

THE COMMUNITY OF INQUIRY?

and some things about the beliefs of
teachers

Rob Bartels, Antwerp 31 May 2015

PHILOSOPHY FOR DEMOCRACY

democratic

skills and attitudes:

- reasoning and judiciousness
- dialogue and diversity

research of a curriculum *(in action)*

- the ideal curriculum
- the formal curriculum
- the interpreted curriculum
- the operationalised curriculum
- the experienced curriculum
- the effected curriculum

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context and analyses

- four primary schools
- 16 groups, 4 groups (age 4-6), 4 groups (age 6-9), 8 groups (age 9-12)
- philosophising is done like this (*Filosoferen doe je zo*)
- typology derived from Marie-France Daniel
- triangulation

	A	B	C	D
quality aspect / question ↓				
How can the contribution of the children be characterized?	1A It is mainly personal anecdotes	1B they are mainly short answers (a few words rather than a complete sentence)	1C There are more complex views (e.g. in the form of a reasoning)	1D There are also questions raised
Do children give statements, reasons, etc. for their input?	2A children do not substantiate their statements, even if the teacher (or another child) requests	2B children do not substantiate their statements spontaneously, but they do as the teacher (or another child) encourages them	2C children substantiate their statements spontaneously but not always fully	2D children substantiate their statements spontaneously and completely
Are the statements (and reasons) of children questioned and examined?	3A No, and for question 2 option A is chosen	3B No, and for question 2 B, C or D is chosen	3C statements, reasons, etc. are queried	3D statements, reasons, etc. are examined.
Are dialogical aspects discernible in the children's input?	4A There seems to be no or little interest in each other's statements; There are no questions asked	4B Contributions are separate from each other as if anyone keeps an 'interieur monologue'	4C There are links identifiable between contributions of children; they use each other's input (by building on or by contradicting each other)	4D There is a by the children expressed interdependence of the contributions.
How do the children relate to each other and to their teacher?	5A The input of children is mainly depending on the teacher	5B The children focus mainly to the teacher	5C The children explicitly focus to each other	5D the teacher is 'absent' (in the transcriptions)
Is there a common objective?	6A The contributions of children do not contribute to a common objective	6B The children are mainly heading for facts or a correct answer	6C There is a common question to which an answer is sought	6D The inquiry focuses on collaborative construction of meaning

Results: dialogue and diversity

- children embrace the question as a shared one; monologues hardly take place, children show interest in each other's contribution, and they integrate the thoughts of others in their thinking → they show dialogical behaviour
- they understand others better, they develop respect for other opinions, they can handle conflicts better, they feel able to bridge opposite points of view through discussion → they can handle differences
- TEACHERS!

Results: reasoning and judiciousness

- children give a mix of short, simple answers and complex contributions in the form of reasoning; which are substantiated either spontaneously or after probing; validity of statements and arguments is often questioned, but rarely examined.
- children learn to think autonomously, learn to articulate their thoughts, they begin to provide arguments for their points of view. It however does not come to critical thinking about opinions or to philosophical inquiry of concepts.
- TEACHERS!

the beliefs of the teachers

- **teachers'** pedagogical beliefs: safety, comfort, dialogue, communal understanding, autonomous thinking: children are given the opportunity to express their opinion
- critical thinking, socratic questioning causes discomfort

Haynes & Murriss: psychological paradigm

even gentle, open disagreement and challenge are sometimes rejected as 'rude' or 'impolite' and avoided because they cause discomfort (...) emotional disturbance tends to be avoided (...) even when it offers rich opportunities for the community of inquiry to explore its values and procedures at meta-level' (Haynes & Murriss, 2012, page. 128

→ professional self-understanding of teachers

the community of inquiry?

- Can we expect 25 children to participate equally in an open inquiry, where the teachers' role is reduced to that of a facilitator?
 - Can we then expect these 25 children to develop inquiry skills (like reasoning, dialogue, etc.) only in action (as a stand alone activity)?
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- Can we expect that an open inquiry within a group of 25 children can be characterised as a critical dialogue?
 - Can we expect that an open inquiry within a group of 25 children can lead to insights, to meaning?

Eco3: fysiek, sociaal, mentaal



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Allemaal



TUINIEREN EN MILIEULESSEN



a community of guided inquiry?

- **Should we give the teacher a more pronounced role in guiding the inquiry,**
 - in which the process has been designed in advance, with a clear focus (-question)?
 - which is supported by exercises to help children develop reasoning and dialogue in action?
 - in which knowledge transfer, before, during or after the inquiry can play an important role?
 - in which ideas of philosophers (from past and present, from East and West) play a critical role as reference, as ideas for children to think about?
 - that is not non-committal but is aligned with pronounced pedagogical and social objectives?