



dossier “philosophy with children across boundaries”

developing new methods to assess community transformation through philosophical dialogue

author

kazuki tsuji

toyama university of international
studies, japan

e-mail: je.suis.kazuki@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4543-0130>

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abstract

This study presents a methodological approach for assessing the educational impact of philosophical dialogues. Drawing upon the Q-U model, this research develops a framework designed to evaluate group dynamics. The framework was implemented in philosophical dialogue at a junior high school in Gifu Prefecture, Japan, to examine its practical applicability. Existing evaluation methods predominantly emphasize individual assessment. However, philosophical dialogues operate within a community, where collective transformations take place. The proposed framework assesses both individual and communal transformations through a structured self-assessment questionnaire, measuring participants' critical and caring thinking. The findings indicate that philosophical dialogues contribute to the maturation of dialogue groups, as evidenced by changes in students' critical and caring thinking abilities over time. Results from the exploratory study suggest that philosophical dialogues can foster gradual improvements in participants'



cognitive and social abilities. The feasibility of assessing community transformation through student self-assessments was examined and found to be viable. These findings suggest that this study contributes to the ongoing discourse on evaluating philosophical dialogues by advocating for assessment methodologies that capture their dynamic and interactive nature. Future research should incorporate teacher and peer evaluations to complement self-reported data. Furthermore, expanding the sample size and introducing control groups would enhance the validity of the proposed framework.

keywords: community of philosophical inquiry; educational efficacy; evaluation methodology; group assessment; self-assessment; group dynamics.

desenvolvimento de novos métodos para avaliar a transformação comunitária através do diálogo filosófico

resumo

Este estudo apresenta uma abordagem metodológica para avaliar o impacto educacional dos diálogos filosóficos. Com base no modelo Q-U, esta pesquisa desenvolve um quadro destinado a avaliar a dinâmica de grupo. O quadro foi implementado em diálogos filosóficos realizados em uma escola de Ensino Fundamental na Província de Gifu, Japão, a fim de examinar sua aplicabilidade prática. Os métodos de avaliação existentes enfatizam predominantemente a avaliação individual. No entanto, os diálogos filosóficos ocorrem em uma comunidade, onde transformações coletivas acontecem. O quadro proposto avalia tanto as transformações individuais quanto as comunitárias por meio de um questionário estruturado de autoavaliação, medindo o pensamento crítico e cuidadoso dos participantes. Os resultados indicam que os diálogos

filosóficos contribuem para a maturação dos grupos de diálogo, como evidenciado pelas mudanças nas habilidades de pensamento crítico e cuidadoso dos alunos ao longo do tempo. Os resultados do estudo exploratório sugerem que os diálogos filosóficos podem promover melhorias graduais nas capacidades cognitivas e sociais dos participantes. A viabilidade de avaliar a transformação comunitária por meio de autoavaliações dos alunos foi examinada e considerada aplicável. Esses achados indicam que este estudo contribui para o debate contínuo sobre a avaliação dos diálogos filosóficos, ao defender metodologias de avaliação que captem sua natureza dinâmica e interativa. Pesquisas futuras devem incorporar avaliações de professores e colegas para complementar os dados autorrelatados. Além disso, a ampliação do tamanho da amostra e a introdução de grupos de controle aumentariam a validade do quadro proposto.

palavras-chave: comunidade de investigação filosófica; eficácia educacional; metodologia de avaliação; avaliação em grupo; autoavaliação; dinâmica de grupo.

desarrollo de nuevos métodos para evaluar la transformación comunitaria mediante el diálogo filosófico

resumen

Este estudio presenta un enfoque metodológico para evaluar el impacto educativo de los diálogos filosóficos. Basándose en el modelo Q-U, esta investigación desarrolla un marco diseñado para evaluar la dinámica grupal. El marco se implementó en diálogos filosóficos en una escuela secundaria de la prefectura de Gifu, Japón, con el fin de examinar su aplicabilidad práctica. Los métodos de evaluación existentes enfatizan predominantemente la evaluación individual. Sin embargo, los diálogos

filosóficos se desarrollan en el seno de una comunidad, donde tienen lugar transformaciones colectivas. El marco propuesto evalúa tanto las transformaciones individuales como las comunitarias mediante un cuestionario estructurado de autoevaluación, que mide el pensamiento crítico y empático de los participantes. Los resultados indican que los diálogos filosóficos contribuyen a la maduración de los grupos de diálogo, como lo evidencian los cambios en las capacidades de pensamiento crítico y empático de los estudiantes a lo largo del tiempo. Los resultados del estudio exploratorio sugieren que los diálogos filosóficos pueden fomentar mejoras graduales en las habilidades cognitivas y sociales de los participantes. Se examinó la viabilidad de evaluar la transformación comunitaria a través de autoevaluaciones estudiantiles, y se consideró factible. Estos hallazgos sugieren que este estudio contribuye al discurso actual sobre la evaluación de los diálogos filosóficos, abogando por metodologías de evaluación que capturen su naturaleza dinámica e interactiva. Futuras investigaciones deberían incorporar evaluaciones de docentes y compañeros para complementar los datos autoinformados. Además, ampliar el tamaño de la muestra e introducir grupos de control aumentaría la validez del marco propuesto.

palabras clave: comunidad de indagación filosófica; eficacia educativa; metodología de evaluación; evaluación grupal; autoevaluación; dinámicas grupales.

developing new methods to assess community transformation through philosophical dialogue

introduction

The aim of this study is to develop an evaluation methodology for assessing the transformative processes within communities facilitated by philosophical dialogues. Specifically, it seeks to elucidate the progression of dialogue communities as they evolve from an initial, immature state to a more mature and cohesive state through ongoing dialogue sessions.

Lipman posited that within the community of inquiry, three forms of thinking—critical, caring, and creative—are cultivated, all of which are fundamental to the development of multidimensional thinking (Lipman, 2003). This study specifically examines critical thinking and caring thinking as key competencies fostered through philosophical dialogue. For analytical purposes, students whose proficiency in these two areas fell below the general average were classified as “immature,” while those demonstrating above-average proficiency were categorized as “mature.” Therefore, another objective of this study is to clarify this general average.

Two primary reasons support the emphasis on critical thinking and caring thinking in this study.

First, the junior high schools that collaborated in this study placed considerable emphasis on fostering interpersonal relationships as a strategy for mitigating bullying. Since critical and caring thinking contribute to bullying prevention, their development was particularly relevant.

Second, assessing creative thinking would have required more complex analytical methods, such as three-dimensional graph construction and interpretation, making evaluation less practical. The need for a straightforward method to assess classroom dynamics—expressed by teachers at these schools—served as the impetus for this study.

Accordingly, this research focuses on the development of these two dimensions of thinking abilities. It is noteworthy that awareness of philosophical dialogues with children has been gradually increasing in Japan. These dialogues

have been recognized as an effective means of fostering critical thinking skills in children, as well as a valuable tool for preventing and addressing bullying in the classroom. The transformative nature of philosophical dialogues enables children to develop both critical thinking and empathy, contributing to a more inclusive and reflective classroom environment. While the positive effects of incorporating philosophical dialogues into school curricula have been observed, several challenges remain to be addressed.

The evaluation of the effectiveness of philosophical dialogue is a critical issue that requires careful consideration to facilitate its widespread adoption. When introducing philosophical dialogue to junior high school educators, questions regarding its evaluation frequently arise, with some educators expressing concerns about its efficacy. Thus, the development of robust evaluation indicators is considered essential. Establishing objective measures to assess the effectiveness of philosophical dialogue can not only provide empirical support for its benefits but also help alleviate concerns among educators. Such an approach may encourage a greater number of schools to integrate philosophical dialogue into their educational practices.

Several prior studies have attempted to evaluate the “effectiveness” of philosophical dialogues. One example is the evaluation method proposed in *Philosophy for Children: Practitioner Handbook* (Gregory, 2008). For elementary school students, the evaluation focuses on the acquisition of reasoning and inquiry competencies as the primary outcomes. The content of the dialogue itself is also considered in the evaluation, with the deepening of dialogue regarded as another effect of philosophical dialogue. Another evaluation method is the one proposed by Cleghorn (1988). The items of this method focus on whether students have developed the competencies of dialogue and inquiry. Such effects of fostering dialogical and inquiry competencies, along with their evaluation, have been reported in study such as Wartenberg (2014).

Several prior studies have investigated the impact of philosophical dialogue on cognitive abilities and have conducted corresponding evaluations. Trickey and Topping (2013) also assessed children’s cognitive abilities using the Cognitive Abilities Test. The results indicated that philosophical dialogue was effective in

developing both verbal and nonverbal abilities. Fair et al. (2015) reported that weekly inquiry-based philosophy classes demonstrated the potential to enhance students' cognitive abilities. However, the observed changes are very gradual, requiring a minimum of 24 weeks of instruction to achieve measurable effects.

From another perspective, the research conducted by Delbari et al. (2020) is also worth considering. Based on interviews with teachers and a questionnaire survey, they found that one of the expected outcomes of P4wC is to help children acknowledge their own emotions and transform them into constructive actions. The effects of philosophical dialogue on children's emotions have been explored using psychological methods, with studies reporting an increase in self-esteem (Trickey & Topping, 2006). The benefits of philosophy for children are therefore many and varied. Ab Wahab et al. (2022) classify the effects into five categories, (1) higher-order thinking skills, (2) safe environments, (3) civilized students, (4) democracy in discussion, and (5) the culture of thinking in the classroom.

On the other hand, some have argued that the effectiveness of philosophical dialogue may have limitations. Tsukahara and Eguchi (2019) argue that if the purpose of philosophical dialogue is to cultivate "philosophical thinking" and a "sense of community," these two aspects are context-dependent capacities within a "community of inquiry," making them difficult to assess. Based on this premise, they assert that the evaluation of philosophical dialogue should not focus on individual abilities but rather on the conditions that enable philosophical dialogue to take place and shape its direction. Furthermore, they emphasize the necessity of assessing the growth of the community itself in relation to the teacher's belief about what kind of community they aim to foster. While Tsukahara and Eguchi questioned the validity of evaluating individual abilities in the context of philosophical dialogue, it is undeniable that a community is composed of individuals. Both the community and individuals undergo change as they influence each other in a dynamic process.

German psychologist Lewin proposed "Field Theory," a psychological framework that views human behavior as the result of continuous interaction between individuals and their environment (Lewin, 1951). Lewin stated that behavior (B) is a function of the person (P) and the environment (E), expressed by

the formula $B = f(P, E)$. In the context of philosophical dialogue, the community can be considered part of the environment. Since philosophical dialogue takes place within a community, it is only natural that individuals' actions and thoughts are influenced by the community, just as the community itself is influenced by the actions and thoughts of individuals. It is therefore important to assess not only individual transformation but also the transformation of the community.

Based on previous studies examined so far, this study proposes that philosophical dialogue has two main effects. The first is the development of critical and caring thinking, as demonstrated in previous research. The second is that acquiring these skills facilitates the transformation of the community into a more mature dialogue group.

Facilitators of philosophical dialogue may have personally observed the profound impact of these transformative processes. However, change is a slow process; therefore, achieving noticeable transformation requires sustained engagement in dialogue over time (Fair et al., 2015). Due to the gradual nature of these transformations, their effects may not always be readily apparent within the ongoing process. This inherent characteristic presents a potential challenge for newcomers who are considering involvement in philosophical dialogue, as the lack of immediate visible outcomes may lead to uncertainty regarding their effectiveness.

Recognizing and understanding subtle changes over time are crucial for individuals beginning to facilitate philosophical dialogues. The ability to identify these gradual transformations enables facilitators to guide dialogue groups in a manner that is both appropriate and effective, fostering deeper engagement and meaningful discourse.

what is Q-U?

According to Lipman (2003), the concept of inquiry is inherently situated within a community; however, not all communities are necessarily exploratory. Some communities may be unified by traditional beliefs, while others may be defined by shared values. This distinction suggests that communities can be categorized as either exploratory or non-exploratory.

Moreover, within educational institutions, particularly public schools, children are grouped together in a single classroom without consideration of the social or ideological bonds that may connect them. Initially, these children may not even constitute a community. Consequently, educators must assess the state of the classroom.

A substantial body of research in psychology, particularly in social psychology, has explored the ways in which individual behavior emerges and evolves within group contexts. Lewin's concept of group dynamics offers a foundational framework for understanding the reciprocal influence between a community and its members. The Q-U scale, which serves as an inspiration for this study, can be regarded as an extension of group dynamics research.

The Q-U scale is a psychological assessment tool developed by Japanese psychologist Shigeo Kawamura to evaluate classroom group dynamics. Recognized as a reliable measure, it is widely utilized in schools across Japan. According to Kawamura (2006), the Q-U scale is particularly valued for its effectiveness in preventing truancy, detecting bullying, and mitigating classroom disruptions. The Q-U consists of two questionnaires: one designed to measure classroom satisfaction and the other to assess students' motivation for school life. Classroom satisfaction is assessed from two perspectives: approval and infringement. The state of the classroom group is evaluated based on students' self-assessments in these two areas. In this study, we adapted the method of assessing classroom conditions through student self-assessments to evaluate philosophical dialogue. This is because there is a wealth of prior research on self-evaluation in philosophical dialogue, and we believed that this method would enable us to build on the existing body of research on the topic.

The following inquiry is posed: by what means does the Q-U model transition from the self-assessment of students to the assessment of the class? For instance, questions such as "Do you get recognition from your classmates for your athletics, studies, committee work, hobbies, etc.?" and "Do your classmates ever encourage you when you make mistakes?" are used to assess the level of approval within the group, while questions such as "Do you sometimes have a hard time when someone in your class says something you don't like or makes fun of you?"

and “Do you sometimes have a hard time because of violence by others in your class? ” are employed to evaluate infringement. The responses are quantified and analyzed against national averages, providing educators with valuable insights into classroom dynamics and areas for improvement.

First, the results of the self-assessment are categorized into four quadrants, as illustrated in Figure 1. Students with a high approval score and a low infringement score are classified into the Satisfaction Group. These students are highly satisfied with their classroom experience and have successfully found their place within the group.

Students with both high approval and high infringement scores are categorized into the Infringement Awareness Group, which may include individuals who have experienced bullying or teasing but who remain attentive to social contexts and interpersonal dynamics.

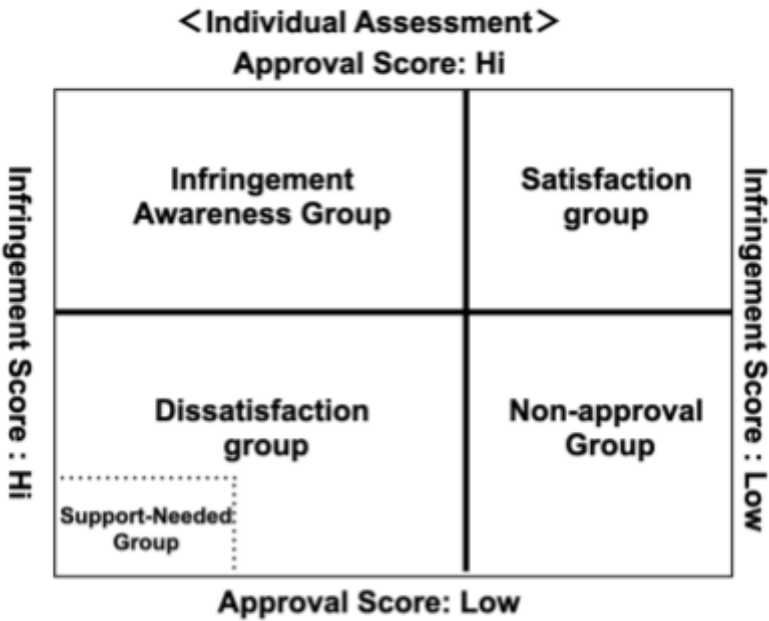


Figure 1: Four quadrants of self-assessment results
(Source: Kawamura, 2007, p. 55)

Those with low approval and low infringement scores are classified into the Non-Approval Group. While students in this category have not been subjected to bullying or victimization, they may struggle to establish a sense of belonging within the class.

Finally, students with low approval scores and high infringement scores are placed in the Dissatisfaction Group and, in particularly severe cases, in the

Support-Needed Group. Individuals in these categories are at a higher risk of having experienced severe bullying or teasing and are more likely to feel a profound sense of insecurity.

The following section provides an illustrative example of the methodology employed in conducting a group evaluation. If students are predominantly distributed within or near the Satisfaction Group, the class can be assessed as an Affinity Class, indicating a positive and cohesive classroom environment. In this class, every child is accepted by both teachers and peers, creating an environment free from bullying or exclusion.

However, in cases where a class consists of a higher proportion of students classified as Satisfied and Non-Approved, it may suggest that optimal interpersonal relationships have not yet been fully established (Figure 2). In such classrooms, some students may actively participate and express their opinions, while others may remain silent due to fear of failure. To foster a more inclusive classroom environment, it is essential to provide support that encourages students to recognize one another and gain a sense of approval from their peers.

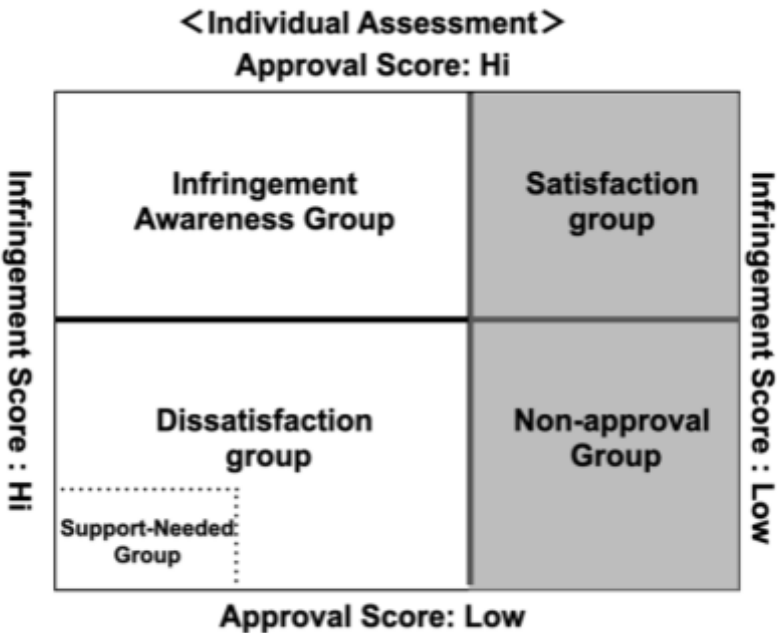


Figure 2 : Classrooms where relationships have not been established
(Source: Kawamura, 2007, p. 68)

Let us consider another example. A class with a higher proportion of Satisfied and Infringement students may indicate a failure to establish clear classroom rules (Figure 3). At first glance, these classes may appear to be dynamic

and engaging, with students actively participating. However, a closer examination reveals that students in this group may struggle with listening to others and may exhibit self-centered behaviors. In such cases, it is crucial for teachers to take a proactive role in establishing rules and fostering a cooperative classroom environment. This can be achieved by addressing rule violations through corrective measures, such as scolding, while simultaneously reinforcing positive behaviors by offering praise to those who follow the rules.

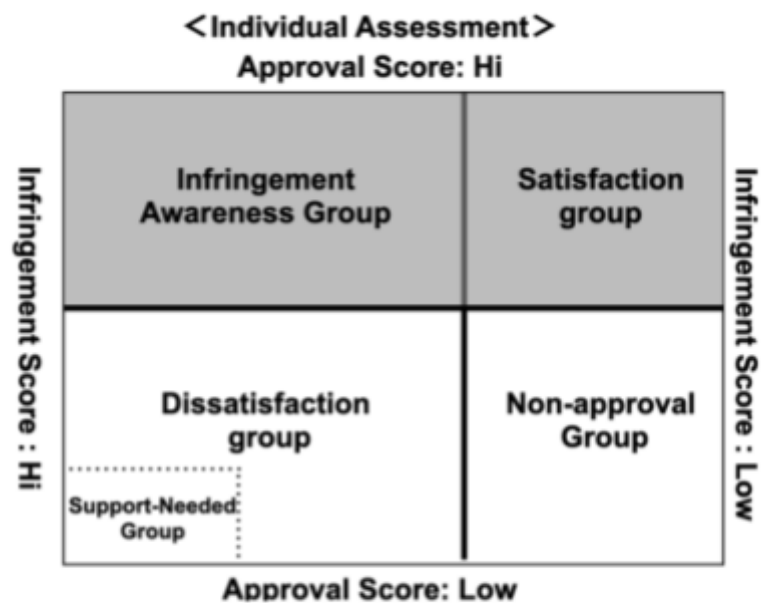


Figure 3 : Classrooms where rules have not been established
(Source: Kawamura, 2007, p. 68)

The above provides an overview of the Q-U psychological scale. The Q-U scale facilitates the implementation of group assessments within classrooms and offers educators valuable guidelines for providing appropriate support, whether for the class as a whole or for individual students. However, a key limitation is that the Q-U is not an evaluation method specifically designed for philosophical dialogue. As such, it is not suitable for directly enhancing dialogue through its results. Drawing upon the Q-U as a prototype, it is necessary to develop a group evaluation method tailored to the unique dynamics of philosophical dialogue.

how to assess communities of philosophical inquiry

It has been argued that the evaluation of philosophical dialogues could potentially conflict with their fundamental purpose. This concern arises from the fact that evaluation inherently involves the establishment of specific goals and the assessment of the current state relative to those objectives. Such a process may undermine the open and exploratory nature that is central to philosophical inquiry.

While goal-setting can be beneficial in certain contexts, it may also inadvertently constrain the organic and flexible nature of creative discussions, leading to a more rigid and predetermined framework. However, as long as the dialogue remains creative, the act of evaluation does not inherently contradict the fundamental purpose of philosophical dialogues.

Rather, it is the competencies in dialogue—such as providing evidence, speaking logically, and asking thoughtful questions—that make dialogue creative. When a community is formed by members who possess these competencies, it transforms into a community of philosophical inquiry.

Therefore, identifying and assessing goals related to dialogical competencies aligns with, rather than opposes, the objectives of philosophical inquiry. Indeed, previous studies have proposed specific criteria for assessing or self-assessing these competencies. It is important to note, however, that they may lack methodologies for evaluating group dynamics.

Evaluation criteria used by teachers to assess communities have been introduced in *Philosophy for Children: Practitioner Handbook* (Gregory et al., 2008). These assessment items can be utilized by experienced facilitators and teachers. For example, “Did the community reason well?” was listed as an assessment point. However, the validity of these assessment methods may be influenced by the subjective interpretation of the teaching staff.

In response, the present paper proposes a new method of community assessment, based on the Q-U scale. This new approach involves a collective assessment grounded in students’ self-assessments, thereby simplifying the

process of understanding group dynamics for facilitators, particularly those who are beginners.

The framework developed in this study is intended to assess communities based on participants' self-assessment of critical and compassionate thinking (as illustrated in Figure 4). In this assessment approach, participants are asked to evaluate themselves through a series of questions focused on critical thinking and empathic reflection (as shown in Table 1). The questions are designed to be straightforward, allowing participants to self-assess without feeling undue pressure. Participants are instructed to provide their responses using a five-point scale.

It was hypothesized that the quality of dialogue would be enhanced if individual participants possessed the appropriate skills. Consequently, the evaluation indicators developed in this study were designed to assess the skills acquired by students. The use of standardized questionnaire items that focus on the concept of "can" is grounded in this principle. The Japanese term *できる* (*dekiru*) corresponds to the English word "can," and is an expression that inquires about the availability of a specific ability or skill.

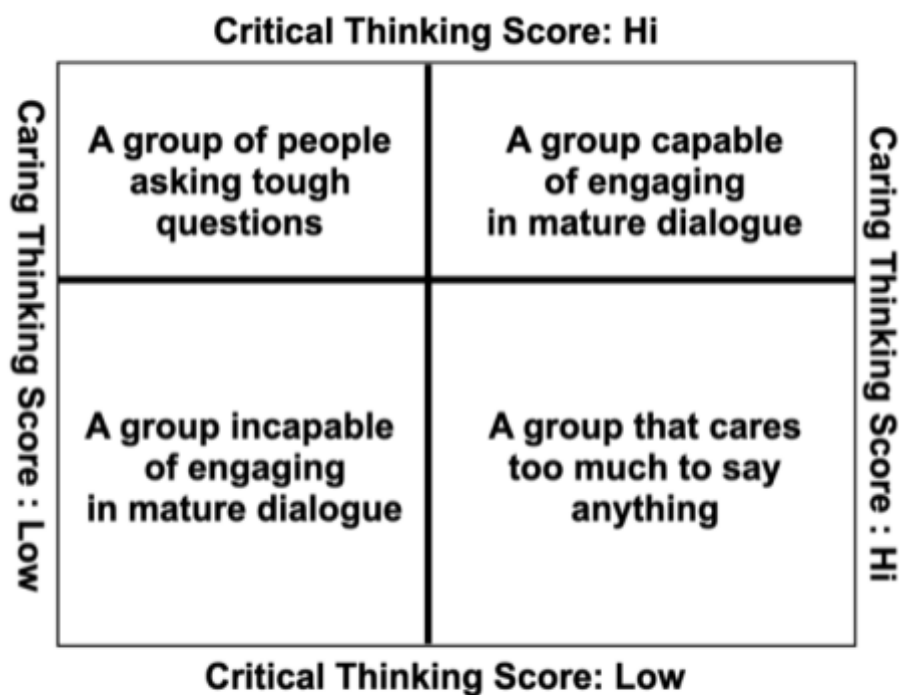


Figure 4: The framework for community of philosophical inquiry
(Source: Author)

Based on the self-assessment data obtained, it was possible to establish four quadrants: (1) a group capable of engaging in mature dialogue, (2) a group that asks tough questions, (3) a group incapable of engaging in mature dialogue, and (4) a group that cares too much to speak up. The following characteristics are exhibited by individuals within each of these groups.

Table 1. Self-assessment questions

Critical thinking	Caring thinking
Can you communicate while being mindful of word meanings and definitions?	Can you actively ask questions about what others are saying?
Can you express your opinion with evidence and reason?	Can you ask questions to people who don't speak often?
Can you turn abstract ideas into concrete ideas?	Can you create an atmosphere where everyone feels comfortable talking?
Can you refute someone else's opinion?	Can you accept ideas and values that are different from your own?
Can you point out what is good about other people's opinions and what should be improved?	Can you have the mindset of thinking about a question or theme as a group?
Can you incorporate new ideas and values into your thinking through dialogue?	Can you honestly say, "I don't know" or "I don't understand"?
Can you once again question things that are common sense and assumptions?	Can you relate the topic to your own experience?

(1) A group capable of engaging in mature dialogue

Individuals in this group tend to exhibit a higher level of both critical and compassionate thinking than the general population. They demonstrate the ability to engage thoughtfully with other participants in the dialogue, showing consideration and respect. Additionally, they are willing to ask critical questions and critically evaluate the opinions expressed, contributing to a deeper and more meaningful exchange.

(2) A group of people asking tough questions

Members of this group demonstrate superior critical thinking skills, yet their levels of compassionate thinking are comparatively lower. As a

result, they are adept at posing challenging questions and rigorously scrutinizing viewpoints. However, their limited capacity for caring thinking may result in a lack of empathy, which can create a perception of rigidity or even intimidation among other participants.

(3) A group incapable of engaging in mature dialogue

Individuals in this group exhibit below-average critical and compassionate thinking skills. They are often unable to engage thoughtfully with others or ask critical questions. Additionally, they show little consideration for the perspectives of other participants, resulting in a lack of maturity in their dialogue contributions.

(4) A group that cares too much to say anything

Members of this group tend to exhibit lower-than-average critical thinking skills, but their levels of compassionate thinking are higher. This inclination to prioritize the emotional needs of others may lead to a reluctance to engage in critical inquiry, resulting in a passive role in the dialogue.

These are the expected characteristics of individuals belonging to each of the four groups. It is posited that the larger the proportion of participants in group (1), the more mature the overall dialogue group is likely to be regarded.

exploratory study

The questionnaire was administered to secondary school students as part of a pilot study utilizing the developed assessment items. This pilot study was conducted at a junior high school in Gifu, Japan, from November 2023 to February 2024, in conjunction with and as part of the philosophical dialogue program.

Initially, a preliminary survey was conducted with all school pupils to assess their dialogue skills using the questionnaire items listed in Table 1. The study employed a five-point scale method (Strongly agree: 4 points, Agree: 3 points, Neutral: 2 points, Disagree: 1 point, Strongly Disagree: 0 points). The maximum total score achievable for both A and B, respectively, is 28 points.

A total of 335 valid responses were obtained, and the average of these responses is presented in Tables 2 and 3. The average total critical thinking score was 18.72, while the average total caring thinking score was 19.56.

The average scores obtained were used as the point of intersection for the coordinates (Figure 5). Following the questionnaire study, three philosophical dialogues were conducted in one class at each grade level. After these three rounds of dialogue, the same questionnaire was administered again to the classes that had participated. The average scores from this second round are also presented in Tables 2 and 3. A total of 75 respondents completed the questionnaire, providing a valid dataset for analysis.

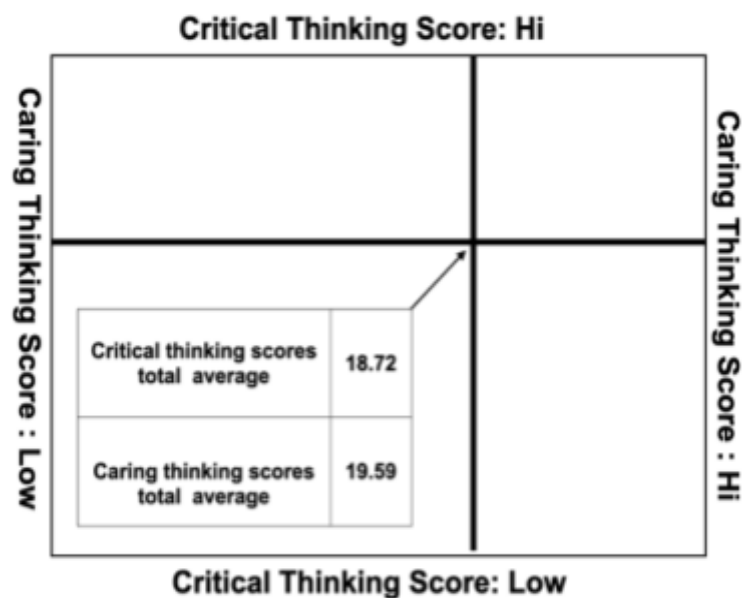


Figure 5: The point of intersection of the coordinates
(Source: Author)

As demonstrated in Tables 2 and 3, the self-rated critical and care thinking scores of students in the class who had participated in three philosophy dialogues were higher than the averages obtained from students who had never experienced a philosophy dialogue.

Table 2. Critical thinking score average

	All students average, November 2023 (n=335)	Three classes, which experienced three philosophical dialogues February 2024 (n=75)
① Can you communicate while being mindful of word meanings and definitions?	2.75	3.04
② Can you express your opinion with evidence and reason?	2.81	2.89
③ Can you turn abstract ideas into concrete ideas?	2.81	2.73
④ Can you refute someone else's opinion?	2.60	2.58
⑤ Can you point out what is good about other people's opinions and what should be improved?	2.60	2.72
⑥ Can you incorporate new ideas and values into your thinking through dialogue?	2.60	3.05
⑦ Can you once again question things that are common sense and assumptions?	2.60	2.69
Critical thinking scores total average	18.72	19.76

Table 3. Caring thinking score average

	All students average, November 2023 (n=335)	Three classes, which experienced three philosophical dialogues February 2024 (n=75)
① Can you actively ask questions about what others are saying?	2.64	2.65
② Can you ask questions to people who don't speak often?	2.64	2.67
③ Can you create an atmosphere where everyone feels comfortable talking?	2.87	2.96
④ Can you accept ideas and values that are different from your own?	2.87	3.09
⑤ Can you have the mindset of thinking about a question or theme as a group?	2.45	3.21
⑥ Can you honestly say, "I don't know" or "I don't understand"?	2.45	3.11
⑦ Can you relate the topic to your own experience?	2.48	2.89
Caring thinking scores total average	19.56	20.59

results

Figures 6 and 7 present the results of applying the methodology to assess the classes (November 2023). Each point represents the placement of individual students within specific groups. It is important to note that some points may overlap. As shown in Figure 6, students in Class A (comprising 13-year-olds) are distributed across various groups. This distribution suggests that there may be opportunities for improving the facilitation of mature dialogue among Class A's students. During class discussions, it is recommended that students be encouraged to ask more questions and critically assess each other's opinions.

In contrast, Figure 7 illustrates that a significant proportion of students in Class B (comprising 15-year-olds) are affiliated with the mature dialogue group. Within Class B, there was a clear inclination among students to ask questions and critically evaluate the opinions shared during the dialogues. When comparing Class A and Class B, it appears that their respective classes and evaluation results hold a degree of validity. As demonstrated in Figure 7, students in Class B exhibited a high level of proficiency in dialogue at the time of the November assessment. However, after three rounds of dialogue, an increasing number of students began posing critical inquiries and expressing their viewpoints more clearly.

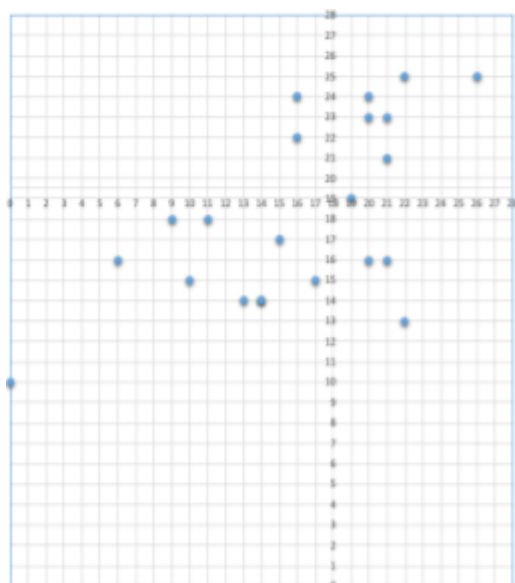


Figure 6: Class A (November, 2023)
(Source: Author)



Figure 7: Class B (November, 2023)
(Source: Author)

Following the three dialogue sessions, a questionnaire similar to the one administered in November was re-administered. The results of this investigation are presented in Figures 8 and 9. A comparison of Figures 6 and 8 reveals an increase in the number of students in the mature dialogue group. Similar changes are observed in Class B. Based on the observations made during the facilitation of both Class A and Class B, it appears that the changes observed are valid to a certain extent.

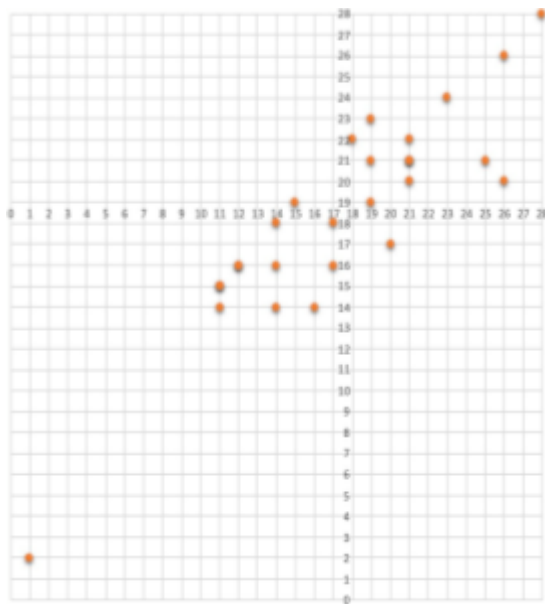


Figure 8: Class A (February, 2024)
(Source: Author)

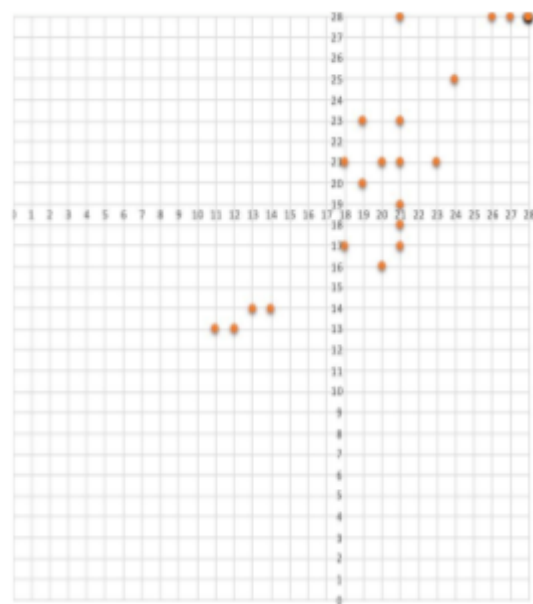


Figure 9: Class B (February, 2024)
(Source: Author)

discussion

In this study, a methodology inspired by the Q-U scale was applied to evaluate the transformation of classes through philosophical dialogue, measuring the degree of dialogical maturity in Class A and Class B. The results confirmed that, after multiple sessions of philosophical dialogue, the proportion of students engaging in mature dialogue increased in both classes.

Notably, students in Class B initially exhibited a higher proportion of membership in mature dialogue groups, demonstrating relatively strong abilities in posing critical questions and articulating their opinions clearly. In contrast, while students in Class A initially displayed variability in their level of dialogical

maturity, observations after the third dialogue session indicated an improvement in their willingness to ask questions and express their opinions.

Furthermore, the novel evaluation method provides a visual representation of the community's status, which can serve as a reference for determining appropriate facilitative support methods. For instance, Figure 10 shows that Class A has a significant number of students with below-average critical and caring thinking skills. As a result, there is a risk of a schism between students in the mature group and those in the immature group, hindering the establishment of a cohesive community of philosophical inquiry among all students. Additionally, one student demonstrates exceptionally low scores in both areas. To prevent this student from becoming isolated during the dialogue, the facilitator may consider providing support to foster a caring mindset.

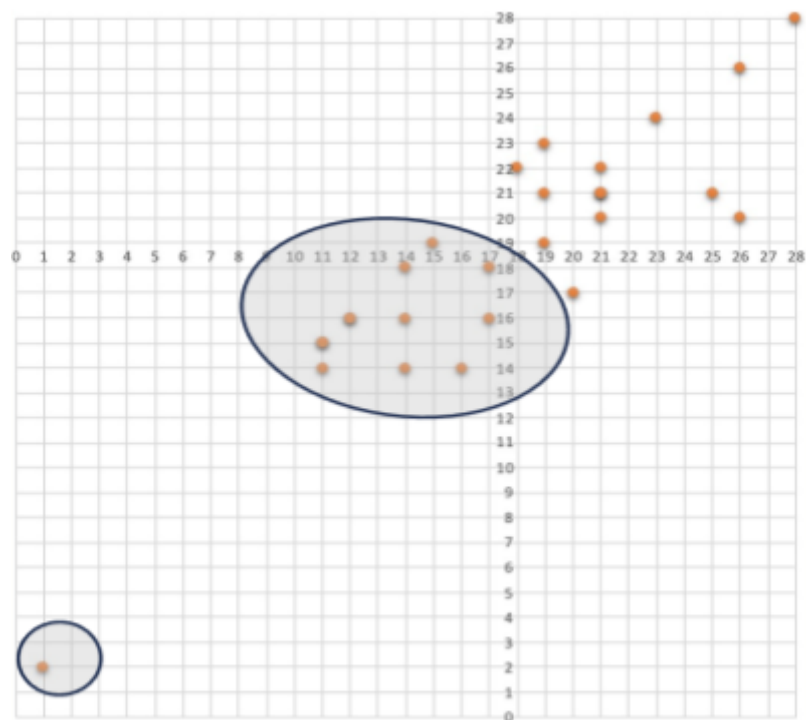


Figure 10: Class A (February, 2024)
(Source: Author)

As illustrated in Figure 11, Class B exhibits a lower proportion of students with below-average critical and caring thinking scores, and a few students with below-average critical thinking score. Therefore, facilitators should prioritize supporting the development of critical thinking in Class B, which will help bring the class closer to forming a community of philosophical inquiry that includes all

students. The assessment of the state of the community as previously described will then assist the facilitator in determining the appropriate support for the student.

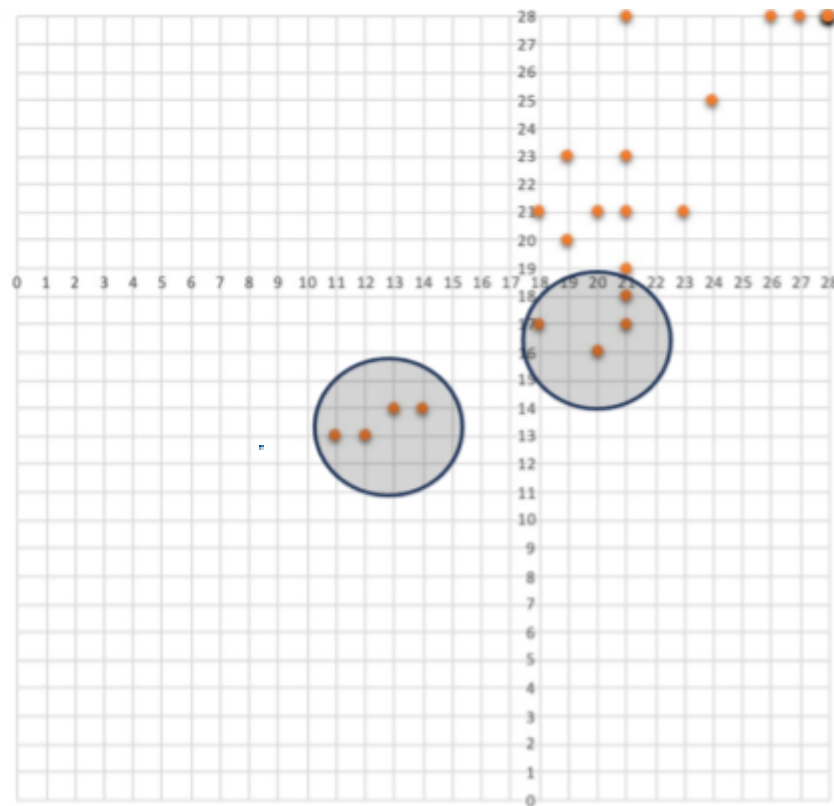


Figure 11: Class B (February, 2024)
(Source: Author)

conclusions

The assessment method proposed in this study allows for the visualization of subtle changes at both individual and community levels. Gaining clarity on these dynamics enables the facilitator to determine and implement appropriate support strategies for future dialogue sessions. Therefore, assessing and understanding classroom dynamics is essential for effective philosophical dialogue.

There are five key challenges for future research. One concern is the relatively small sample size used to calculate averages. To address this issue, it would be beneficial to continue collecting data in order to ensure more accurate and reliable numerical calculations. The data for this survey was limited to junior high school students. In order to improve the accuracy of the evaluation methodology, it is necessary to collect responses from a wider range of ages.

The second challenge is determining how to improve facilitation based on this evaluation methodology. To address this, it is essential to investigate how improvements in facilitation influence evaluation outcomes. Lippman identified four conditions for teaching philosophical thinking: 1. commitment to philosophical inquiry, 2. avoidance of indoctrination, 3. respect for children's opinions, and 4. evocation of children's trust (Lipman et al., 1980). The methodology developed has the potential to evaluate these conditions. For instance, if a significant number of students are positioned in the left half of Figure 4, it may indicate a lack of consideration for one another, which could hinder the formation of trusting relationships. By refining the evaluation method and implementing a support plan based on the assessment results, conditions can be established for fostering a community of philosophical inquiry within the classroom.

The third challenge concerns the efficacy of the changes observed in students, which appeared to be particularly successful in this study. It is not unexpected that students would demonstrate a willingness to critically assess their own abilities through dialogue. As a result, students who initially rated their competencies highly may reconsider their self-assessment. In such cases, as observed in the present study, many students do not immediately belong to the mature dialogue group. In other words, the critical thinking skills fostered in the community of philosophical inquiry could be directed to one's own competencies. As a result, the changes in students' self-evaluations over time will need to be observed continuously.

The fourth challenge is that the self-assessment approach relies on students' self-perceptions, which may lead to issues of over- or under-assessment. To address this, it is important to explore methods that combine self-assessment with teacher assessments or peer evaluations. This approach could provide a more balanced and accurate representation of students' abilities.

The fifth challenge is to analyze the relevance of the evaluation method presented in this study in relation to philosophical polyphony. Polyphony, a concept introduced by Bakhtin (1984), refers to the state in which diverse voices develop independently without merging into a unified whole. In the context of

philosophical dialogue, discussions may progress dialectically, with participants presenting a thesis and an antithesis, ultimately leading to a synthesis. However, it is also possible for each viewpoint to deepen without converging, allowing individual perspectives to retain their distinct identities. This phenomenon is referred to as polyphonic dialogue. If only caring thinking is present, the opportunity to create new meaning with others may be lost by merely empathizing with them. If only critical thinking is applied, participants may be less inclined to voice their opinions. The hypothesis proposed here is that such polyphonic dialogue can emerge within a mature community of inquiry. This assertion will be further explored in future research.

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kazuki tsuji:

Lecturer, Faculty of Child Development & Education, Toyama University of International Studies.

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