



article

philosophy for/with children (p4wc) and primary education: through the lens of a pre-service teacher reflecting on their practice

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abstract

Philosophy for/with Children (P4wC) is used widely as a pedagogical approach in schools. However, it can also be used beyond schools and is increasingly being utilised in university based pre-service teacher education. This article shares reflections from pre-service teacher educators using P4wC in their institution in the south of England both to encourage critical reflection upon education itself, and also as a practice to share with pre-service teachers in the hopes that they may carry it forward as a pedagogical approach in their own future classrooms. These pre-service teacher educators share and reflect upon a case study provided by one of their students, a pre-service teacher in their final year of an undergraduate degree in primary education at the university. Within this case study, the pre-service teacher shares a critical discussion about their research exploring literature surrounding P4wC and reflects upon their early exploration of this approach within a primary school classroom. The pre-service teacher concludes their case-study with a recognition of some challenges but also with a commitment to continuing to engage with P4wC

moving forward in their career. The pre-service educators conclude the article by reflecting upon their student's experiences, the impact using P4wC had upon that pre-service teacher and the value of embedding P4wC in pre-service teacher education.

keywords: pre-service teacher education; initial teacher education; pedagogy; primary education; philosophy for/with children (p4wc).

filosofia para/com crianças (fpcc) e educação primária:

através das lentes de um professor em formação que reflete sobre sua prática

resumo

A Filosofia para/com Crianças (FpcC) é amplamente usada como uma abordagem pedagógica nas escolas. No entanto, ela também pode ser aplicada além do ambiente escolar, de modo que está sendo cada vez mais utilizada na formação inicial de professores em universidades. Este artigo compartilha reflexões de educadores de professores em formação que utilizam a FpcC em sua instituição no sul da Inglaterra, tanto para encorajar a reflexão crítica sobre a educação em si, quanto como uma prática para compartilhar com os futuros professores, na esperança de que eles possam levá-la adiante como uma abordagem pedagógica em suas próprias salas de aula no futuro. Esses educadores de professores em formação compartilham e refletem sobre um estudo de caso fornecido por um de seus alunos, um professor em formação no último ano de uma graduação em educação primária na universidade. Dentro deste estudo de caso, o professor em formação compartilha uma discussão crítica sobre sua pesquisa, explorando a literatura em torno da FpcC e refletindo sobre sua exploração inicial dessa abordagem em uma sala de aula do ensino fundamental. O professor em serviço conclui seu estudo de caso reconhecendo alguns desafios, mas também afirmando o compromisso de continuar a se envolver com a FpcC ao

longo de sua carreira. Os educadores em formação concluem o artigo refletindo sobre as experiências de seus alunos, o impacto que o uso da FpcC teve sobre o professor em formação e o valor de incorporar a FpcC na formação inicial de professores.

palavras-chave: formação de professores pré-serviço; formação inicial de professores; pedagogia; educação primária; filosofia para/com crianças (fpcc).

filosofía para/con niños (fpcn) y educación primaria:

a través de la perspectiva de un docente que reflexiona sobre su práctica

resumen

La Filosofía para/con Niños (fpcn) se utiliza ampliamente como enfoque pedagógico en las escuelas. Sin embargo, también puede utilizarse fuera del ámbito escolar y se utiliza cada vez más en la formación inicial del profesorado universitario. Este artículo comparte reflexiones de formadores de docentes en formación que utilizan la fpcn en su institución, ubicada en el sur de Inglaterra, tanto para fomentar la reflexión crítica sobre la educación en sí misma como para compartirla con docentes en formación, con la esperanza de que la apliquen como enfoque pedagógico en sus futuras aulas. Estos formadores comparten y reflexionan sobre un estudio de caso presentado por uno de sus estudiantes, un docente en formación que cursa el último año de la licenciatura en educación primaria en la universidad. En este estudio, el docente comparte una discusión crítica sobre su investigación, explorando la literatura sobre la fpcn y reflexiona sobre su exploración inicial de este enfoque en un aula de primaria. El docente en formación concluye su estudio de caso reconociendo algunos desafíos, pero también con el compromiso de continuar trabajando con la fpcn en el futuro de su carrera. Los educadores en formación concluyen el artículo reflexionando sobre las experiencias de sus estudiantes, el

impacto que tuvo el uso de fpcn en esos docentes en formación y el valor de incorporar fpcn en la formación docente.

palabras clave: formación inicial del profesorado; formación docente; pedagogía; educación primaria; filosofía para/con niños(fpcn).

philosophy for/with children (p4wc) and primary education: through the lens of a pre-service teacher reflecting on their practice

introduction from teacher educators working in pre-service teacher education

This article will present a single case study of a pre-service teacher in their third and final year of an undergraduate degree programme in primary education at a university that undertakes teacher education in the south of England. The university where this took place is a small values-led university, with approximately 8,000 students. A significant number of these students study Pre-service Teacher Education, which in the English context is referred to as Initial Teacher Education (ITE), the term which will be used henceforth. Gaining Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) through an undergraduate, university based ITE programme, enables pre-service teachers to read, discuss and question current educational theory with lecturers and experienced teachers. This university-based learning takes place alongside school-based placements throughout the academic year, providing the opportunity to make links and apply learned theory within a school environment. The three years of undergraduate study ensures exposure to a breadth of alternative pedagogies, whilst fundamentally encouraging students to critically reflect on their effectiveness. Across the three years, pre-service teachers are also engaging with questions around teacher identity, values and ethos, and are typically navigating how they conceptually see, identify and evaluate themselves as a teacher (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2011; Buchanan, 2015).

benefits of engaging with p4wc for pre-service teachers

It has been argued that the pedagogy of P4wC can play a useful role in university-based ITE as a “critical pedagogy and democratic method for decision-making” (Murrells et al., 2009, p. 4). Although the nomenclature Philosophy for/with Children might seem to curtail its use to only children or philosophy, it can be used eclectically to enhance and deepen the pre-service teacher learning experience (Demissie, 2015; Love, 2016, 2023). The use of the Community of Inquiry (CoI) in ITE provides opportunities to engage with diverse general and specific questions around education; for example, discussing questions around power, democratic approaches in education, and methods for

behaviour management (Haynes & Murriss, 2011b; Love, 2021; Murriss et al., 2009). Burgh (2018) proposes that the transformation of the university classroom into a CoI, is reliant on effective ITE programmes, which actively encourage and model how to integrate creative approaches to teaching and learning that embrace pedagogy, including philosophy as a pedagogy.

Claims that the CoI can support the reflective process of pre-service teachers, as well as in-service teachers, are well-documented (Baumfield, 2016a; Demissie, 2015; Haynes & Murriss, 2011b). Within the CoI there are opportunities to critically reflect on the dominant discourse surrounding education theories, philosophy and practice (Haynes & Murriss, 2011b; Murriss et al., 2009). Baumfield (2016a) found that teacher educators who practise the CoI with their students not only become “more reflective, curious and experimental themselves” (p. 119) but equally potentially transform their classrooms “into places where students teach as they learn, and teachers learn as they teach” (p. 121). This reflects the suggestion by Freire (1996) that when power dynamics in the classroom are disrupted, this leads to a reimagined role of both the teacher and the student.

Informed by a conviction that P4wC has the power to challenge and potentially transform mindsets, the teacher educator authors of this article have worked over the last decade to embed P4wC within diverse modules across the university-based ITE programmes (Love & Goto, 2023). As a result, all pre-service teachers on these programmes have had opportunities to experience P4wC and develop their pedagogical knowledge around this powerful approach.

Engagement with P4wC has been well received by pre-service teachers on these programmes, with feedback suggesting that their thinking had been challenged and even transformed, leading them to see education and pupil capabilities in a new light, informing their view of themselves as a teacher (Love & Goto, 2023). This supports the view that P4wC can lead teacher-practitioners to examine and re-assess their philosophy on education (Murriss, 2008). Additionally, many pre-service teachers highlighted the democratic principles of P4wC as something they wanted to emulate in their future classrooms, seeing the philosophy behind P4wC as more wide-reaching than a curriculum approach (Love, 2016; Love & Goto, 2023). It is an increasingly prevalent contention that P4wC provides opportunities for pre-service teachers to critically consider and

reflect on their practice, their values, and beliefs about education, and can have a transformative impact on their developing teacher identity (Baumfield, 2016a; Demissie, 2015; Love, 2019; Love & Goto, 2023).

Within this context, pre-service teachers, in their final year of their degree programme at this university, were set an assignment to critically reflect on a specific pedagogical approach, within a curriculum subject other than English, Mathematics or Science, commonly referred to as foundation subjects in England. This enabled action-based reflection to take place. What follows was developed from the assignment submission from a pre-service teacher, who selected to focus on P4wC contextualised within the teaching of Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) (Department for Education, 2021). *In order for transparency of authorship, the pre-service teacher's discussion will be clearly identified through the use of italics. Where appropriate reflections in response to the pre-service teacher's discussions have been added, these will not be in italics to make this distinction clear.* This case study shows a pre-service teacher embarking on using this pedagogy in the classroom, after independently researching the theory and practice of P4wC. This assignment began with a review of the literature in the field, followed by a critical reflection on their first use of this pedagogical approach in practice. Whilst this account demonstrates a novice practitioner of P4wC, the reflections and impact are powerful. This article ends with some final conclusions and reflections upon the value of P4wC in ITE from the teacher educator authors.

reflections on learning from pre-service teacher

This programme's model of focusing on literature and theory, and then enacting it in practice, mirrors critical reflection through action-based research (Badia, 2017). During a period described as a "deep-seated cultural divide" between education academic research and schools-based teaching (Colucci-Gray et al., 2013 p. 126), pre-service teachers are situated between the two; affording a unique position between two distinct areas of education. This position correlates with action-based research, whereby the linking of the terms "action" and "research" highlights both the practice and theory elements of teaching (Kemmis et al., 2014). Everyday critical self-reflection within a dynamic and uncertain primary classroom can often be characterised as fleeting (Saric & Steh, 2017), however, is

regarded as an essential element of practice, providing the pedagogical tools and foundational information to becoming a better teacher (Brookfield, 2017). For a pre-service teacher, critical reflection is embedded in school-based placements, however, often focuses on self-reflection or improving their role in teaching and learning as a whole. Finlay (2008) calls for greater criticality in reflection, drawing from the critical analysis skills used within research. Reflection focused on a specific pedagogy, would be one way to narrow the scope of what is being considered to provide opportunity for deeper, more substantial critical reflection which can be documented and compared with key educational theory and literature; contributing to professional development.

The challenging position the pre-service teacher discusses between two worlds has previously been interrogated. This liminal space is occupied by pre-service teachers as they try to reconcile the ITE culture with the professional school context, and is challenging to navigate, with issues of congruence and dissonance experienced by many (Love, 2021; Seymour, 2018; Wilkins, 2011). Derived from the Latin “limen” meaning threshold, liminality is seen as the dissonance or disorientation that occurs in the middle stage of a rite of passage, in this context the passage from pre-service teacher to fully qualified teacher status (Love, 2021).

P4wC permeated the three-year degree in Primary Education, subtly and discreetly underpinning university-based teaching, incorporated within modules and seminars focusing on religious education, educational principles, and practice, PSHE and Special Educational Needs. This approach to weaving P4wC throughout the degree curriculum (Love & Goto, 2023) ensures that all pre-service teachers on this programme start their teaching career with an awareness of P4wC as a pedagogical approach. For the pre-service teacher in this case study, this resulted in an emerging teacher identity appreciating the power of the community of inquiry (Sutcliffe, 2016). For beginning teachers, teacher identity is constantly re-shaping and developing with exposure to new situations, educational theory and classes of children, reaffirming and building professional values and ethos (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). This researcher-teacher aimed to create a classroom environment where children felt empowered to be curious, to question and form their own identities; therefore, integration of P4wC felt a natural choice.

critical discussion of literature around philosophy for/with children as pedagogy

Making deliberate and justified pedagogical decisions when teaching is paramount to children's progression (Department for Children, 2009). There are numerous pedagogies teachers can utilize when teaching Personal, Social, and Health Education (PSHE) (Department for Education, 2021), for example, Circle Time (Mosley & Child, 2005) and question-based planning (Smith et al., 2007). This case study critically examines using Philosophy for/with Children (P4wC), exploring the aims, practice and impact, attempting to evaluate the quality and any limitations of this pedagogical approach within PSHE (Department for Education, 2021; Steward, 2020).

aims

P4wC is a pedagogical approach nurturing philosophical inquiry (Gaut & Gaut, 2013; Gorard et al., 2015), which has developed from the original conceptualisation by Matthew Lipman and Ann Margaret Sharp in 1970 (Gorard et al., 2015). P4wC is enacted through a Community of Inquiry (COI). Within the COI the children come together to inquire collaboratively. They pose questions, search for meaning and develop their understanding (Golding, 2015; Love, 2021).

Lipman envisaged a CoI operating under two requirements, one being inquiry itself, and the other being the requirement for communal life, respecting others, but also offering one's ideas for scrutiny (Lipman, 2008). P4wC aims to support children to become willing and able to question, reason, co-construct arguments and collaborate cohesively with others (Gorard et al., 2015; Shorer & Quinn, 2022). Lipman et al. (1980) aimed to support children to become "more thoughtful, more reflective, more considerate, and more reasonable individuals" (p. 15). Shorer and Quinn (2022) however, suggest that these intended aims are unlikely to appear as outcomes within curriculum subjects in England, as the English National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) is knowledge-based, rather than value or concept-based. Gaut and Gaut (2013) describe children becoming active learners as a result of P4wC. Both Lipman (2011) and Gaut and Gaut (2013) recognise these benefits are a result of P4wC's format, whereby children have ownership over the discussion in a direction that interests them; facilitated, but not directed by the teacher (Gaut & Gaut, 2013; Lipman, 2011; Shorer & Quinn, 2022). This encourages children to develop their way of thinking about the world, providing the opportunity to express ideas with confidence and in a safe and supportive, yet accountable, environment (Lipman, 2011)

resulting in the development of communication, concentration, social and critical reasoning skills (Gaut & Gaut, 2013).

In England there is often a tension between advocates of knowledge-based education and those who might support a more holistic approach, incorporating inquiry-led learning for exploration of concepts (Hudson & Shelton, 2020). Whilst recent government guidance has been in favour of a “knowledge-rich” curriculum (Davis, 2023), the National Curriculum itself does not dictate how curricula must be enacted, leaving space for schools and professionals to make pedagogical and philosophical decisions about teaching and learning. P4wC advocates might draw from this approach, incorporating concept-led dialogic inquiry as a means to rebalance a curriculum that has been increasingly skewed towards knowledge and didactic approaches (Gregory, 2019).

p4wc approach

Dialogue is at the heart of P4wC (Smith, 2016; Topping et al., 2019) with social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) at its theoretical foundation (Hymer & Sutcliffe, 2012). Stokell et al. (2016) suggest that most group work within primary school, rather than true collaboration can be viewed as children working alongside each other, with no real sharing and combining of ideas. In comparison, the dialogue facilitated during P4wC offers the possibility of synthesising ideas leading to new meanings and understandings and the potential that perceptions may change (Topping et al., 2019). Children ideally should be sat within a circle where everyone can contribute and be seen, the teacher also sits within the circle to break down hierarchies, encouraging inclusion of all (Fisher, 2013; Hymer & Sutcliffe, 2012; Topping et al., 2019). The teacher’s role as the facilitator includes withholding their own opinion to keep dialogue open and exploratory (Ab Wahab et al., 2022; Fisher, 2013). Whilst lesson plans differ (Lipman, 2008), in the United Kingdom (UK), P4wC often follows a similar structure: starting with sharing a concept-rich stimulus, such as a picture book or video that has been chosen by the teacher-facilitator. Children then pose questions and democratically select one to engage in dialogue around (Ab Wahab et al., 2022), finishing with closure or a community debrief (Hymer & Sutcliffe, 2012).

challenges for the p4wc practitioner

Literature refers to limitations and challenges of implementing P4wC. A key theme within literature, for example, is the challenge of a crowded curriculum (Shorer & Quinn, 2022; Stokell et al., 2016), resulting in limited time for teachers to go beyond what is mandated. It is argued that the current neoliberal attainment and outcomes narrative within education in England, perpetuated by league tables, school inspection processes, and standardisation, often results in overstretched teachers who can be reluctant to introduce new initiatives (O’Riordan, 2015).

Neoliberal ideology is present within education in England, turning education into a marketplace. This system is measured by outcomes from testing, which are used to rank schools. In addition, in England, schools are regularly inspected and held to account by the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted). Within this climate, parents can select schools for their children, impacting the funding that schools receive, based on decisions influenced by league tables and Ofsted ratings.

Neoliberals promote this accountability agenda aimed at raising educational standards (Apple, 2017). This system is driven by assessment data that can be used to measure educational outcomes and standards. Proponents value this focus on improvement with some teachers highlighting that this data can allow them to refine teaching approaches and develop their practice for the benefit of learners (Hardy & Lewis, 2017). However, many claim that the high-stakes nature of this standards agenda can lead to a performative culture which can reduce education to focus mainly on outcomes that are tested, impacting those measures being used to judge and rank schools (Wilkins et al., 2012). Ball and Olmedo (2013) and Raymond (2018) see this culture, driven by competition and performance, as a dominating force in education. Within this system, teachers’ pay is increasingly linked to pupil outcomes in tests (Hill, 2007) reducing education to just that which can be measured, evaluated and compared (Holloway & Brass, 2018). This environment can discourage deviation from the norm and disempower teachers as autonomous professionals (Biesta, 2009). This makes it increasingly challenging to experiment with new approaches, making it harder for teachers and schools to adopt arguably less commonplace pedagogical approaches such as P4wC. Haynes (2007) suggests many teachers value exploratory interaction; however, show concern over the additional effort, time, and planning

involved. O’Riordan (2015) similarly states teachers struggle to implement a pedagogical approach such as P4wC that runs counter to the prevailing neoliberal performative concept of education focused on short-term, content-based outcomes.

P4wC is defined by ambiguity and child-led questions, which teachers often shy away from engaging with. Haynes (2007) suggests many adults assume children are not cognitively ready to discuss difficult subjects. This aligns with previously entrenched views of child development. Piaget (2013) suggests young children are not capable of philosophical thinking (Astington, 1993). There is an extensive body of research disputing Piaget’s (2013) contention (Astington, 1993; Gopnik, 2009; Matthews, 1980), questioning Piaget’s methodology which could be argued to lack meaningful context and rely too heavily upon children verbalising their understanding. Subsequent studies have consequently found Piaget to underestimate children’s ability to engage in both serious and sustained philosophical thinking and discussion (Matthews, 1980). This underestimation of the child is sometimes referred to as adultism (Bertrand et al., 2023). Alternatively, J. Haynes (2014) uses the term childism to describe this phenomenon, which she argues should be considered alongside ageism as a form of discrimination based purely on age.

This corresponds to a body of literature around historical childhood narratives (Lyle, 2016; Stables, 2008; Stainton Rogers & Stainton Rogers, 1992; Wall, 2010). Wall (2010) distinguishes two views of the child, as either innocent or unruly. It has been developed from Stainton-Rogers and Stainton-Rogers’ (1992) binary as either child as innocent or child as evil. Lyle (2016) suggests the development from child as evil to child as unruly better reflects the narratives of teachers. This polarised model can dictate teacher behaviour, especially during PSHE and P4wC (Lyle, 2016). For example, those upholding the view of childhood as innocent may attempt to shield and withhold information (Dahlberg et al., 2013), often avoiding controversial or difficult issues such as racism within P4wC (Lyle, 2016). Alternatively, those viewing the child as unruly, would prioritise a stance of good behaviour or compliance; often resulting in teachers intervening in enquiries to provide the “correct” response (Lyle, 2016).

Traditionally childhood has been viewed predominantly as preparation for adulthood. Cassidy and Mohr Lone (2020, p. 16) describe how:

The adult/child binary has dominated, with children seen as “becomings” – that is, as in the process of becoming fully human – and adults seen as “beings,” as stable and complete human beings.

This dichotomy further embeds the views based on childism discussed above. J. Haynes (2014) reports that Rousseau viewed childhood to be an important time that deserved to be valued in and of itself. Children are already beings. If we take this view then education might be seen as an important process in its own right, aimed at developing the child to enable them to get the most out of their childhood. This would align with the view put forward by (Dewey, 2017), who argued that education is for now, not just for the future. Stanley and Lyle (2016) present a view of young children as capable, co-creators who, through their play, make meaning and develop understanding. Stables (2008) similarly asserts the child’s world holds integrity and should be respected. Such views of the child as capable, empowered and cognisant, lead educators to suggest that, in alignment with an approach such as that practised in P4wC, children should be consulted and co-construct matters affecting them (Lyle, 2016). This model has clear implications for practice, with F. Haynes (2014) and Dahlberg et al. (2013) calling for a pedagogy prioritising listening to children, which underpins P4wC practice (Lyle, 2016).

Shorer and Quinn (2022) and the PSHE Association (2019) also describe a reluctance among teachers to face difficult or contentious subjects. Haynes (2007) argues the gap between what children know and what they do not know can leave children vulnerable to abuse, stressing the importance of covering sensitive topics (Shorer & Quinn, 2022). Stokell et al. (2016) assert it is imperative teachers are adequately trained and have the confidence to approach potentially unpredictable areas of the PSHE curriculum. This corresponds to Denby (2012) highlighting the link between teacher subject knowledge and confidence, stressing secure teachers are more likely to adopt creative approaches and take risks, suggesting there is a potential opportunity for P4wC to be embedded in practice as a pedagogical approach to address these challenges.

In order to have a positive impact on children, PSHE should be coherently planned with clear aims, using approaches that support pupil progress and taught by knowledgeable teachers (PSHE Association, 2019). Using P4wC as a pedagogical approach to engage with aspects of the PSHE curriculum through a CoI, supports children to be able to question others, co-construct opinions and collaborate as a community (Gorard et al.,

2017; Lipman et al., 1980). When using this pedagogy in practice, the teacher acts as a facilitator, supporting and encouraging the children to develop their thinking and to engage with concepts related to the PSHE curriculum (Topping et al., 2019).

impact of p4wc:

There is an extensive literature base discussing potential impact and outcomes of using P4wC (Gorard et al., 2015, 2017; Lipman et al., 1980; Siddiqui et al., 2019; Trickey & Topping, 2004). An initial evaluation of P4wC (Lipman et al., 1980) saw progress in logical reasoning and reading. A larger evaluation undertaken by Trickey and Topping (2004) reported significant improvements in reading and critical thinking. Gorard et al. (2017) similarly found P4wC to have a positive impact on children's mathematics and English attainment at age ten to eleven. In addition to this, Gorard et al. (2017) found teachers felt P4wC had other beneficial impacts including increases in confidence, patience and self-esteem. Figueiredo (2022) however argues that whilst it might be possible to measure critical thinking, it does not contribute to the exercise of good judgment or moral virtue. This view could be argued to contribute to the child-unruly narrative (Lyle, 2016) questioning the aims of P4wC.

In the following section, reflections from this pre-service teacher, upon an initial foray into teaching using the P4wC pedagogy, are explored.

critical reflection of a pre-service teacher:

Teachers' actions are based on assumptions about how best to support children's learning (Brookfield, 2017). Critical reflection, therefore, is defined by Brookfield (2017) as the intentional process of identifying the accuracy of teaching assumptions. By examining practice reflectively (Bolton, 2014) and engaging in a process of adaptation and learning (Schön, 2017), the teacher can refine their practice. When considering reflection this way, it can be viewed as a process of inquiry (Priestley et al., 2013) drawing some parallels to the inquiry process of P4wC (Lipman, 1987). The following section will reflect critically on a P4wC session taught within a PSHE lesson in a primary school in England, highlighting implications for future practice.

This lesson took place with a class of thirty-three Year Five children (aged nine and ten years old), within an urban primary school in the south of England, serving a diverse community, with children who have a range of educational needs. P4wC was not a

well-known or used pedagogy within the school, therefore the children had not experienced a P4wC session before. Prior to the CoI, the children were introduced to P4wC as an approach, exploring guidelines for an effective community and expectations for engagement as well as some explanation with regards to the teacher-facilitator role. A discussion was had about how to appropriately agree, build upon or disagree with peers, in a respectful manner.

The inquiry was planned using the SAPERE 10-step model (SAPERE, 2019) that had been demonstrated within the ITE programme. The P4wC session was linked to the PSHE curriculum, with the aims for the half-term as follows in Figure 1:

PSHE Unit of Work Year Five pupils
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Differences and similarities between people arise from a number of factors, including family, cultural, ethnic, racial and religious diversity, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability (see “protected characteristics” in the Equality Act 2010). - To realise the nature and consequences of discrimination, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours (including cyber bullying, use of prejudice-based language, how to respond and ask for help)

Figure 1. PSHE Unit of Work Year Five pupils. Source: PSHE (2019).

This PSHE lesson focused on fairness, with an intention of developing children's understanding of the concepts of prejudice and discrimination (Department for Education, 2021). For the P4wC CoI, a video stimulus about three children deciding how best to share out their kit before going on a quest was chosen (BBC, 2018). One child was described as the smallest, another child had a broken arm, and the last child, described as the biggest, brought the least amount of kit. Hymer and Sutcliffe (2012) state a stimulus is intended to get children thinking and questioning from a shared experience. The ideal stimulus may, therefore, hold ethical, aesthetic, and logical ambiguities or subtleties (Hymer & Sutcliffe, 2012). Pritchard (2002) suggests teachers can be reluctant to engage in content without a preconceived “correct” response, thus meaning they might be wary of P4wC. However, I found it easier to remain a facilitator whilst using this provocative stimulus, indeed, I found my own opinions changing within the session. This may support my explicit reflections on the way I view the child and their capabilities (Kennedy, 2001; Lyle, 2016; Stables, 2008; Wall, 2010). Choosing a stimulus without a preconceived “correct” response supported this pre-service teacher to reframe practice away from directing children to the correct way to behave, in favour of empowering the children to engage in dialogue around

the subject and to collaboratively develop their own thinking in this area (Lyle, 2016). An informal discussion with the class about their first experience of P4wC elicited that the children enjoyed the session and wanted to try it again.

However, before the session, many limitations discussed in literature aligned with my experience. Finding, and allocating time for this P4wC session was challenging; reflecting earlier discussion of the challenge of the crowded curriculum (Pritchard, 2002; Shorer & Quinn, 2022; Stokell et al., 2016). Attempting to cover a full range of foundation subjects with integrity was a challenge (O’Riordan, 2015). This view was anecdotally shared by other teachers within the school; despite the school having strong, child-centred values, the outcome accountability-focused educational system challenged the implementation of P4wC (O’Riordan, 2015).

The class had a high number of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), specifically children with autistic spectrum conditions (ASC). There is limited research on the intersection of P4wC and ASC (Garwood, 2023; Lukey, 2004). However, both Garwood (2023) and Lukey (2004) describe how some children with ASC might struggle with P4wC; due to difficulties with verbal language, sensory overwhelm (Garwood, 2023) and possible rigidity in thoughts and understanding (Lukey, 2004). I, however, found many of the children within the class with SEND and/or ASC to thrive during this session. I noted two specific students who are often quiet during discussions, engaging more fully, sharing ideas and respectfully disagreeing with their peers. This resonates with Stokell et al. (2016), who describe how many children with SEND are vocal during P4wC. They attribute this to the supportive structure and guidelines of a P4wC session (Stokell et al., 2016), where everyone is listened to and respected (Lipman, 2008). Meir and McCann (2016) also suggest P4wC gives children with SEND a voice, acquiring numerous tangible positive effects, including improvements in behaviour, increased empathy and developed interpersonal relationships. Garwood (2023) suggests scaffolds to support the inclusion of all children accessing P4wC, including a focus on collaboration rather than verbal communication. This raises implications for future practice.

Due to the short-term nature of this case study, the long-term benefits of the P4wC approach suggested by Lipman et al. (1980); Trickey and Topping (2004); and Gorard et al. (2017) cannot be commented on. However, informal feedback from the class was extremely positive, with many children vocalising their enjoyment. It is important to remember that this was a new community with very limited experience of the P4wC approach, so they

were not yet highly skilled in areas such as philosophical question creation and exploring philosophical concepts within a CoI. With increased exposure to, and experience of P4wC, it is likely that the children would become more adept at creating philosophical inquiry questions, would demonstrate greater critical thinking and show increased ability to make connections between philosophical concepts (Love, 2016).

Whilst there are undoubtedly challenges, both to the implementation of P4wC within a crowded and attainment-focused curriculum (Pritchard, 2002), and navigating the complexities involved in facilitating a successful and meaningful P4wC inquiry. I aim to address such challenges by participating in continued critical reflection (Schön, 2017) and seeking to engage in ongoing professional development (Haynes, 2007). For example, something as outwardly straightforward as stimulus choice, can be more nuanced than it first appears to novice facilitators (Hymer & Sutcliffe, 2012; Pritchard, 2002; Wall, 2010). As I move forward, I aim to reflect upon and actively confront implicit child-innocent and child-unruly narratives (Lyle, 2016) towards a view of the child as competent (Wall, 2010). Corresponding to this, I aim to embrace difficult topics (Department for Education, 2019, 2021) whilst ensuring I uphold my safeguarding duty. As I further engage with literature surrounding P4wC and key bodies of research, I recognise my practice will change and develop; in order for this to happen, I need to make time for P4wC sessions within the curriculum.

Ultimately, the introduction to P4wC during my university-based pre-service education, and the opportunity to delve deeply into the literature surrounding P4wC, has given me the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to begin to use P4wC as a qualified teacher. Despite the potential challenges in implementation, P4wC is a pedagogical tool that has potential for classroom and curriculum use which I hope to draw from throughout my teaching career.

conclusions and reflections from the teacher educators

This case study aligns with claims from literature that engaging with P4wC can have a positive impact on the reflective process of pre-service teachers (Baumfield, 2016b; Demissie, 2015; Haynes & Murris, 2011b). The pre-service teacher in the reflections above, described how her own thinking had been transformed in the CoI. This is attributed to the provocative nature of the CoI, where different viewpoints are raised, aired and indeed often contested,

leading participants and facilitators to, where appropriate, change their minds (Murriss, 2008). This openness of the facilitator to change within the CoI, resonates with the reimagined role of the teacher and student described by Freire, where the teacher and students are engaged in reciprocal learning (Freire, 1996).

This reimagined relationship between teachers and pupils that Freire describes, is practised in P4wC, where the teacher becomes a co-enquirer with the class/students (Burgh, 2018; Haynes & Murriss, 2011b). P4wC changes the conventional power structure in the classroom, creating new classroom dynamics, where the children's voices (often marginalized in education) aspire to have equal weight to that of the teacher (Haynes & Murriss, 2011a). The teacher in the CoI does not adopt the traditional roles associated with teaching, that of knowledge-deliverer, authoritarian or disciplinarian; instead the teacher is a facilitator and the community is seen as "autopoietic, that is, as a dynamic, self-organizing system" (Kennedy, 2004 p. 753).

It is interesting that the pre-service teacher within this case study spoke of feeling able to change her mind, simply due to the ambiguous nature of the stimulus and concepts being discussed. This openness to new ideas and ways of thinking would make, we suggest, genuine reflective practice more achievable. To develop one's practice based on reflection, one must remain open to change. This aligns with the view, raised by the pre-service teacher, that reflection is in many ways akin to the inquiry process (Priestley et al., 2013).

The teacher educator co-authors of this article propose that the inclusion of P4wC from the naissance of the pre-service education journey has the potential to positively impact pre-service teachers as they start to develop their teacher identity, build their pedagogical toolkit and identify a lens through which they might approach teaching in general. Experiences and feedback, such as those shown in the reflections above, have continued to emphasise the importance of grasping opportunities to embed P4wC throughout ITE provision (Love & Goto, 2023).

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