or cultures…" (UNESCO, 2007, p16) and recommended that the teaching of philosophy to children continue to be adapted to suit differing cultural and political contexts; a form of hybridisation that embraces and reflects global plurality. Case studies from twenty two countries illustrate this hybridisation: For instance, the UK has modified and adapted the original P4C programme developed by the American professor of philosophy Matthew Lipman to meet the national cultural context; others, like Germany and Japan have collaborated to develop a P4C programme which draws on the ideas of western and eastern philosophers; and France has developed a variety

of approaches to teaching philosophy to primary school children which include the Lipman P4C method, the 'democratic-philosophical' stream and the Socratic method of Oscar Brenifier (UNESCO, 2007, p34). The UNESCO study found that discussion, which is understood as "an interactional process that takes place within a group, is led by a teacher, and features verbal exchanges related to a precise subject" (Ibid., p.10), was the predominant pedagogical method employed at the primary level across the world despite cultural differences.

In February 2011 the Society for Advancing Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education (SAPERE) represented the UK in a high level regional meeting on the teaching of philosophy in Europe and North America organised by UNESCO and the Italian National Commission for UNESCO. One of the key purposes of this meeting was to "…draw up recommendations for the benefit of the actors concerned, notably the public bodies responsible for school and university education, with the aim of either introducing philosophy into the curriculum or improving teaching where this discipline is already on offer" (UNESCO, 2011a, p6). With regard to providing the conditions necessary to enable the teaching of philosophy in schools an important recommendation made to member states was that national policy, planning and administration of education should: "Reaffirm that education contributes to building the intellectual autonomy of individuals and refuse to reduce the education process to training for instrumental techniques and competences" (UNESCO, 2011b, p2). With regard to the teaching of philosophy in pre-school and primary it was recommended that member states should:

- "Promote research, pilot experiences and practices in the field of philosophy with children in pre-school and primary education, and when possible, institutionalise this approach in the education system

- Introduce philosophy courses in teacher training in general, with the support of philosophy departments, with the aim of making philosophical enquiry a principle of primary and secondary education in general

- Encourage practitioners of philosophy with children to attend philosophy courses as a condition for doing philosophy in primary schools"

(UNESCO, 2011b, p3)

P4C is supported by several international organisations including: the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC), the International Council of Philosophical Inquiry with Children (ICPIC), the European Foundation for the Advancement of Doing Philosophy with Children (SOPHIA), the North American Association for Communities of Inquiry (NAACI) and the Federation of Australasian Philosophy in Schools Associations (FAPSA). Despite this support, the UNESCO study (2007) revealed that the institutionalisation of P4C was rare and that, with the exception of Australia, P4C is an innovation operating on the edge of national education systems (UNESCO, 2007, p. 17).

Morrow & Torres (2007) define a social movement as "a collective actor constituted by individuals who understand themselves to have common interests and, for at least some significant part of their social existence, a common identity" (p.86). The writer would argue that the growing enthusiasm and interest in teaching philosophy to children worldwide (despite official support from national governments) constitutes an emerging social movement and is a form of globalisation from below. Carnoy and Levin (1985) consider social movements to be pivotal in exerting pressure for educational reform in the educational policy field. In 1992, the Society for the Advancement of Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education (SAPERE) was founded to promote P4C practice in

the UK. This charitable organisation provides professional development for 2000 teachers each year (SAPERE, 2012) and since its inception it has worked hard to gain official recognition for P4C in English educational policy discourse: P4C is acknowledged, in the appendices of the DfES publication 'Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning: Guidance' (2005), as a sound pedagogical approach for developing children's emotional competence. It is also acknowledged in the National Strategy publication 'What works for children with literacy difficulties?' as a successful intervention for improving reading (DCSF, 2007, p.98). Although these official endorsements represent a positive step forward the writer would argue that they are marginal and instrumental. If philosophical enquiry is to become "a principle of primary and secondary education" (UNESCO, 2011b, p3) then P4C needs to be included in national educational policy discourse which addresses curriculum aims and pedagogical repertoire. There has been some progress in this respect: P4C is mentioned in the final report of the Cambridge Primary Review (Alexander, 2010a); firstly with regard to the aim of 'enacting dialogue' and secondly with regard to re-thinking pedagogy, where SAPERE argue that "teachers should be given more encouragement and preparation in stimulating and managing classroom dialogue" and that "more opportunity should be allowed within the curriculum for open enquiry" (Alexander 2010a, p283). SAPERE representatives continue to try and exert influence on educational policy discourse as members of the Cambridge Primary Review Network: In March 2011 SAPERE representatives attended the Cambridge Primary Review/Department for Education liaison meeting reviewing curriculum capacity in primary schools (Lewis, SAPERE, 2011) and as a consequence P4C was briefly mentioned in relation to the development of a local curriculum in the final report by the Expert Panel on the framework for the National Curriculum (DfE, 2011).

The origin, aims and principles of philosophy for children

P4C was developed in the late 1960s by Matthew Lipman (then a Professor of Philosophy at Colombia University in New York) in response to the student riots of that period and increasing concern about the apparent lack of reasoning and dialogical skills amongst undergraduate students (SAPERE 2010, Gregory 2008). Although initially conceived for use with pre-college students the programme was soon expanded to include all pupils in the primary and secondary phases of education. In 1980, Lipman and his colleagues argued that all pupils should be given the opportunity to engage in regular communities of enquiry with the long term aim of:

- Improving reasoning skills

- Developing creativity

- Developing personal and interpersonal skills

- Developing ethical understanding

(Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyan, 1980, pp79-81)

As illustrated above, the aim of philosophy for children is to nurture multi-dimensional thinking; critical, creative, collaborative and caring modes of thought linked to different aspects of judgement with philosophical roots in epistemology, aesthetics and ethics (Lipman, 2003, Haynes, 2008). In fact, in Lipman's view the ultimate aim of philosophy for children is to educate for reasonableness which he defines as "rationality tempered by self-criticism, deliberation and judgement" (Lipman, 1998, p11).

Three features are essential for a culminating judgement to be deemed reasonable in a P4C enquiry; firstly judgement must be based on sound reasoning and good evidence, secondly it must take into account a broad range of perspectives thereby illustrating that it is well-

informed and finally it must be self-corrective and personally meaningful (Gregory, 2008, p20). The formation of reasonable judgement takes time and cannot be achieved through a recitation-recall pattern of classroom interaction. Judgements in P4C are aimed at addressing the issues arising from lived experience in relation to beliefs, values and actions (Ibid, p21). Hence the educational paradigm upon which philosophy for children is based is reflective and critical, and perhaps most importantly, it assumes that education is enquiry (Lipman, 2003).

The current educational policy context favours competition and individualism but P4C assumes that the growth of intelligence is a social achievement and furthermore that the capacity for intellectual growth is linked to relations of trust (Lipman, 2003, Brown & Lauder, 2001). The principles upon which Lipman's (2003) P4C is based state that:

- "Education is the outcome of participation in a teacher-guided community of enquiry, among whose goals are the achievement of understanding and good judgement

- Students are stirred to think about the world when our knowledge of it is revealed to them to be ambiguous, equivocal and mysterious

- The disciplines in which enquiry occurs are assumed to be neither non-overlapping nor exhaustive; hence their relationships to their subject matters are quite problematic

- The teacher's stance is fallibilistic (one that is ready to concede to error) rather than authoritative

- Students are expected to be thoughtful and reflective, and increasingly reasonable and judicious

- The focus of the educational process is not on the acquisition of information but on the grasp of relationships within and among the subject matters under investigation"

(pp18-19).

These principles swim against the current paradigmatic tide; they represent the antithesis of the banking concept of education which dominates educational policy at the present time.

The Theoretical Basis and Methodology of Philosophy for Children

Lipman's educational paradigm has its origins in the Socratic Method, social constructivist theory and pragmatic philosophy (SAPERE, 2010, Mercer & Littleton, 2007, Burgh, Field & Freakley, 2006, Fisher 2003, Lipman, 2003, Gregory, 2008, Wells, 1999). The writer will now examine how and to what extent these ideas have influenced the P4C approach and the implications for the implementation of this approach in the primary classroom.

<u>The Socratic Method</u>

According to Plato the ancient Greek philosopher Socrates believed that "the unexamined life is not worth living" (Plato: Apology 38a).The 'examined life' on the other hand (which necessitates development of the capacity for creative and critical reflection) enables individuals to interrogate 'received' beliefs and values and break free from prejudicial, egocentric and impulsive habits of thought (UNESCO, 2007, Fisher, 2003). In the Socratic view the search for truth is both a moral and rational enterprise facilitated through the Socratic Method which is defined as an inductive process of "persistent and thorough questioning" (Burgh, Field & Freakley, 2006, p37) enabling movement from specific examples of whatever is the case (e.g. justice) to tentative generalisations (Lipman, 2003, Fisher, 2003, Burgh, Field & Freakley, 2006).

Socrates believed that teaching is the art of asking questions. P4C facilitators employ Socratic questioning to encourage pupils "to seek clarification, probe reasons and evidence, explore alternative views, test implications and consequences and ask questions about the question" (Fisher, 2003, pp154-155) and in doing so they model the habits of multi-dimensional thinking. Implementing Socratic questioning in the current policy context poses difficulties for primary teachers: Firstly, the 'hurry along' curriculum (Dadds, 1994) and officially promulgated notions of lesson 'pace' (which is analogous to speed meditation in philosophical enquiry) do not encourage development of the type of questioning required for philosophical enquiry; Secondly, teachers' use of open questioning is historically sparse and culturally entrenched (Galton, 2007).

Social Constructivist Theory

Social constructivist theory informs both P4C theory and practice. The epistemological position of social constructivism, like P4C, is intersubjective; knowledge is not regarded as an absolute, objective reality but as an active meaning making process, mediated through language and social interaction which is situated in an historical and culturally specific context (Daniel, 2007). As a consequence, critical dialogue in P4C encourages active participation, interdependence, multiple perspectives and tolerance of complexity and uncertainty.

Lev Vygotsky, the founder of social constructivism, began his working life as a psychologist shortly after the Russian revolution. He set out to develop a theory of human development in order to better understand (a) what it means to be human and (b) how the human condition might be improved (Wells, 1999). Fundamentally Vygotsky believed that culture was the central driver of human development. He asserted that:

- Language is the most important cultural tool for learning; language and other meditational tools are embedded in specific historical and cultural contexts which directly influence the capacity to learn

- Learning is an inherently social activity mediated through the use of cultural tools; meaning is constructed firstly between people (inter-mental) and then within the individual (intra-psychological)

- Learning takes place in the gap between actual and potential development (known as the zone of proximal development) and this learning is mediated by more experienced members of the community

(Vygotsky, 1978, Wells, 1999, Burgh, Field & Freakley, 2006, Mercer & Littleton, 2007).

The assumptions and practice of philosophy for children place heavy emphasis on the importance of collaboration and the construction of meaning through dialogue with others as a means of appropriating and internalising the metacognitive tools for multi-dimensional thinking and higher cognitive functioning (Burgh, Field & Freakley, 2006, Fisher, 2003. As discussed earlier, within this framework learning is viewed as an active, meaning making process and all members of the class are regarded as a potential source for increasing knowledge and understanding. This kind of mutual, shared learning requires a cultural sea change from a banking concept of education, which regards the teacher as the font of all knowledge, to a view of education as the "outcome of participation in a teacher-guided community of enquiry" (Lipman, 2003, p18) and necessitates adequate time and space in the curriculum for doing so.

The ideas of Charles Sanders Peirce and John Dewey can be clearly traced within the principles and practice of philosophy for children. Pragmatic philosophy rejects the Platonic notion of absolute truth in favour of an understanding of knowledge as a useful tool for "making our way in the world" (Benjamin & Echeverria, 1992, p69). Fallibilism, an understanding that human perception and methods of enquiry are prone to error, is inherent in a pragmatic view of knowledge. Peirce believed that scientific knowledge is tentative at best and the "product of human contrivance embedded in practical judgements of a community of fallible enquirers" (Burgh et al, 2006, p33). Furthermore, Peirce asserted that progress towards more comprehensive understanding could only be achieved through participation in a community of self-corrective enquiry (Gregory, 2002). Likewise, P4C does not regard knowledge claims as representations of the world 'as it really is' but rather as a basis for action; the purpose of participation in a community of self-corrective enquiry is "to discover the consequences in lived experience, of employing our beliefs" (Gregory & Kennedy, 2000, p6). Therefore, fallibilism and self-correction are fundamental aspects of the principles and practice of philosophy for children. Under a banking concept of education framework knowledge is fixed, certain and indisputable and notions of fallibility and self-correction are irrelevant.

Influenced by Darwin's theory On the Origin of Species John Dewey believed that human intelligence evolved through active problem-solving and that education should provide plenty of opportunities for engaging pupils in such creative activity. Dewey regarded education as enquiry and criticised the education system for being far too concerned with the transmission of knowledge and not concerned enough about the process of knowledge construction (Lipman, 2003). Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose; within the current

educational paradigm, pupil engagement in learning is confined to jumping through academic hoops in order to achieve national curriculum expectations but pupil enjoyment of learning has declined significantly (Galton, 2007). Dewey argued that an education system which precluded opportunities for student enquiry was inherently undemocratic as it fails to teach the skills and dispositions necessary to enable full participation in the democratic process. Lipman (1991) asserted that the community of philosophical enquiry represents: "the social dimension of democracy in practice, for it both paves the way for the implementation of such practice and is emblematic of what such practice has the potential to become" (p249).

Dewey (1933) fervently believed that education should be reconstructed along the lines of scientific enquiry. Based on his observations of human problem-solving, he developed a pattern of reflective thinking which the writer would argue is similar in many respects to the basic sequence of a community of philosophical enquiry:

• A problem situation is experienced

• The problem is defined

• A range of solutions are generated to solve the problem

• The implications of each solution are compared and evaluated

• An appropriate course of action is selected

The Practice of Philosophy for Children in England

As discussed earlier, Lipman's original P4C programme has been adapted and modified for use in different cultural contexts across the globe. The original P4C programme emphasises logic and reasoning more so than the 'second generation P4C' practised in England which

tends to place more emphasis on dialogue and reflection (Vansieleghem & Kennedy, 2011). However, in all contexts the practice of P4C is founded upon collaborative thinking. Burgh et al (2006) suggest that collaborative thinking within a community of philosophical enquiry is more than shared cognition; it encompasses values and dispositions as well as mental acts: "To think collaboratively is to think actively together, to care about what is important, to value the process of communal enquiry within a democratic environment, to find and explore alternative views and solutions, to follow the enquiry where it leads, and to envision new possibilities and make judgements accordingly" (p112). This view of collaborative thinking echoes the QCA (2004) definition of creative activity and Alexander's (2010a) concept of dialogic teaching. However, within a performance oriented classroom culture which emphasises targets, levels, testing and individual achievement, collaborative learning is likely to be regarded by pupils as superfluous and irrelevant to their needs.

The foundations of collaborative thinking in the classroom are built on trust, respect and reciprocity (SAPERE, 2010). In order to achieve this it is necessary to begin by establishing appropriate ground rules for communal enquiry. Ideally these are negotiated democratically with the whole community, although in the case of very young children much more teacher guidance is usually required.

Developing collaborative thinking in a community of philosophical enquiry requires a different kind of classroom organisation; the facilitator and students push desks aside and sit in a circle so that all members of the community can see, hear and respond to each other face to face (Burgh et al, 2006, Haynes, 2008). Fisher makes the point that this arrangement "allows for equality of position" (2003, p170) and it is intended to re-position

the teacher's role as the 'guide on the side' instead of the 'sage on the stage' (SAPERE, 2010).

Philosophical enquiry with children follows a structured sequence. The ten step sequence of a community of enquiry recommended by the Society for Advancing Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education (SAPERE, 2010) will now be considered.

Step 1: Getting Ready

This step is intended to ensure that students are in an appropriate frame of mind for an enquiry. Depending on the particular circumstances this might be achieved by using a 'thinking game', a short activity related to the stimulus or a relaxation technique.

Step 2: Presentation of the Stimulus

Just as Dewey believed that enquiry begins with a problematic situation the sequence of a philosophical enquiry begins with the presentation of a stimulus which is potentially problematic or challenging. Fisher (2003) suggests that the stimulus should provide 'Romance' that is to say it should stimulate a critical, creative or imaginative response from the students (p172). Unlike the IAPC, SAPERE does not provide a systematic philosophical curriculum for teachers to implement. Instead it recommends that teachers use any stimulus that contains 'big ideas/concepts' which are common to the experience of all human beings, central to the way in which we understand ourselves as human beings and inherently contestable. The benefits of this approach are that teachers can use stimuli which are linked to national curriculum subject areas at relatively little cost. The disadvantage of this approach is that philosophical enquiry has the potential to become ad hoc and unstructured (Stone, 2011).

Step 3: Thinking Time

This step consists of private and public reflection on the stimulus presented. After a couple of minutes of private reflection pupils are encouraged to share responses to the stimulus in pairs or small groups.

Step 4: Question-Making

After a period of reflection upon the stimulus pupils define what is problematic to them in the form of philosophical questions. This is a collective endeavour with the teacher assuming a supportive role. Gregory (2008) points out that in the early stages of the development of a community of enquiry students may need help in generating or articulating philosophical questions. In early enquiries SAPERE (2010) suggest that pupils work in groups of 3 – 5 to generate philosophical questions; this enables pupils to share ideas and reduces the anxiety that some pupils may experience in the early stages of enquiry.

Step 5: Questions-Airing

After the questions have been generated by pupils they are then recorded accurately and displayed for all to see. Assumptions, ambiguities, connections and distinctions within and between questions are often identified and discussed at this stage.

Step 6: Question-Choosing

Setting the agenda for purposeful discussion can be done in different ways, for example, voting or starting with the question at the top of the list. Haynes (2002) is careful to point out that however the agenda for discussion is decided the process should be fair and inclusive (p37).

Step 7: First Thoughts

At this step in the process of enquiry the individual or group responsible for formulating the chosen question are invited to share their thinking behind the question. Sometimes this may involve explanation of the how the question was arrived at and at other times it may involve elaboration of initial ideas related to the question.

Step 8: Building

Although used throughout the sequence of an enquiry, multi-dimensional thinking is particularly emphasised at this stage as a means of enabling participants to deliberate comprehensively on the question which has been chosen as the focus of discussion. Teachers employ Socratic questioning to model and prompt students in the process of philosophical enquiry with the aim of enabling co-construction of meaning and improved judgement. Dialogue is reciprocal, supportive and cumulative. Eventually, through this process the tools of philosophical enquiry are internalised by the pupils (Gregory, 2008).

Step 9: Last Thoughts

This step in the sequence of enquiry provides an opportunity for all students to express final thoughts about what had been said over the course of enquiry without being contested.

Step 10: Review

The final point in the sequence of enquiry enables participants to collectively assess cognitive and social progress in the community of enquiry. The cognitive dimensions of P4C assessed at primary level may include: "giving a reason; offering a proposition, hypothesis or explanation; giving an example or counter-example; making a comparison;

offering a definition; identifying an assumption; making an inference; making a conditional statement (if/then); reasoning syllogistically; self-correcting; and entertaining different perspectives; and revising own opinion" (Gregory, 2008, p74). Reviewing social progress in the community of enquiry is equally important as it enables participants to determine any issues which require resolution in order to facilitate further progress as a group. For example, in an enquiry with year six pupils facilitated by the writer, the issue of fair turn-taking was highlighted. Various methods for resolving the problem were generated and discussed by the pupils and a strategy was agreed for application in the following enquiry. Pupils had complete ownership of the solution and this personal investment ensured that the chosen strategy was applied successfully in the following enquiry.

Fisher (2003) observes that as pupils internalise the procedures and language of philosophical enquiry they also begin to assume more responsibility for leading and regulating the enquiry itself. This is evidenced by a shift in the dynamic of the discussion: less input from the teacher and more pupil to pupil interaction; pupil appropriation and use of the vocabulary of enquiry; an increased facility of pupils to critically evaluate their own and the progress of the community; and a pupil stance of 'scholarly ignorance'. Over time there is also a qualitative change in discussion; from pupil anecdote and monologue to critical dialogue (Daniel, 2007). The process of enquiry becomes more flexible and the role of the facilitator shifts from that of model and prompter to that of coach and co-enquirer (Fisher, 2003).

The Society for Advancing Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education (SAPERE) is the key provider of P4C professional development in England. SAPERE offer three levels of accredited, internationally approved (IAPC and ICPIC) professional development to teachers wishing to implement P4C in their own schools. The writer will mainly address

the first level of professional development as this is the one which is most commonly accessed by schools.

Garet et al. (2001) suggest that the core features of effective professional development include "a focus on content knowledge, opportunities for active learning and coherence with other learning activities" (p.915). Garet et al. (2001) also assert that longer term professional development activity is more likely to be implemented and sustained (Ibid). The 12 hour SAPERE Level 1 course 'An Introduction to P4C' aims to provide delegates with "sufficient understanding to facilitate philosophical enquiries in their own schools, colleges or community groups" (SAPERE website, 2012). Unlike the teacher professional development provided by the IAPC, which Stone (2011) claims is didactic, prescriptive and passive, SAPERE's teacher development programme teaches the principles of P4C theory and practice through active participation in and reflection on P4C enquiries; an approach which is recommended by UNESCO (2007) as a means of developing teacher skills in "cultivating intellectual curiosity, a communicative ethic, habits of collective questioning and reasoning, and logical thought processes (p.13). Also, in keeping with effective professional development research, the SAPERE level 1 training provides opportunities for participants to make connections between the aims and practice of P4C and the content and objectives of the primary curriculum. The writer believes that this is an especially important aspect of P4C professional development as the relevance of P4C to current educational policy and practice will be brought to bear on the implementation process.

Although SAPERE training programmes are designed to progressively address the practical and theoretical aspects of P4C, as far as the writer is aware, school based training (which is more cost effective and sustainable than individual training) is only available at level 1. The cost of training for an individual at level 2 and level 3 is prohibitive: £695 and £750

respectively (SAPERE website, 2012) and in terms of sustainability and opportunities for extended professional development, these costs may have implications for the longer term implementation of P4C in the classroom.

The Claims and Criticisms of Philosophy for Children

The writer does not pretend to address every claim or criticism of P4C documented in the extensive literature on this subject. Instead the writer will address the claims and criticisms that have a bearing upon the current primary educational policy context. These claims and criticisms will be analysed respectively and the implications for implementation discussed.

<u>Improvement in Academic Attainment</u>

The improvement of students' oral language development through regular engagement in P4C is documented in qualitative and quantitative research evidence (Millet & Tapper, 2011, Trickey & Topping, 2007). The importance of oral language development has received increased emphasis in recent policy discourse which highlights connections between oral development, cognitive development and educational attainment (DfE, 2011). P4C research supports these claims and provides systematic evidence of statistically significant gains in critical and logical reasoning and improved educational attainment in reading, writing, maths, science and problem-solving skills (Lipman, Sharp & Oscanayan, 1980, Sasseville, 1994, Fields, 1995, Trickey & Topping, 2004, Millet & Tapper, 2011). Furthermore evidence also suggests that these gains are durable and transferrable (Topping & Trickey, 2007). Outcome efficacy describes a belief that teaching strategies employed will lead to positive outcomes (Soodak & Podell, 1996) but the relative advantage which P4C brings in terms of cognitive and educational attainment is neither linear nor immediately perceptible (Splitter, 2006). Teachers need to maintain the belief that P4C is effective over

a sustained period in order to see the benefits. Unfortunately teachers in England are working within a performativity culture which expects progression in learning to be demonstrated within one lesson (Ofsted, 2012) and the writer believes that the 'slow burn' of P4C may be disadvantageous in terms of its longer term implementation in the classroom.

<u>Development of Personal, Social and Emotional Skills</u>

A recent CBI education and skills survey (2012) stated that employers want primary schools to help children develop effective communication skills and appropriate self-management and personal behaviour; skills which they regard as essential for work in later life (p24). A large body of research evidence indicates the positive impact of P4C on children's social and emotional skills (Trickey & Topping, 2004, Campbell, 2002, Doherr, 2000, Sasseville, 1994, Lipman et al., 1980). In the writer's experience, P4C appears to have a more immediate, or perhaps a more easily observed impact on students' social and emotional skills. A school in a socio-economically deprived area in the writer's own Local Authority commented on the impact that P4C had on improving behaviour in a 'challenging' Year 5 class. They attributed improvements in behaviour to the language for effective communication and opportunities for listening and responding to other students respectfully which the P4C process taught (Marshlands, 2008). This anecdotal evidence supports the theory that the lack of good discussion skills amongst students in classrooms is a consequence of a lack of knowledge about how to discuss (Dawes et al., 2004). The relative advantages which the school felt the innovation brought included an ability to discuss topics in groups and plan work together in other curriculum areas. Outside observers, including Local Authority teaching and learning consultants, the DCFS regional director and OFSTED also commented on students 'mature approach to discussion and

good use of language' (Ibid) and the school's decision to roll out the innovation to other year groups was a direct consequence of positive feedback from internal and external sources.

<u>The Development of Open Questioning and Higher Order Thinking</u>

One of the Ofsted (2012) criteria for judging the quality of teaching in school inspections is "the extent to which teachers' questioning and use of discussion promote learning" (p.11). The writer believes that there is an assumption that teachers instinctively know how to promote extended discussion through effective questioning but evidence suggests that this is not the case. Despite the fact that higher order questioning is widely associated with higher student achievement (Redfield & Rousseau, 1981, Samson, Strykowski, Weinstein & Walberg, 1987) a study of teacher questioning in primary schools found that only 8% of teacher questions were of a higher order nature and that closed questioning requiring factual, limited responses from students predominated (Brown & Wragg, 1993); this finding is also supported in more recent studies (Alexander, 2010). Notwithstanding curriculum and associated time constraints, developing the skills of effective questioning is not easy as Bernstein (1991) highlights: "The cliché is that it is easy to ask questions but hard to give answers. But the truth is that it is the art of questioning that is difficult and fragile. Serious questioning requires knowing what to question and how" (p4). In a study of interactive behaviour by Topping & Trickey (2007a) the researchers found that during philosophical enquiries "teachers were talking less and asking more open questions , while children were talking more and demonstrating more elaborate thinking in contributions to discussion" (p81). The impact of P4C on teacher questioning techniques and strategies for promoting class discussion is also highlighted in other studies (Northern Territory

Department of Education, 1991) and the relative advantage this confers in other areas of the curriculum may be favourable to the implementation of P4C over the long term.

Compatibility with other Educational Agendas

In addition to the impact that P4C has on students cognitive, academic, social and emotional skills, P4C also contributes positively towards many of the educational agendas which are of concern to primary schools like inclusion, community cohesion, citizenship, the pupil voice, the creative curriculum and enquiry-based learning. P4C has attracted criticism for drawing attention to these claims on the grounds that it is then used instrumentally to achieve pre-determined objectives (Biesta, 2009) but the writer would argue that P4C as an innovation would never be implemented in the classroom if schools could see no relative advantages in doing so. Furthermore teachers feel 'time poor' (Jones, 2008) and will be reluctant to implement anything which does not contribute the educational agendas which they are already expected to address.

The writer will now explore the criticisms of P4C that have a bearing upon the current policy context and the implications for implementation.

Pupil Ability

Perhaps a major obstacle to the implementation of P4C in primary classrooms is the belief, based on a Piagetian notion of 'intellectual readiness' and reinforced by a content heavy curriculum which provides little opportunity for intellectual exploration, that primary aged children are incapable of abstract reasoning and therefore unable to engage in philosophical activity (Kitchener, 1990). The ability to reason in abstract should not be considered a pre-condition for children's engagement in philosophical activity; in the writer's experience,

which is supported by others in the field, children develop abstract reasoning skills through the process of philosophical enquiry (Murris, 2000, Haynes, 2008).

A related criticism of P4C is that primary school children lack the life experience and "acculturation into big ideas" required in order to reflect and engage in philosophical discussion (White, 2011). The writer disagrees with this criticism; most if not all primary school children have personal experience of (and questions about) 'big ideas' like love, friendship, kindness, cruelty, religion, justice, loss and even death and furthermore they are eager to discuss and make meaning from these experiences. Often teachers report being taken aback by the depth of thinking articulated by primary pupils when discussing concepts which are personally meaningful (Haynes, 2008, Haynes, 2011). The writer believes that this teacher surprise reflects a gross underestimation of primary pupils' cognitive capacity due to a lack of space in the curriculum for intellectual exploration. The 'Pygmalion effect' refers to the impact of teachers' expectations on student performance; if teachers' beliefs are incompatible with the view that pupils have the capacity (both cognitive and experiential) to engage in philosophical activity then this is likely to have a detrimental effect on the implementation of P4C in the classroom.

The complexity of P4C Facilitation

A third criticism, which the writer believes is not without foundation, relates to the ability of teachers without a background in philosophy to successfully facilitate philosophical enquiries. Van der Leeuw (2009) argues that recognition of what is philosophical in an enquiry is insufficient for successful facilitation and that teacher expertise in P4C requires training in dialogic pedagogy, experience of dialogue and a philosophical background. Lipman et al. (1980) state that it is "…common for teachers to reach a certain plateau and then find it difficult to improve. They will be successful in eliciting children's views of their

own experience, asking for alternative views and giving illustrations. But they may not yet be proficient in moving to more philosophical levels of dialogue, such as are involved in drawing out inferences, generalising, pointing out contradictions, asking for underlying assumptions and stressing the need for intellectual coherence" (p125). The complexities of P4C facilitation are recognised and echoed by many teachers (Lyle et al., 2011, Jones, 2008, Northern Territory Education Department, 1991). Many teachers will undoubtedly experience low self-efficacy in P4C facilitation during the early stages of implementation; the thinking required of teachers and pupils in philosophical enquiry is non-algorithmic, complex, uncertain and effortful (Resnick, 1987) and is a world away from the requirements of a more familiar teacher recitation-recall pattern of classroom interaction.

Haynes (2011) admits that in England "there is some poor practice passing as philosophy for children that is no more than disconnected thinking 'games' and an airing of opinions (p.5) and cites "the impoverishment of teacher education [as] a contributory factor in teachers' lack of familiarity with philosophical ideas" (Ibid.). In the writer's experience P4C is often regarded as synonymous with circle time. Although SAPERE level 1 professional development equips teachers with dialogic techniques and experience of dialogue in a community of philosophical enquiry it cannot, by virtue of the length of professional development, provide a rigorous grounding in the content of philosophy. Stone (2011) suggests that teachers extend their own philosophical knowledge through further academic study to address any deficit in philosophical understanding. The writer would suggest that this is an unrealistic expectation for most primary teachers. In the USA, Lipman and his colleagues at the IAPC wrote a series of novels and teacher manuals which constitute a systematic philosophical curriculum for students from 5-17 years of age. The IAPC recommend the implementation of this curriculum until teachers and students "are competent in the tools and methods of philosophical enquiry" (Gregory, 2008, p9). The

writer would argue that there is a strong case for developing teacher resources of a similar ilk for the English context. If such resources were linked to key concepts across the curriculum not only would they provide on-going professional development support to 'novice' philosophy teachers but they would also dovetail with recent educational discourse about quality teaching and appropriate curriculum design (Ofsted, 2010a, DfE, 2011). Furthermore, these resources would provide a focus for extended and collaborative professional development in situ and address the issue of shallow implementation of P4C in tandem. Although this suggestion may be criticised by some as being prescriptive, research into effective professional development suggests that formalised and focused support of this kind is especially helpful for the novice (Daley, 1999, Alexander, 2010a).

<u>Pupil Engagement</u>

The problems associated with facilitating philosophical enquiry with class sizes of 30 students plus are often raised by teachers and are sometimes cited as a reason for discontinuing P4C (Northern Territory Education Department, 1991, Stone, 2011).

Stone (2011) argues that "…P4C stacks the odds too heavily in favour of listening against speaking. In a one hour enquiry with thirty participants, each participant can only speak on average for two minutes without facilitator interventions" (p64). The writer would argue that opportunities for speaking can be increased by the use of paired, small group discussion and feedback at different points during an enquiry, thereby minimising pupil frustration and maximising engagement. Stone (2011) also asks "How different is listening to peers speaking for fifty-eight minutes from listening to a one hour lecture or reading?" (Ibid) The writer would argue that the difference is marked: students are not listening to the 'officially mandated voice of authority' but to the personal viewpoints and experiences of their peers, an experience which is probably of far greater significance to the listener.

Moral Relativism

Just as Socrates was indicted for corrupting Athens' youth, P4C is sometimes regarded with moral suspicion. Based on the writer's personal experience, teachers often accuse P4C of fostering moral relativism because it emphasises that there are no right or wrong answers in a philosophical enquiry. Although it is true that all participants' contributions are valued as a potential source of truth within a community of philosophical enquiry, contributions are not accepted uncritically. Reasonable judgements are reached through good reasoning, evidence and the exploration of implications and consequences. Hence the assumption that 'anything goes' is unfounded. Likewise, some of the literature recommended for philosophical enquiry is also criticised for its 'controversial and sensitive' content which some teachers feel might upset or send the wrong message to pupils (Haynes & Murris, 2008). Fear of parental complaints and misconceptions about 'safeguarding' no doubt fuel teacher anxieties but there is plenty of evidence to suggest that students want to talk about controversial and sensitive issues (Haynes, 2008) and the writer would argue that not allowing them to do so is morally indefensible. P4C facilitation takes teachers out of their comfort zone and involves risk-taking on a number of levels. Teachers' capacity to take risks will have an impact on the implementation of P4C in the classroom.

Epistemological and Moral Authority

Finally, the constructivist understanding of knowledge promoted through P4C is often at odds with the epistemological message conveyed through the current curriculum i.e. that knowledge is "an amalgam of discrete items of information or data to be transmitted and learned" (Splitter, 2006). The current curriculum is objectives led and the uncertain and non-linear nature of philosophical enquiry can evoke anxiety and may be regarded by some teachers as synonymous with a loss of control over the learning situation. In addition,

relationships in the classroom are altered by the practice of P4C; as students' intellectual autonomy develops it may well result in challenges to the teacher's epistemological and moral authority (Fisher, 2012) and for some teachers this may be a step too far.

P4C and Educational Values

The education process is not neutral (Postman & Weingartner, 1971, Feire, 1996 Gregory & Kennedy, 2000). Shaull cited in Freire (1996) states that: "Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes "the practice of freedom", the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world" (p16).

The writer would argue that the educational assumptions of philosophy for children reflect a deontological perspective; a view of teaching as a "life-shaping, world-changing social mission" (Hargreaves, 2003) and that this authentic view of teaching sits uneasily within the reformed culture of schools where teachers are recast as curriculum technicians (oriented towards the efficient delivery of externally imposed educational outcomes) rather than professionals with a wider moral purpose capable of critical judgement and reflection (Parker, 1997, Jeffrey, 2002, Ball, 2003).

Conclusion

UNESCO (2007) argue that shifts in the political, economic, cultural and technological landscape wrought through the processes of globalisation require a reconsideration of conventional educational paradigms. Furthermore, UNESCO (2011b) recommend that member states make philosophical enquiry "a principle of primary and secondary education" (p.3). P4C, which stresses the importance of building intellectual autonomy

through the cultivation of multi-dimensional thinking, is a critical and reflective educational paradigm which advocates believe would better equip children and young people for the complexities of life in the 21st century (The Guardian, 2011, UNESCO, 2007).

Although P4C is mentioned in national educational policy discourse it is mostly viewed in instrumental terms and the international evidence to date suggests that P4C continues to be an innovation operating on the margins of educational systems. Despite this, the popularity of P4C continues to grow amongst educators in England and SAPERE now train 2000 teachers each year (SAPERE, 2012). However, successful implementation of P4C makes heavy demands on teachers: it is an uncertain, complex and risky activity which necessitates the adoption of a fallibilistic stance, an ability to relinquish a didactic role and assume a position of 'scholarly ignorance'. Achieving this is no easy task in a climate where educational policy reinforces a narrow 'banking concept of education' (Freire, 1996) and where children are credited with making intellectual progress, not when they begin to think for themselves, but when they begin to approximate national expectations based on narrow standard assessment tests (Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyan, 1980).

The following chapter will discuss the research methodology of this thesis and provide a philosophical justification of the research approach, methods and procedures.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

Introduction

The previous chapters provided the contextual and theoretical backdrop for this research. This chapter will address the sub-research question *What is the most appropriate research methodology to investigate the concerns of this research?'* and will include a philosophical, methodological and procedural justification of the approach taken in this thesis.

In order to provide a philosophical justification of the research approach taken in this research it is necessary to begin by examining the fundamental beliefs underpinning the quantitative and qualitative research paradigms and the key features of each approach. The writer will then briefly discuss the pragmatic paradigm and the relevance for this study.

Ontological and Epistemological Beliefs

Research approaches are underpinned by philosophical beliefs about the nature of social reality and how knowledge of this reality can be attained. These underlying and interrelated assumptions "…represent belief systems that attach the user to a particular world view" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p4).

An objectivist ontological position holds that social reality is 'out there' waiting to be discovered and exists independently of individuals. In contrast, a subjectivist ontological position holds that social reality cannot exist independently of individuals and is a product of human perception. In turn, these ontological positions influence epistemological beliefs about what constitutes "…warrantable knowledge about the social world" (Bryman, 1988, p5) and how this knowledge should be acquired and communicated to others. Those who subscribe to an epistemological viewpoint that knowledge is "…hard, objective and

tangible…” (Cohen et.al, 2005, p6) reflect an objectivist ontological stance and believe that the social world can (and should) be investigated and reported using the same methods and procedures as the natural scientist (Bryman, 1988, Cohen & Manion, 1985, May, 1997). Likewise, those who subscribe to an epistemological viewpoint that knowledge is “…personal, subjective and unique…” (Cohen et. al, 2005, p6) reflect a subjectivist ontological stance and reject the methods of natural science on the grounds that many important influences on human behaviour, e.g. values and beliefs are inaccessible to direct observation and measurement.

Other researchers (Patton, 1990, Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007) adopt a more pragmatic stance, laying aside ontological and epistemological concerns in favour of an approach which they believe is best suited to answering the research question. The writer will now discuss the quantitative, qualitative and pragmatic paradigms before presenting a justification of the approach believed to be most appropriate to addressing the concerns of this research.

Quantitative Research

The overarching paradigmatic stance of quantitative research is objectivist, based on the premise that the social world, like the natural world, is external to the individual and there is a value-free, measurable reality ‘out there’ (Cohen & Manion, 1985, p8). This view dictates that the social researcher must study the social world “…in the same state of mind as the physicist, chemist or physiologist when he probes into a still unexplored region of the scientific domain” (Durkheim, 1964, cited in May, 1997). Within this scenario the role of the researcher is regarded as one of a neutral outside observer (Cohen et.al, 2005). The key features of the quantitative approach include:

The development of precise concepts which can be measured

Kidder & Judd (1986) state that, "To do any research we must be able to measure the concepts we wish to study" (p40). In order to overcome the difficulties which arise as a consequence of peoples' differing conceptual understanding, quantitative researchers systematically strive to develop precise and measurable definitions of the concepts under investigation. However, concepts are often difficult to define and the issue of validity may be raised if there is poor correspondence between concept definition and the instrument designed to measure it.

The establishment of causal relationships between concepts

Quantitative researchers are often preoccupied with determining cause and effect relationships between concepts. Babbie (1979) states that, "One of the chief goals of the scientist, social or other, is to explain why things are the way they are. Typically we do that by specifying the causes for the way things are: some things are caused by other things" (p423). However, establishing causal relationships between concepts is not a straightforward task because of the possibility of more than one equally plausible model of causality (Bryman, 1988).

The generalisation of findings

A concern to "…search for universal laws which explain and govern the reality which is being observed" (Cohen et.al, 2005, p7) is manifested in the quantitative researcher's inclination to generalise findings beyond the confines of a particular study and reflects the tendency to emulate the methods and procedures of the natural scientist (Bryman, 1988). Problems arising as a consequence of this desire tend to revolve around issues of representativeness, contamination and reactivity (Ibid.). In addition, the production of 'law-

like' generalisations, both in survey and experimental research, usually fail to acknowledge the potentially temporal nature of research findings.

<u>A belief in the importance of replication</u>

According to Bell (1999) "Reliability is the extent to which a test or procedure produces similar results under constant conditions on all occasions" (p64). If a test or procedure is reliable then it can be replicated. If a survey, test or procedure can be replicated in a different context with similar results it provides a litmus test as to the extent to which such research can be generalised beyond its original confines. According to Bryman (1988) replication is often seen, not as a way of checking the extent to which research can be generalised, but as a way of checking for researcher bias.

Qualitative Research

The overarching paradigmatic stance of the qualitative researcher is subjectivist, based on the premise that the social world is interpreted, created and modified through the interaction of the individuals within it (Cohen & Manion, 1985); it is a world of specific contexts, multiple realities and relative truths. Barr Greenfield (1975) states:

"The purpose of social science is to understand social reality as different people see it and demonstrate how their views shape the action which they take within that reality. Since the social sciences cannot penetrate what lies behind social reality, they must work directly with man's definitions of reality and with the rules he devises for coping with it. While the social sciences do not reveal ultimate truth, they do help us to make sense of the world. What the social sciences offer is explanation, clarification and demystification of the social forms which man has created around himself" (cited in Cohen & Manion, 1985, p28).

Within this scenario the qualitative researcher is the instrument of research (Patton, 1990) and therefore the researcher assumes a subjective insider role. The key features of the qualitative approach include:

A desire to understand social phenomena through the eyes of those studied

The predominant feature of qualitative research is its desire to present an 'inside view' of the social phenomena being studied. As Hegarty and Evans (1985) state: "… human action and behaviour can be understood only in terms of how the participants perceive and understand significant events" (p.11). Seeing through the eyes of those studied necessitates sustained contact in the field of research (Cresswell, 2003) in order to gain as comprehensive an understanding as possible of the way in which the subjects of the study interpret and ascribe meaning to the situations and events of their everyday lives.

One of the most obvious weaknesses of this approach concerns the issue of 'reactivity' (Bryman, 1988, p113), also known as 'best behaviour syndrome' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p79), whereby participants in a study alter their behaviour as a consequence of being studied. As Hegarty & Evans (1985) state, "…one must take care not to underestimate the amount of deception that does take place in social relationships" (p 158).

Concern with Context

Concern with context emphasises that people cannot exist in isolation from the social, economic and political context within which they are situated. Concern with context subscribes to the view that understanding of the social world cannot be achieved through experimental manipulation in artificial settings and is allied to 'ecological validity' or the ability to "…capture the daily life, conditions, opinions, values, attitudes, and knowledge base of those we study as expressed in their natural habitat…" (Cicourel, 1982, p15).

A weakness of this approach to research is the danger of 'going native'. In this instance the researcher becomes so immersed in the cultural milieu of those studied that the values of those researched are unwittingly built into the researcher's analysis (Hegarty & Evans, 1985).

Rich Description

Qualitative research is also characterised by substantial attention to the details of everyday life. Bryman (1988) states that, "…mere description is often demeaned and portrayed as lacking intellectual integrity" (p63). Indeed it may be argued that an emphasis on describing the minutiae of everyday life runs the risk of 'failing to see the wood for the trees'. However, such rich description is inherently linked to ecological validity; it forms the contextual backdrop for the analysis of social phenomenon and enables the researcher to convey a processual view of social life.

Data that is rich in detail may be open to criticism because it is so context specific that it conveys limited generality (Bryman, 1988). However, data which is rich in contextual information enables readers to ascertain the "relatability" (Bassey, 1981, p85) of the research findings to their own context and Bryman (1988) points out that the potential of such data for policy making is increasingly being recognised.

A Processual View of Social Life

To use a metaphor, the qualitative researcher aims to capture social life through the lens of a video camera as opposed to a Polaroid snapshot. This desire to convey social reality as a series of changing, interconnected events is "…attractive to students of policy…since such research can be much more concerned with the process of implementation rather than solely with its outputs" (Finch, 1986, cited in Bryman, 1988, pp. 67-68).

The Use of Multiple Methods

Qualitative research does not favour one research method or practice over any other method or practice - in fact, it employs strategies, methods and techniques drawn from a variety of human disciplines (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Triangulation is a common feature of qualitative research and is typified by the use of different research methods, or different data sources, or different observers, or different perspectives in an, "…attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question" (Ibid, p2). However, recognising that objective reality can never be captured, Denzin & Lincoln (1994) emphasise that triangulation is "…not a tool or strategy of validation but an alternative to validation" (p4).

An Emergent Relationship between Theory and Research

Although there is some variation in theory use in qualitative research (Cresswell, 2003) in general the relationship between theory and data tends to be emergent. Loosely framed concepts or theories provide a general framework at the outset and as the research progresses and more data is collected, concepts and theories are increasingly refined (Bryman, 1988). The strength of this approach is that it allows the researcher to respond to the research context and participants' perspectives in a flexible way and alter the focus of research as appropriate; as Bryman (1988) states, "The elaboration and application of theory prior to or even at a relatively early stage of a qualitative study may prejudice the researcher's ability to see through the eyes of his or her subjects" (pp86-87). However, the merits of this approach can also be a disadvantage, as Whyte (1984) points out, "…you may find so many interesting things to study that you are at a loss to delimit the scope of your project and focus on specific problems" (p225).

The Pragmatic Paradigm

According to Bryman (1988) the correspondence between epistemologies and research methods is fuzzier than one is led to believe. At the most basic level qualitative research can be defined as "…research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p17). However, this definition is misleading as most qualitative research necessarily involves quantification of some sort or another; for example, the theory emerging from qualitative research is grounded in data which has been quantified through processes such as coding and categorising. Creswell (2003) argues that adopting mixed method approaches (both quantitative and qualitative) in light of the suitability of the methods for answering the concerns of research may be viewed as a paradigm in its own right. As such a mixed methods approach provides the practical tools for "making our way in the world" (Benjamin & Echeverria, 1992, p69).

<u>Theory Testing</u>

The use of qualitative research methods for theory testing, a typical feature of quantitative research, has been advocated by some researchers (Becker, 1958, McCall, 1969, Campbell, 1979, Hammersley, Scarth & Webb, 1985) on the grounds of maximising the potential of the qualitative approach. Indeed Bryman (1988) states, "…there is nothing intrinsic to the techniques of data collection with which qualitative research is connected that renders them unacceptable as a means of testing theory" (p123).

Philosophical Justification of the Research Approach

The central question of this research asked:

"What are teacher's perceptions of the factors determining the implementation of P4C in the classroom?"

The central question of this research assumes that teachers' understanding of the factors determining implementation of P4C in the classroom will be "…personal, subjective and unique" (Cohen et. al, 2005, p6). It seeks to understand social phenomena through the eyes of those studied and therefore reflects a key concern of the qualitative paradigm.

In relation to the main research question, further sub-questions asked:

1.   *What is the current policy context within which P4C currently exists?*

2.   *What are the educational assumptions underpinning P4C?*

3.   *What are the implications for P4C implementation?*

4.   *How do primary teachers implement P4C?*

5.   *What do primary teachers say are the main factors influencing their decision-making?*

Sub-research questions 1, 2 and 3 were addressed through the literature reviews. These questions assume that teachers do not teach in a vacuum and are situated in a social, political and economic context which prescribes, to a greater or lesser degree, the possibilities for action within the classroom. In short, these questions reflected a concern with context; one of the key features of the qualitative paradigm.

With regard to sub-research question 4, the writer agrees with Fullan (2007) that the implementation of educational change is a process, not an event. As such the answer to this question required a research approach which could describe and capture in rich detail the implementation of P4C in the classroom as a series of changing, interconnected events.

With regard to sub-research question 5, Leat (1999) argues that teacher efficacy is "…a measure of the chances of implementing change" (p399). Although to some extent the relationship between theory and data was emergent in this research, in finding the answers to the fifth sub-research question, the writer also sought to test Leat's (1999) theory and as such drew upon a concern more commonly associated with the quantitative research paradigm.

Taking into account the level of congruence between the concerns of the research questions discussed above and the concerns which are indicative of a qualitative paradigm, the writer would argue that it was justifiable and appropriate to answer the questions of this thesis through a mainly qualitative approach albeit tempered with an element of pragmatism i.e. theory testing.

The following section will discuss and justify the research methods used in this study.

Justification of the Research Methods

This research took the form of a longitudinal study. Longitudinal research involves the gathering of data over an extended period of time (weeks, months or even years) and is often developmental in nature "…concerned both to describe what the present relationships are among variables in a given situation and to account for changes occurring in those relationships as a function of time" (Cohen et.al, 2000, p169). In addition, longitudinal research facilitates retrospective analysis; enabling the researcher to provide tentative explanations of the present situations of individuals based on accounts of their previous experiences (Ibid.). Unlike cross-sectional studies, longitudinal studies follow the same individuals over a period of time and facilitate:

- Prolonged contact in the field of research

- Deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the way in which individuals interpret and ascribe meaning to their lived experience

- The identification of interconnecting events and changes over time

- Opportunities to verify key themes and address omissions or inconsistencies identified in previous encounters

Eight primary teachers participated in this research. Five of these teachers were interviewed three times over a thirteen month period from April 2010 to July 2011. Two teachers, due to personal circumstances, were only able to participate in the first and second interviews which took place over an eight month period from June 2010 to February 2011. In the case of the final teacher, the content of the three interview schedules were condensed into two interviews and were conducted during the summer holidays of 2011. Prolonged contact in the field was maintained through e-mail correspondence which continued from the first point of contact to July 2013. E-mail correspondence was employed to verify data analysis and emerging themes with participants, to discuss points of divergence and to gather further information where necessary.

Qualitative Interviewing

Kvale (1996) states that, "The use of interview in research marks a move away from seeing human subjects as simply manipulable and data as somehow external to individuals, and towards regarding knowledge as generated between humans, often through conversations" (p11). Qualitative interviews, characterised by open-ended questions designed to elicit descriptive and explanatory information, were used in this research because it was the best method for exploring "…those things we cannot directly observe: feelings, thoughts, intentions, previous behaviours, the meanings they attach to the world" (Patton, 1990, p278).

Lincoln & Guba (1985) suggest that "…the structured interview is useful when the researcher is aware of what she does not know…Whereas the unstructured interview is useful when the researcher is not aware of what she does not know and therefore relies on the respondents to tell her" (p270). In the case of this research the writer was neither completely aware, nor completely unaware of what she did not know and therefore semi-structured interviews were chosen. The semi-structured interview format facilitated the comparison of responses across interviews, enabled the researcher to maintain control over the interview process and at the same time probe for depth and clarity from respondents. In order to minimise issues of reactivity the researcher also wanted to, "'go with the flow' of the conversation and the context to make the respondent[s] as relaxed and comfortable as possible" (Radnor, 2002, p62) which necessitated a modicum of flexibility in the sequencing of interview questions not possible with structured interviews.

Because of the very nature of the study multiple interviews were employed. Multiple interviews have all the advantages of a longitudinal study (as discussed above) and enabled the researcher "…to construct a denser, more complex analysis…multiple interviews chart a person's path through a process" (Charmaz, 2002, p682). In addition, multiple interviews enabled the researcher to establish and build rapport with those studied. Interviews were of the key informant type – designed to probe the experiences and perspectives of a relatively small number of individuals (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998, p253) and were conducted by telephone. Telephone interviewing was employed in this research on several grounds:

- The geographical distance between the researcher and most respondents precluded face-to-face interviews due to time and monetary restrictions (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998);

- Teachers are extremely busy people and telephone interviewing facilitated the arrangement of interview times which were better suited to their busy work schedules (Cohen et.al, 2005);

- It was a convenient and easy matter to re-arrange telephone interviews if, due to other circumstances arising, respondents were unable to be interviewed at the arranged times;

- Teachers could be interviewed from the comfort of their own homes and this environment mitigated possibilities of interruption and hence better facilitated teacher reflection on the questions posed;

- The cost of telephone interviewing was relatively moderate which facilitated multiple interviewing (Cohen et.al, 2005);

- The influence of bias on the interview process, based on the appearance and presentation, of both researcher and interviewee was negated (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998, Cohen et. al, 2000);

- The lack of face-to-face contact was more likely to encourage honesty (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998) and reduce feelings of embarrassment when potentially difficult or sensitive questions were asked (Cohen et. al, 2005);

- Audio-recording telephone interviews was unobtrusive and therefore helped to minimise interviewee self-consciousness and reduce the issue of reactivity.

The main reported disadvantages of telephone interviewing centre on the potential for loss or distortion of data because of the absence of visual and non-verbal cues (Miller & Cannell, 1997, Cohen et. al, 2005, Novick, 2008). Issues about the reliability of participant responses is raised by Miller and Cannell (1997) with regard to the capacity of respondents to retain items of information in short-term memory in the absence of supportive visual

cues. In the case of this research, this issue was minimised by e-mailing interview schedules out to participants in advance and allowing adequate time for perusal of the content prior to interviewing. Other potential problems relate to the loss of information conveyed through facial expressions and body language (Cohen et. al, 2005, Novick, 2008) thus (a) making it impossible to interpret non-verbal cues which may contribute to the richness of the data collected and (b) more difficult for the researcher to ascertain whether or not there is respondent misunderstanding about the questions posed. Quite apart from the dangers of misinterpreting non-verbal cues (Novick, 2008), the nature of the research questions of this thesis rendered the collection of non-verbal data irrelevant and auditory cues, i.e. intonation, hesitations and discussion content alerted the researcher to potential issues of respondent misunderstanding.

The interview schedules were designed to answer the subsidiary research questions: '*How do primary teachers implement P4C?'* And *What do primary teachers say are the main factors influencing their decision-making?* In developing the interview schedules the researcher followed the advice of Anderson & Arsenault (1998) and was careful to avoid double barrelled, dichotomous, restrictive, leading and loaded questions. In keeping with key-informant interviews, the majority of questions developed were open; designed to elicit information about teachers' "priorities and frame of reference" (Ibid. p184).

Pilot Study

The overall purpose of the pilot study is to develop a "…satisfactory procedure…for the formal data collection plan (Yin, 1994, p76). For the purposes of this research a pilot study was also important to:

- Ensure the relevance and suitability of the interview questions for getting the information required

- Ensure that the interview questions were clear, unambiguous and understood in the same way by each respondent (Cohen et. al, 2005)

- Ensure that interviews were of an appropriate length

- Test the utility of arrangements for audio-recording the interviews

Two teachers from the researcher's own Local Authority were approached to undertake the pilot study. The main criteria for the choice of these teachers was that they were both primary teachers who were P4C trained, they had both implemented the P4C approach in their respective classrooms and they were both, as practising primary teachers, still grounded in the realities of classroom life. In addition these teachers were willing and able to maintain contact with the researcher over a prolonged period of time.

The pilot studies were conducted over a one year period from March 2010 to March 2011. Prior to the first pilot interview the researcher e-mailed both teachers a copy of the research proposal so that they were fully cognisant of the purpose and aims of the research and would therefore be in a better position to provide constructive feedback about the relevance and suitability of the research questions. During the pilot interviews (and in subsequent interviews) the researcher followed the advice of Anderson & Arsenault (1998) for conducting successful interviews i.e. the researcher listened actively, maintained an open and empathetic attitude and paraphrased respondent comments to check for understanding of content discussed (pp. 195-197).

After the first pilot interviews teachers were asked to reflect on the clarity and relevance of the questions, the interview process and the researcher's interview technique. The key points emerging from the pilot of first interview schedule were:

- The questions in the first interview schedule were clear, unambiguous and thought provoking;
- The researcher should send out the interview schedules prior to interviewing because it would provide participants with more opportunity to reflect on the questions posed and facilitate deeper and more thoughtful responses from participants during the interview process;
- An hour was appropriate for the interview length;
- The researcher gave participants plenty of time to answer the questions posed.

The second pilot interview confirmed the utility of sending out interview schedules pre-interview as participant responses were more detailed and fully developed than in the previous interview. One suggested alteration to the interview questions and one additional question were also proposed by participants and added to the second interview schedule:

- 'What are the benefits of P4C for pupils?' was changed to 'Have you noticed any changes in your pupils since they started doing P4C?' on the grounds that this question might encourage interviewees to include negative as well as positive changes in pupils;
- The question 'Does the year group you teach make a difference to the amount of time you spend on P4C in the classroom?' was included as an additional question on the grounds that ideas about maturation levels might have an influence on teacher decision making about the length of enquiries.

Interviewee feedback after the second pilot interview illustrated the utility of pilot interviewing for mitigating the influence of researcher assumptions and bias at the interview design stage. The third pilot interview confirmed the relevance and clarity of the questions included in the third interview schedule and no further issues or amendments were highlighted.

Ethics

Research ethics can be defined as a set of moral principles which guide the conduct of researchers through the process of research design, data collection, data analysis and dissemination of findings. Principles of ethical conduct in educational research are important on two main counts; firstly, to protect human rights and avoid harm to the individuals involved; and secondly, to ensure the integrity of research and hence public trust in its veracity (BERA, 2011, Cohen et al., 2005). Ethical issues in educational research may arise as a consequence of "…the nature of the research project…the context for the research…the procedures to be adopted…methods of data collection…the nature of the participants…the type of data collected…and what is to be done with the data" (Ibid., p49).

With respect to insider research, an asymmetry of power is often assumed (Kvale, 1996): Information disclosed by research participants may place them in a position of potential vulnerability, particularly in circumstances where the researcher holds a senior position within the organisation and participants believe that possible research outcomes may be critical. The researcher in this study employed three strategies to overcome the potential problems caused by acting in part as an insider researcher within her own Local Authority. Firstly, the researcher was careful not to approach schools or teachers that she had worked with in her professional capacity as an Educational Consultant. Secondly, the researcher

assured participants that the research being undertaken was instigated out of private professional interest related to the researcher's wider role as a registered SAPERE level 1 trainer and not the interests of the Local Authority. Finally, the researcher assured participants of complete confidentiality and anonymity during all stages of the research process.

Researchers have a duty to uphold and protect the rights, dignity and welfare of research participants. The "ethic of respect for persons" (BERA, p5) was applied to the concerns of this research thesis throughout the research process:

- In January 2009, at the design stage of this research, an ethics approval form (including required documentation) was completed by the researcher and submitted to the university;

- Prior to data collection the researcher obtained voluntary informed consent from those teachers who expressed an interest in participating in the research and voluntary informed consent from the head teachers of the schools in which participants worked. Informed consent is defined here as "the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of the facts that would be likely to influence their decisions" (Diener & Crandall, 1978, cited in Cohen et.al, 2005, p51);

- Prior to data collection and at every stage thereafter, the researcher was careful to ensure that participants were fully cognisant of their right to withdraw from the research at any point;

- At the data collection stage the researcher was careful to ensure that interviews were conducted at a time which best suited the needs of participants and didn't

encroach on their right to a work-life balance even if this meant re-scheduling appointments;

- On each interview occasion the researcher sought permission to audio-record the conversation, provided assurances of confidentiality and anonymity and thanked the research participants for their contributions to the research;

- Transcripts of recorded interviews were coded to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of participants;

- At the data analysis stage interview transcriptions (which included key themes identified by the researcher) were sent to participants for comment, amendments and verification;

- At the data analysis stage draft results, analysis and discussion chapters were sent to participants for comment, amendments and verification.

<u>Validity and Reliability</u>

Qualitative researchers have questioned the appropriateness of applying the criteria of validity and reliability, concepts which are rooted in the quantitative perspective, in qualitative research because of the divergent ontological and epistemological assumptions of these two approaches (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, Agar, 1986, Cohen et.al, 2000). Instead, Guba (1981) proposes an alternative conceptual framework, that of trustworthiness, for establishing the rigour of qualitative research. Within this conceptual framework, validity and reliability are replaced with alternative criteria for assessing rigour: truth value, applicability and consistency.

The first criterion of trustworthiness is *truth value*. Truth value pertains to the degree to which a researcher can establish confidence in the truth of the findings. Truth in quantitative research is assessed by internal validity, which is established when (a) the

instruments of measurement used in research measure that which they purport to measure and (b) the explanation of phenomena are accurately supported by the data. Lincoln & Guba (1985) suggest that on ontological grounds, truth value in qualitative research should be assessed by the notion of *credibility*. Sufficient contact in the field of research (to build rapport, recognise and minimise reactivity effects and identify and verify recurrent patterns in data sets) is required to establish credibility.

In quantitative research external validity refers to the extent to which research findings can be generalised beyond the confines of the original study to a wider context. Guba (1981) suggests that the concept of *applicability* is more appropriate in assessing the trustworthiness of qualitative research than the concept of generalisation because: "What can a generalisation be except an assertion that is context free? …it is virtually impossible to imagine any human behaviour that is not heavily mediated by the context in which it occurs" (p62). Applicability refers to the extent to which the findings of the research are transferrable to a wider context. Assessing the *transferability* or "relatability" (Bassey, 1981, p85) of a piece of research necessitates 'thick description' so that the reader can make an informed judgement about the relevance of the research to their own context.

Reliability in quantitative research relates to the extent to which the procedures and instruments employed in a particular study facilitate consistent and stable findings when they are replicated under the same conditions using similar subjects. Some qualitative researchers reject the notion of reliability as irrelevant on ontological grounds (Cohen et.al, 2005). Maykut & Morehouse (1994) make the point that, "The qualitative researcher's perspective is perhaps a paradoxical one: it is to be acutely tuned-in to the experiences and meaning systems of others – to indwell – and at the same time to be aware of how one's biases and preconceptions may be influencing what one is trying to understand" (p123).

Furthermore, because the instrument of research in qualitative enquiry is the researcher (Patton, 1990) variability is to be expected: "…two researchers who are studying a single setting may come up with very different findings but both sets of findings might be reliable" (Ibid, p119). As a consequence, Guba (1981) proposes that qualitative researchers apply the criterion of *consistency* to assess the trustworthiness of research. Consistency is defined in terms of *dependability*; the extent to which the research conveys "…fidelity to real life, context and situation-specificity, authenticity, comprehensiveness, detail, honesty, depth of response and meaningfulness to the respondents" (Cohen et.al, 2005 p120).

In order to establish the credibility, transferability and dependability of this thesis the researcher:

- Conducted pilot interviews to ensure the relevance and clarity of interview schedules;

- Conducted in-depth multiple interviews with 8 participants over a fifteen month period;

- Maintained a reflective awareness of her own influence on data gathering and analysis;

- Used respondent validation at the data gathering and data analysis stage;

- Sought to ensure that claims made in the research were fully supported by the data;

- Used purposive sampling to seek information rich key informants;

- Provided 'thick description' of the nature and extent of participants' P4C implementation efforts and the factors and processes influencing their decision making;

- Condensed and clarified the transferability of this research for readers in the form of fuzzy predictions;

- Provided a thorough description of the research methods, including data collection and data analysis.

Data Analysis

Thorough description of methods of data analysis are important in the research process because "We need to argue what we know based on the process by which we came to know it" (Agar, 1996, p13). Miles & Huberman (1994) describe qualitative analysis as a process of "…moving up a step on the abstraction ladder" (p224) and in a similar vein Spencer et.al (2003) describe the process of data analysis as a form of "conceptual scaffolding"; facilitating movement up the "analytic hierarchy" from data in its raw form to descriptive and then explanatory accounts (p212). Data analysis is an iterative process of progressive focussing requiring the researcher to shuffle backwards and forwards between the raw data and differing levels of abstraction to verify and refine analytical accounts (Miles & Huberman, 1994, Cohen et.al, 2005). The methods of analysis used in this study were based on 'framework analysis' a methodology for applied policy research developed in the 1980s by the National Centre for Social Research (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994).

Data Management

Qualitative research methods generate voluminous amounts of data: the 22 interviews conducted in this small study generated over 130,000 words of transcribed content. In order to manage the data effectively and reduce the problem of data overload (Cohen et. al, 2005) initial analysis of the raw data began during the data collection stage. This approach enabled the researcher to become fully familiarised with the data set and facilitated

identification of emerging themes and issues which were then noted in descriptive form on interview transcripts and sent to participants for verification (see Appendix 1).

The next step of data analysis involved the construction of a thematic framework. The development of this framework was guided by the 4th and 5th sub-research questions and the key themes emerging from the interview data. This approach enabled the researcher to sort and categorise the data into 9 substantive descriptive headings and a further 103 separate descriptive sub-themes which emerged from the data (see Appendix 2). Mapping out *a priori* issues and emergent themes in this way facilitated preliminary identification of recurring patterns and potential associations within the data. For example, the sub-theme 'curriculum coverage' appeared in 6 of the substantive headings. Likewise, 'performativity pressures' and 'time pressures' appeared in 5 of the substantive headings. Both these sub-themes appeared to be associated with, for example, the frequency and duration of P4C implementation and the extent of pedagogical change achieved by teachers. The researcher then returned to the interview transcripts and coded the sections of data that corresponded

to the themes mapped out in the thematic framework (see Appendix 3). This strategy ensured that all the data was reviewed comprehensively and mitigated the potential for researcher bias through the selective use of data (Cohen et. al, 2000).

The next stage of data management consisted of summarising and synthesising the original data. Relevant coded sections of data were pulled together and summarised for each interviewee consecutively under the substantive headings from the thematic framework. During this process the researcher was careful not to include so much content and context that she couldn't 'see the woods for the trees' but enough to retain the essence of the original accounts (Spencer et. al, 2003).

Descriptive Accounts

The thematic summarising and synthesis of the interview data as described above formed the basis for the next stage of data analysis: the descriptive account. Descriptive analysis is characterised by a concern to retain the substantive content of individuals' accounts and to include the actual words used by individuals to describe their experiences (Spencer et.al, 2003). Using the thematic summaries developed previously, the researcher used cross-sectional analysis to identify overarching themes, patterns, divergences and associations between and across the data sets. At this stage in the process the tactic of counting was used to identify and confirm patterns in the data. This strategy ensured analytic honesty because as Miles & Huberman (1984) state "…people habitually tend to overweight facts they believe in or depend on, to forget data not going in the direction of their reasoning, and to "see" confirming instances far more easily than disconfirming instances…Doing qualitative analysis of all the data with the aid of numbers is a good way of seeing how robust our insights are…" (p216). The outcomes of descriptive analysis included:

1. Identification of the key influences challenging the successful implementation of P4C;

2. Identification of recurring patterns of P4C implementation;

3. Construction of analytical typologies which characterised the P4C implementation behaviours of the individuals studied i.e. regular, intermittent and ceased;

4. The analytical categorisation of P4C as counter-cultural practice.

Explanatory Accounts

Miles & Huberman (1994) state that, "Just naming and classifying what is out there is usually not enough. We need to understand the patterns, the recurrences, the *whys*" (p170).

In the final part of the analysis the researcher tested Leat's (1999) theory that teacher efficacy is a "…a measure of the chances of implementing change" (p399) by applying it to the P4C implementer typologies identified in the descriptive account. The plausibility of this theory was explored and confirmed through the tactics of clustering, comparing and contrasting levels of personal, outcome and teaching efficacy for the identified typologies (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and searching for deviant cases.

In addition to exploring the applicability of Leat's (1999) thesis to this research, the researcher also sought to expand upon and explain the high recurrence of certain patterns and associations across the data sets which were categorised analytically as 'P4C as counter cultural practice' in the descriptive account. This was achieved through the tactic of clustering and 'subsuming particulars into the general' (Miles & Huberman, 1994) as well as seeking supporting evidence from wider theory cited in the literature reviews.

Procedural Justification of Research Approach

This section of the methodology chapter will discuss how the research proceeded and provide justifications for the decisions made during the sampling and interviewing process.

<u>Sampling</u>

The sampling strategy chosen for this research was purposive; the researcher wanted to interview primary teachers who had trained in the P4C approach and implemented this innovation in English primary classrooms. Primary teachers working in English classrooms were chosen for two reasons: familiarity and access. Firstly, the researcher is a qualified primary teacher and has spent her career working in the English educational context. Secondly, research evidence (and the researcher's own experience as a SAPERE trainer) suggests that a greater number of primary teachers are trained in the P4C approach than

secondary colleagues (Splitter, 2006) which increased the likelihood of getting access to enough teachers in the primary sector willing to participate in the research.

In order to find suitable research participants the researcher contacted the Society for the Advancement of Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education (SAPERE). The researcher wrote a short article about the research project (which included a request for participants) for the SAPERE Bulletin. This was published on the SAPERE website and e-mailed to 700 SAPERE members in early December 2009 (Lewis, 2009). Naively, the researcher anticipated a flood of responses from eager volunteers. Instead the researcher received three expressions of interest from teachers who did not match the research criteria. In late January 2010, the researcher contacted six established SAPERE trainers with whom she had a working relationship to request their help in gaining access to teachers who matched the sampling criteria and who might be willing to participate in the research. Ten contacts were identified by these trainers - six of whom withdrew from the research prior to interviewing.

Initially the researcher wanted to avoid recruiting any teachers from the Local Authority in which she was working as an Educational Consultant. However, due to problems with recruitment and attrition the researcher decided to use her own immediate contacts to identify teachers in the local area who met the sampling criteria. This strategy was successful in recruiting a further three teachers to participate in the research. In order to minimise the increased possibility of reactivity effects (due to the researcher's status in the Local Authority) the researcher was careful not to approach schools or teachers that she had worked with in her professional capacity as an Educational Consultant.

Patton (1990) states that, "There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. Sample size depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what's at stake. What

will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources" (p184). Due to personal circumstances, two of the teachers participating in the research were only interviewed twice. So in the summer of 2011, the researcher invited an additional P4C primary practitioner from a different Local Authority to participate in the research. This decision was taken for two reasons: firstly, the researcher felt that there were insufficient perspectives on the P4C implementation process included in the original data set. Secondly, and related to the first point, the additional participant was a source of rich information with which to enhance the credibility of the research.

Interviewing

Interviews were conducted with research participants over a fifteen month period from April 2010 to July 2011. Respondents expressed a preference for being interviewed from their own homes and the majority chose to be interviewed during the day at weekends. Prior to each interview participants were sent a copy of the relevant interview schedule. The duration of the interviews varied between 40 – 75 minutes. The researcher was conscious of the potential impact of respondent fatigue on the quality of data collected and in circumstances where interviews seemed likely to exceed 60 minutes the researcher gave participants the option to defer the remaining questions on the schedule until the next interview.

Coded verbatim transcripts were sent to participants via e-mail after each interview. These transcripts were displayed in a tabulated form and included the question posed, the transcribed response and the researcher's descriptive summary of the key themes emerging from each response. Participants were asked to judge the accuracy and truth of the tabulated content. In circumstances where the content was perceived to be inaccurate or untrue participants were encouraged to make amendments using a different font colour

and then return the amended transcript to the researcher. At the beginning of the second and third interviews the key themes emerging from the previous interview were confirmed with participants and points requiring further clarification from the previous interview were also discussed and noted by the researcher.

One minor issue emerged during the interview process. This related to one participant following her own agenda during interviews. This particular teacher had conducted P4C research in her own school as part of a Master's thesis and was keen to discuss her research findings irrespective of their relevance to the interview questions posed. The researcher felt that the interview should, from an ethical standpoint, be a reciprocal process (Patton, 1990) and so she addressed this issue by giving the teacher plenty of scope to discuss her own findings during the interviews whilst at the same time (a) clarifying which aspects of the interview pertained to her own personal experience and thoughts about implementing P4C in the classroom and (b) ensuring that all the research questions were addressed.

Conclusion

This chapter has explained the philosophical, methodological and procedural justification for the approach taken in this research in order to answer the sub-research question *"What is the most appropriate methodology to investigate the concerns of this research?"* The following chapter will report the results of this research.

Chapter 5: Results

Introduction

The previous chapter addressed the research methodology of this thesis. This chapter will report the results of empirical data collected from semi-structured interviews conducted with eight teachers over a period of several months.

Teachers are the agents of change in the classroom (Stenhouse, 1975, Hargreaves, 1994) and the principal actors in the implementation of educational innovations (Stenhouse, 1985). Implementation is defined here as a process through which a proposed innovation is translated into classroom practice. The study of implementation processes is concerned "with the nature and extent of actual change, as well as the factors and processes that influence how and what changes are achieved" (Fullan, 1994, p2839). The overall picture which emerges from the data appears to suggest that P4C faces challenges from:

1. The extent of P4C professional development and support available to most teachers attempting to implement this innovation in the classroom;
2. Varied motivation and commitment to implementing P4C in the classroom;
3. The tensions between the educational assumptions embedded in the practice of P4C and the requirements and assumptions of the prevailing educational context.

The first section of this chapter will consider data relating to the "nature and extent" of P4C implementation in the classroom and will mainly address the subsidiary research question *'How do primary teachers implement P4C?'* The second section of this chapter will consider data relating to possible "factors and processes" influencing teachers' implementation of P4C in the classroom and will mainly address the subsidiary research question *'What do primary teachers say are the main factors influencing their decision-making?'* At the

beginning of each section an overview will be provided. Data from interview questions will be reported individually and then summarised to form preliminary speculations. The key themes emerging from the chapter will be summed up in the concluding section and inform analysis in the next chapter.

The Nature and Extent of P4C Implementation in Primary Classrooms

This section will explore how primary teachers implement P4C in the classroom and will address the context, frequency and duration of P4C implementation, the extent of pedagogical change and planning and assessment of P4C activity in the classroom.

The majority of teachers studied implemented P4C using resources that were directly linked to the content of the curriculum and half of the teachers studied implemented P4C specifically through the literacy curriculum. Experience of P4C facilitation varied widely; only a minority of teachers managed to implement and sustain P4C practice for an hour a week as recommended by SAPERE and a minority ceased implementation altogether. Except in the case of two teachers who were both from the same school, P4C was not allocated a specific time slot in the curriculum and facilitation of philosophical enquiries appeared to be on an ad hoc basis.

Data suggests differential changes to the pedagogical repertoires of the teachers studied which appear to be linked to levels of P4C professional development, experience of P4C facilitation and the perceived developmental needs of pupils. In the majority of cases, self-reported changes to practice indicate increased recognition of the educational value of pupil questioning and discussion, increased teacher confidence in this area and movement towards a more dialogic pedagogy across the curriculum.

Data also suggests that P4C is an innovation operating on the margins of school systems; in all cases studied P4C was not formally embedded into the planning and assessment practices of the school; only half of the teachers in the study noted P4C in short-term subject planning and where assessment took place it was tied, not to the development of multi-dimensional thinking, but to statutory assessment of speaking and listening. Planning for progression in the development of pupils' philosophical skills was not reported in any cases and may impact upon the quality and depth of philosophical dialogue achieved in the classroom and the longer term development of teacher facilitation skills.

<u>The context of P4C Implementation</u>

Interview 2: *In what curriculum context did you decide to implement the P4C approach?*

Although half of the teachers studied initially implemented P4C as a stand-alone lesson, in the case of two of these teachers, links were made to the content of the National Curriculum. The remaining teachers all chose to implement P4C primarily through the literacy curriculum.

Jane implemented the P4C approach through the literacy curriculum as part of a school wide drive to develop and assess speaking and listening because "…we weren't feeling secure or providing enough opportunities to properly assess this…" Clare implemented the P4C approach mainly as a stand-alone lesson but stated that she had facilitated P4C enquiry through cross-curricular topic work. Louise implemented the P4C approach primarily through the literacy curriculum but reported that she had also facilitated P4C enquiries through cross-curricular topic work. Rose and Lisa decided to implement the P4C approach through the literacy curriculum. Lisa stated, "We decided to do it in literacy at the beginning of the week… it's not gonna get freezed out…" Lisa also reported using P4C in

cross-curricular contexts. Lily decided to implement P4C as a stand-alone lesson but recognised that it related very much to the PSHCE curriculum and could have been infused into this curriculum area. Ann initially implemented P4C as a stand-alone lesson but later infused it into the science, maths and RE curriculum. Nick also implemented P4C as a stand-alone lesson but recognised the links between P4C and literacy and PSHCE.

The data suggests that space for innovation and the development of curricular specialisms at a local level are circumscribed by current National Curriculum demands: Half of the teachers studied chose to implement P4C through the literacy curriculum with one teacher specifically implementing P4C in this area as a means of developing and assessing students' speaking and listening skills. Two teachers from the same school made the decision to facilitate their literacy-linked philosophical enquiries at the beginning of each week in order to ensure that P4C would not get squeezed out by other curriculum demands. The remaining teachers in the study decided to implement P4C as a stand-alone lesson but recognised, and in two cases made links to the content of other areas of the curriculum.

Interview 2: *What stimulus did you use for your first enquiry?*

A small majority of the teachers studied chose stimuli which were directly linked to the National curriculum for their first P4C enquiries. The remaining teachers' choices were influenced by: the type of resources used during initial P4C training; the ability range of the class; and the philosophical content of the stimulus.

Jane used a picture stimulus which was unrelated to the content of the curriculum for her first P4C enquiry with pupils because she was introduced to this resource during her P4C training. Clare used a familiar resource from the literacy strategy as a stimulus for her first enquiry with pupils: "...it was a short film called The Piano...I've used that in literacy

before…I was able to focus more on it using the P4C." Louise used a large leaf as a stimulus for her first enquiry with pupils as part of on-going work about creation. Rose and Lisa used a story stimulus relating to the literacy curriculum for their first enquiries with pupils. Lily used "…a picture stimulus of a fire fighter climbing into a burning building…" because she perceived that it would appeal to the broad range of ability within her class and because she had seen picture stimuli used to good effect during her P4C training. Ann used a poem as a stimulus for her first enquiry with pupils because it was related to the topic based enquiry question for that term 'Who am I?' Perhaps because of his philosophical background, Nick used a story stimulus which was specifically written for philosophical enquiry.

Data suggests that National Curriculum demands and familiarity with and availability of resources linked to the curriculum influenced a small majority of initial choices about the use of philosophical stimulus: Five of the eight teachers in the study chose stimuli which were directly linked to the content of the curriculum. The choices of philosophical stimulus for the remaining teachers were based on familiarity, broad appeal and philosophical content.

Interview 3: *Where do you get your ideas for philosophical enquiries?*

The majority of ideas for philosophical enquiry were derived from curriculum content. Half of the teachers studied also stated that ideas for enquiry were sometimes suggested by pupils. Only two teachers appeared to choose philosophical stimuli without any reference to the curriculum.

Jane stated that ideas for philosophical enquiry were linked to curriculum content and tended to have a moral basis as "…moral ideas are…very much…a big part of our

curriculum". Clare and Louise linked philosophical enquiries to curriculum content. Louise also reported that ideas for philosophical enquiry sometimes related to questions from pupils that had arisen in other lessons "…they might ask a question that…very interesting in the lesson but we haven't got time to cover…" Rose facilitated P4C enquiries through the literacy curriculum and stated that she used lots of stories, her own ideas and resources that she had acquired through her SAPERE training. Again, ideas for philosophical enquiry were sometimes inspired by children's comments. Rose stated, "…like one of the girls said if she could change anything about herself she wanted to be a boy…so I thought well I'll just go with that then." Lisa reported that she often used picture books and artefacts for philosophical enquiry but her main concern was with "…how it can fit in nicely with the topic work…" Like Louise and Rose, Lisa also reported that sometimes ideas for philosophical enquiry were suggested by the children during other lessons. Lily, teaching a full Key Stage 2 class, used stimuli for philosophical enquiry which would appeal to a broad range of ages and ability levels. Ann reported that she used stimuli linked to the content of the curriculum and that these ideas came from colleagues, the children and stories written specifically for philosophical enquiry. Nick, a philosophy graduate, used resources which were specifically designed for philosophical enquiry which he accessed from the SAPERE website, other sites on the internet and published books.

The data suggests that although pupil interests are often taken into account during the planning process the locus of control for stimulus choice rests with the teacher and that choices are influenced in the majority of cases by National Curriculum demands: Six teachers stated that ideas for philosophical enquiry were linked to the content of the curriculum. Only two teachers appeared to choose philosophical stimuli without reference to curriculum content to be covered.

Interview 2: *When and how regularly does P4C take place in your classroom? What are the reasons for this?*

Only three teachers reported that they were facilitating P4C enquiries each week as recommended by SAPERE. In three other cases P4C appeared to be implemented on a more intermittent basis. However, two of the teachers from this group stated that elements of the P4C approach were being used 'implicitly' on a far more regular basis in other lessons. Two teachers ceased implementation altogether due to time and performativity pressures.

Jane facilitated formal P4C enquiries about once every two to three weeks because of "…a huge staff turnover" although she stated that she used the P4C approach "…a lot more within lessons" particularly history and science, which she felt lent themselves to philosophical enquiry. Clare reported that P4C was "…sort of intermittent really...it depends on the time I've got during the week…whether I've had a bit of inspiration…and sometimes remembering to do it..." Louise facilitated P4C enquiries once a week but on different days because of management responsibilities. Both Rose and Lisa ran P4C enquiries on a weekly basis at the beginning of the week so that it didn't get pushed out by other curriculum pressures. Lily reported running P4C enquiries "…about once every half term over a couple of years if that and then…my hours were reduced…and I couldn't do it anymore." Ann reported that she was explicitly facilitating about four P4C enquiries per term but felt that "…implicitly it's going on all the time…it's embedded in the ethos of the classroom…" Examples Ann used to illustrate this point included pupils asking "more mature questions" and listening more carefully to each other in other lessons. Nick stated that he used to facilitate P4C enquiries once a week but because of increased pressure to

raise levels of pupil attainment in core curriculum areas he was no longer able to facilitate any enquiries at all.

Implementation was ceased in two cases due to time and performativity pressures. In both these cases P4C was implemented as a stand-alone lesson and philosophical enquiry was not related to content in other curriculum areas. This suggests that P4C implementation might be more likely to be sustained in circumstances where it is linked to the content of the current curriculum. Only three teachers reported that they were facilitating P4C enquiries once a week; all these teachers implemented P4C primarily through the literacy curriculum and two of these teachers allocated a specific time in the curriculum for this. Although two teachers reported that they were explicitly facilitating P4C enquiries on a more intermittent basis both stated that elements of P4C were being used 'implicitly' within other lessons in the classroom on a far more regular basis; which suggests a recognition of the educational value of increasing opportunities for pupil questioning and discussion in the classroom. Only one teacher facilitated P4C on a more ad hoc basis due to perceived time constraints and remembering to do it.

Interview 2: *How long do your P4C enquiries last?*

A small majority of teachers reported that their P4C enquiries lasted for one hour as recommended by SAPERE and two of these respondents stated that enquiries often lasted longer and would continue into the following week. Three respondents (who had received the least amount of P4C training) reported that their enquiries lasted between 30-45 minutes.

Jane reported that her P4C enquiries lasted between thirty-five and forty-five minutes and Clare reported that her P4C enquiries lasted around thirty minutes. Louise reported that

her P4C enquiries lasted "…thirty-five minutes if I'm lucky…" because of the poor behaviour of some pupils. Rose reported that the time allowed for enquiry was one hour per week but "…quite often with year 6 we carry on in the following week…" Likewise Lisa reported that the time allowed for enquiry was one hour per week but stated that "…we never get through one in one session…" Lisa also reported that "…other ideas jump out from other parts of the week…so one of the children might say to me 'Oh can we do this in philosophy next week?' and so as a result of that I might change things and not go further with the enquiry that we were on before…" Lily, Ann and Nick also reported that their enquiries generally lasted about an hour.

The data suggests that there may be a link between the amount of P4C training teachers receive and the amount of time spent facilitating enquiries in the classroom; the three teachers who spent less than an hour facilitating philosophical enquiry also spent the least amount of time training in this approach.

Interview 3: *When did you last facilitate a P4C enquiry?*

Only three teachers reported recent P4C activity in the classroom at the time of interview. In the case of two teachers, end of KS2 SATs preparation meant that philosophical enquiry in the classroom was ceased for a substantial period of time. Two teachers ceased implementation altogether, one because of increased curricular and time constraints and the other because of performativity pressures.

Jane reported that the most recent philosophical enquiry "…was two weeks ago…and it was based around an R.E. lesson it was very much linked to our topic about conscience." Clare was on extended leave from school and as a consequence was unable to facilitate P4C enquiries. Louise stated that she had facilitated a P4C enquiry on the day of the interview

linked to an RE topic. Rose reported that she last facilitated a P4C enquiry six weeks previously due to SATs preparation. Likewise Lisa reported that she last facilitated a P4C session "…about three months ago because…it went onto SATs writing…every single literacy lesson was either a planning…a writing or an editing of practice questions for SATs." Lily reported that she had stopped facilitating P4C enquiries because of a reduction in her hours and increased curricular and time constraints. Ann reported that she last facilitated a P4C enquiry 2 weeks before the start of the summer holidays. Nick reported that he last facilitated a P4C enquiry in the previous academic year due to increased pressures to raise test results.

The data suggests that performativity pressures, particularly in upper Key Stage 2, have a substantial impact on the implementation of P4C in the classroom. Two teachers had suspended P4C enquiries for a substantial period of time in order to prepare their pupils for SATs tests and another had ceased implementation altogether because of pressure to raise test results in core curriculum areas. At the time of interview, only three teachers had recently facilitated P4C enquiries with their classes.

Interview 2: *Approximately how many P4C enquiries have you facilitated to date?*

Experience of facilitating P4C enquiries varied widely, even amongst teachers from the same school. The number of enquiries facilitated by the teachers studied ranged between 4 and 200.

Jane estimated that to date she had facilitated about 20 enquires with her class. Although Clare and Louise were both from the same school, Clare estimated that she had facilitated about 4 enquiries to date whereas Louise reported that she had facilitated about 15 enquiries. Likewise, Rose and Lisa, both from the same school, reported that they had

facilitated 200 enquiries and 30 enquiries respectively. Lily stated that the number of enquiries she had facilitated with her classes was less than ten. Ann estimated that she had facilitated about 70 enquiries with her classes and Nick estimated that he had facilitated about 200 P4C enquiries to date.

In the case of teachers from the same school, the number of enquiries facilitated varied considerably despite working within the same educational context; this may be accounted for by differing levels of motivation. An alternative explanation may be that individuals have differing capacities to withstand other demands on teaching time (which may be related to other factors like length of teaching experience and confidence in the efficacy of P4C). The vulnerability of P4C, is exemplified in the case of Nick, who, despite lengthy experience of facilitating this approach in the classroom (indicating a high degree of commitment), ceased implementation altogether as a consequence of increased performativity pressures.

<u>Extent of Pedagogical Change</u>

Interview 2: *What does a good P4C enquiry look like? What are the reasons for this?*

Only a minority of teachers described what a 'good P4C enquiry' looks like mostly in terms of teacher behaviours. The remaining teachers described a 'good enquiry' in terms of pupil behaviours.

Jane admitted that she was unsure about what a good P4C enquiry looks like and would like further training in this area. Her expectations were that a good enquiry would engage and excite and that pupils would be expressing their own ideas and not those of the teacher. Clare felt that a good enquiry was one in which "…all or…most of the children…are contributing…" either in whole class or small group discussion, where all the

questions generated are of good quality and where pupils don't want to stop enquiring." Louise described a good P4C enquiry as "…a structured session…so it follows the steps…and [includes Socratic] questions …and also sticking to the rules of the circle…" Rose felt that a good P4C enquiry engaged all pupils and involved the teacher as facilitator pushing for a range of opinions and more depth of thought. Lisa felt that a good P4C enquiry was one which involved all pupils expressing different opinions and thinking in depth and where pupils chose a "juicy question" for enquiry. Lily also felt that a good enquiry involved pupils choosing a good question and discussing a range of opinions and viewpoints in a respectful manner. Ann described a good P4C enquiry as one where "…all the children are listening…looking and engaging…they're thinking…they're speaking…" Nick felt that a good enquiry followed the P4C structure and "…kind of runs itself…you know a flow happens because that's when the kids are properly engaged…"

Five teachers described what a good enquiry looks like mostly in terms of pupil behaviours. The tendency to focus on pupil behaviours; engagement, asking good questions for enquiry and sharing alternative viewpoints may reflect the perceived developmental needs of pupils. Alternatively it may reflect the pupil assessment focused context in which teachers are working. In either case the data suggests that the current educational context provides limited opportunities for teacher reflection on their own practice: Only three teachers described what a good enquiry looks like mostly in terms of teacher behaviours i.e. following the P4C sequence and pushing for a range of opinions and depth of thinking through Socratic questioning.

Interview 2: *What strategies do you employ as a facilitator to ensure a good enquiry?*

Strategies employed to ensure a good enquiry appeared to fall into two broad categories; strategies focused on the inclusion of all pupils in enquiry and strategies focused on the development of pupil thinking in enquiry.

Jane stated that she gave her pupils more time to think: "I learnt this last year….it's very much about not stepping in and giving that real quality time to think…because all of us need that time to think…" Clare stated that she made sure that she provided an interesting stimulus and used question prompts to steer the discussion and re-direct pupils back to the question if they went off on a tangent. Louise stated that she tried to ensure "…everyone speaks…that everybody listens…" Rose felt that good facilitation skills included "…knowing what to say and when to say it…" and believed "…that comes with experience and also depends on the individual." Lisa stated that she used question prompts to promote pupil thinking and Lily stated that she would only intercede during an enquiry to ensure that everyone had a chance to contribute an opinion "…otherwise it runs itself…" Ann followed the P4C sequence flexibly and felt that "…being in tune to children…as well as listening very carefully" was essential in guiding pupils towards deeper levels of thinking. Nick stated that he continually stressed the ground rules of enquiry and the importance of listening and responding respectfully to the contributions of other pupils.

The strategies employed by teachers during philosophical enquiry appear to be tied to the perceived developmental needs of pupils, levels of P4C professional development and support and experience of facilitation. Of the three teachers who focussed on strategies to ensure the inclusion of all pupils during philosophical enquiry, two of these indicated a deeper understanding of the facilitator role in enquiry in the previous interview question.

This suggests that in the case of these teachers, the development of collaborative and caring attitudes and dispositions were prioritised as underpinning skills for philosophical enquiry. A small majority of teachers focussed on strategies to enable to development of pupils' critical and creative thinking. Teacher questioning was used in four cases to prompt, steer, re-direct and promote deeper thinking and one teacher from this group alluded to the significance of individual motivation in acquiring the skills of facilitation. One teacher provided adequate time to think as a strategy for developing pupil thinking which appears to reflect her limited P4C professional development experience.

Interview 3: *How often do pupils get the chance to choose a stimulus for enquiry? What are the reasons for this?*

In all cases teachers maintained control over the choice of stimulus for enquiry although three teachers reported that their stimulus choice sometimes followed children's interests or ideas. Half the teachers in the study specifically cited time constraints related to the difficulties of covering curriculum content as the main reason for retaining control of stimulus choice.

Jane reported that the pupils in her class had not yet had any opportunity to choose a stimulus for enquiry because they were at an early stage of skill development and weren't mature enough to agree on a stimulus. Clare reported that she had only facilitated about four enquiries and that the stimuli for these were chosen by the teacher. Louise stated that "on an already crammed curriculum …there is really no time for them to say…for me to just facilitate a P4C enquiry on something random…so they don't." However, Louise stated that she sometimes used children's questions and interests in other areas of the curriculum as a stimulus. Likewise, Rose reported that although she sometimes followed children's questions and interests arising from previous enquiries she always chose the

stimulus. Lisa stated that it had never occurred to her to provide children with an opportunity to choose a stimulus for enquiry but stated that "I'm one of those teacher's that…like to know what's going on and I like to have the control…I've been trying to fit it all into our curriculum so it isn't just a stand-alone lesson it does actually fit in …" Lily reported that because of time constraints she always chose the stimulus for enquiry. Ann also stated that time constraints made it difficult for her to provide pupils with opportunities to choose the stimulus for philosophical enquiry although this did happen on occasions. Nick reported that he always chose the stimulus for enquiry because it had never occurred to him to do otherwise.

On most occasions teachers chose the stimulus for enquiry, although three teachers reported that ideas for philosophical enquiry sometimes followed children's interests and questions arising from previous enquiries or other areas of the curriculum. Time constraints, related to the difficulty of covering curriculum content, were specifically cited by four teachers as the main barrier to providing pupils with opportunities to choose stimuli for philosophical enquiry.

Interview 3: *Have any aspects of your P4C practice changed since you first began? If so, how?*

In most cases increased confidence in using the P4C approach appears to be positively related to the amount of experience of philosophical enquiry which in turn appears to be related to improvements in and more flexible facilitation.

Jane stated that when she first started facilitating P4C enquiries she did "too much talking" and that enquiries were "too rigid". She felt that as her confidence in facilitating P4C enquiries had grown, she had become more relaxed and was now able to step back and let the discussion between pupils unfold. Clare stated that she was still "…sticking with the

way that we did it with training…to keep building up confidence with it…and also if the children are used to a particular format I think it makes it easier for them to…understand…what is expected of them." Louise felt that her confidence in P4C facilitation had grown as a consequence of participating in the P4C research project. Louise reported that she had stopped using a 'talking object' during P4C enquiries and had begun to facilitate enquiries without teaching assistant support. Rose reported that she now used a greater variety of stimuli in P4C enquiries and had become "…more confident…I think it's just confidence really…asking questions." Lisa stated that she felt more confident about guiding philosophical discussion "…not dwelling quite so much on using the vocabulary of open questions and closed questions…I think what's changed is once I've allowed them to veer off actually to bring them back in again…I've become more adept at doing that." Lily reported no changes to her P4C practice since she first began. Ann reported that she no longer stuck rigidly to the P4C sequence and that her approach had become more flexible and creative. Nick stated that "…I really try and keep the pace up…I think I kept to that same format…I think I'm probably a bit freer with what I use for a stimulus…"

The data suggests that P4C facilitators tend to stick to the structure provided during P4C training during the initial phase of implementation. Four teachers explicitly reported increased confidence in facilitating philosophical enquiry with children which they believed was directly related to improvements in their facilitation skills. Two teachers with minimal experience in facilitating philosophical enquiry reported no changes to their P4C practice. Interestingly, one teacher stated that he had introduced "greater pace" into his philosophical enquiries and this may be an example of performativity culture leaking into P4C practice.

Interview 3: *Has P4C changed your practice in other areas of the curriculum? If so, how?*

Seven teachers reported that their experience of P4C had encouraged them to make changes to their practice in other areas of the curriculum. The changes reported indicate the use of a more dialogic pedagogical approach across the curriculum.

Jane reported that she now planned more opportunities for discussion into other lessons and had adopted a Foundation Stage practice to record evidence of pupil learning during this time "…I think you get so hung up on wanting to have written evidence of what they know…writing down some of the comments which are more valuable we've got that dual assessment and…you can then let the discussion really unfold…knowing… it's not a waste of time." Likewise, Clare stated that she felt "…more confident about giving [pupils] more thinking and discussing time…when we're doing science or something like that…" Louise reported that children were using the language of philosophical enquiry and readily expressing their opinions in other curriculum areas. Rose reported that she allowed more time for questioning and discussion in other areas of the curriculum "…they get a lot out of it…doing that in other sessions…and I think…you do feel a bit more comfortable and more confident to step back and let them talk." Lisa incorporated aspects of the sequence of philosophical enquiry in other lessons "…more actually having private thinking time with the particular topic…those initial first words and last words…those sorts of strategies in other areas of the curriculum more time to discuss amongst themselves…" Lily reported that her practice was "…always geared to children thinking…" and didn't feel that P4C had altered her practice in other areas of the curriculum. Ann felt that P4C had enhanced her style of teaching in the classroom and she reported using aspects of the P4C sequence to develop enquiry and learning in other areas of the curriculum. P4C helped Nick to realise the potential of starting off a new topic from pupils' questions "…asking them what their

questions are and, kind of drawing out their prior knowledge…it…engages them" although he admitted that time and performativity pressures often made it difficult to engage in extended dialogue with pupils in other lessons.

Teacher comments typify the negative consequences of a 'hurry-along' curriculum (Dadds, 1994) for deep learning. On a positive note, the data suggests that P4C practice has facilitated increased recognition of the educational value and potential of providing opportunities for pupil thinking time, questioning and discussion in other curricular areas. A large majority of teachers reported that they had become more responsive to pupil needs and interests in other curriculum areas and pedagogical adjustments reflected P4C practice. Only one teacher reported that P4C had not changed her practice in other areas of the curriculum.

Planning and Assessment of P4C Activity in the Classroom

Interview 2: *Do you keep records of planning for philosophical enquiries? How?*

Records of planning for philosophical enquiry were kept in half the cases studied and were linked to short-term subject planning in other curriculum areas.

Jane stated that she didn't plan separately for philosophical enquiries but that planning for P4C enquiries was included in her history and science planning. Likewise, Clare and Louise stated that P4C was noted in short-term subject planning. Rose reported "…I've got …flip charts that I put the questions on…and I have kept those really…" Lisa also stated that she did not keep records of formal planning for P4C but that any philosophical questions generated during enquiries and recorded on the whiteboard were kept as a reference "...which then allows me to see the following year if I'm gonna use that same stimulus …there's nothing official, there's nothing formal…" Lily stated that she did not keep

records of planning for philosophical enquiries. Ann reported that P4C was included in her short term planning for literacy "…even if it's an RE focus or a…geographical focus…" and that it was included "…under [a] speaking and listening sort of objective…" Nick stated that he didn't really keep records of planning for philosophical enquiries but that "…at one stage I kept a log of the conversations…"

The data indicates that, in the case of half the teachers studied, P4C is not embedded into school planning systems. Only four teachers reported that P4C was noted in their short-term subject planning. Informal records of completed enquiries, used to evaluate the success of philosophical stimuli used in enquiry, were kept in two cases to inform decision making in the following year.

Interview 2: *Do you assess pupils' progress in P4C in any way? If so, what do you assess and how?*

A minority of the teachers studied did not assess pupil progress in P4C in any way. For the remaining teachers assessment was tied to the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills.

Jane reported that she assessed pupils' speaking and listening during philosophical enquiries stating that "…it lends itself to that perfectly…" but also gave an example of assessing other aspects of the curriculum during enquiries "…if I'm using something like an historical artefact… I'm also looking at… their chronological understanding, their ability to use evidence and predict…" Clare reported that she didn't assess pupils' progress in P4C in any way at the present time because she was "…trying to just get used to using it before attempting any…type of assessment…" Louise also reported that she didn't assess pupils' progress in P4C but she did assess pupil's speaking and listening skills. Rose reported that she didn't formally assess pupils' progress in developing the skills of philosophical enquiry

although "…we discuss what children are getting out of enquiries on an informal basis…" Both Rose and Lisa reported that philosophical enquiries were useful in assessing the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. Lily reported that she did not assess pupils' progress in P4C in any way; she felt that "…you can't…hurry a child on…in its maturity… I think maybe that's not very measurable or not fair to be measured..." Ann stated that "…obviously I assess speaking and listening…it's more linked in with literacy development I'll have to say." Nick reported that he kept an informal "running record" of pupil contributions during enquiries in order to "…know who's never ever contributing…"

The data indicates that where pupil contributions in philosophical enquiry were being assessed they were tied to statutory assessment in National Curriculum subjects and not the development of pupil thinking skills. A small majority of the teachers studied assessed pupils' speaking and listening skills during philosophical enquiries and one of these teachers also assessed skills in other areas of the curriculum where relevant. The remaining teachers, for a variety of reasons, did not assess pupils at all. This has implications for planning for the progression and development of pupils' thinking skills and may limit teachers' ability to move to deeper levels of philosophical facilitation.

Factors and Processes Influencing Teachers' Implementation of P4C in the Classroom

This section will explore the factors and processes informing teachers' implementation of P4C in the classroom and will consider the rationale for P4C training, the extent of P4C training, the compatibility of P4C with teachers' own beliefs and professional development needs, the anticipated and unanticipated consequences of P4C implementation and the perceived relative advantages and disadvantages of P4C.

Data suggests that decisions to undertake P4C training were, in the majority of cases, a consequence of whole school development initiatives influenced by the increased emphasis on creativity in national primary educational policy discourse. The data suggests a positive association between SAPERE accredited training which included school based coaching and mentoring and regular and sustained P4C implementation. Although P4C training appeared to meet the majority of teachers' professional development needs in terms of developing pupils' questioning and discussion skills, a minority reported that their training left them feeling inadequately prepared for facilitating *philosophical* enquiry in their own classrooms. Unsurprisingly, this minority of teachers spent the least amount of time training in P4C and were not able to access mentoring and coaching support in school.

The Ofsted (2012) assumption that teachers implicitly understand how to develop and promote questioning, discussion and deeper pupil thinking in the classroom is challenged by the data. The majority of reported responses to P4C training suggest a latent desire on the part of teachers to institute more meaningful 'child-centred' enquiry in the classroom and, in the case of two long-serving teachers, exposed resentment of previous national policy agendas which they believed stifled professional autonomy and encouraged pupil passivity in the learning process.

The majority of teachers anticipated some difficulties implementing the P4C approach and the data suggests that in most cases teachers recognised that adjustments to the classroom culture would be required in order to establish an environment conducive to philosophical enquiry. Although initial experiences of philosophical enquiry negatively challenged teacher expectations in half the cases studied this did not appear to bear any direct relation to the frequency or duration of P4C implementation in the classroom. The data also indicates

that, for the majority of teachers studied, effecting changes to established pupil behaviours required sustained effort over a substantial period of time.

Observed changes in pupils attributed to P4C tended to relate to improvements in social and communication skills, although a minority of teachers admitted that they had not facilitated enough P4C enquiries to qualify any impact. In terms of benefits for teachers, a small majority felt that P4C enabled them to attain a broader perspective of pupils' beliefs, interests and abilities but in most cases P4C was not perceived to confer any relative advantage in terms of improving pupil attainment in standard assessment tests.

The majority of teachers studied reported some difficulties maintaining the engagement of all pupils during philosophical enquiries and the strategies employed to address these difficulties appeared to focus on well-rehearsed behaviour management strategies as opposed to the use of different pupil groupings during the enquiry process. This may be attributed to fixed ideas about what philosophical enquiry looks like in the classroom and may be related to experiences of enquiry during P4C training.

Rationale for P4C Training

Interview 1: *Why did you become P4C trained?*

The majority of teachers studied became P4C trained as part of wider creative curriculum development activity in their schools. Only two teachers undertook P4C training out of personal professional interest.

Jane's school began to implement a creative curriculum in September 2010 and the head teacher requested that she attend a one day P4C training course running at a nearby school with a view to developing this approach within her own school. Both Clare and Louise worked with a teacher who was very experienced in the P4C approach. Clare stated that

she became P4C trained "…through Sam's influence really. She's very enthusiastic about it so as a staff we decided to do something that we'd find useful in school." Louise added that "…the previous Head teacher said… it's becoming [a] more and more important part of the curriculum…these things are becoming the things that Ofsted look for in developing the child as a whole really…" It is noteworthy that this school also began to implement a creative curriculum in September 2010. Rose and Lisa became P4C trained as part of the Open Futures programme, a curriculum enrichment project which includes gardening, film-making, cooking and philosophising. Rose expressed a personal interest in developing the philosophical aspect of the programme and Lisa was asked to attend the training by the senior management team. Lily became P4C trained "Because it was something I was interested in... it would fit in with our ethos…" Ann undertook P4C twilight training at a previous school as part of whole staff development and stated that there "wasn't any choice" as it was part of the head teacher's vision for the direction of the school. Two years later she experienced further P4C training as part of a creative contexts project for whole school development. Nick did a philosophy degree and already had an interest in this area. "I saw a documentary…called 'The Transformers' I think…back in '91…I went back into the classroom as a primary teacher in '97…I thought…how am I going to enrich my practice…and I thought philosophy for children…that's really what I want to do…"

In a large majority of cases teachers became P4C trained as part of whole school initiatives related to the development of a more creative curriculum. Despite this, initial training in this approach was part of whole school staff development in only three of these cases, and the data suggests, particularly in one case, that teachers attending external courses were later expected to cascade this approach across the whole school. The implication of this is that P4C may not be implemented across the school as originally intended. The data also

suggests that professional development training, instigated out of personal interest, does not guarantee sustained implementation of P4C in the long term.

Extent of P4C Training

Interview 1: *Could you outline the P4C training you have had to date?*

Experiences of P4C training varied considerably between the teachers studied. At one extreme two teachers received only one day of externally based training and at the other, one teacher received ten days of externally based training and additional in-house training, mentoring and coaching from a SAPERE accredited trainer.

Jane attended a one day externally based P4C course "… the first part… just started off thinking about learners…what is it that makes you a successful learner and it was thinking about the skills and attitudes involved in that …we looked at some video clips… using photos as a stimulus…and it was looking at the process…just getting them in foundation stage to ask questions about anything and then developing that up towards the end of school…" Clare and Louise attended whole staff school based twilight training. Clare stated, "…not huge amounts… but staff have been given the opportunity to have Sam come in and either take a philosophy lesson herself and you watch it or she comes in and watches you and says which bits need changing…" Louise stated that, due to time constraints, she had not yet had the opportunity to observe Sam facilitating P4C with a class. Rose attended externally based SAPERE training "…I've done the level 1 and level 2 and level 3…" Lisa attended externally based SAPERE level 1training but stated that a SAPERE accredited trainer "…has been and done in-house training with our school …he's done philosophy sessions with my class on two separate occasions which is extremely helpful and then he's given us feedback and ways forward…" Lily attended a one day

externally based P4C course which included observation of a philosophical enquiry in a year 4 classroom "…I had half a day in some teacher training centre in Sheffield learning about P4C and being shown some resources and then half a day in a school…" Ann attended a school-based twilight P4C training session at her previous school and a one day school-based P4C training session run by an accredited SAPERE trainer at her current school. Ann also had the opportunity to observe a SAPERE accredited trainer lead enquiries in her own school and she later completed a Master's thesis related to P4C. Nick attended externally based SAPERE level 1 and SAPERE level 2 P4C training.

The amount of P4C training experienced by the teachers studied varied considerably in duration and design. Five teachers attended externally based P4C training which ranged from one day to ten days in duration. Only half the teachers studied accessed school based coaching and mentoring in the P4C approach in addition to direct training. The data suggests a positive association between SAPERE accredited training which includes school based coaching and mentoring and regular and sustained P4C implementation for one hour each week.

Interview 1: *How did your P4C training prepare you for facilitating communities of enquiry?*

Although all the teachers studied reported that the practical elements of P4C training were most useful in preparing them for philosophical enquiry with their own class, two teachers expressed a desire for further training, implying that they felt inadequately prepared for facilitating this approach in the classroom.

Jane felt that observing a class of pupils engaged in a P4C enquiry was the most useful aspect of the training as she was able to see what it "really meant" in practice. Clare observed that her P4C training "…gave me quite a few ideas of what I would use…just

sort of different medium that you can use as a starting point…" Louise felt that the training enabled her to understand the basic principles of P4C but said that "I would welcome some more training and I want to watch Sam do it really but it's just the time constraints…" Rose felt that her P4C training prepared her well for facilitating P4C in her own classroom because it gave a format for discussion and also provided opportunities for her to observe an experienced P4C facilitator working with her own children so that she was able to see what it entailed in practice. Lisa felt that the experience of observing an enquiry with her own class was "extremely useful" and that "…the theory behind it and how it should fit in [with the National Curriculum] was particularly helpful…and also just showing you the different stimulus you could use…" Lily stated that she "…would have liked to have gone on more training" and although she felt that observing an enquiry with pupils was a very useful aspect of the training she would have liked to have experienced a community of enquiry first hand "rather than trying it out in my classroom…" Like Clare, Ann felt that her P4C training gave her lots of practical ideas and suggestions for games and stimuli to use in enquiries with pupils. Nick stated that engaging in communities of enquiry during his P4C training gave him the "…confidence to have a go…" although he added "…I was more interested in the skill of conversation rather than analytical philosophy and I sometimes found [the sessions] a bit tiresome."

The data suggests that the practical elements of P4C training i.e. observing or participating in P4C enquiries and suggestions for games and stimulus were most valued by teachers. In half of the cases studied opportunities provided during P4C training to observe pupils engaging in communities of enquiry were deemed to be very helpful in illustrating what P4C entailed in practice. Three teachers also found suggestions for games and stimulus useful in helping them to prepare for facilitating P4C in their own classrooms. Two teachers expressed a desire for further training in P4C; unsurprisingly these teachers

received minimal amounts of P4C training and had not had the opportunity to access school based coaching and mentoring in this approach.

<u>Compatibility of P4C with Teachers' Professional Development Needs and Own Beliefs</u>

Interview 2: *What new knowledge/skills did your P4C training equip you with?*

A large majority of the teachers studied felt that their P4C training had equipped them with the skills to develop their own questioning and/or the questioning skills of their pupils. Half the teachers studied also felt that P4C provided them with a structure for promoting discussion in the classroom.

Jane stated that her P4C training improved her understanding of higher order questioning and how to develop pupil's thinking and debating skills. Clare felt that her P4C training equipped her with a range of techniques for developing her own questioning and discussion skills which enabled her to deepen pupils' thinking "…it just introduced me to…a range of techniques...to bring the…information out of children to draw…their thinking out…questioning techniques..." Louise felt that her procedural knowledge and skills in developing pupils' ability to ask questions developed, not through the initial P4C training, but through the experience of facilitating P4C enquiries. Rose felt that the P4C training refreshed and extended her questioning skills and her ability to develop pupil responses "…the types of questions that you ask and the way that you sort of ask them…it brought it all back to me…" Lisa stated that the P4C training taught her how to develop thinking and discussion skills in the classroom and that it also taught her the value of giving children time to think about and share their ideas with each other. Lisa also felt that the P4C training taught her "…how people think…" and that it was "…a real eye opener." For Lily the P4C training consolidated her ideas about questioning techniques and enabling

children to think autonomously "…it cemented a lot of thought about questioning techniques…and also accepting the maturity of thought that the children already have and enabling that to come out." Ann felt that the P4C training provided her with a framework for developing the skills of enquiry and gave her "…another way of listening to children…allowing them to speak and become engaged…" Nick felt that the P4C training gave him confidence and a structure for classroom discussion.

The assumption that teachers understand how to develop pupil questioning, discussion and thinking skills is challenged by data and indicates an unmet professional development need in this area. Seven of the eight teachers in the study felt that their P4C training had enabled them to develop their own questioning and/or the questioning skills of their pupils. Four teachers felt that their training had equipped them with a structure for promoting discussion in the classroom. Three teachers were explicit in stating that P4C had helped them to develop pupil thinking in the classroom.

Interview 1: *Can you recall your initial response to P4C?*

Responses to P4C training were, with the exception of two teachers, very positive. The majority of teachers indicated that P4C legitimised and provided a workable model for developing questioning, thinking and discussion skills in the classroom.

Jane recalled that the P4C training "…made me think I could be the type of teacher I'd always wanted to be…sometimes I think you can get bogged down with all these, you know, strategies and fulfilling requirements and doing all that…it was about really motivating the children and getting them to question things…sometimes you need to be taught that or you need to see that in action in order to do it although you know kind of what you want to happen in your own classroom…" Clare felt that "…it was a very good

sort of concept of sort of bringing out the children's thinking… the activities and things like that were very interesting." Louise was sceptical about the claims made during her P4C training "I struggled to get my head around the fact that it improved reading because a lot of it was discussion based…" Rose felt that the P4C training was reminiscent of teaching before the National Curriculum and stated that "I just loved it…it was more as I remember teaching when I first started…the discussion and the openness of it and not too prescriptive…" Lisa was also enthusiastic about using the P4C approach in the classroom and felt that it legitimised her own desire to increase opportunities for deep discussion in the classroom "…absolutely fantastic… I could see that just the ability to be able to listen to somebody else and be able to debate and to be able to have your own opinion in a safe environment…and this had never been formally explained to me that of course this is alright…for someone to say you can do this and it would fit in with the curriculum…" Lily was similarly excited by the prospect of enabling children to think "I was excited…because it seemed to be just the way we should be going with children equipping them to think…" Ann was enthusiastic about the P4C training and she felt that it offered a different way of 'being' in the classroom "I loved it although I was apprehensive…I thought oh this is just…the way I wanted to teach…" Nick was critical of the P4C training that he received in that he felt it was "…a bit hyper-rational… [I was] more interested in discussing the feelings and …trying to articulate them but not necessarily sticking on a particular word as academic philosophers do…I never really felt… that's ultimately where the meaning making lies..."

Initial responses to P4C training imply a certain level of dissatisfaction with previously prescribed approaches to teaching which, in the case of two teachers, were perceived to limit children's' scope for thinking and discussion. The data suggests a latent desire on the part of the teachers studied to initiate deeper, more meaningful interaction with pupils in

the classroom and responses suggest that P4C legitimised and provided teachers with a meaningful model for achieving this.

Interview 1: *How does P4C relate to your own views about teaching and learning?*

In all cases, P4C accorded to a lesser or greater degree with teacher values and beliefs about teaching and learning. Although the emphasis differed from teacher to teacher, increasing pupil autonomy and engagement in the learning process were common themes throughout.

Jane felt that teaching was about engaging and motivating pupils and asking and teaching pupils to ask the right kind of questions to facilitate learning. She felt that P4C helped teachers to develop these aspects of teaching and learning. Clare thought that P4C validated and afforded pupils the freedom to explore their own ideas without "…worrying about giving a right or a wrong answer…" Louise on the other hand, felt that P4C embodied principles of inclusion in that it provided all pupils with an opportunity to voice their beliefs and opinions and also stressed the importance of listening to the beliefs and opinions of others. Rose thought that P4C accorded with her child-centred ideals; it gave pupils the opportunity to think for themselves and enabled deeper, more critical thinking in other areas of the curriculum "…you can sort of go…where the children take it…you can see it in the subjects as well…the children are questioning there and…not just taking it as this is what happened but [asking] 'how do you know that that is the case?'" Lisa claimed that P4C had helped her to recognise the importance of discussion and exploration for learning "…beforehand I wouldn't have given credit so much to class discussion and I would have put more emphasis on [written evidence]…" Like Rose, Lily stated that P4C complemented her own views about education "It goes hand in hand with my personal ethos about education; child centred…developing pupils…thinking and autonomy…verbal skills as well…" Ann thought that P4C should be embedded within the ethos of the

classroom and become a way of 'being' in school because "…it gives children tools for life…encourages them to dig below the surface of their thoughts and feelings…develops skills of reasoning, explanation…helps stop children from being passive learners." Nick stated that P4C related "very strongly" to his own views about teaching and learning because "one of our main jobs in the primary school classroom is to practise negotiation, debate, agreement, disagreement…basically the tools of discussion…" Nick also believed that P4C was important for developing a sense of community and collective responsibility for learning.

All of the teacher responses to this question related to the perceived importance of developing greater pupil autonomy and engagement in the learning process and the role of P4C in facilitating this. Half of the teachers studied felt that the development of pupils' discussion skills was an important but under-emphasised aspect of teaching and learning. Two of the long-serving teachers felt that P4C accorded with their own views of child-centred learning. All teacher responses implicitly suggested that previously prescribed approaches to teaching encouraged pupil passivity and dependence in the learning process.

Interview 1: *Did your P4C training change your views about teaching in any way?*

P4C training did not appear to change any views about teaching. In the majority of cases it merely consolidated teachers' own ideas about what good teaching entails and provided a framework for achieving this in the classroom.

Jane thought that her P4C training reinforced her own views about good teaching: "…creating inspiring opportunities so that [pupils] are still learning whilst you are teaching what you need to teach…" and she felt that her training provided her with "…the tools to teach in the way I would like to teach…" Like Jane, Clare felt that her P4C training

reinforced her own philosophy about "how I would like my class to run and how I would like my children to learn things…" Louise, on the other hand, was sceptical about the claims made about the impact of P4C during her training i.e. that it improved higher order thinking, motivation and cooperative skills. She felt that these claims were slow to manifest themselves in the classroom "…I just feel like it's a very slow process…and that's the danger of it… I think a quicker response would enthuse more teachers…" For Rose, P4C training confirmed previously held views about the importance of child-centred learning and also made her question the impact of imposed national policy on her own teaching style "…it did make me sort of think, goodness me…this isn't what I was like before I don't want to be like this…" Lisa felt that her P4C training had helped to develop her professional autonomy and confidence to step away from the script "…when I first started [teaching] I followed everything by the book sad to say to the detriment of some of my pupils because we moved on so quickly from one thing to another and you can step away from the framework or step away from whatever it is…" Although P4C training did not change the views of Lily about teaching she reported that she felt angry about the perceived limitations imposed on her teaching by national policy "It just made me angry… that I was supposed to be teaching in a very limited way and not flying with these children…" Ann stated that her P4C training confirmed her previously held views about teaching but it had also enhanced her teaching and provided her with a framework for developing pupils' critical and creative thinking "I think what it's done is move me on a little bit further…it's given me more of a framework…it sort of fits with my way – my style and everything…" Likewise Nick felt that P4C training reinforced his own core values about teaching and gave him a common language for enquiry which is internationally based "…it just gave me confidence and a language like the community of enquiry idea I

thought…that's exactly what I believe …knowing that you're not just going mad…thinking that…spread sheets were not necessarily the answer for being a better teacher…"

The data suggests that primary national strategy policy, with its focus on performativity and prescription of teaching methods, has had a detrimental impact on teachers' professional autonomy and hence the development of pupils' creative and critical thinking in the classroom. Furthermore, it highlights a latent desire on the part of teachers to institute more meaningful, 'child-centred' teaching approaches in the classroom. Although none of the teachers in the study thought that P4C had changed their views about teaching and learning the majority felt that their P4C training reinforced and legitimised previously held views about what good teaching should entail. In the case of three teachers, P4C training was perceived to have provided them with tools which they believed had enhanced their teaching and professional confidence.

Interview 2: *Does the year group you teach make a difference to the amount of time you spend on P4C in the classroom?*

Although all of the teachers studied taught mainly in KS2 only half believed that the maturation levels of pupils had an impact on concentration span and that P4C with younger pupils would, as a consequence, be shorter.

Jane felt that the explorative nature of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum easily facilitated the practice of P4C whereas the curriculum further up the school was more concerned with curriculum coverage and as a consequence there was "…possibly less exploration time.." particularly in year 6 because "…you want to make sure you've prepared them enough for secondary school… [P4C] sometimes falls by the wayside…" Clare implied that younger children might find P4C more difficult to understand and stated

that she would allow older pupils more time for enquiry "…and wouldn't be so strict with the timings…" if they were responding positively. Although Louise had only ever facilitated P4C enquiries with year 4 pupils she felt that "…what makes a difference is the enthusiasm a teacher has…rather than the age group and the belief the teacher has that it works and that it will be beneficial to their class…" Rose stated that "…I think you would be really hard pressed to do it [a P4C enquiry] in less time [than an hour] whatever the year group." Lisa, drawing on discussions with KS1 staff in her own school, felt that the limited concentration span of younger pupils made a difference to the amount of time spent on P4C "…they can't do it for a full hour at all…so they do split things down into half hours…it does make a difference…just the concentration span really." Lily on the other hand, speaking from experience of teaching a full KS2 age range in one class, felt that the year group did not make any difference to the amount of time spent on P4C in the classroom because in her experience "…the younger ones look to the older ones and take their questions from them…" Ann, who taught an upper Key Stage 1, lower Key Stage 2 class, concurred with the views of Clare and Lisa and also felt that a pupil's stage of development had an impact on their concentration span. Nick admitted that he had no experience of teaching P4C to younger pupils but felt that "…maybe older children are able to sustain their concentration for longer."

Although all the teachers studied taught mainly in KS2 there were substantial differences in the amount of time spent in philosophical enquiry in these classrooms which do not appear to be influenced to any great extent by beliefs about maturation levels. One teacher cited teacher belief in the efficacy of P4C as the main determinant of the amount of time spent on P4C in the classroom and another felt that pupils were disadvantaged as they moved through school because of an increasing concern for curriculum coverage and a declining emphasis on exploration.

Anticipated and Unanticipated Consequences of P4C Implementation

Interview 2: *What were your initial thoughts about introducing P4C to your class?*

A small majority of teachers felt apprehensive about introducing P4C to their class. In three cases apprehension was related to concerns about pupil responses and in the other two cases, teachers worried about finding time in the curriculum to implement this approach. Only three teachers reported that they were not concerned about introducing this approach to their class.

Jane reported feeling "…a bit wary" and also "…quite excited" about introducing P4C to her very able and articulate class. "…I was quite worried that actually I was trying to take them…back a little bit first in their thinking in order to actually develop this community of enquiry and whether they would go with that." At the same time Jane also felt excited about the possibilities for developing deeper thinking with such an able group. Clare reported feeling "…a bit reticent" about introducing P4C to her class because she was unsure about how it would benefit her teaching. In addition Clare had some concerns about "…certain children's behaviour…would they embrace it [P4C] or would they use it as an opportunity to…disrupt really." Louise was initially quite pessimistic about introducing P4C to her class and felt that it was "…another thing to fit into the timetable…" She reported that she found it hard "…letting go of that structured lesson that I was so used to teaching each day to produce a piece of work…" Like Clare, Rose also felt doubtful about the pupil response to P4C and worried about the potential for poor behaviour from some of the pupils in her class. In contrast, Lisa reported feeling "…no worries" about introducing P4C to her pupils and was just keen get started with it. Similarly, Lily was also excited and eager to try the approach with her class "I was excited by it and…I wasn't really apprehensive about how it would go…because you know…you

win some…you lose some..." Ann felt apprehensive about introducing P4C to her class for two reasons: "…it was the time aspect…cramming something else extra initially…and although it supports my style of teaching…will I be able to do it justice…" Nick reported feeling optimistic about introducing the P4C approach to his class because he felt it was a good structure for organising class discussion and he could "…feel this working."

The data suggests that a small majority of teachers anticipated some degree of difficulty implementing P4C in their own classroom. Apprehension was mostly related to concerns about pupil responses and curriculum overload although one of the teachers in this group also worried about the fact that pupils would not be producing written evidence of work at the end of each enquiry. Three teachers were unequivocally positive about the prospect of introducing P4C to their class. Despite this initial enthusiasm, two of the teachers from this group later ceased implementation of P4C altogether.

Interview 2: *What considerations did you take into account before introducing P4C to your class?*

The majority of teachers took into account the differing expectations which philosophical enquiry places on pupils. Clear ground rules were established and strategies for addressing difficult behaviours and ensuring pupil engagement were also considered.

The main consideration that Jane took into account before introducing P4C to her class related to the creation of an appropriate ethos in the classroom so that all the pupils felt safe and able to express their opinions confidently: "…'coz like any other class you have children that are very opinionated and children that you have to really draw it out of them because they're quite worried about speaking up in front of the others …" Clare thought about strategies for managing potentially challenging behaviour, the space available for facilitating an enquiry and how to fit P4C into the context of other learning. Louise

considered "…the different abilities of the children…the fact that some children like to be encouraged to speak…and also…which topics I'd be covering…" Rose had a class which were "…quite difficult…boys that could kick off against each other type of thing…" She worried that P4C might become "…a sort of arena for them to start arguing…" and as a consequence she decided was to establish clear ground rules prior to engaging in P4C enquiries. Lisa knew that her class were "…used to the idea of sitting in a circle…all the circle time business…" and she wanted to make clear to the children the difference between P4C and circle time that "it's not just all having a conversation about an issue." Lisa also decided to establish clear ground rules for discussion which included an emphasis on flexible thinking i.e. changing a point of view in light of further evidence. Lily reported that her only consideration was "...the age differentiation with having a full Key Stage 2 class..." Ann on the other hand thought about "…the practical aspects…the thinking skills and how to fully engage every child …making sure that I did have the facilitator role…I'm in control but not dominating it." Nick considered the differing expectations of philosophical enquiry, the fact that pupils were unfamiliar with this way of working and how he might get across the idea of flexible thinking.

The majority of teachers studied recognised the different expectations which philosophical enquiry places on pupils and considerations prior to the introduction of P4C tended to be pupil focused: establishing clear ground rules, managing potentially challenging behaviours and ensuring the engagement of all pupils during philosophical enquiry. Two teachers also considered how they might encourage pupils' flexibility of thought i.e. changing opinions about an issue after listening to the views of others. The data implies that in half the cases studied teachers recognised that changes to the established classroom culture were necessary in order to develop an ethos conducive to philosophical enquiry with pupils.

Interview 2: *Can you describe what your first P4C enquiry with your class was like?*

Initial experiences of P4C enquiry with pupils were problematic for all teachers studied and related to both teacher and pupil inexperience in using this approach and uncertainty about roles and expectations.

When asked to describe her perceptions of the first enquiry with her class Jane felt that there was too much teacher talk because of a worry that certain members of the class would dominate the discussion. Jane was also surprised that her pupils didn't listen and respond to each other as well as she thought they would "…even from the first session I was thinking oh no we've got quite some way to go in terms of them really listening and…responding to each other in the way that they're supposed to…" Clare stated that her first P4C enquiry "…went well…the children were more responsive than I thought they'd be…" although she felt that the enquiry didn't flow as well as it could have done because she had tended to "…stick to the…script that we'd had on the training just to make sure I was doing it right…" Louise admitted that she cut her first P4C enquiry short because pupils were "…making silly remarks and giggling and laughing…getting out of control really…" Rose felt that her first enquiry was "OK" but felt that the discussion got stuck because of her inexperience as a facilitator "…they seemed to get tied up on one aspect and at that point I didn't really know how to move them on from that…" Lisa spent most of her first P4C enquiry developing pupil questioning and getting across the idea that some questions are more 'juicy' than others. She reported that the first session was "very slow" because both she and her class lacked confidence and felt uncertain about what they were doing. Lily reported that although "…the children were all engaged…" in the first P4C enquiry a lot of them found it difficult to generate philosophical questions. During her first enquiry Anne followed "the letter of the law" but felt unsure about "…whether I was

saying too much…whether I was saying too little whether I should be fixing the children's questions and making sure the best questions were asked…" Nick reported that he found it quite difficult to get his children to engage seriously in philosophical discussion during the first enquiry and recalled that the children were "…laughing and giggling and…messing about…" He felt that much of the discussion consisted of pupils "…telling anecdotes vaguely related to the story…"

All of the teachers reported that they had encountered difficulties with their first enquiry. Their experiences fell into two categories: teacher difficulties and pupil difficulties. Teacher difficulties related to inexperience and uncertainty about the facilitators' role. This data confirms previous research findings which acknowledge the complexities of P4C facilitation (Lyle et. al, 2011, Jones, 2008). Pupil difficulties in initial enquiries also appear to be linked to inexperience and uncertainty about their role in the enquiry process; pupil responses as a consequence included difficulties generating philosophical questions, giggling, messing about and not listening to the views of others. The data highlights the difference between the expectations and practice of philosophical enquiry and the everyday expectations and practice of the primary classroom.

Interview 2: *Did your first enquiry meet, exceed or fall below your expectations?*

Half of the teachers studied felt that their initial experience of philosophical enquiry with pupils was disappointing although expectations were challenged for a variety of reasons. Only two teachers anticipated that it would take some time to establish serious communities of enquiry with their pupils.

Jane felt that her first enquiry fell below her expectations because "…my expectations [were] too high…I don't think it was probably a fair judgement of the children…" Clare on

the other hand felt that her first enquiry exceeded her expectations because of positive response from her pupils "I didn't know what to expect from the children…and they sort of…took me by surprise a bit." Louise reported that the first enquiry fell below her expectations "…purely because …there's six boys in [the class] who…really bounce off each other." Rose felt that her first enquiry fell below her expectations because "…they got wound up on that one aspect and I didn't sort of know how to move away from that…so sort of lack of experience by me and by them as well." Lisa recalled that her first enquiry fell below her expectations because "I didn't realise it was gonna take quite as long …to give the children the right…bits and pieces that they needed to know…it did fall below but only because I thought that I would get further." Lily felt that her first enquiry met her expectations "…because the children rose to it and were just very sparky and interested." Ann also felt that her first enquiry met her expectations as she was aware that it would take her pupils a while to get used to a different way of working. Likewise, Nick also reported that his first enquiry met his expectations because the response from his pupils was not unexpected and he understood from watching a SAPERE training video that "…it would take a little while…before the kids took it seriously."

Teacher expectations were challenged during their first philosophical enquiries in a small majority of cases: challenges appear to have arisen in most part because of teacher and pupil inexperience and/or mismatched teacher expectations of pupils during the enquiry process. Only two teachers anticipated that it would take a while to establish a serious community of enquiry and as a consequence their expectations of initial enquiries were not unduly challenged. The data does not indicate any direct link between initial difficulties experienced implementing this approach and later frequency and duration of implementation.

<u>Relative Advantages and Disadvantages of P4C Implementation</u>

Interview 2: *Have you noticed any changes in your pupils since they started doing P4C?*

Changes in pupils attributed to P4C related to the development of pupils' confidence, social and communication skills. Two teachers were reticent about attributing changes in pupils to P4C because of a variety of other factors impinging upon pupil development.

Jane stated that some of her more dominant pupils were very confident speakers but "…weren't great listeners…" and tended to ignore the contributions of other classmates in discussion. She felt that the P4C process had developed their ability to listen to and appreciate the views of other quieter members of the class "…they realised their contributions made them think and were actually quite interesting…" Clare didn't know if she had done enough enquiries to "…really qualify whether there's been an impact or not…" but she felt that some of her quieter children had grown in confidence. Louise also felt that some of her quieter pupils were more confident in expressing their ideas in front of the class but added that it was difficult to determine the extent to which P4C had facilitated improvements in reading and writing. Like Jane, Rose reported that in early enquiries her pupils were more interested in expressing their own opinions than listening to the views of others. She observed "…they're starting to listen more…and coming back to what other people are saying…they answer each other more…" Lisa stated that her class had already had a year's experience of philosophical enquiry and were "quite familiar and happy with the whole process of thinking…" She observed that the average and above average ability pupils found philosophical enquiry much easier than the lower ability pupils and it was these pupils who were asking questions in other lessons. Lily stated that she didn't do P4C for long enough to see an impact on her pupils. Ann felt that her pupils were more confident and were asking more questions in other areas of the curriculum but, like

Louise, felt that it was difficult to attribute these changes in pupils to P4C as "…there are so many other things that are going on in school and at home…" Nick felt that "…school is a lot about guessing what the right answer is…what the teacher wants you to say…" He believed that P4C had helped his pupils to think for themselves and "…answer some of those inferential questions…the…reading comprehension."

The changes noted by teachers fell into 3 main categories: improved listening skills and appreciation of others points of view; increased confidence to participate in classroom discussion, particularly amongst quieter pupils in the class; and increased pupil questioning in other lessons. Two teachers mentioned the difficulty of attributing change to P4C when there were so many other factors impacting upon pupils in school and at home. The data suggests that P4C effected positive changes in pupils' confidence levels, questioning, social and communication skills. Except in one case, the changes noted by teachers, although important for pupils' personal development, were not perceived to confer any particular advantage in terms of pupil improvement in areas of the curriculum that are subject to national assessment tests.

Interview 3: *What are the benefits of P4C for teachers?*

A small majority of teachers reported that P4C had enabled them to gain a much more comprehensive picture of their pupils' beliefs, interests and abilities and in two cases, teachers stated that this information had informed their teaching in other contexts. Three teachers believed that P4C had facilitated deeper, more meaningful learning in other curriculum areas.

Jane felt that P4C was a vehicle for developing creativity in the curriculum, that P4C provided teachers with a different perspective of pupils and also enabled purposeful

discussion in the classroom "…there's lots of depth to it it's not just speaking and listening for speaking and listening sake and the kids feel that as well…particularly because they're discussing their own questions." Clare felt that P4C gave her permission "…to allow the children more time for thinking and questioning…they don't actually have to have something written down on paper…you are achieving something in your lessons." Louise on the other hand, felt that P4C enabled her to get to know her pupils "…as a person more and their real beliefs…" She liked the fact that P4C involved no marking and that it conferred social prestige as the head teacher was "passionately" supportive of this approach. Like Louise, Rose felt that P4C enabled her to gain a more in depth knowledge and understanding of the pupils in her class "…you get to know the children better and how they think…the whole child." Lisa felt that P4C benefited teachers because it required minimal planning, resources for philosophical stimulus were easy to find and it provided a vehicle for developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. Lisa also believed that it developed a more reflective and questioning attitude in her pupils. In accordance with Louise and Rose, Lily felt that P4C provided her with greater insight and a fuller picture of her pupils "…how they tick…how they think…" and that this information was useful in tailoring responses to pupils in other situations. Ann believed that P4C enabled pupils to "…find what matters to them rather than what matters to the adults…" She felt that it also facilitated greater pupil independence in learning and a more collaborative attitude in the classroom. Nick felt that P4C was "…good for your soul… gives you a chance to see kids in a different light and gives you a different perspective on some of the kids and their thoughts and abilities…" Nick also felt that the broader perspective of pupils' abilities gained through P4C enriched his teaching in other areas of the curriculum.

The data suggests that one of the main reported benefits of P4C for teachers relates to the opportunities which P4C affords to develop more in-depth knowledge and understanding

about the pupils in their class; information which two teachers later used to inform teaching and responses to pupils in other contexts. Other advantages for teachers included no marking, minimal planning and resourcing, and improved confidence to allow more time for thinking and discussion. Three teachers believed that wider benefits, like greater pupil independence and deeper more meaningful learning in the classroom, accrued from the development of pupils' thinking, questioning and discussion skills.

Interview 3: *What are the disadvantages of P4C?*

The most common complaint about P4C related to the time taken to organise the classroom for philosophical enquiry, although in the case of two teachers this appeared to be a very minor issue. Two teachers expressed varying degrees of concern about the potential of P4C for increasing the vulnerability of some students. Other perceived disadvantages reiterated concerns expressed in earlier interview questions.

Jane couldn't think of any disadvantages of P4C. For Clare "…fitting [P4C] in to…what's already a fairly tight schedule…" and "…organising the classroom…there's a certain amount of moving the desks around and things like that…" were deemed to be disadvantageous. Louise felt that it was not easy trying to establish an appropriate ethos for enquiry in the classroom "…the instilling of the rules and trying to get it off to a good start it's a struggle…" Louise also felt that a lack of teacher confidence in the ability to facilitate enquiries might also be disadvantageous as it fuelled self-doubt "…am I doing it right and is it really worthwhile…" After much thought Rose felt that "…changing your classroom about…" to accommodate P4C enquiries might possibly be regarded as a disadvantage of P4C. Lisa stated "…I do like to rearrange my classroom so that's time consuming. That's a bit picky really I'm just grasping at straws here for negative things…just a tiny niggle…" Like Jane, Lily couldn't identify any disadvantages of P4C.

Ann felt that P4C made some pupils feel vulnerable and exacerbated popularity issues within the class. Ann also wondered about the potentially negative consequences of developing pupils' critical and creative thinking if they then moved to a school where this was not encouraged or even actively discouraged: "…Is it possible that removal of P4C could be more dangerous by removing it than if it had never been available to those pupils in the first place?" Nick suggested that P4C might be criticised for "…not having specific enough goals and un-measurable goals…" He also wondered whether personal disclosures from pupils during philosophical enquiries might make them more vulnerable.

A small majority of teachers found it difficult (and in two cases) impossible to identify any disadvantages of P4C. The most commonly perceived disadvantage of P4C related to the time taken to organise the classroom in preparation for a philosophical enquiry, although in the case of two teachers, this concern was regarded as fairly trivial. Two teachers in the study reiterated concerns expressed in earlier interview questions relating to time constraints, teacher confidence and the establishment of an appropriate ethos for enquiry. Other mooted disadvantages included the potential of P4C for increasing the vulnerability of some pupils in the classroom and the possible negative consequences of fostering pupil autonomy.

Interview 2: *What problems (if any) have you encountered implementing this approach in your classroom?*

Pupil engagement, time and curricular constraints were the three main problems encountered by teachers implementing P4C in the classroom. In the case of three teachers behavioural issues appeared to contribute significantly to the difficulties experienced when trying to engage pupils in philosophical enquiry.

Jane felt that sometimes the stimulus chosen for enquiry failed to engage the pupils and that on occasions it would be better if the pupils were able to choose a stimulus: "I know to an extent we have to provide the stimulus as teachers…but…sometimes actually it would be better if it was coming from them…" Jane wondered whether it was permissible to allow the pupils opportunities to choose a stimulus for enquiry. Clare encountered problems with the "…behaviour of some children…I've just had difficulties with some children who have got behavioural difficulties anyway and you're trying to keep them involved but you also try to keep a lid on them so that everyone else can have a go…" Clare also reiterated "…just getting your classroom organised…you've got to move desks and stuff…to be in a circle…it does take a bit of organising…" Louise echoed the difficulties experience by Clare in terms of engaging pupils with challenging behaviours in philosophical enquiries "…it's the sheer unwillingness of some of them to sit for more than ten minutes and listen to what other people are saying or their inability to at the moment which doesn't seem to be improving…passing silly comments when it's not their turn big problems from the boys…" Rose felt that the main problems she encountered when implementing P4C in the classroom were time constraints and feeling pressure from the other demands of the literacy curriculum, specifically the development of pupils' writing. Lisa also echoed the views of 8EP. Lily felt that time constraints and the difficulties of covering the content of curriculum created problems for implementing P4C in the classroom "…it's time and the curriculum…something gets squeezed…and as I teach literacy…science…ICT and history and geography I've got programmes to finish …but I daresay if I'd thought about it a bit more I could've fitted it in…" Ann felt that there were difficulties implementing the P4C approach with a full class of children and that some children got bored and frustrated whilst waiting for an opportunity to speak. Nick observed that pupil conflicts and difficulties in relationships with each other impacted on

the quality of philosophical enquiries in the classroom. He felt that it was difficult to get pupils to engage wholeheartedly in the P4C process because of a lack of trust and respect for each other "…there's often kind of…untrusting, guarded responses to philosophy conversations with the children…"

Although one might reasonably expect time and curricular constraints to be the most commonly cited problems experienced by teachers when implementing the P4C approach in the classroom the data indicates that this is not the case. Instead, difficulties maintaining pupil engagement during the enquiry process, attributed to behavioural issues and other factors, was cited as the most common problem among a small majority of the teachers studied.

Interview 2: *How have you addressed these problems?*

Due to varying circumstances, three teachers were not in a position to address the problems they had encountered facilitating philosophical enquiry with their classes. Issues of engagement related to challenging behaviour and poor pupil relationships were addressed by three teachers using a range of familiar strategies which accorded with school discipline policies. In the case of two teachers, time constraints and curriculum pressures, although an on-going issue, were minimised by facilitating philosophical enquiries at the beginning of the week.

Jane stated that she had yet to address the problems she had encountered implementing P4C. She felt that her new class had not had enough experience of the P4C approach to begin choosing stimuli for enquiries for themselves "…I don't [think] I've given them enough experiences of …having this community of enquiry to do that yet…" Clare addressed issues of challenging behaviour by "…trying to remind [pupils] what's

expected…the ground rules for discussion in circle time and things like that…I mean you don't want to exclude any children from the activities but sometimes…you have to almost ignore them just to give everybody else a go really." Louise addressed issues of challenging behaviour by applying the assertive discipline policy and removing disruptive pupils from the enquiry after three warnings. Rose stated that she addressed issues of time constraints and curriculum coverage by doing "…enquiries at the beginning of the week so that it doesn't get pushed out." Lisa also did likewise. Lily did not address the problems she had encountered implementing P4C but admitted that she might have done if she'd "…thought about it a bit more…" Although Ann felt that facilitating P4C enquiries with a whole class was problematic she admitted that she hadn't "…cracked that one yet…" and stated that she was "…still open to suggestions how I can do…" Nick believed that the development of trusting and respectful relationships was an on-going aspect of his everyday work "…continually articulating the way in which you want them to respond to each other and…how if you respond in another way these are the implications…"

A minority of teachers were not in a position to address the problems they had encountered in implementing P4C in the classroom. The intractable problem of time and curriculum constraints was minimised in the case of two teachers by facilitating philosophical enquiry at the beginning of the school week. Problems of pupil engagement, related to issues of challenging behaviour and poor pupil relationships, were addressed by three teachers using a range of familiar and well-rehearsed strategies. Teachers did not consider the use of alternative pupil groupings as strategy for maintaining pupil engagement during philosophical enquiry (and potentially minimising behavioural issues); this may be attributed to fixed ideas about how philosophical enquiry should be conducted related to experiences during P4C training.

Conclusion

This chapter has been concerned with reporting the results of empirical data collection in order to answer the sub-research questions *"How do primary teachers implement P4C in the classroom?"* and *"What do teachers say are the main factors influencing their decision making?"*

Examples of tensions between the educational assumptions embedded in the practice of P4C and the assumptions and requirements of the prevailing educational context are prevalent throughout this chapter. The data indicates that for all of the teachers studied, time constraints, associated with curriculum overload and performativity pressures, circumscribed the nature and extent of P4C implementation. However, the impact of the aforementioned pressures varied considerably between individuals, and in most cases appears to be related to differences in levels of motivation and access to P4C professional development and support.

Three distinct groups emerge from the data: teachers who continue to implement P4C on a regular (weekly) basis; teachers who continue to implement P4C on an intermittent basis; and teachers who ceased implementation altogether. Leat (1999) proposes that teacher efficacy can be used to explain disparities in the implementation of thinking skills programmes. The next chapter will use the construct of teacher efficacy as an organising framework to explore in detail the common factors bearing upon the P4C implementation process between these three distinct groups of teachers. In view of the prevalence of examples within this chapter concerning the tensions between the assumptions and practice of P4C and those of the prevailing educational context the writer will then go on to explore the concept of P4C as a counter-cultural practice.

Chapter 6: Analysis and Discussion

Introduction

The previous chapter reported the results of data gathering relating to the nature and extent of P4C implementation in the classroom and the factors influencing teacher decision making in this process. Two important areas for analysis and discussion emerge from the data: Firstly, the data revealed three distinct groups of P4C implementers: teachers who continue to facilitate P4C on a regular (weekly) basis; teachers who continue to facilitate P4C on an intermittent basis; and teachers who ceased P4C facilitation altogether. Secondly, the data highlighted conflict between the values and practice of P4C and the assumptions and requirements of the prevailing educational policy context which, although differential in effect, were common to all groups of P4C implementers. The first part of this chapter will analyse and discuss the factors which appear to differentiate between the three groups of P4C implementers identified. The second part of this chapter will analyse and discuss the concept of P4C as a counter-cultural practice with reference to the accounts of the P4C implementers studied in this research. In doing so, this chapter will address the sub-research questions 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 outlined on pages 5 and 6 of this thesis.

Three Different Groups of P4C Implementers

Leat (1999) is convinced that teacher efficacy is "…a measure of the chances of implementing change" (p.399) in the classroom. The writer believes that the challenges to P4C outlined in the results chapter (i.e. levels of professional development, motivation and commitment and tensions between the assumptions and practice of P4C and the requirements of the prevailing educational context) constitute aspects of teacher efficacy, a

construct which the writer will enlarge upon and then employ in an attempt to explain disparities in implementation effects amongst the teachers studied.

The construct of teacher efficacy

Three interrelated aspects constitute teacher efficacy: personal efficacy; outcome efficacy; and teaching efficacy (Leat, 1999, p.399). Leat (1999) argues that teachers must possess *all three elements* for the successful implementation of thinking skills programmes. The dimensions of each aspect of teacher efficacy will now be addressed in turn.

<u>Personal Efficacy</u>

Personal efficacy refers to the beliefs that an individual holds about their ability to effect positive change. It is both an individual and a social construct; personal efficacy is often achieved in a social context and is mediated by social as well as individual factors. The social factors which influence personal efficacy in a change situation include: the extent and quality of professional development experience designed to effect change; the organisational capacity to implement and sustain change; and levels of collaboration within the organisation to support the change process. At an individual level the factors which influence personal efficacy include: the context for change; teaching histories; and personal attributes e.g. confidence levels, risk-taking, persistence in the face of difficulties, flexibility etc.

<u>Outcome efficacy</u>

Fullan (2007) states that during the "…early implementation stage, the people involved must perceive both that the needs being addressed are significant and that they are making at least some progress towards meeting them" (p89). Outcome efficacy refers to a belief that the strategies employed will achieve the desired objectives and is manifested in levels

of motivation and commitment. The interrelated factors which influence outcome efficacy include: the compatibility of the innovation with teacher's own beliefs and expectations; pupil responses to initiated changes; and the costs and benefits that are perceived to accrue from such changes.

<u>Teaching efficacy</u>

Teaching efficacy refers to the belief that one can "overcome all the problems that the teaching environment poses" (Leat, 1999, p399). The problems faced by the teachers in this study appear to arise mainly from the difficulties of implementing a pedagogical approach which runs counter to the prevailing educational philosophy. Time, curricular constraints, performativity pressures and established classroom cultures were all problematized by the introduction of P4C. Teaching efficacy can be gauged by the responses employed to address these issues and the level of implementation success achieved by teachers in the study.

Group 1: Regular (weekly) P4C implementers

The regular (weekly) implementers of P4C included Louise, Rose and Lisa. Both Rose and Lisa worked in the same school. Louise taught in lower key stage 2 and both Rose and Lisa taught in upper key stage 2 (see appendix 4).

All of the regular implementers were operating in a context in which P4C had been initiated as part of a school-wide drive to develop a more creative curriculum. In the case of Louise's school, P4C was also initiated in response to the changing requirements of the Ofsted inspection schedule as P4C was perceived by the Head teacher to "…meet the things that Ofsted look for in developing the child as a whole…" As a consequence whole school P4C professional development activity was undertaken in both of these schools and

opportunities for mentoring and coaching in this approach were also provided for staff. Although there were significant differences in the extent of P4C training undertaken by the regular implementers the capacity to further develop teacher skills in P4C was fairly substantial within each of their educational settings; both schools included a P4C enthusiast who had not only accessed a significant level (60 hours +) of SAPERE P4C training but were also willing to collaborate and provide further support to other members of staff.

All of the regular implementers experienced initial difficulties facilitating P4C in their classrooms and each admitted that their first experience of enquiry fell below their expectations. In all cases interview responses revealed a determination to persevere with P4C, although the factors driving this differed between teachers. In the case of Louise, external drivers, i.e. support and encouragement from the Head teacher, appeared to facilitate her commitment to keep going despite initial misgivings "…the Head teacher has a big grin on his face when he sees us doing it he believes in it passionately…it's good to get feedback…like the Head teacher to say 'It's good you're doing P4C'…you know it gives you a bit of a boost…want to do it a bit more often." Fullan (2007) states that, "Principals' actions serve to legitimate whether a change is to be taken seriously (and not all changes are) and to support teachers both psychologically and with resources" (p95). Louise was also resourceful; this was manifested in her self-initiated use of the internet and other sources of information to seek solutions to the problems she was experiencing. For Rose, her motivation to persevere with P4C appeared to stem from her teaching history; not only did her P4C training refresh and extend skills which she had employed prior to the introduction of the National Curriculum, it also reinforced the value of these skills for deep learning. In addition, Rose took a long term view with regards to her own professional development in this area; she recognised that her initial difficulties implementing the P4C approach were partly due to her inexperience and she believed that

her facilitation skills would develop gradually with time and practice "…knowing what to say and when to say it…that comes with experience..." Enthusiasm for P4C fuelled Lisa's determination to persist with P4C despite initial difficulties. This enthusiasm was associated with a latent desire to provide opportunities for in-depth discussion and deeper learning in her classroom and was sustained through collaboration with her colleague Rose. In all these cases, perseverance was rewarded with reported improvements in confidence levels as their P4C facilitation skills developed.

The value ascribed to P4C differed markedly between the three regular implementers and appear to be related to teaching roles and histories: Louise felt that P4C embodied the principles of inclusion, an agenda with which she was heavily involved in her capacity as Special Educational Needs Coordinator. For Rose, P4C was reminiscent of teaching before the National Curriculum and represented a shift back to cherished child centred ideals "…it was more as I remember teaching when I first started…you can sort of go…where the children take it…" In contrast, Lisa, a teacher trained after the introduction of the National Curriculum, viewed P4C in both instrumental and emancipatory terms: P4C helped her to recognise the importance of discussion and exploration for learning but equally as important, she felt that P4C also helped to develop her professional autonomy and confidence to step away from the 'script'. In all cases the value ascribed to P4C appeared to be significant in terms of addressing perceived development needs related to classroom practice.

The tangible benefits perceived to accrue from the implementation of P4C also appeared to outweigh the costs in the case of the regular implementers and the perceived benefits extended beyond the time prescribed for this activity. All of the teachers in this group reported that P4C had enhanced the quality of pupil learning in the classroom as elements

of the P4C enquiry process transferred into other areas of the curriculum: In the case of Louise this was initiated spontaneously by the pupils; they began to use the language of enquiry, ask questions and offer their own opinions on matters under discussion in other lessons. In the case of Rose and Lisa elements of the enquiry process were consciously employed in other lessons and initiated by the teachers themselves as Lisa stated, "…more actually having private thinking time with the particular topic…those initial first words and last words…those sorts of strategies in other areas of the curriculum…more time to discuss amongst themselves." Quite apart from the wider benefits, other more specific benefits for these teachers were also perceived to accrue from P4C practice; both Louise and Rose felt that P4C enabled them to gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of the pupils in their class; Louise enjoyed the social prestige that P4C implementation conferred and appreciated the lack of marking; and Lisa felt that P4C required minimal planning and was easy to resource. In addition to this, each of these teachers recognised and exploited the opportunities that P4C provided for developing and assessing pupils' speaking and listening skills.

All of the regular implementers adopted a fidelity approach to change i.e. P4C was implemented according to its original intentions; time was allocated on a weekly basis specifically for enquiry, teachers followed the P4C sequence and employed Socratic questioning to promote and extend pupil thinking. In order to achieve this, these teachers embedded philosophical enquiry into the existing curriculum (primarily literacy) and used resources linked specifically to the content of the curriculum as a means of overcoming time and curricular constraints. In addition Rose and Lisa made a conscious decision to facilitate enquiries at the beginning of the week so that P4C didn't get 'frozen out' by other demands on their time. However, despite high levels of commitment and the employment of strategies which appeared to be effective in facilitating the regular

implementation of P4C, this innovation was still vulnerable to the effects of performativity pressure, particularly in upper key stage two: Rose and Lisa reported suspending P4C activity for a substantial period of time in the spring term (in Lisa's case the whole of the spring term) to make space for SATs preparation. Lisa stated, "…every single literacy lesson was either a planning…a writing or an editing of practice questions for SATS."

For the most part, this group of teachers were successful in overcoming the problems that the teaching environment posed and P4C professional development which included opportunities for school based mentoring and coaching supported the growth of their personal efficacy in this approach. However, the evidence suggests that, particularly in the case of Rose and Lisa, the perceived value of and benefits ascribed to P4C were particularly significant motivating factors driving commitment to regular implementation of this approach in the classroom.

Group 2: Intermittent P4C implementers

The intermittent implementers of P4C included: Jane, Clare and Ann. Both Jane and Clare taught in upper key stage two and Ann taught a mixed upper key stage 1 and lower key stage 2 class (see appendix 4).

In the case of two of the intermittent implementers P4C professional development appeared to be the result of happy chance as opposed to forward planning by their respective schools: Jane was invited to attend an external one day P4C training event which was "actually…an offer from another school…" and this opportunity coincided with the school's plans to develop a more creative curriculum and promote the development and assessment of pupil's speaking and listening skills. Although Ann had experienced a twilight P4C training session at her previous school, her substantive P4C training was the

result of participation in a Creative Contexts project which provided staff at her current school with the opportunity to observe a SAPERE accredited trainer facilitating philosophical enquiries with their children "…we were all so inspired by her that my head decided we had one free inset day left…and so she came in and did…a days' training…" Clare on the other hand worked in the same school as Louise and received whole school training in the P4C approach as part of planning for creative curriculum development.

The organisational capacity to support and sustain teachers' change efforts differed substantially between this group of teachers: Jane had no access to coaching and mentoring and was responsible, after only one day of training, for cascading the P4C approach to staff in her school; Ann received some coaching and mentoring support from an outside specialist as part of a whole-school training package and later completed a master's thesis in this area; whereas Clare had access to mentoring and coaching from an experienced SAPERE level 2 trained teacher based in the school. The data suggests that teacher uncertainty about what constitutes a good philosophical enquiry is more likely in circumstances where teachers have received minimal face to face training experience (particularly if this is not accompanied by school based mentoring and coaching) and may result in misapplication of this approach in the classroom. For example, Jane's one day of P4C training appeared to concentrate mostly on the development of pupil questioning "…just getting them in foundation stage to ask questions about anything and then developing that up towards the end of school…" As a consequence Jane was unsure about what constituted a good enquiry, employed a limited repertoire of strategies in philosophical enquiry, and expressed a desire for further training in this area.

All the intermittent implementers recalled a positive response to P4C training. P4C was perceived as a useful "framework" or "tool" for enhancing teaching and learning with

regards to the development of questioning and discussion skills in the classroom and teachers felt that their training provided them with strategies to move closer towards their ideal vision of a "good teacher". However, interview responses indicate that what they valued from their P4C training contradicted (in the case of the two younger teachers) perceived accountability expectations. Both Jane and Clare expressed anxiety about not producing written evidence of pupil's achievements in philosophical enquiry, as exemplified by Jane in the following comment: "I think you get so hung up on wanting to have written evidence of what they know…writing down some of the comments which are more valuable…you can let the discussion really unfold…knowing it's not a waste of time." It is therefore unsurprising that the time spent on philosophical enquiry by these two teachers fell far short of the time recommended by SAPERE.

Like the regular implementers, both Ann and Jane recognised and exploited P4C as a vehicle for developing and assessing speaking and listening skills. In addition to this benefit, Ann felt that P4C facilitated greater pupil independence and collaboration in the classroom and Jane felt that P4C was a vehicle for developing creativity and increased her understanding of the pupils in her class. Clare on the other hand felt that P4C gave her "…permission to allow children more time for thinking and questioning…" However, the benefits of P4C implementation appeared to be tempered by the disadvantages perceived to accrue from P4C practice: All these teachers voiced concerns about finding the time to fit this approach into what was regarded as an already crowded curriculum and P4C was vulnerable to performativity pressures especially in upper key stage 2. Jane stated, "…you want to make sure that you've prepared them enough for secondary school… [P4C] sometimes falls by the wayside." This group of teachers also experienced difficulties with pupil engagement during philosophical enquiry which, at the time of interviews, they were unable to resolve

satisfactorily. In the case of Ann the evidence suggests that some of her "more logical-mathematically minded pupils" found it difficult to adjust to the changed expectations within the classroom and were more comfortable with a didactic pedagogical approach. Other more individual factors also impacted on motivation: Clare felt that it was difficult to qualify the impact of P4C on pupils and that organising the classroom for enquiry was time consuming; and Ann believed that P4C exacerbated popularity issues within her class and increased the vulnerability of some of her pupils. Ann also wondered: "…Is it possible that the removal of P4C could be more dangerous by removing it than if it had never been available to those pupils in the first place?" This remark is significant in that it suggests that P4C is operating in a context where the development of pupil's intellectual autonomy runs counter to prevailing educational practice and raises questions about the ethics of developing pupil expectations about processes of learning which may be challenged at a later stage in their education.

The intermittent implementers appear to have adopted an evolutionary approach to P4C implementation i.e. the innovation was transformed by these users to fit their circumstances: Philosophical enquiry was facilitated where time permitted and, in the case of Jane and Ann, elements of the P4C approach were embedded within other subject areas and therefore perceived to be occurring "implicitly" on a far more regular basis. However, the data suggests that what was occurring in these classrooms "implicitly" on a regular basis was good classroom discussion rather than philosophical enquiry; following a teacher specified agenda and focused on outcomes related to curricular content.

Although all of the teachers in this group included P4C in short-term subject planning and facilitated enquiries using resources linked to the content of the curriculum as a way of addressing time and curricular constraints, these strategies were only partially successful in

facilitating the implementation of P4C in their respective classrooms. In the case of Jane, extremely limited P4C training which focused for the main part on the development of pupil questioning, coupled with the performativity pressures associated with teaching a year six class, appear to be the key factors determining her approach to P4C implementation. For Ann, difficulties related to pupil engagement and wellbeing perceived to arise as a consequence of philosophical enquiry, coupled with a belief that P4C was "…embedded in the ethos of the classroom…" and "…implicitly…going on all the time…" appear to be the main contributory factors influencing her approach to P4C implementation. Clare's case is significant in that it illustrates "within-school variance" (Fullan, 2007, p103) of P4C implementation. Despite the affordances provided through her school to build personal efficacy in this approach, for Clare, the questionable benefits of P4C and difficulties with pupil engagement in philosophical enquiry coupled with time, curricular and performativity pressures appear to be the main factors impacting upon her motivation to implement P4C in the classroom.

Group 3: Ceased Implementers

The ceased implementers of P4C included Lily and Nick. Lily was responsible for teaching a full key stage 2 class and Nick taught in upper key stage 2 (see appendix 4).

Both Lily and Nick attended externally based P4C training instigated out of personal professional interest, and both were working in contexts where the organisational capacity to support their efforts to implement change in this area were negligible: P4C was unrelated to whole school development and neither of these teachers had access to school based mentoring and coaching. Lily had one day of P4C professional development and like Jane, this left her feeling inadequately prepared for facilitating philosophical enquiry with her own class. Although Lily felt that her training "…cemented a lot of thought about

questioning techniques…and accepting the maturity of thought that children already have and enabling that to come out…" she was critical of the fact that her training precluded opportunities for her to experience a community of enquiry first-hand before "…trying it out in my classroom." At the other extreme, Nick, a philosophy graduate, felt more than adequately prepared for facilitating philosophical enquiry in his classroom as his circumstances permitted access to both SAPERE level one and SAPERE level two training. Nick felt that his P4C professional development experiences provided him with a structure for classroom discussion and stated that opportunities for engaging in communities of enquiry first hand gave him the "…confidence to have a go…" in his own classroom.

In both cases, P4C resonated strongly with and reinforced core values about teaching and learning. Although the value attributed to P4C by these teachers appeared to reflect their teaching histories both suggested that P4C represented a more satisfactory educational paradigm than the one promulgated through national policy initiatives: Lily, an older teacher on the verge of retirement, felt that P4C was "child centred…developing pupils'…thinking and autonomy…verbal skills as well" and reported feeling angry "…that I was supposed to be teaching in a very limited way and not flying with these children." Nick, a teacher trained after the introduction of the National Curriculum, felt that P4C was important for developing "…the tools of discussion…" and P4C confirmed his view that "…spread sheets were not necessarily the answer for being a better teacher." Both teachers were optimistic about introducing philosophical enquiry into their classrooms and their initial experiences of enquiry did not challenge their expectations. In terms of tangible benefits, both Lily and Nick agreed that P4C facilitated a broader perspective of pupils' interests, abilities and thinking processes and they both used this information to their advantage in other areas of the curriculum. In addition, Nick felt that "…school is a lot

about guessing what the right answer is…what the teacher wants you to say…" and he believed that P4C had helped his pupils to think for themselves and "…answer some of those inferential questions…the…reading comprehension."

Both Lily and Nick implemented the P4C approach as a stand-alone session. Although links to the curriculum were recognised, P4C was not embedded into any curriculum area and resources chosen as a stimulus for enquiry were unrelated to the content of the curriculum. Instead resources were chosen because of their broad appeal to a full key stage 2 age range (in the case of Lily) or their philosophical content (in the case of Nick) and reflected the teaching context and personal history of these respective teachers. P4C was not included in these teachers' short-term plans and pupil progress was not assessed either. Interview responses revealed a belief, in both cases, that thinking skills were as Lily stated, "…not very measurable…" Although both Lily and Nick perceived the needs being addressed through P4C as being personally significant to their own practice in terms of increasing understanding of the pupils in their classrooms, they were situated in a policy context which values what can be measured above all other considerations. Unlike the other P4C implementers in this study Lily and Nick did not employ P4C as a vehicle for developing or assessing pupils' skills in areas of the curriculum that were subject to statutory assessment, and as a consequence they were in a position where they were less able to justify continued P4C implementation when faced with increasing time and performance pressures.

Lily was an intermittent P4C implementer prior to ceasing this approach and the evidence suggests that after a reduction in her hours due to a falling pupil roll, her approach to P4C implementation made it difficult to overcome problems related to time constraints and curriculum coverage; this was implicitly acknowledged when she admitted "…if I'd thought

about it a bit more I could've fitted it in." In contrast, Nick had implemented P4C regularly for an extensive period of time prior to ceasing this approach, indicating high levels of motivation and commitment. Due to school circumstances, Nick, along with the rest of his colleagues, experienced increasing pressure to raise pupil achievement in core areas of the curriculum and as a consequence he ceased philosophical enquiry with his class. However, the evidence suggests that like Lily, his approach to P4C implementation may have been a contributory factor in his inability to overcome these performativity pressures.

Fuzzy Predictions

Bassey (2001) asserts that "…wherever possible the outcome of empirical educational research should include fuzzy predictions" (p.17) because users of research, for example, policy makers, managers, teachers and the like, usually want to ascertain "…what may happen in their situation if a particular action is taken" (Ibid, p12). Fuzzy predictions are tentative claims that something *may* be true and are predicated on the notion that the 'thick description' intrinsic to qualitative research enables readers to make an informed judgement about the "relatability" (Bassey, 1981, p85) of the research findings to their own context.

Before summarising the factors which appear to determine levels of teacher efficacy amongst the groups of P4C implementers studied, the writer would like to emphasise that although the sample size is small, several points emerge from the analysis which the writer believes may be of practical value to others involved in the process of P4C implementation. Many of these points assume the form of fuzzy predictions which readers may apply to their own contexts to make judgements about the likely consequences of particular courses of action on the P4C implementation process. The writer will now address the key factors which appear to determine teacher efficacy in the P4C approach in turn.

The development of personal efficacy in the P4C approach appears to be best supported when teachers have the opportunity for extended professional development that includes school-based mentoring and coaching. Furthermore, the data suggests that opportunities for extended P4C professional development which includes school-based mentoring and coaching are more likely to happen in circumstances where P4C is instigated as part of a whole school development agenda. In the schools where P4C was implemented regularly, school-based P4C enthusiasts with substantial training and experience of this approach acted as positive change agents; collaborating with and supporting colleagues through the implementation process. Conversely, research suggests that in circumstances where personal efficacy in facilitating philosophical enquiry was limited due to insufficient training and support, then teachers were more likely to implement this approach intermittently. The assumption of implicit practice was also another factor which appeared to determine intermittent P4C implementation; in two cases teachers believed that because elements of the P4C approach were embedded in other curricular areas P4C was therefore being implemented on a far more regular basis. This suggests that misinterpretation and partial application of the P4C approach may be a further consequence of limited professional development.

Outcome efficacy appears to be strengthened in circumstances where P4C is perceived to contribute to whole school agendas and areas of the curriculum which are subject to statutory assessment: In the case of the regular implementers, P4C was implemented as part of creative curriculum development and each of these teachers recognised and exploited the opportunities that P4C provided for developing and assessing pupils' speaking and listening skills. Likewise, two of the intermittent implementers recognised the contribution that P4C made to the creativity agenda and also exploited opportunities arising in P4C for assessment of skills in other areas of the curriculum. However, P4C

originated as an approach for developing multi-dimensional thinking and a lack of attention to the progression and development of these skills may be detrimental to the implementation of P4C in the longer term. This point will be discussed further later in this chapter.

The value and benefits ascribed to P4C appeared to be related to the school development context, teacher roles and experience. However the evidence suggests that P4C is more likely to be implemented regularly in circumstances where the advantages ascribed to P4C outweigh any perceived disadvantages. Two of the regular implementers were hard pressed to identify any disadvantages of P4C but this was not the case for intermittent implementers. For this group the benefits of P4C appeared to be tempered by the disadvantages perceived to accrue from P4C practice: All the respondents in this group experienced, and were unable to resolve at the time of interviews, difficulties related to pupil engagement during philosophical enquiry. In the case of the younger teachers who were intermittent implementers, P4C also appeared to conflict with underlying beliefs about perceived accountability expectations.

Finally, although all the teachers in this study worked in the same policy context and experienced similar time, curricular and performativity pressures, some teachers were more effective than others at overcoming the problems which this presented for P4C implementation. The way in which P4C was implemented may be the explanatory factor for this: When P4C was implemented through existing areas of the curriculum using resources related to the content of the curriculum as stimuli for philosophical enquiry, teaching efficacy appeared to be strengthened and the strategies adopted were, for the most part, successful in supporting the continued implementation of this approach in the classroom. In contrast, where philosophical enquiry was implemented as stand-alone lesson

unrelated to the content of the curriculum, teaching efficacy appeared to be weakened and when circumstances changed P4C implementers were unable to withstand the time, curricular and performativity pressures which the teaching environment posed.

P4C as a Counter-Cultural Practice

A key thread running through the preceding results, analysis and discussion relates to the tensions between the values and practice of P4C and the values and practice promulgated through the current educational policy context. These tensions were not exclusive to particular groups of P4C implementers and are worthy of further discussion insomuch as they appear to suggest that P4C is a counter-cultural practice; a view which is supported by a number of experienced SAPERE P4C trainers.

Leat (1999) implicitly suggests that thinking skills programmes per se represent counter-cultural practice when he likens the process of implementation to "rolling a stone uphill" (p389): "Firstly…it is tremendously hard to overcome initial resistance and get moving at all…every inch of the way is a struggle against gravity…if you ever stop there is no status quo: you cannot stop for a rest and resume the upward path, the stone is inclined to hurtle back downhill… [and] is likely to bump into the distance, where it will be difficult to retrieve" (p389-390).

Counter-cultural practice is defined here as educational practice which runs counter to prevailing national policy expectations. On the face of it P4C does not appear to be at variance with current political discourse about the curriculum which emphasises the centrality of dialogue for intellectual development (DfE, 2011) and the need for "…innovation, creativity, deep learning and intellectual exploration (DfE, 2010b, p40). However, this research suggests a deep disconnection between political discourse relating

to the stated aims for the curriculum and policy mechanisms for accountability and control, which appear to promote behaviours in the classroom which run contrary to the achievement of these aims.

The Culture of Accountability and Control

Educational activity in the primary classroom continues to be evaluated according to the extent to which it is perceived to contribute to successful outcomes based on Standard Assessment Testing at the end of Key Stage 2. Expectations of pupil progress in core subject areas are mapped out in detail at every stage of a pupil's primary school experience and progression towards these goals are subjected to rigorous scrutiny in termly pupil progress meetings. All schools are subject to regular risk assessments by Ofsted and declining results raise the prospect of an imminent inspection (Ofsted, 2013). Within this performance driven environment the 'politics of knowledge' (Dadds, 2001) are authoritarian; linear, prescriptive, objectives-led lessons position pupils as passive recipients instead of active agents in their own learning; pupil questions and interests (unless related specifically to curriculum content) represent a diversion from the task of curriculum coverage; and opportunities for pupil enquiry and the social construction of knowledge are therefore denied. In these circumstances deep learning and intellectual exploration are negated. The educational paradigm underpinning the P4C approach promotes a culture in the classroom which stands in direct contradiction to the one described above and as a consequence, the implementation of P4C calls into question and problematizes aspects of teachers' pedagogical practice.

Common to the majority of teachers in this study was the belief that their P4C training gave them a framework and tools to move further towards their ideal vision of teaching. In accordance with the educational assumptions of P4C, these ideals placed pupils' questions

and interests, not performance targets, at the centre of the educational process. Teacher comments reveal the narrowness of pupils' educational experience within the current policy context and highlight the dissonance between these policy expectations (and the behaviours that this promotes) and teachers' intrinsic values:

Jane: "…[P4C] made me think I could be the type of teacher I'd always wanted to be…sometimes I think you can get bogged down with all these, you know, strategies and fulfilling requirements and doing all that…it was really about motivating the children and getting them to question things…"

Rose: "…it was more as I remember teaching when I first started…the discussion and openness of it and not too prescriptive…you can sort of go where the children take it…it did make me sort of think, goodness me…this isn't what I was like before…I don't want to be like this…"

Lily: "It goes hand in hand with my personal ethos about education; child-centred…developing pupils…thinking and autonomy…It just made me angry…that I was supposed to be teaching in a very limited way and not flying with these children…"

Nick: "…the community of enquiry idea I thought…that's exactly what I believe…knowing that you're not just going mad…thinking that…spread sheets were not necessarily the answer for being a better teacher…"

However, teachers' efforts to implement P4C revealed incongruities between these authentic values and established classroom practices as determined by the culture of accountability and control. Within this context the teleological values of the reformed teacher were often made visible: SATs preparation and assessment of pupil progress illustrate these flashpoints.

The influence of the accountability culture was particularly apparent in the upper phase of Key Stage 2, where coverage of curriculum content became paramount and philosophical enquiry was suspended in favour of didactic teaching for substantial periods of time (even amongst the most committed P4C implementers) in order to prepare pupils for SATs testing:

Lisa: "…it went into SATs writing…every single literacy lesson was either a planning…a writing or an editing of practice questions for SATs."

Jane: "…less exploration time…certainly when it comes to year 6…you want to make sure you've prepared them enough for secondary school… [P4C] sometimes falls by the wayside."

P4C is neither linear nor predictable. As with the development of all higher order thinking it is non-algorithmic, messy and complex and therefore less amenable to narrow measurement. But teachers are operating in a political context where 'inputs' have to be justified by measurable 'outputs'. As a consequence teleological concerns determined teacher assessments of philosophical enquiry and where assessment took place it was oriented towards nationally imposed pupil performance outcomes:

Ann: "…obviously I assess speaking and listening…it's more linked in with literacy development I'll have to say."

Jane: "…if I'm using something like an historical artefact…I'm also looking at…their chronological understanding, their ability to use evidence and predict…writing down some of the comments which are more valuable we've got that dual assessment and…you can let the discussion really unfold…knowing…it's not a waste of time."

The instrumental use of P4C to facilitate assessment in areas of the curriculum subject to statutory assessment has potentially serious implications: firstly, it undermines opportunities to plan for the progression and development of pupil's multi-dimensional thinking skills (which is the raison d'etre of P4C); secondly, and related to the first point, it limits teacher's ability to move to deeper levels of philosophical facilitation and is therefore likely to dilute the impact of P4C on pupil's intellectual and cognitive growth; and finally, it increases the risk of philosophical enquiry being subverted into something else entirely i.e. an objectives-led teacher directed discussion focussed on coverage of curriculum content.

It is notable that the majority of teachers felt that P4C gave them "permission" to allow pupils time for thinking, questioning and discussion in the classroom which illustrates the authoritarian bent of established primary pedagogical practice:

Lisa: "…I could see that just the ability to be able to listen to somebody else and be able to debate and to be able to have your own opinion… …for someone to say you can do this…beforehand I wouldn't have given credit so much to class discussion…"

Clare: "…[P4C training] gave permission to allow children more time for thinking and questioning…I feel more confident about giving more thinking and discussing time…when we're doing science or something like that."

Furthermore, one of the main reported benefits of P4C was that it afforded teachers opportunities to develop a more comprehensive understanding of their pupils; it revealed beliefs, interests and abilities that were silenced through the outcomes focussed, 'hurry-along' curriculum (Dadds, 2001):

Nick: "…gives you a chance to see the kids in a different light and gives you a different perspective on some of the kids and their thoughts and abilities."

Rose: "You get to know the children better and how they think…the whole child."

Despite this, anxieties about and difficulties related to covering the content of the curriculum loomed large for the majority of teachers, substantially constricting the time available for philosophical enquiry and in one case, determining the ultimate demise of the P4C approach in the classroom:

Lily: "…my hours were reduced…and I couldn't do it anymore. It's time and the curriculum…something gets squeezed…and as I teach literacy…science…ICT and history and geography I've got programmes to finish…"

The implementation of philosophical enquiry challenged teachers' understanding of what constitutes good teaching and learning in the classroom as dictated by the culture of accountability and control. Teachers struggled (and were successful in varying degrees) to reconcile the practice of P4C with established expectations of classroom practice. But the evidence suggests that in some instances, pupils also struggled to adjust to the changed expectations which P4C wrought:

Louise: "…making silly remarks and giggling and laughing…getting out of control really…it's the sheer unwillingness of some of them to sit for more than ten minutes and listen to what other people are saying…passing silly comments when it's not their turn…"

Clare: "…I've just had difficulties with some children who have got behavioural difficulties anyway and you're trying to keep them involved but you also try to keep a lid on them so that everyone else can have a go…"

Conclusions

The first part of this analysis and discussion appears to support Leat's (1999) thesis that teacher efficacy is "…a measure of the chances of implementing change" (p.399) in the classroom. In the case of the regular implementers, the context for and extent of professional development and support, the perceived benefits of P4C and effective strategies for incorporating P4C into the existing curriculum were sufficient to enable continued P4C implementation. Although the intermittent implementers benefited variously from some of the affordances available to regular implementers (for instance all members of this group adopted the same strategies as the regular implementers for incorporating P4C into the existing curriculum) other factors (like assumptions of implicit practice and perceived disadvantages) impacted upon the time teachers were willing to make available for this innovation. The key factors preventing the continuation of the P4C approach for the ceased implementers appeared to be the context for their P4C training (both were lone implementers in their schools) coupled with the strategies they employed to implement P4C in their classrooms which, when circumstances changed, made it difficult for them to overcome the problems which the teaching environment posed in terms of time, curricular and performance pressures.

Although P4C accords with the stated aims for the curriculum and chimes with teacher's authentic ideals about what constitutes good teaching in the classroom, the evidence from this research suggests that P4C is a counter-cultural practice; it is non-linear, messy and complex and its short-term outcomes are unpredictable. Within this framework the 'politics of knowledge' (Dadds, 2001) are democratic; pupil questions and interests are seated at the heart of the educational project and the social construction of knowledge and understanding are intrinsic to its function and existence. Mechanisms for accountability and

control have fashioned primary classroom practice in a different image; one which is linear, reductive, objectives-based, and predictable. The difficulties of reconciling these two different educational paradigms in practical terms have been outlined here and the evidence suggests that the implementation of P4C within the current policy context will always involve compromise to a lesser or greater degree.

The final chapter of this thesis will summarise the conclusions of this thesis, policy recommendations and possibilities for future research.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

Although a wide range of research, both national and international, has recognised P4C's efficacy in promoting children's cognitive and affective skills (Trickey & Topping, 2004) the researcher observed that within her own Local Authority P4C failed in most cases to become established in the schools that had trained in this approach. As a consequence, this research thesis set out to explore the implementation of P4C in the primary classroom (a hitherto neglected area in the large body of research literature pertaining to P4C) through the eyes of those most closely involved in this process i.e. teachers themselves. In doing so this research also sought to determine the veracity of Leat's (1999) proposition that teacher efficacy is "…a measure of the chances of implementing change" (p399) in the classroom.

This chapter will summarise the findings from this research with respect to the sub-research and main research questions. The writer will then discuss policy recommendations, research limitations and possibilities for future research.

Research Findings

This section will summarise the findings of sub-research questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 as a prelude to answering the main research question of this thesis: '*What are teacher's perceptions of the factors determining the implementation of P4C in the classroom?*'

SRQ 1: What is the current policy context within which P4C currently exists?

Economic rationalism and a growth oriented paradigm have underpinned educational reform in England resulting in high levels of political interference in schools and a reconstitution of the values and practices of educational institutions to reflect those of the

business sector. In the late 1990s, England's tightly controlled and highly centralised model of educational reform, which focussed almost exclusively on raising standards in basic skills, was criticised for squeezing creativity, a quality which was considered to be vital for maintaining a successful knowledge economy, out of the classroom (DTI & DfEE, 2001, DfEE, 2001a). The *Excellence and Enjoyment* (2003) Primary National Strategy was implemented to address these criticisms but the impact on pedagogical repertoire was negligible (Smith et. al, 2004) and performativity pressures and a prescriptive, overloaded curriculum continued to be identified as serious impediments to the development of creative activity in the classroom (Hall et. al, 2006, Turner-Bissett, 2007, Paul Hamlyn Foundation et. al, 2008, Alexander, 2010a). The accounts of teachers in this research confirm these analyses: the perceptions of older teachers support the accusation that the Primary National Strategy imposed "…a state theory of learning" (Alexander, 2010a, p411) on schools and the accounts of younger teachers indicate a lack of knowledge of alternatives to prescribed approaches.

Although the most recent policy reform efforts have addressed issues of curriculum overload, in all other respects they merely echo the failed *Excellence and Enjoyment* (2003) strategy; maintaining a strong focus on the standards agenda and intensifying performativity pressures through the use of increased 'top-down' control mechanisms. Furthermore, government promises of greater professional autonomy in the classroom are undermined through policy discourse which endorses didactic teaching and a banking concept of education whilst denigrating and effectively excluding consideration of alternative pedagogical approaches; making it very likely that opportunities to exercise professional autonomy will continue to be determined by school performance (Harris et. al, 2003).

SRQ 2: What are the educational assumptions underpinning P4C?

Philosophy for children is an educational approach which aims to develop pupils' critical, creative, collaborative and ethical modes of thinking through discussion of central, common and contestable concepts. Based on Socratic questioning, social constructivist theory and pragmatic philosophy, P4C places heavy emphasis on the importance of questioning, collaboration and the construction of meaning through dialogue with others as a means of appropriating and internalising the tools for multi-dimensional thinking and higher cognitive functioning (Burgh et. al, 2006, Fisher, 2003). Knowledge is regarded as ambiguous and uncertain and the fallibility of human perception is acknowledged. P4C is rooted in the interests, concerns and lived experience of pupils; they generate the questions for enquiry and then determine the agenda for discussion through a democratic process. Within this framework the teacher assumes a stance of 'scholarly ignorance', pupil questioning and self-correction is encouraged and the contributions of all members of the community of enquiry are regarded as important to the achievement of intellectual growth and more comprehensive understanding.

One of the main reported benefits highlighted in this research pertains to the opportunities that P4C affords for developing a more comprehensive understanding of pupils' beliefs, interests and abilities. However, P4C facilitation is an uncertain and complex activity: It cannot be scripted and its short-term outcomes are unpredictable. Furthermore, it requires recognition of what is philosophical and skill in the use of Socratic questioning. The complexities of P4C facilitation highlighted by teachers in other research (Lyle et. al, 2011, Jones, 2008, Northern Territory Education Department, 1991) are confirmed by the teachers in this study some of whom also drew attention to the need for longer term professional development in this area. However, the positive impact of P4C on teacher

questioning techniques and strategies for promoting discussion in the classroom referenced in previous research (Northern Territory Education Department, 1991, Topping and Trickey, 2007a) are supported by the accounts of most of the teachers in this study irrespective of the length of P4C professional development.

<u>SRQ 3: What are the implications for P4C implementation?</u>

The assumptions and practice of P4C represent the antithesis of the banking concept of education promulgated through the current educational policy context. Evidence from the literature reviews, which are supported by teacher accounts in this research, suggest that mechanisms of accountability and control and related concerns about curriculum coverage pose the greatest challenges to the implementation of P4C in the classroom.

The findings from this research indicate that decisions to undertake professional development in the P4C approach were in the majority of cases influenced by policy discourse stressing the importance of creativity in schools (DCSF, 2009, Alexander, 2010a, Ofsted 2010a). P4C has attracted criticism for drawing attention to its potential contribution to the achievement of other educational agendas. Biesta's (2009) claim that P4C is then implemented instrumentally to achieve pre-determined objectives is not without foundation; this research found that where assessment of P4C activity took place it was tied, not to the development of pupils' multi-dimensional thinking skills, but to areas of the curriculum subject to statutory assessment which (quite apart from the dangers of P4C being subverted into something else entirely) has implications for the quality and depth of philosophical enquiry achieved in the classroom.

Although teacher perceptions from this research support previous research evidence indicating the positive impact of P4C on pupils' personal, social and emotional skills

(Trickey & Topping, 2004, Doherr, 2000, Lipman et. al, 1998) accounts also indicate that the impact of P4C on pupils' cognitive and educational attainment is less amenable to direct observation in the short-term (Splitter, 2006). Teacher perceptions from this research bear testament to the argument of Sharpe & Gopinthan (2002) that "Schools have a tendency to focus on what is being measured…to change behaviour we have to change what counts" (p160). This research indicates that the implementation of P4C was circumscribed by performativity pressures, particularly in upper Key Stage Two, where philosophical activity was suspended for substantial periods of time (and in one case ceased altogether) as a consequence of these pressures.

Research findings from this study confirm the deleterious impact of a "hurry along" (Dadds, 2001) curriculum on the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. Difficulties related to covering the content of the curriculum posed a great concern for the teachers in this study and was a major factor determining the strategies for P4C implementation and the time made available for this approach in the classroom. However, concerns about levels of pupil engagement in philosophical enquiry were also raised by the teachers in this research and echo the findings of previous research (Northern Territory Education Department, 1991, Stone 2011) and teacher accounts suggest that in some instances pupils also struggled to adjust to the changed expectations which P4C wrought.

SRQ 4: How do primary teachers implement P4C?

The majority of teachers chose to implement P4C using resources linked directly to the content of the curriculum and in half of the cases studied P4C was implemented specifically through the literacy curriculum. In all cases teachers retained control of stimulus choice although some teachers reported that pupil interests were occasionally taken into account.

Teachers tended to stick to the P4C structure provided during P4C training to facilitate enquiries and a majority reported that they had applied elements of this approach in other curricular contexts. Strategies used during enquiries appeared to fall into two broad categories; those aimed at ensuring the inclusion of all pupils and those aimed at developing pupil thinking. A small majority of teachers employed the latter.

The time spent on philosophical enquiry in the classroom varied between thirty minutes and one hour per session although two teachers reported that enquiries would often last longer and continue in following sessions. The frequency of P4C facilitation also varied greatly between the teachers studied: At the time of interviews only three teachers were implementing P4C on a regular (weekly) basis, three teachers were implementing this approach intermittently and two teachers had ceased implementation altogether. With regards to the ceased implementers one teacher reported regular facilitation of P4C prior to the cessation of this approach whilst the other reported intermittent P4C facilitation.

P4C appeared to operate on the margins of schools systems; it was not formally embedded into planning and assessment practices of schools and planning for progression in the development of pupils' thinking skills was not reported in any case. Where planning took place it was related to curricular objectives. Likewise, where assessment took place it was tied to statutory assessment of other curricular areas, most commonly speaking and listening.

SR5: What do primary teachers say are the main factors influencing their decision making?

Philosophical enquiry was linked to curriculum content or facilitated through curricular areas which were perceived to lend themselves to philosophical enquiry. This approach was employed by the majority of teachers to overcome perceived time and curricular

constraints and explains why, in half of the cases, teachers retained control of the choice of stimulus for philosophical enquiry.

In the majority of cases P4C was regarded as a useful framework for promoting questioning and discussion in the classroom and experience of philosophical enquiry confirmed the educational value of this approach. As a consequence teachers felt confident and able to justify the application of elements of the P4C process in other lessons. In two cases, regular application of aspects of this approach in other areas of the curriculum appeared to be a key factor determining their intermittent approach to P4C implementation. Facilitator strategies employed during philosophical enquiry reflected levels of P4C professional development, facilitation experience and the perceived needs of pupils.

Time and curricular constraints, confidence (associated with levels of P4C professional development and teaching experience) and levels of pupil engagement were the main factors determining the time spent on philosophical enquiry in the classroom. In most cases a combination of these factors determined the implementation approach adopted. Likewise, the frequency of P4C implementation was mainly determined by time and curricular constraints, performativity pressures, confidence in the efficacy of this approach and, in the case of two intermittent implementers, assumptions of implicit practice. Time and curricular constraints and performativity pressures were factors which respectively determined the cessation of this approach in the case of two implementers. Accounts from teachers indicate that the although the duration and frequency of philosophical enquiry differed between implementers, sustained implementation of the P4C approach was supported in circumstances where it was perceived to contribute to whole school development agendas.

Performativity pressures were the main factor determining planning and assessment of the P4C approach. Philosophical enquiry was tied to assessment of curricular objectives because evidence illustrating the tangible outcomes of P4C provided justification of the time spent on this approach in the classroom.

<u>What are teacher's perceptions of the factors determining the implementation of P4C in the classroom?</u>

Drawing on the evidence from the sub-research questions this section will now proceed to answer the main research question of this thesis. In doing so it will discuss the influence of six key factors which teachers perceived to determine the implementation of P4C in the classroom: the extent of P4C professional development and support, the contribution of P4C to whole school development agendas, the compatibility of P4C with beliefs, values and professional development needs, the perceived advantages and disadvantages of P4C, time constraints and curriculum coverage and performativity pressures.

I. <u>Extent of P4C professional development and support</u>

Regular implementation of P4C in the classroom was supported when professional development in this approach was undertaken as a whole school and opportunities for mentoring and coaching were made available to staff. Further affordances were provided through the provision of advanced P4C training for individual teachers based in the school setting. These teachers then acted as positive change agents; collaborating and supporting other members of staff to implement this approach in their respective classrooms.

In circumstances where teachers felt inadequately prepared for facilitating philosophical enquiry in the classroom (due to limited P4C professional development without the benefit

of access to school based mentoring and coaching) the P4C approach was implemented intermittently.

II.   Contribution to whole school development agendas

The continued implementation of P4C in the classroom was supported in circumstances where it was perceived to contribute to whole school development agendas. For the majority of teachers in this study P4C was perceived to contribute first and foremost to the development of a creative curriculum. Other educational agendas P4C was perceived to contribute towards included the development and assessment of speaking and listening and meeting the requirements of Ofsted. In both cases where P4C was implemented out of personal professional interest, unrelated to whole school development agendas, this innovation failed to be sustained in the classroom.

III.   Compatibility with beliefs, values and professional development needs

The majority of teachers felt that P4C professional development reinforced and legitimised previously held ideas about good teaching: P4C accorded with a latent desire to institute more meaningful 'child-centred' approaches in the classroom and develop greater pupil autonomy and engagement in the learning process. P4C professional development was perceived, in all cases, to address unmet needs; providing a framework to facilitate movement towards a more dialogic pedagogical approach in the classroom. The majority of teachers studied reported that they had transferred the questioning and discussion skills acquired during P4C professional development to pedagogical practice in other areas of the curriculum and in the case of two teachers, this was a factor determining the intermittent implementation of this approach in the classroom because P4C was perceived to be occurring implicitly in other lessons on a far more regular basis.

IV.   Perceived advantages and disadvantages of P4C

Regular implementation of the P4C approach was supported when the perceived benefits of philosophical enquiry outweighed the perceived costs: The majority of regular implementers struggled to identify any disadvantages of P4C and believed that P4C had afforded them a more comprehensive understanding of pupils' beliefs, interests and abilities. This greater depth of knowledge was reported to be useful in tailoring teaching approaches in other areas of the curriculum. Other cited benefits from this group related to pupils' increased personal, social and communication skills; teachers reported improvements in their pupils' ability to listen, appreciate and respond to the views of others and increased confidence in expressing ideas in front of the class, particularly amongst quieter pupils. In addition to these benefits, Rose also reported increased pupil engagement with curriculum content other subject areas; pupils were asking more questions in lessons and also challenging the basis for knowledge claims.

In the case of the intermittent implementers, the advantages of P4C were tempered by the disadvantages perceived to accrue from practice: The majority of this group, for varying reasons, felt that it was difficult to attribute positive changes in pupils to the practice of P4C although the fact that P4C was implemented intermittently increased the likelihood of this perception. In addition, most of this group experienced difficulties with pupil engagement during philosophical enquiry which they were unable to resolve satisfactorily at the time of interviews.

V.   Time constraints and curriculum coverage

Time constraints, related to anxiety about covering the content of the curriculum, were perceived by the majority of the teachers studied to be major factors determining the

implementation of P4C in the classroom. In the case of the intermittent implementers these were prevalent factors influencing the frequency of philosophical enquiry in the classroom. Two of the regular implementers deliberately adopted a strategy of facilitating philosophical enquiry at the beginning of the week in an attempt to overcome the perceived pressures of other curriculum demands.

The majority of teachers chose to implement the P4C approach through the existing curriculum in an attempt to resolve time and curriculum constraints. In half the cases studied P4C was implemented specifically through the literacy curriculum because of its perceived links - particularly to the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. For the remaining teachers in this group P4C was linked to other curriculum subjects that were also perceived to lend themselves to philosophical enquiry, for example, Religious Education, History and Science. Although pupil interests were sometimes taken into account, in all cases the locus of control for philosophical stimulus choice rested with the teacher and half of the teachers studied cited time and curricular constraints as the reason for this.

In both cases where P4C was implemented as a stand-alone lesson, unrelated to the content of the curriculum, P4C implementation failed to be sustained in the classroom and one of the teachers from this group explicitly cited time constraints related to difficulties of curriculum coverage as the reason for ceasing implementation of this approach in the classroom.

VI.   Performativity pressures

For the majority of the teachers studied performativity pressures were perceived to be another major factor influencing the implementation of P4C in their respective classrooms:

Where assessment of pupil performance in philosophical enquiry took place it was linked primarily to the assessment of pupils' speaking and listening skills, an area of the curriculum which is subject to statutory assessment. For a small majority of teachers, using philosophical enquiry to assess areas of the curriculum subject to statutory assessment was perceived to legitimise and account for the time spent on this activity.

Performativity pressures, associated with teaching in upper Key Stage 2, were also brought to bear on P4C implementation decisions: Two of the regular P4C implementers suspended philosophical enquiry for a substantial period of time in the spring term in order to prepare pupils for SATs testing. In the case of another teacher, P4C was ceased altogether because of increasing pressure to raise standards of pupil attainment in core curriculum areas.

Policy Recommendations

The five key recommendations in the following section are highlighted in bold, italicised type and are predicated on the notion that strengthening the personal, outcome and teaching efficacy of teachers will have a positive impact on the implementation of P4C in the classroom.

In the context of promoting innovation, creativity, deep learning and intellectual exploration, government should seek to resolve policy contradictions which undermine the achievement of these aims.

The difficulties of reconciling the practice of P4C within the current educational policy context are highlighted in this research. Although issues of curriculum overload have been addressed by recent proposals for educational reform this research suggests a deep disconnection between policy discourse related to the stated aims of the curriculum and

policy mechanisms for accountability and control which appear to promote short-term and risk-averse behaviours in the classroom detrimental to the achievement of "…innovation, creativity, deep learning and intellectual exploration" (DfE, 2010b, p40). Accountability and control mechanisms should take into account and give due credit to educational activity which promotes the long term aims of the curriculum.

In the context of promoting greater professional autonomy in the classroom government should remain neutral on matters of pedagogical practice.

The influence of national policy discourse on schools' decisions to innovate in the classroom is apparent in this research. In the context of supporting greater professional autonomy in education, government should refrain from subjecting pedagogical approaches which do not accord with party political ideology to a 'discourse of derision' (Ball, 1990, cited in Alexander 2012, p108) and furthermore, from perpetuating falsely dichotomous views of pedagogical practice.

SAPERE should incorporate opportunities for mentoring and coaching within initial Level 1 P4C training.

This research indicates the benefits of longer-term P4C professional development, which include opportunities for mentoring and coaching in the P4C approach, for regular and sustained P4C implementation. Likewise, this research suggests that short-term P4C professional development without the benefit of mentoring and coaching is more likely to result in intermittent and partial application of the P4C approach. Mentoring and coaching would for instance, facilitate the resolution of issues related to pupil engagement; one of the main factors determining the time spent on philosophical enquiry amongst the teachers in this study. With regard to these points the claim that the present SAPERE level 1 course

provides delegates with "…sufficient understanding to facilitate enquiries in their own schools…" (SAPERE website, 2012) is disputable. In a context of increased accountability for school spending, SAPERE should incorporate opportunities for mentoring and coaching within the initial SAPERE level 1 course in order to promote a greater chance of implementation success.

SAPERE should develop a systematic philosophical curriculum for new P4C facilitators to support on-going professional development and personal efficacy in this approach.

SAPERE should develop a systematic philosophical curriculum for teachers related to the new curriculum; teachers would be able to perceive the relevance of P4C to the curriculum but the practice of P4C would remain grounded in philosophical thinking and provide progression in the development of pupils' multi-dimensional thinking skills. Furthermore, a resource of this nature could provide a focus for extended and collaborative professional development in situ. The Institute for Advancement in Philosophy for Children (IAPC) recommend the implementation of their philosophical curriculum until teachers are "…competent in the tools and methods of philosophical enquiry" (Gregory, 2008, p9) and research into effective professional development suggests that formalised and focused support of this kind is especially helpful for the novice (Daley, 1999)

SAPERE should encourage and support schools to develop whole school P4C policies

This research indicates that P4C is a practice operating on the margins of schools systems; in the case of teachers in this research P4C was not formally embedded into the planning and assessment practices of schools and P4C practice varied substantially within and across

school settings. Encouraging and supporting schools in the development of a whole school P4C policy would provide an opportunity to demonstrate the relevance and contribution of P4C to school aims and core values, legitimate and clarify expectations of change, facilitate a fidelity approach to P4C implementation and diminish the possibility of "within-school variance" (Fullan, 2007, p103).

Research Limitations and Possibilities for Future Research

This research used qualitative interviewing to explore primary teachers' perceptions of the main factors determining the implementation of P4C in the classroom. This research was based on a small sample size of eight primary teachers. Whilst the findings are rich in detail they are context specific and therefore convey limited generality. However, the writer believes that this research is a valuable contribution to a hitherto neglected area of research into P4C; its rich detail and context specificity facilitates analysis of the "relatability" (Bassey, 1981, p85) of these findings to other primary classroom contexts.

A range of possibilities for further research present themselves as a result of the findings outlined in this thesis. Firstly, the findings of this research support Leat's (1999) thesis that teacher efficacy is "…a measure of the chances of implementing change" (p399) in the primary classroom. It would therefore seem appropriate to explore whether and to what extent this holds true in the secondary classroom. Secondly, the evidence from this research concludes that P4C represents counter-cultural practice within the current policy context. These conclusions would be worthy of further investigation after the recently proposed education reforms have been embedded in order to explore whether and to what extent this finding still holds true. Finally, another fruitful area of research would be to undertake research to explore effective models for implementing P4C within the current educational policy context drawing upon the experiences of those schools who have

managed to implement the P4C approach according to its original intentions across the whole school for an hour a week on a regular basis.

Conclusion

The factors which teachers in this research perceived to determine the implementation of P4C in their respective classrooms accord with Leat's (1999) thesis that teacher efficacy (a construct that includes personal, outcome and teaching efficacy) is "…a measure of the chances of implementing change" (p399). Levels of P4C professional development, motivation and capacity to reconcile the assumptions and practice of P4C within the prevailing educational policy context differed substantially amongst the teachers studied and determined the regular, intermittent or ceased implementation of the P4C approach in the classroom.

The requirements of the current educational policy context and the practice of P4C represent two opposing educational paradigms: Current educational policy discourse assumes a banking concept of education; knowledge is regarded as fixed, certain and indisputable, the transmission of curriculum content is paramount and the role of the teacher is authoritarian. Classroom practice, dictated by a culture of high stakes accountability and control is linear, predictable, objectives based and focussed on the achievement of short-term outcomes. P4C on the other hand, assumes that education is enquiry; knowledge is regarded as ambiguous and subject to reinterpretation and change, the interests and questions of pupils are paramount and the role of the teacher is facilitative. The practice of P4C is complex, non-linear, unpredictable and focussed on the long-term goal of building intellectual autonomy. Although in reality teachers operate on a continuum between these two polar opposites, the evidence from this research illustrates the difficulties of instituting a purely enquiry based pedagogical approach in the classroom

for one hour a week on a regular basis and gives credence to the view of many experienced

SAPERE P4C trainers that the implementation of philosophical enquiry in the current

educational policy context represents counter-cultural practice.

Appendix 1: Transcript with Emergent Themes

Question	Response	Emergent themes
What new knowledge/skills did your P4C training equip you with?	I think it's really this understanding of, sort of high order questioning and thinking you hear a lot about to be honest…and its sometimes you just want someone there to say 'this is what it looks like' and this is what it is and I think it was the whole.. how you could start some- then just to be able to ask a question… to children being able to really think around and debate something…but it was like going through that whole process from the very young.. and very early age right up into year six	How to develop higher order questioning and thinking skills across the school
What were your initial thoughts about introducing P4C to your class?	A bit wary actually. .. I suppose I was a bit excited… the class I had last year which was the philosophy I first did it with were extremely articulate in fact they were one of the brightest classes I've ever taught they really were… but that didn't necessarily make... I suppose…the whole discussion of philosophy discussion and I was wondering how.. I think if you were starting on a more, sort of, basic level question if perhaps the children, you know, weren't such a high level.. I imagined it might have been easier and I was quite worried that actually I was trying to take them back a bit because as I said their discussion techniques and their questioning were already very good although not necessarily philosophical but actually once you started they really really ran with it and they were quite a chatty class anyway so I think enjoyed the opportunity to actually express in the class what this was about you know.. discussing and asking questions and thinking about things for ourselves and so although I was slightly wary.. I suppose I was quite excited about it as well yeah and as I already said because they were already at- I mean they were pretty consistently for the majority of the class level five already at the beginning of the year it was yeah and it was, sort of, hard then thinking… if.. yeah.. if I suppose developing them but also.. do I have to take them back a little bit first in their thinking in order to actually develop this community of enquiry and whether they would go with that.	Wary of pupil response that they might perceive that they were being 'taken back to a little bit' Excited about possibilities with a very able class

Appendix 2: Thematic Framework

Thematic framework for study of implementation of P4C in primary classrooms

1. **Context of P4C implementation**

    1. Linked to NC
       Speaking and listening
    2. Stand-alone lesson
       Time pressures
       Curriculum coverage/constraints
    3. Stimulus choice: curriculum
    4. Stimulus choice: P4C training
    5. Stimulus choice: pupil ability
    6. Stimulus choice: philosophical content
    7. Stimulus choice: pupil questions

2. **Frequency and duration of P4C implementation**

    1. Regular (weekly)
    2. Intermittent
    3. Ceased
    4. Implicit implementation: embedded in NC lessons
       Time pressures
       Curriculum coverage
       Performativity pressure
    5. Experience of facilitation
    6. SATs testing
    7. Recommended enquiry length
    8. Shortened enquiry length

3. **Extent of pedagogical change**

    1. P4C sequence
    2. Socratic questioning
       Developing thinking skills
       Pupil engagement
       Speaking and listening
    3. Thinking time
    4. Flexibility
    5. Question prompts
    6. Social skills
    7. Control of P4C process
       Curriculum coverage
       Time pressures
    8. Confidence to allow time for thinking, questioning and discussion in other lessons
       Performativity pressure

9. Responsiveness to pupil interests

4. Planning and assessment of P4C activity in the classroom

1. Links to short-term subject planning
   Speaking and listening
2. Other areas of the curriculum
3. Pupil contributions
4. Pupil questions
5. Un-measurable

5. Rationale for P4C training

1. Personal professional interest
2. Whole school development initiative

6. Extent of P4C training

1. External training
2. SAPERE external training
3. School based training with SAPERE
4. School based training
5. Mentoring and coaching
6. Training duration
7. Desire for further training
8. Observation of philosophical enquiry with pupils
9. Observation of philosophical enquiry with own class
10. Participation in philosophical enquiry
11. Ideas for stimulus/games
12. Development of questioning and discussion skills
13. Framework/structure for discussion
    Developing thinking skills
14. Confidence

7. Compatibility of P4C with teachers' CPD needs and own beliefs

1. Ideals of good teaching
2. Purpose of teaching
3. Scepticism
   Performativity pressures
4. Legitimising changing practice
5. Professional autonomy
   Child centred
6. Developing pupil autonomy
   Pupil engagement
7. Realisation of importance of questioning/discussion for learning
8. Developing social skills
9. Criticism of educational policy
   Developing thinking skills

10. Meaning making
11. Inclusion
    Curriculum coverage
12. Maturation levels

8. **Anticipated and unanticipated consequences of P4C**

    1. Anxiety
    2. Excitement
    3. Optimism
    4. Uncertainty
    5. Control
       Performativity pressure
       Curriculum coverage
       Time pressures
    6. Pupil responses
       Behaviour
    7. Classroom space
       Pupil engagement
       Differing ethos/expectations of P4C
    8. Dominance of teacher talk
       Challenging teacher expectations of pupils

9. **Relative advantages and disadvantages of P4C**

    1. Developing confidence
    2. Contributions from quieter pupils
    3. Developing social skills
    4. Developing listening and communication skills
    5. Intellectual autonomy
    6. Pupil questioning in other curricular areas
    7. Picture of 'whole' child/in-depth knowledge
       Challenging teacher expectations of pupils
    8. Use of P4C to meet other agendas in school
    9. Permission to allow time for thinking, questioning and discussion
    10. Social prestige
        Child centred
    11. Minimal planning/resourcing
        Curriculum coverage
        Time pressures
    12. Classroom organisation
        Differing ethos/expectations of P4C
    13. Pupil vulnerability
        Performativity pressures
    14. Negative consequences of fostering pupil autonomy
        Pupil engagement
        Behaviour

10. Recurring themes

1. Speaking and listening
2. Time pressures
3. Curriculum coverage
4. Performativity pressure
5. Developing thinking skills
6. Pupil engagement
7. Child centred
8. Behaviour
9. Differing ethos/expectations of P4C
10. Challenging teacher expectations of pupils

Appendix 3: Coded Transcript

Question	Response	Emergent themes
What new knowledge/skills did your P4C training equip you with?	I think it's really this understanding of, sort of high order questioning and thinking you hear a lot about to be honest…and its sometimes you just want someone there to say 'this is what it looks like' and this is what it is and I think it was the whole... how you could start some- then just to be able to ask a question… to children being able to really think around and debate something...but it was like going through that whole process from the very young... and very early age right up into year six	How to develop higher order questioning and thinking skills across the school **10.5** **3.5** **6.12**
What were your initial thoughts about introducing P4C to your class?	A bit wary actually. .. I suppose I was a bit excited… the class I had last year which was the philosophy I first did it with were extremely articulate in fact they were one of the brightest classes I've ever taught they really were… but that didn't necessarily make... I suppose…the whole discussion of philosophy discussion and I was wondering how.. I think if you were starting on a more, sort of, basic level question if perhaps the children, you know, weren't such a high level.. I imagined it might have been easier and I was quite worried that actually I was trying to take them back a bit because as I said their discussion techniques and their questioning were already very good although not necessarily philosophical but actually once you started they really really ran with it and they were quite a chatty class anyway so I think enjoyed the opportunity to actually express in the class what this was about you know... discussing and asking questions and thinking about things for ourselves and so although I was slightly wary... I suppose I was quite excited about it as well yeah and as I already said because they were already at- I mean they were pretty consistently for the majority of the class level five already at the beginning of the year it was yeah and it was, sort of, hard then thinking… if... yeah... if I suppose developing them but also... do I have to take them back a little bit first in their thinking in order to actually develop this community of enquiry and whether they would go with that.	Wary of pupil response that they might perceive that they were being 'taken back to a little bit' Excited about possibilities with a very able class **8.1** **8.2** **8.6** **10.5** **10.9**

Appendix 4: Participant Roles

Participant	School context	Role	Year group/s taught
Jane	urban	Deputy Head	Y6
Nick	urban	Class teacher	Y5
Louise	rural	Special Educational Needs Coordinator	Y4
Clare	rural	Class teacher	Y5
Rose	urban	Class teacher	Y6
Lisa	urban	Class teacher	Y5
Lily	rural	Class teacher	Y3-Y6
Ann	rural	Class teacher	Y2-Y4

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